

**Collected Publications
of
The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
1990 – 2005**

Compiled by Edward R. Canda





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About the Cover Image

The image on the cover page was designed by the artist Don Pollack in the early 1980s in response to Edward Canda's request for a symbol of transformation. Ed and Don Pollack were graduate students and friends at The Ohio State University at the time. Don designed the image to resonate with Ed's personal story about drowning to near death and being born into a new phase of life while he was a student in South Korea, 1976. The morning after drowning, Ed had watched the sun rise over the East Sea of Korea, sending brilliant ripples of light through the waves. Ed contributed the design to the Society for Spirituality and Social Work since it encouraged a transformation of the social work profession. The logo first appeared in the Winter 1992 issue of its journal, though not in color. Currently, Don Pollock is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Visual Communication at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (<https://www.donpollack.com/>).

Introduction

This compendium conveys insights from leaders and innovators in the movement to establish spiritually sensitive social work during an important historical period of its solidification in the United States from 1990 to 2005. During this period, the Society for Spirituality and Social Work (SSSW) helped to bring together scholars and practitioners who shared a commitment to promote respect, knowledge, and skill for addressing the diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives of clients and their communities. Authors include long-time advocates for addressing religion and spirituality in social work, such as Alan Keith-Lucas (since the 1950s), Donald Krill (since the 1960s), M. Vincentia Joseph (since the 1970s) and Robert Constable, Eleanor Hannon Judah and Max Siporin (since the early 1980s). Authors also include scholars and practitioners who have been active in the movement for spiritually sensitive social work from the 1990s to the present.

The articles in this compilation reveal innovation and creativity as expressed through research reports, bibliographic resources,¹ narratives of practice experience, poetry, and accounts of local chapters' activities, professional networking, national and international conferencing, and advocacy with the Council on Social Work Education and the National Association of Social Workers. This collection makes the complete set of these publications available free and open access.

¹ These bibliographies were published by the SSSW in 1990 (compiled 1989), 1991, and 1992. SSSW members later produced two comprehensive bibliographies with annotations:

- Canda, E. R., Nakashima, M., Burgess, V., & Russel, R. (1999). *Spiritual diversity and social work: A comprehensive bibliography with annotations*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.
- Canda, E. R., Nakashima, M., Burgess, V., Russel, R., & Barfield, S. T. (2003). *Spiritual diversity and social work: A comprehensive bibliography with annotations, second edition*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.

History of the Publications

I founded the Society for Spirituality and Social Work in 1990 at the University of Kansas (KU), Lawrence, Kansas, USA. This organization grew out of the Spirituality and Social Work Network, which I founded in 1988 at the University of Iowa (in Iowa City) and then moved to KU in 1989. I directed the SSSW until 1994 and served in various advisory capacities since then. Subsequent Directors have been Robin Russel (1994 – 2005), University of Nebraska at Omaha and then Binghamton University in New York; Ann Weaver Nichols (2005 – 2010), Arizona State University in Tucson; Helen Land (2010 -- 2018), University of Southern California in Los Angeles; and Kimberly Hardy, Fayetteville State University, North Carolina (2018 – present).¹ For more information, see <https://spiritualityandsocialwork.org/>. I am grateful to all these directors who have continued the Society with their dedicated leadership and vision for many years. Robin Russel merits special appreciation for editing and producing the SSSW publications for ten years.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work published print newsletters and journals, that included invited or refereed articles, with various names from 1990 to 2005 under the editorship of myself (1990 – 1992), Robin Russel (1994 – 2004), and Ann Weaver Nichols (2005), as indicated in the following Table of Contents. Since Fall 1994, the Society for Spirituality and Social Work has been closely affiliated with the *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*. The JRSSW is the premier refereed journal addressing spiritual diversity in social work. See their website for information on the journal's history and index (<https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wrsp20/current>).

The Table of Contents for this compilation of SSSW publications lists each issue and their articles. Click on an issue title [e.g., 1990 Volume 1, Issue 1 (Winter)] to jump to that location.

Edward R. Canda, MA, MSW, PhD
Professor Emeritus
Coordinator of the Spiritual Diversity and Social Work Initiative
School of Social Welfare, The University of Kansas

¹ Special thanks to Professor Hardy for encouraging me to publish this compilation.

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Topical Bibliography on Religion and Social Work

Edward R. Canda, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
School of Social Welfare
The University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045-2510

(Revised March, 1989)

Introduction

This bibliography is intended as a resource for social workers who wish to teach or conduct research on the subject of religion and spirituality in social work courses. The bibliography is arranged according to topical categories in order to assist selection of readings for a comparative approach to the subject. The following criteria were used to select entries: 1) published as social work journals or books; 2) content explicitly refers to religion or spirituality; 3) range of entries represents diverse perspectives: Buddhist, Christian, Existentialist, Jewish, Shamanistic and Spiritist, Nonsectarian, Other Religious Perspectives.

Entries were categorized according to the primary topical focus of their contents. For example, an "existentialist" entry may include allusions to Christian beliefs, but the primary focus is on existentialist philosophy. Likewise, a "nonsectarian" entry may be influenced strongly by a particular religious perspective, but the author attempted to address the subject in a generic or interreligious manner. Although this bibliography is not exhaustive, it is hoped that it will provide a thorough introduction to the subject.

Buddhist

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Christian

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Social Work Journals Emphasizing Religious Perspectives

Journal of Jewish Communal Service

Social Work and Christianity

Social Thought

**Spirituality and Social Work
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Spirituality and Social Work Communicator

The University of Kansas

School of Social Welfare
Edward R. Canda, Ph.D., Editor

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Foreword On the Inaugural Issue Editor

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Spirituality and Social Work Communicator*. This newsletter is dedicated to promoting dialogue and mutual understanding among social work scholars, students, and practitioners who strive to provide spiritually-sensitive service. As increasing numbers of publications and conference presentations indicate, we and our clients represent a diverse and sometimes conflictual range of sectarian and nonsectarian views. The *Communicator's* editorial policy is to encourage open expression of diverse views in a constructive and respectful manner. The human spiritual quest for a sense of meaning, purpose and morally fulfilling relationship is integral to our own professional and personal attempts to understand and alleviate suffering and injustice. This quest motivates the practice of many social workers, and it motivates many clients to seek our assistance. I believe that the magnitude of suffering and the significance of spirituality in dealing with it are so great that social workers of all diverse spiritual views need to work together in cooperation and common purpose. It is my hope that this newsletter and the Network on Spirituality and Social Work will play a role in this coming together, this literal communication.

I wish to thank the people who have encouraged, supported, and advised the network in its formation. This advisory group includes: Robert Constable, Loyola University of Chicago; Donald Krill, University of Denver; Sadye Logan, University of Kansas; Max Siporin, Suny-Albany; and M. Vincentia Joseph, Catholic University of America. I would also like to thank the University of Iowa School of Social Work for a small start-up grant and the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare for its present support of this project. Special appreciation goes to one of our School secretaries, Crystal Cunningham, for doing the excellent word processing and layout for the newsletter.

FORMAT AND CALL FOR PAPERS

Each issue (2 per year: Winter and Summer) will include an editor's foreword and afterword. The foreword will introduce the topical theme of the issue and the afterword will attempt to provide an integrative or supplemental perspective on the articles. Each issue will include articles of the following types: Topical Thematic *Essays*; Research, Education, and Practice *Updates*; *Transdisciplinary News*; *Readers' Responses*; and *Working Paper Exchange*. *Submissions are invited for all these types of articles*. Submissions will be reviewed by the editor and referred for blind review to the advisory group or other readers for a second opinion

if necessary. When the readership and submission rate expands significantly, we may move to a more formal review process.

Each issue will have an organizing topical theme, such as "Buddhist Perspectives on Social Work" or "Transpersonal Psychology and Social Work." Submissions of all types will be reviewed in terms of relevance to the theme, although not all items in a given issue need to conform to the theme. However, *Essays* will be selected in accordance with a specific issue's theme. *Updates* will be reports of current social work research, curriculum developments, or practice innovations relevant to spirituality and social work. *Transdisciplinary News* will review articles, books, or conferences that occur outside social work contexts but which are relevant to our concerns. *Readers' Responses* will be letters to the editor in response to previous issues of the *Communicator*. *Working Paper Exchange* will offer brief (300-word) abstracts of work

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Spirituality and Social Work Communicator invites essays on the following topics:

1. Minority perspectives on spirituality and social work.
2. Transpersonal psychology and social work.
3. Application of prayer in social work practice.
4. Spiritual aspects of self-help movements (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous).

Articles appropriate for Transdisciplinary News, Updates, Readers' Responses, and Working Paper Exchange are also welcome. See the guidelines in the Foreword of this issue.

Based on the number and quality of responses, the theme of the next issue will be selected from the above topics.

Deadline for next issue: April 15, 1990.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Includes Winter and Summer issues, 1990.

Mail to: Edward R. Canda, *Spirituality and Social Work Network*, School of Social Welfare, Twente Hall, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045-2510, USA.

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY, STATE _____
ZIP CODE, COUNTRY _____

I wish to have my name and address listed in a public directory of social workers and other helping professionals interested in spirituality for the purpose of networking.

YES NO

Enclosed is my check, payable to *Spirituality and Social Work Network*, for:

\$5.00 (USA and Canada) or \$10.00 (International)

Foreword, (Continued from page 1.)

in progress, inviting readers to exchange papers and comments with the authors of the papers.

All articles must be submitted in *APA style*. Two copies must be included together with a stamped self-addressed envelope for return of the manuscript if necessary. Maximum length for any article will be 6 to 7 pages typed double-spaced (plus references). Articles may be less formal, more personal, and more creative than is allowed in the typical journal.

SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL WORK NETWORK

The first two issues of the *Communicator* will include the names and addresses of all subscribers who requested on their subscription form to be included in the network directory. This will enable people of similar interest to identify each other for local meetings, conference gatherings, and correspondence.

TOPICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

This first issue includes a bibliography, organized by topics, of social work articles and books that deal with spirituality and religion. The bibliography was compiled by the editor.

INAUGURAL ISSUE INVITATIONAL ESSAYS

Finally, I would like to introduce the essays included in this issue. I invited members of the advisory group to submit essays that summarize their views of the most significant issues or ideas that the profession should address involving the connection between spirituality and social work. They were encouraged to be less formal and more personal than the typical journal allows. I am grateful to those who were able to contribute at this time. Their comments and suggestions establish general concerns and directions for the *Communicator* to pursue in the future.

CHRISTMAS

is the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, celebrated possibly as early as the fourth century in North Africa, established as the 25th of December by the Jerusalem church in the mid-fifth century, and first declared a public holiday in the early sixth century by the Roman emperor Justinian. Current festivities incorporate elements of northern European winter solstice practices, such as celebrating the victory of sunlight over powers of darkness and evil spirits by displaying lights and evergreen plants. [Summarized from M. Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 3, (New York: Macmillan, 1987): pp. 460-461.]

--Editor

Welcome to the *Spirituality and Social Work Communicator*

Max Siporin

We offer a warm welcome and best wishes to this new addition to our personal and social work lives. For those of us concerned about spirituality and social work, there is anticipation of a promising dialogue with fellow social workers on a subject that some of us believe to be of primary importance. This newsletter and the events to be associated with it, such as conferences and publications, will meet a need some of us feel strongly about: to learn, explore, and share thinking about the spiritual aspects of human beings and how social workers can help people understand and realize themselves in terms of these aspects of their lives.

We look forward to the new decade with an increasing recognition of a critical social problem and of the critical necessity to deal with it. This problem concerns the growing void in the lives of people that may help explain the alarming incidence of pathology and deviance prevalent in our society: the epidemics of crack and other drug abuse, venereal disease, interpersonal violence, and family and community disorganization. Another side of this pathology is the trend to religious fundamentalism, and its increasing acceptance, despite the scandals, such as the Bakker case, which have exposed the underside of this religious trend.

These trends are taking place in our country, where there is a high level of economic affluence and a great shortage of workers qualified to fill basic jobs, as well as high proportions of people who have achieved substantial educational levels as high school and college graduates. Of course, social workers need to continue their battles against poverty, discrimination, injustice, substance abuse, violence, and social disorganization, and for socioeconomic structures more responsive to people's needs. We may be better able to do so with a conscious regard for the bases of these forms of pathology.

Whether we refer to this void in people's lives as feelings of alienation, anxiety, depression, meaninglessness, powerlessness, amorality, or hopelessness, we refer to a spiritual dimension of the human personality which lacks needed elements and supports. By spirituality, we mean the element of the personality that includes a state of being and consciousness, within which a person seeks and sometimes achieves a purpose, set of personal meanings, and a relation to other people, to nature, and to the ultimate reality and immanent force of life.

Some of us refer to this inner element of self as the soul and to the ultimate reality and life force in religious terms as God; but many individuals, including social workers, prefer a nontheistic terminology and orientation. There are also some people, including social workers who deny or disregard this element of

the human being. It is clear, however, that the need for spiritual consciousness, growth and experience is basic to the human being. Individual and social pathology arises from the lack of opportunities and support for human relationships and experiences that have spiritual qualities and transcendence, sacrament, virtue, and grace. Also, this spiritual element is essentially moral in identifying what is virtue or vice, right or wrong, good or evil; it is thus necessary in guiding human aspiration and conduct.

During the past few years there has been a welcome increase in attention, among social workers and in social work education, to religious and spiritual aspects of personality and behavior, and in the application of this knowledge to social work practice. This development has been taking place in the face of some controversy and opposition. I can personally attest to the negative reactions expressed by some colleagues about this trend, in their opposition to any imposition of religious beliefs and practices upon nonbelieving practitioners. There is a deeply ingrained identification of spirituality with an institutional religious orientation that has negative connotations and will continue to have negative meaning for a substantial number of social workers who prefer a nontheistic or atheistic personal belief system. Despite the continuing religious revival that has been taking place in this country and worldwide, a substantial proportion of social workers will continue to have this nonreligious orientation.

The statement by Sanzenbach in the November 1989 issue of *Social Casework* about religion and social work expresses this kind of misidentification of religion and spirituality and a stereotyping of religion as ultra-conservative fundamentalism, and therefore as inimical to humanistic social work values. In this same edition of the journal, Canda and Joseph offered very helpful responses in clarifying the diversity of conservative and liberal religious fundamentalism, restating the distinctions between religion and spirituality they both have made, and reaffirming the concordance of humanistic, progressive religious beliefs and practices with social work values. Still, the interchange highlights the need to recognize and accept the presence of nonreligious as well as religious social workers, and to address their concerns about spirituality in both religious and nonreligious terms.

In our pursuit of greater understanding of the spiritual dimension of personality and how it may be enhanced in social work practice, it is helpful to hold valid distinctions between spirituality and religion. However, there are issues to be faced about whether it is feasible to gain spiritual development and experience in truly nonreligious terms, given the wider meanings of

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Welcome to the *Spirituality and Social Work Communicator*, Max Siporin.

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religion, and its non-institutional as well as institutional forms. There also is an issue about the validity of the use of religious practices, such as prayer, within social work practice procedures, in the context of a proper distinction between social work as secular profession and ministry and a religious ministry that has its own socially sanctioned functions and procedures.

However we may deal with these issues, our focus needs to be directly on the nature of the spiritual dimension, needs, and experiences of social work clients. It would be helpful for us to clearly identify some of the elements of the spiritual aspect, even though we may never penetrate or know its mystery. We hopefully will go beyond the metapsychology of psychoanalysis and the currently popular cognitive theories of personality which are limited in approaching this aspect. We also can winnow out the valid content from certain existentialist approaches that lack credibility because of their association with some of the nonsensical, witless, muddled excesses of New Age thinking and activities.

It would advance our knowledge to steer clear of reductionist quantitative, "empirical" research methods and to use as well as further develop qualitative, hermeneutic research approaches that can deal with the complex, multifactorial aspects of the human being and of the spiritual dimension. Recent research efforts, as by Canda and by Joseph and Conrad, are fine exemplars for us to follow. We can aim to further a social work practice that is in Canda's phrase "spiritually-sensitive." We can creatively develop and test helping procedures that will enable clients to deal effectively with their existential anxieties, feelings of alienation, meaninglessness, and powerlessness, and with their moral, interpersonal estrangements and conflicts. Such creative helping should also enable clients to grow, function, and fulfill themselves as members of a spiritually-nourishing and supportive society.

The advent of this *Communicator* augurs well for the realization of the needs and wishes I have just identified. I look forward to the dialogical and sharing relationships and to the spiritually good outcomes which our participation in this project will stimulate.

Max Siporin is a professor at the State University of New York at Albany, School of Social Welfare.

Spirituality and Social Work: Issues to be Addressed

Robert Constable

What is the spiritual dimension in social work and what relation does it have to social work practice? Spirituality is a relatively new term in social work and demands definition. Traditionally "religion" became a frame of reference for spirituality. Social work always respected religion as a part of clients' lives and agency sponsorship. Yet it was less clearly a part of social work practice, and when it appeared in the form of the social worker's religious beliefs, it had to be treated with all due caution. The half-millennium of religious wars in the West, the relief and the promise of a pluralistic American experiment, the process of modernization and the development of the concept of privacy, the dominant materialist, positivist, and psychoanalytic approaches to thought, all gave reason to be cautious about religion, if not barely tolerant. If religion was barely tolerated, spirituality, taken out of the organized context of religion, would be less so. And so it is today to a degree, although the countervailing forces of a revival of personalized expressions of religion have brought the concept of spirituality to the fore. Without the anchorage of religion the term acquires a variety of permutations, all of which are reflected in the literature. It may be that spirituality in its multiple manifestations is a transitional term, reflective both of the casualties suffered by organized religious expression in the process of the Western experience of modernization and simultaneously of the reemergence of creative and constructive forces in human nature which cannot be suppressed.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary reflects well these permutations of the term and is a useful beginning framework for analysis. Spirituality "relates to or consists of spirit . . . rather than material." The antimaterialist and antipositivist stance is common to many who write about spirituality. Indeed the oppositional stance to the predominant materialist ideologies may be a source of energy. The spiritual is what is not material—but is that really true? Or are we setting up a dichotomy which denies the obvious, that we also are body and there is some relation between the two? What then is spirituality and what does it have to do with social work? The definition is a symptom of the problem as long as it is defined only by a negative and excludes other aspects of reality. The field remains in disarray on what precisely spirituality *is* and thus on what its relation to social work is.

The second Webster permutation is that spirituality pertains to "religious or sacred matters." No doubt this is the traditional approach, but the postmodern, personalistic mentality is not easily encompassed by simple religious affiliation, and the literature itself

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Spirituality and Social Work: Issues to be Addressed, Robert Constable.

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shows far more diverse concerns about spirituality, even among atheists (Canda, 1988b). For reasons discussed earlier, in a personalist world spirituality cannot be limited to its organized manifestations in religion and religion, as a social institution, certainly is and should be much more than the sum of the personal spiritualities of its members.

The third permutation is the most abstract, "relating to the moral feelings or states of the soul as distinguished from the external actions." The problem is that it separates itself from action and appears to be related to a reflective or contemplative faculty. There are vague links to a moral universe or to personal asceticism. The moral universe is quite different from personal asceticism and any severance of morality from human acts is problematic for social workers, who constantly deal in action.

Nevertheless it is clear that the concept of spirituality has freed itself from organized religion. From a personalistic standpoint, the development is probably positive. But the distinction does not help much in its definition. As with religion, in its undefined state spirituality can become a cover for all sorts of what otherwise might be called insanity. This was a reason for social work's traditional caution around both spirituality and religion. Recent discussion in the religion and social work literature points out these concerns (Spessart, 1988). Secondly, spirituality can be used to institutionalize a series of purely individual points of view with no broader frames of reference. Modernized and personalized religion can do this also. Philip Reiff's caricature of the emergent personality of the Twentieth Century, "Psychological Man," is no longer bound by any commitments which conflict with his or her sense of well being and self realization. This personality would use conventional religious institutions to mask the profound change. This change amounts to the reduction of religion to psychological or sociological phenomena. Reiff suggests that

the wisdom of the next social order, as I imagine it, would not reside in right doctrine, administered by right men, who must be found, but rather to doctrines amounting to permission for each man to live an experimental life . . . Psychological man, in his independence from all gods, can feel free to use of all god-terms; I imagine he will be a hedger against his own bets, a user of any faith that lends itself to therapeutic use" (Reiff, 1966, pp. 126-127).

Psychological man, in full bloom with Reiff and later discussions of societal narcissism (Lasch, 1979), is the child of an earlier crisis of faith, the same crisis which produces some aspects of spiritualism and in a different sense, fundamentalism.

To extricate ourselves from these potential dangers we must start with social work practice and inquire about what the role of spirituality in social work practice is. Answering this question in its many aspects we come up with a functional definition. Just as the blind beggars describing the elephant, the whole which emerges from its partial manifestations provides a definition and simultaneously a range of issues to be addressed.

Spirituality in social work has been related to three dimensions of practice. First, it has been *from and for the client(s)*, that is there is the recognition of the spiritual needs of each person and that these needs are inextricably related to the growth and development of the whole person (Joseph, 1987). To ignore this aspect of human life is to ignore persons in their wholeness. As social work moves toward holistic, ecological models of practice, it cannot ignore the spiritual dimension of human life (Canda, 1988a). Spirituality is inherent in human life. Second, it has been *from and for the agency*. Religious sponsored agencies reflect a communal striving to maintain identification and implicitly to foster an interpretation of spirituality associated with the sectarian community. Struggling with modern norms of homogeneity, this is a major reason for sectarian agencies. In the Jewish Communal Services area the struggle between sectarian and modernizing tendencies generated a remarkable literature in the 1950s, a metaphor for the nearly identical struggles of other groups (1). In this second sense spirituality is communal and environmental. Third, and most recently, spirituality is a quality and capacity *of the worker*. The long-delayed recognition of the worker's spirituality can be seen in the recent discussion of religion and spirituality and of its effects on practice (Canda, 1988b), in the popularity of conference presentations, and in the development of a literature to include specialized journals in the area of religion and spirituality. In this third sense spirituality is recognized as a personal quality and capacity. Each approach to spirituality, as a human phenomenon, as a communal phenomenon and as a personal phenomenon, is one part of something more complex. Missing one aspect would distort the whole.

Spirituality involves a picture of human persons and their capacity to act, to know, to will, to reflect, to meditate. It is a realistic perception of one's nature and one's purposes and the good, to include more than biological life. It is a picture of universal human destiny. Based on this picture, Augustine opened his *Confessions* with the statement "You have made us for yourself alone, O Lord, and our hearts cannot rest until they rest in you." It is thus a broader picture of relations and obligations with fellow human beings and

1. This discussion may be seen in the pages of the *Journal of Jewish Communal Services* over the decade of the 1950s.

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with God, no longer private, but personal, no longer purely material, but built upon a natural order. This recognition paradoxically propels the social worker to assist in the building of a relational world where it is possible for each person to achieve a personal spiritual destiny and this is Justice. This relational world is not just with ourselves, as having a spiritual and corporeal nature, or with others, with reciprocal duties and rights from that nature, but first of all to God, and thence from God to others and ourselves. For social workers spirituality is private and simultaneously and unavoidably public, since professional acts are public acts. It has a relation to a picture of the human good, thus to a picture of morality and thus to professional ethics. It has a relation to organized religion in various ways, but social workers need to distinguish their activity from the clergy. If indeed spirituality is in the nature of each person, each person ought then to acquire the personal and communal resources to become what he or she *already is*, using the phrase of John Paul II (2). For John Paul II, the recognition of human destiny and divine transcendence at the personal and social levels is the strategic spiritual response to the crisis of modernity, with each person making the recognition of transcendence permeate the institutions of society and all human activity (Holland, 1987). The echoes of this powerful and paradoxically secular idea are resounding in the societies of Eastern Europe, to some extent in modernized and individualistic Western Europe and even in a faint whisper for a brief moment in Beijing.

Recognition of spirituality generates a number of questions for social workers:

What is the place of spirituality in social work and how should it be addressed?

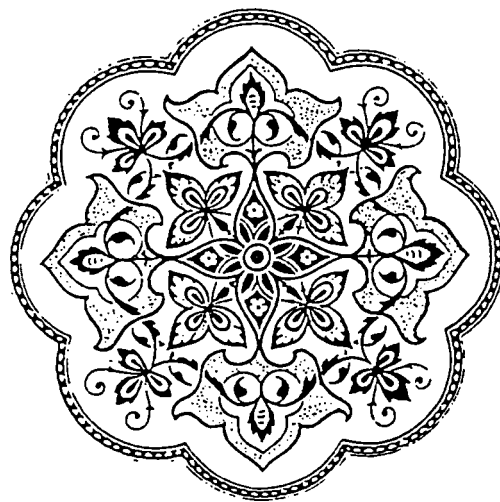
What general legitimacy should be accorded different schools of spirituality? Without criteria the term could contain a variety of perverse personal and institutional manifestations. What are the boundaries imposed by the worker's own spiritual tradition? How does/should that influence his/her actions? Should the social worker pray with the client? If yes, under what circumstances and with what goals?

2. The concept that I become what I choose through my actions because what I choose is in accord with my essential nature is developed in greater detail in St. John of the Cross (1958), *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, and in writings of John Paul II (Wojtyla, 1979; Wozniki, 1980), who did his doctoral dissertation on St. John of the Cross.

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Robert Constable, DSW, LCSW is a professor at the Loyola University of Chicago School of Social Work.



Critical Issues in Operationalizing the Spiritual Dimension of Social Work Practice

Sadye L. Logan

In considering those issues that must be addressed by the social work profession if it were to respond in a sensitive and effective manner to operationalizing the spiritual dimension of social work practice, one must first establish a context for identifying such issues.

A useful starting point is the profession's earlier historical commitment to moral upliftment as its primary function. This focus was heavily influenced by the religious convictions of the friendly visitors of the charity organization movement. Over time the focus of helping became centered on the enhancement of social functioning (Bartlett, 1970). Inherent in this broad base purpose and function is the profession's commitment to the whole person. Complementing this view was the profession's search for more effective ways of responding to and understanding the person in context (Germain, 1970). As a result, ecological and systems concepts have been applied in this effort. Despite the expanded concept of helping, the profession has not incorporated religion or spirituality as a part of its knowledge base, values, or process.

With a resurgence of interest in spirituality and religion in the general population, in social work, and other helping professions, it is timely to move toward a stronger level of commitment. Such a shift can create the necessary atmosphere for the inclusion of specific content and experiences into the graduate curriculum that may contribute to a spiritual dimension of social work practice.

To identify major issues connected with this process, it is useful to assume a broad base perspective about a spiritual dimension of social work practice. In this regard, this paper conceptualizes the spiritual dimension to include a conceptualization of human nature and strategies for dealing with ethnic/racial concerns, women's issues, and practice issues.

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS of HUMAN NATURE

Incorporating new information and knowledge from a variety of sources is not new to the profession. However, the inclusion of knowledge that will stretch our conceptual foundations is another matter. The first step in addressing this paradigm shift relates to a clear, working definition of spirituality and its relevance as an important component of human growth and development. There is, however, growing substantive literature on this topic (Beck, 1986; Bergin, 1988; Canda, 1988a, 1988b; Siporin, 1985). Some literature has a tendency to distort the term by dualist thinking or naive religious assumptions. This distortion is often expressed when (a) spirit is described as "the opposite of matter," and spirituality associated only with intangible

thoughts or feeling; (b) spirit is described as "what God is," and spirituality becomes a restrictive religious concept (Conn, 1986). But when spirituality is understood as an experience that encompasses every dimension of human life, it transcends as well as incorporates specific spiritualities. Additionally, it becomes clear that the spiritual dimension of human life exists whether one believes in a God or in any form of organized religion. In considering this broader view of spirituality and human nature, an important question would be whether it is necessary for the profession to agree on a comprehensive definition of spirituality or accept differential definitions that address specific perspectives: religious, ethnic/racial, and women?

ETHNIC/RACIAL CONCERNS

The discussion related to conceptual concerns serves as one layer of complexity upon which the issues of ethnic/racial issues and other value concerns are laid. Despite the profession's emphasis on issues of diversity, the focus has not included spiritual concerns. In recent times, however, there has been a growing emphasis in the literature not only on the importance of spirituality, religious teachings, rituals, folk beliefs and practices, but also on the need for professional knowledge and sensitivity about the impact of ethnicity on spiritual and religious needs (Queralt, 1984; Spero, 1985; Timberlake & Cooke, 1984). Timberlake and Cooke illustrate this point. They acknowledge the integration of Buddhist ontology, Confucianist ethics, and Taoist epistemology in serving as the moral and practical guidance for linking personal, family, social, and biological existence for the Vietnamese. Similarly, Queralt speaks of the widespread influence of santeria, a syncretic religion, on the personal, emotional, and spiritual needs of some Cubans in the United States as well as on the island of Cuba. This author speaks of the spiritual needs that are addressed in the context of santeria beliefs and rituals as folk illnesses: *mal de ojo* (evil eye), *empacho* (a form of indigestion), *desmayo* or *decaimiento* (fainting spells), *decaimiento* (lack of energy), and *barrenillos* (obsessive thinking).

From the perspective of African-Americans the church or religion has always been emphasized as a central focus in their lives. Currently, however, there is a movement that provides alternatives to the traditional religious beliefs and assumptions of African-Americans (Simmons, 1987). One "new orientation" proposes an Afrocentric view of spirituality--a spirituality that is defined as being connected to a higher source of power which is a part of us and is neither physical nor psychological but divine (an eternal

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presence). This perspective views God, religion or spirituality in terms of understanding the reality of nature and the environment that surrounds and conditions our lives. In this view the cosmic universe is made of the harmonious coming together of polar opposites—a coming together that transcends duality and differences. This understanding and experience of spirituality emerges through reconnecting with ancestors and challenging established theology that oppresses the spirit (the divine presence) in human beings (Simmons, 1987).

Further, the African-American view of spirituality is prefaced by the challenge to African-Americans to claim the African influence in the Judeo-Christian heritage. It is purported that this influence is highlighted "when geographical, archaeological and cultural facts are considered in relation to names and events in the Old Testament, for example, it becomes clear that major figures such as Moses, his wife Zipporah ('The Ethiopian'), her father Jethro, the Canaanites and others were of African lineage either ethnically or culturally. (This has been said of other) early church fathers such as Cyprian, Tertullian and even renowned St. Augustine, whose mother was an African woman named Monica" (Simmons, 1987, p. 128).

It is obvious from the foregoing observations that these few examples reflect rich and complex spiritual and religious orientations. In view of the various ethnic/racial groups within this country, a unique challenge exists for the profession if it is to comprehensively move toward conceptualizing and institutionalizing the spiritual dimension of social work practice and education.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Central to issues regarding women's spirituality is the type and nature of their socialization. Historically, most women have been socialized into conforming to passive roles of living for others and of being desirable objects. These roles have been reinforced by most, if not all, religions (Ochs, 1983). Essentially, religious teachings continue to encourage, to a great extent, women's passivity, whereas men's autonomy and self-assertion are encouraged. Conn (1986) very astutely observes that the primary concern is not so much with models of religious teachings as with their application.

In view of the sexist nature of most religious traditions, women's spiritual development has been restricted to a great extent. However, in the past few years a movement to renounce patriarchy in religious institutions has created an atmosphere in which women's spirituality is being supported.

Although this discussion did not differentiate

women in terms of race, social class, and levels of feminism, it acknowledges that as the profession addresses the issue of women's spirituality, these factors must be included also. Further, the influence of sexism on women's spiritual development within religious traditions and the general society must be addressed as well.

PRACTICE ISSUES

Although this section will primarily address practice issues and concerns, implications may also be drawn for education. Despite the increasing awareness among practitioners and educators regarding the importance of the spiritual dimension of human life as a vital component of growth and development, there is much work to be done in developing as well as teaching appropriate intervention strategies related to this perspective. Within this context, it appears that the major focus of concern should include the social worker's level of self-awareness and capacity for self-inquiry, a working language of concepts and their application to appropriately describe and explain clients' spiritual experiences, and a range of treatment strategies that evolve out of such experiences.

To reconstruct a curriculum that incorporates the spiritual dimension will require the entire social work community to expand personal and professional awareness in terms of values, beliefs and its members' own spiritual and religious traditions. In other words, is there enough commitment by educators and practitioners to effectively create a teaching and practice arena that would do the following:

1. Appreciate and support diverse spiritual beliefs and practices,
2. Comfortably utilize religious concepts and techniques, such as healing prayers, meditations, biblical readings, and rituals,
3. Expand the person-in-environment paradigm to include the world of ancestors (nonhuman world), a greater understanding of the reality of nature, and the existence of an alternate Source of being.

Ultimately, the beneficiaries of the profession's timely and insightful move toward making social work a spiritual reality are the service consumers. Therefore, if we are to truly empower our clients, we must work to create an environment in which spirituality is explored and addressed as any other area of practice and education inquiry.

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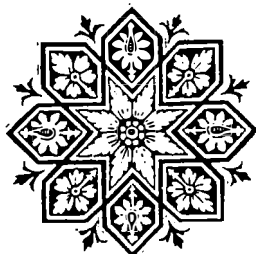
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Sadye Logan, DSW, ACSW, is an Associate Professor at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare.



HANUKKAH

is the Jewish festival of eight days, beginning on the 25th day of Kislev (the third month in the religious calendar). It commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple by Judah the Maccabee in 165 B.C.E. The main feature of the celebration is the lighting of the branched candelabrum (menorah) and the singing of hymns. Work is not prohibited during the festival, but all signs of sadness are to be avoided. A custom of giving gifts to children has become associated with Hanukkah. [Summarized from the following sources: R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, The Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1966), p. 172; and I. Klein, A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1979): p. 229.]

--Editor

WINTER SOLSTICE

is the turning point in the year's solar cycle when the duration of sunlight during the day begins to increase. It occurs around December 22 and marks the beginning of winter in the northern hemisphere. Celebrations of the victory of the power of light associated with the winter solstice have an ancient origin and are distributed widely around the world. For example, many megalithic western European tomb shrines (built during the fifth to second millennium B.C.E.) are aligned with the position of the moon at winter solstice, suggesting an association with the lunar goddess of cosmic regenerative power. Some Native American medicine wheel earthworks are aligned to mark the movements of the sun across the horizon between summer and winter solstices. [Summarized from the following sources: M. Eliade, ed., Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol. 9, (New York: Macmillan, 1987): pp. 342-343; and E.C. Krupp, ed., In Search of Ancient Astronomies (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978).]

--Editor

Reflections on Teenage Suicide and Adult Addictions

Donald F. Krill

A few years ago I attended a public meeting on the subject of teen suicide and was dismayed with the discussion. A school counselor facilitated a panel presentation by teenagers, all of whom were student peer counselors, some of whom had previously made suicide attempts. The question of why the wealthiest county in our state should be plagued by a rising teen suicide rate was not addressed. None of the audience, including clergy, raised the question of values. Yet an obvious question was why life was not worth living for some teens surrounded by plenty and opportunity? The teens themselves spoke of the same problems troubling adolescents 35 years ago, when I was in high school: broken love affairs, social rejection, academic failures. They affirmed their parents as caring people. Neither the panel nor the audience mentioned the popular causes of trauma from physical, sexual or emotional abuse. I had already suspected these causes as being more the "victim psychology" of client-hungry helping professionals than the teenage reality.

In recent years my own professional interests had focused more and more on problems troubling many adults in our society: addictions and burnout. These problems seemed to be growing in number and had social, psychological and spiritual dimensions. I began to look for connections with these adult maladies and possible linkages to teen suicide.

A common ingredient between addictions, burnout and teen suicides seems to be the sense of self imprisonment. Whether adult or teen, a person experienced a profound sense of "stuckness" in life. Chosen routes for happiness, excitement, pleasure and meaning had produced a checkmate of disappointment. One might figure out how one got into such a state, but could not see a way out. There would be a mounting sense of desperation. Some would try the roller-coaster pursuit of new avenues, trading one addictive habit, job or spouse for another, yet a similar despair lurked in the shadows of one's future.

I discovered an interesting correlation between descriptions of the American character and typical characteristics of teenagers. Americans are often described as prizing freedom and independence and maintaining a boundless hope in progress. They are pragmatic in lifestyle orientation with a rather superficial interest in the more profound philosophical and spiritual complexities of life. While exhibiting skepticism and at times outright rebellion toward varied authorities (including disdain toward intellectuals) they also exhibit considerable conformity and are predisposed to follow the directions of a myriad of self-help literature, scientifically garbed helping professionals and emotive ministries termed "religious." These hopes stem from both their allegiance to social-technological progress and from their inclination toward self-preoccupation of pursuing security, pleasure, status,

excitement and the avoidance of pain and confusion. The more the complexities of modern life bombard them through the media, busy schedules, and troubling family problems, the more they look to experts to sort out their bewilderment. The more chaotic life becomes, the more they cling to simplistic, black/white (either/or) solutions. Distracting activities are plentiful and feed the needs of a consumer-oriented society.

The similarities of such descriptions of American character and of teenagers are so obvious they need not be further elaborated. Generalizations have their limitations, of course, but can suggest some useful ideas. One might hazard a guess that what has been termed "midlife crisis" is the later adult version of the teen's identity crisis. Two differences are worth noting, however. First, the teenager is experiencing stronger passions (and therefore more intense disappointments) than the adult in the forties or fifties. Second, teenagers commonly turn for help to their peers and the societal values of the teenage culture for new direction. The possibility of wisdom is far more restricted.

There was a time when elders, parents and extended family members provided a context for a teenager's floundering efforts to find oneself. But family mobility has parted company with extended family, elders have been relegated to "old fashioned" and parents are commonly in the throes of their own midlife crises when their children are teenagers.

The value crises for parents in today's world do have some important differences from the struggles of parents in decades gone by. I will not attempt to pinpoint these changes, but simply refer the reader to the reality of a world of increasing complexities. An "age of narcissism" may be an apt description for parents who burrow into the holes of self-preoccupation in order not to be overwhelmed by outer confusions. Ernest Becker (1973) spoke of our need for "hideouts" from a world of both intense awesomeness as well as horror. It would appear that there has resulted a grave loss for modern people of that edge of intensity that once inflamed great passions, hopes and personal missions. Profound passion has been dissipated by a multitude of desires chasing phantom satisfactions. Faith in progress maintains false hopes in controlled versions of "happiness." But when the bubbles burst, we do not realize how we have been duped, or fool ourselves, because the cause of progress calls for a scapegoat upon which we can heap blame. If we believe ourselves a part of a society on the right track, we require ideologies about victimization to explain our suffering. These ideologies are offered in the form of disease models of mental illness and addictions as well as conspiratorial models that declare entire groups of people to be at fault. These ideologies are no less

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common among the political left than among the political right. Insurance companies, mental "health" institutions and agencies, as well as inpatient settings for addicts and teenagers all play their parts in this grand scapegoating melodrama. While the libertarian Thomas Szasz (1984) has been dismissed by many because of his provocative opinions, he has certainly been one of the clear-sighted prophets in this particular shuffle.

Allan Bloom's (1987) *Closing of the American Mind* suggests that the woes of our present society, especially among the young people, are philosophical in nature. While Bloom opposes the existentialists, these too are philosophers, theologians, artists, and authors who have conveyed a similar concern for more than half a century (Krill, 1986). Perhaps American society has come near that state of anomie that had plagued Europeans decades ago.

If a central ingredient of our modern value confusion is the loss of the edge of intensity, that is, of profound passion, what corrections are indicated? How do we move beyond our protective personal-social screens to experience the tragedy, the mystery, and the personal anguish of the human experience? Can we risk facing our deepest yearnings so as to be able to recognize the absurdities concerning happiness hawked by societal values? A personal awareness of approaching death does this spontaneously for many people, yet their resulting awakening is usually too late to impact others.

Our popularized "pursuit of excellence" has been a useful concern for vitality in the realm of pragmatic-technological endeavors. How can this commitment address the pursuit of truth in the worlds of philosophy, religion, great art and literature? There must first of all be a confrontation with our personal insufficiencies in these realms. From a springboard of "the absurd" perhaps we as parents and helping professionals may begin to open ourselves to the wisdom of past and even ancient knowledge. Graduate programs and staff development seminars might then stimulate hunger not for new theories, but for old truths.

Teenagers are hungering for heroes, not more of the comics and Hollywood variety, but wise models. They need to hear that adults of importance to them are not afraid of the ambiguities and tragedies of life. They need to see that we are passionately interested in the great questions with which humanity has always struggled. We cannot fool them with superficial, neatly packaged systems for happiness. Parents need not run like sheep to the social and psychological scientists for explanations and havens of rest. If parents are afraid of what they do not know (including the dark sides of progress and achievement) let them share these uncertainties with their teenagers. Counselors can do the same. We can demonstrate to teenagers that we are more than thoughtless consumers or followers of

propaganda. We can use our anxiety creatively and demonstrate our independent spirit. We can dialogue with family, friends and fellow professionals about our current life complexities and of some important possible linkages with the wisdom from the past. And we can dare assert what a moral life is about in our everyday confrontations with a world of false lures and deceitful solutions.

Nicholas Berdyaev (1962), the Russian existential philosopher, was called "the apostle of freedom." He stressed the creativity of our spirit, of our primal freedom, in contrast to adapting ourselves to the heaviness, the objectification or solidification of bourgeois values. For Berdyaev the individual bears the universe, the cosmos, within oneself and it is each person's duty to express this through creative acts. The creation of God is carried on in this world through the creation of men and women who are willing to sacrifice their attachments to worldly structures. God is personal, suffers and is in need of people willing to carry forth His work in an oppositional world (Berdyaev, 1962).

Nikos Kazantzakis (1960) reveals the needed intensity:

The Cry within me is a call to arms. It shouts: "I, the Cry, am the Lord your God! I am not an asylum. I am not hope and a home. I am not the Father nor the Son nor the Holy Ghost. I am your General!" . . .

Love danger. What is most difficult? That is what I want! Which road would you take? The most craggy ascent! It is the one I also take: follow me! (p. 67).

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- Donald F. Krill, MSW, is a professor at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work.

TRANSDISCIPLINARY NEWS

Journal Review: *Common Boundary*

Editor

Common Boundary is a journal dedicated to exploring the interface between spirituality and psychotherapy. It has concerns and a history of origin similar to this newsletter. There are also some differences of focus. As a convenient source of concise articles on issues likely to be of interest to our readers, it seems appropriate to review *Common Boundary* as the first installment in "Transdisciplinary News."

According to Charles Simpkinson (1989), the publisher, the journal grew out of networking efforts, begun in 1980, connected with conferences on spirituality and family therapy. An informal newsletter established in 1981 expanded into a formal 36 page journal with 10,000 subscribers by 1989. The journal publication uses a brief article format of essays and reviews to cover a wide variety of current topics ranging from conventional spiritually-oriented psychotherapies to popularized "New Age" helping practices. Views that support and oppose specific spiritually-oriented therapies and theories are presented. For example, the Jan/Feb 1989 issue discussed the esoteric Christian "Course in Miracles" and standards for discriminating valid psychic practices (such as "channeling"). The March/April 1989 issue featured an article about a Jungian analyst (Marion Woodman) discussing the importance of feminine spiritual symbolism. The May/June 1989 issue featured a review of the anthropologist, Felicitas Goodman, and her development of body postures to facilitate trance experiences, derived from ethnographic studies of shamanism. The Nov/Dec 1989 issue presented some views of the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Han, on psychotherapy and Buddhism.

The journal conducted a survey of readers (619 responded out of 6,500) in 1987. The results (Simpkinson & Bruck, 1988) indicate the type of interests among readers (not reported consistently). The *third largest occupational group of respondents was social workers (34)* and the *second largest group of respondents involved in counseling was social workers (52)*. Many respondents were originally Roman Catholic (163/614), currently identify their "faith tradition" as spiritual (125/610) or none (95/610), and are primarily involved in individual private practice (146/414). The five "most interesting topics" were rated as transpersonal psychology (220), intuition (176), dreamwork (171), spiritual direction (170), and meditation (165). The "top" three books were rated as *The Bible (65)*, *The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck (42), and *A Course In Miracles* by the Foundation for Inner Peace (36).

Unfortunately, correlations between variables are not made and the reliability and validity of the methodology are not discussed. So it is not possible to take speculations on these figures very far. Yet there is

a clear implication that many of the *Common Boundary* readers are helping professionals who would consider themselves highly spiritual but little involved in conventional religious institutions. The contributions to the journal also de-emphasize conventional religious perspectives, such as Jewish and Christian community based helping. Eastern traditions, such as Buddhism, receive more attention in articles, but even these have not been discussed with regard to traditional culture-specific community-based contexts for spirituality in much detail. Further, both survey responses and articles emphasize professional and unconventional psychotherapeutic helping with individuals, families, and groups. Agency-based practice, administrative activity, community organization, and macro scale issues of social policy are barely treated beyond some broad criticism of social injustice (e.g. Grof, 1989). This is not to imply that the journal should be expected to deal with these matters--after all, it is focused on psychotherapy. However, I would hope that the social work readership of *Common Boundary* would ask its editors to increase their attention to the connections between the personal and the political, the psychological and the sociological, the spiritual and the religious, and the private and the communal. Indeed I attempted to alert the editors to current developments in spiritually-sensitive social work, but I never received a reply. Nor has any social work book or journal article been reviewed in *Common Boundary*. I will send a copy of this newsletter to the publisher and invite a reply.

If *Common Boundary* was already dealing with these matters, it might not have been necessary to begin the *Spirituality and Social Work Communicator*. My comments above should not be read as a negative judgment of *Common Boundary*. I subscribe to it because it is a highly useful and thoughtful publication. Despite its popularized layout and profuse advertisements, I would recommend it as a reference for clinically-oriented social workers who are interested in current popular developments in spiritually-sensitive psychotherapy. My comments are intended to emphasize the limitations of the journal for social work purposes and to clarify some of the issues that I hope the *Communicator* will address.

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Afterword

Spirituality Reexamined

Editor

The invitational essays of this inaugural issue of the *Communicator* highlight the importance of clarifying what we mean by *spirituality*. This is not merely an academic concern. The conceptualization of spirituality implies theoretical, theological and philosophical positions. It establishes assumptions for dealing in a helpful or harmful manner with religious and spiritual diversity in social work practice. Siporin suggests that certain forms of prevalent psychopathology, criminal behavior, and social injustice are rooted in moral and spiritual malaise. Krill similarly relates crises of meaning for American teenagers and adults to narcissism, superficiality, and spiritual banality. Constable's observations caution us about the dangers of severing the link between private and public, individual and communal, personalistic and institutional, humanly constructed and divinely inspired dimensions of spirituality. Logan reaffirms the need to celebrate and incorporate diverse and even disparate forms of spirituality. If we agree that spirituality is a crucial factor in personal and societal well-being, then it is critical to explicate what it is.

I set forth a conceptualization of spirituality in order to stimulate dialogue on the subject and to establish a basis for further efforts to clarify a definition suitable for social work purposes (Canda, 1986, 1988a, 1988b, 1989). Given the above considerations and continuing misunderstanding (Sanzenbach, Canda, & Joseph, 1989), it seems appropriate to reexamine this conceptualization. I will not repeat the details of this conceptualization, its origin, or its practice implications, since these can be found in the original writings.

To summarize, I conceptualized spirituality as the gestalt of the total process of human life and development, encompassing biological, mental, social, and spiritual aspects. It is not reducible to any of these components; rather, it is the wholeness of what it is to be human. This is the most broad meaning of the term. Of course, a person's spirituality is concerned significantly with the spiritual aspect of experience. In the narrow sense of the term spirituality, it relates to the spiritual component of an individual or group's experience. The *spiritual* relates to the person's search for a sense of meaning and morally fulfilling relationships between oneself, other people, the encompassing universe, and the ontological ground of existence, whether a person understands this in terms that are theistic, atheistic, nontheistic, or any combination of these.

While I take responsibility for the flaws of this conceptualization, its merits are due to the insights of the informants from my original research. The merits are noteworthy. First, it is inclusive of diverse beliefs and behaviors, without making a priori disputational judgments about them. Second, it addresses the holistic nature of spirituality: it is the whole of the person in relationship. It does not imply alienating dichotomies such as spirit versus

nature, individual versus community, immanent versus transcendent, or soul versus body. Third, it appreciates religious institutional contexts for expressing spirituality, but it does not assume that spirituality is limited to them. Fourth, it expands the social work concept of person-in-environment to include the wholeness of the person in the context of cosmological and ontological understandings of the environment, such as beliefs and experiences pertaining to a soul, spirit powers, God, demons, or cosmic consciousness. This is not to say that professional recognition of spirituality mandates agreement with such beliefs or experiences; rather, it takes them into account as prevalent within all human cultures throughout history.

However, there are peculiarities about such a conceptualization. I would like to consider several of these in order to advocate for the merits of using the conceptualization despite its limitations. First, the word spirituality includes the root *spirit*. The term spirit denotes some kind of nonphysical entity or force, such as a soul or a divine (or malign) noncorporeal being. Yet not all spiritual perspectives accept belief in such an entity or force. Certainly, some of the atheist respondents in my study did not believe in spirit or spirits, but they employed the term spirituality usefully anyway. So spirituality as defined here does not necessarily (although it may) have the common denotation of relating to a noncorporeal realm, force, or entity. So, for philosophical materialists (such as atheists) or for believers in a soul, spirits, or God, this may be awkward. Yet I believe that the imperative to be inclusive should outweigh concern over this unconventional usage.

Second, some people will insist that valid spirituality cannot be separated from their own particular belief systems. People who insist on linking spirituality with particular religions or beliefs may find this conceptualization objectionable. Yet again, in view of professional commitment to inclusion of diversity, a general conceptualization of spirituality for *social work* purposes cannot be based upon exclusivist and competitive assumptions. We need a term that is descriptive and nonjudgmental. This poses a paradoxical challenge—that a truly inclusive understanding of spirituality needs to include exclusivist views without being limited to them.

Third, if spirituality is the totality of human life, one may ask why use the term at all? Why not just refer to human existence, being, or life? Actually, I would not have a problem with this under two conditions: that in referring to human life, social workers did not so often leave out consideration of ontological, moral, and mystical issues; and that in using terms such as existence or *being* we customarily understood these in metaphysical as well as physical terms. In Sanskrit, this is not such a problem (e.g. *atman* can mean

(Continued on page 14.)

Afterword: Spirituality Reexamined, Editor (Continued from page 13.)

soul, self, or ultimate reality). But in common use of English, social workers often have materialistic or reductionist understandings of human life in mind unless they explicitly use terms such as spiritual or transpersonal. If social workers established a consensus on a truly holistic understanding of human life, then perhaps the term spirituality, in the broad sense, could be dispensed with.

Fourth, spirituality is asserted to relate to the totality or gestalt of human life. It is a nonreducible *sui generis* phenomenon. But that leaves a critical philosophical question glaring. Is this gestalt a property that emerges from and transcends the complex synergistic interaction of the constituent aspects of human life (the bio-psycho-social-environmental) as general systems theory might suggest? Or is it something granted to human existence by divine action? Or is it something else? It seems to me that these quandaries ought to be left unanswered within the general conceptualization. Yet at the specific level of identifying and comparing particular individuals' and groups' spiritualities and religious behaviors, we need to attend to their views of these matters.

Fifth, the conceptualization does not lend itself to simple operationalizations. Spirituality, as a *sui generis* phenomenon, cannot be reduced to constituent elements. Therefore, it cannot be captured and measured in the operational terms that experimentalists and statisticians enjoy. For example, a variable such as "religiosity" may be measured by counting how many times per month a person attends a church, synagogue, or temple. Yet this says nothing about the person's moral development, level of commitment to a religious institution, inner mystical experiences, or private devotional practice. It is fraught with cultural and religious bias as well. That is not to say that aspects of spiritual and religious behavior cannot be defined in more careful, measurable terms for the sake of research expediency. However, limitations due to the expedient and unrealistic nature of such reductionism should always be specified in studies.

Finally, while the term spirituality, as distinct from institutionalized religion, is becoming popular in the general public and within the helping professions, it has a narrow use among our colleagues in academic religious studies. In interdisciplinary communication, we need to specify the meanings of our terms. For example, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (Eliade, 1987) and *The Penguin Dictionary of Religion* (Hinnells, 1984) do not even include the term in our general meaning. It is included only in the form *Christian Spirituality* (Eliade, 1987). *The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion* (Meager, 1979), produced under Catholic auspices, defines spirituality as "the form or manner of living the Christian life in such a way as to advance in Christian perfection, mainly through the practice of prayer" (p. 3371). Indeed, among my original study informants, those who were not Christian had many reservations about using the word if defined in theistic/trinitarian terms. The

Christians also cautioned about the dangers of setting up dichotomies such as spiritual/physical or spiritual/worldly.

Perhaps in order to avoid limitations of Christian language, the field of comparative religious studies uses the term *religion* to refer to the general human concern with meaning, sacredness, and ultimate priorities, as well as to specific institutional and noninstitutional forms of religious behavior (King, 1987). Thus, the term "religion" in religious studies has much the same range of application as the term "spirituality" in my definition. We could, as a profession, adopt the term religion in place of spirituality. Yet many social workers have a toxic reaction to the term religion because of its association with competing sectarian perspectives within the history of our profession. Also, the term religion does not avoid ambiguity or controversy even within the field of religious studies. So, as an expedient measure, it seems useful to employ the term spirituality as conceptualized here. Hopefully, its definition will be refined. It may be desirable, given the ineffable quality of spirituality, that some ambiguity and imprecision is intentionally accepted within its conceptualization. Perhaps, as Constable suggests in his essay, the term, used in its broad sense, is transitional. If social workers become sufficiently holistic and inclusivistic, it may no longer be necessary. But that does not seem likely in the near future.

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Spirituality and Social Work Communicator

The University of Kansas

School of Social Welfare
Edward R. Canda, Ph.D., Editor

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Foreword Editor

INTRODUCTION

This second issue of the Communicator marks the completion of the first year's existence for the Spirituality and Social Work Network. It has been exciting for me to witness the expansion of professional interest in this topic as demonstrated by conference presentations, articles, personal correspondence, and network membership growth. The growth of membership in the Spirituality and Social Work Network is remarkable. With very little investment in publicity, word of the network has spread throughout the United States and internationally. Membership expanded from approximately 50 at the time of the first issue to approximately 150. Members represent 29 states, Washington, D.C., and Israel. International connections have been made with the International Association of Schools of Social Work that promise to extend our vantage beyond North America further. The world is experiencing many wonderful transformations and terrible conflicts that have religious and spiritual aspects. I am very enthusiastic about this network's potential to continue to stimulate the social work profession to play an important and creative part in the spiritual development of local, national, and global levels of the human community. Please continue to spread the word about the network to interested friends and colleagues.

ISSUE THEME

This issue is dedicated to promote professional understanding and appreciation of spiritual diversity. In particular, it honors one of the most neglected and persecuted spiritual traditions in the United States-- that of Native American Indians. It is my pleasure to include two essays in this issue that address Native American spirituality and social work. The first article, by Venida Chenault, describes a Native American social worker's attempt to integrate her native spirituality into a conceptual framework for social work practice. I selected her essay from those submitted for my course, Spring 1990, on *Spiritual Dimensions of Social Work Practice*. I am impressed by her ability to articulate a convergence of Native American and social work values, beliefs, and behaviors especially considering that there is little precedence for this in the literature. The second article, by Maikwe Parsons Cross, describes an innovation in clinical practice that utilizes the Grof Holotropic Breathwork technique with Native American clients. This article illustrates the fascinating challenge of applying new developments in transpersonal psychology to culturally and spiritually diverse clients.

THANKS TO SUPPORTERS

I would like to thank the people who have offered advice and support to me during this first year of the network's operation. These include: Monit Cheung, University of Hawaii; Robert Constable, Loyola University of Chicago; Maikwe Parsons Cross, Lansing, Michigan; Lowell Jenkins, Colorado State University; M. Vincentia Joseph, Catholic University of America; Donald Krill, University of Denver; Daniel Lee, Loyola University of Chicago; Sadye Logan, University of Kansas; Patrick J. O'Brian, San Francisco; Max Siporin, SUNY-Albany. I am also very grateful to Dean Ann Weick and the KU School of Social Welfare for supporting this effort with institutional sponsorship and secretarial assistance in production of the Communicator.

NEW DIRECTIONS

I would like to offer some suggestions for new or expanded activities of the network, based upon comments I've received and my own ideas. All readers

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Spirituality and Social Work Communicator invites essays on these and other topics:

1. Diverse perspectives on spirituality and social work.
2. Transpersonal psychology and social work.
3. Application of religious practices to social work.
4. Spiritual aspects of self-help movements (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous).

Articles appropriate for Transdisciplinary News, Updates, Readers' Responses, and Working Paper Exchange are also welcome. See the guidelines in Vol. 1, Issue 1. Use APA style; 6-7 double spaced pages in length; Wordstar 5 word processing is desirable; Self-addressed stamped envelope please. Deadline for next issue: November 15, 1990.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

*** RENEW NOW OR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES ***

Includes Winter and Summer issues, 1991.

Mail to: Edward R. Canda, *Spirituality and Social Work Network*, School of Social Welfare, Twente Hall, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045-2510, USA.

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY, STATE _____
ZIP CODE, COUNTRY _____

I wish to have my name and address listed in a public directory of social workers and other helping professionals interested in spirituality for the purpose of networking.

YES NO

Enclosed is my check, payable to *Spirituality and Social Work Network*, for: \$8.00

*** PLEASE SPREAD THE NEWS ***

Foreword, (Continued from page 1.)

are invited to write or call me about your reactions. I will also be in touch with the informal advisory group, mentioned above, for guidance.

I am in the process of applying for nonprofit organizational status. This will involve formalizing a statement of purpose, an organizational structure, and officers. I am also considering establishing a procedure for formal referee of articles submitted for the Essays portion of the Communicator. If there is sufficient interest, we may eventually move toward a journal format. I hope to connect our network with similar activities in other countries, so that we support and strengthen spiritually-sensitive social work internationally. I would like to consider whether a conference on spirituality and social work would be useful and how it could be implemented. I would also be interested to pursue the possibility of producing a special issue of a major social work journal on spirituality. Finally, I wish to update the bibliography on religion and social work that was sent to network members. I am seeking volunteers to assist that project. I will appreciate the suggestions and help of the membership regarding any of these activities.



The traditional Indians, when they prayed, their prayers were always
"Not only for myself do I ask this,
but that the people may live, the people may live."
Any of us can dream,
but when you seek a vision,
you do this not only for yourself
but that people may live,
that life may be better for all of us...
Yes, the earth itself is in need of healing.
And I feel that any way I can help,
that is my mission: to make it whole,
to pay attention to that wholeness,
not only in ourselves
but also in relation to the earth.

- Brooke Medicine Eagle

Quoted from Shamanic Voices, edited

by Joan Halifax (New York: Dutton, 1979, p. 90).

READERS' RESPONSES

It was wonderful to find the inaugural issue of SSWC in the mailbox when I returned to my field placement after the holidays. The diverse, complex, inclusive, and respectful approach to the study of spirituality is refreshing. I enjoyed reading the articles, making notes, and adding each one to my thesis references. A global perspective on spirituality seems to be emerging from the research notes. It is a delight to discover other workers exploring spirituality related to social work practice. *Jacquelyn Marshall, Houston, Texas.*

Congratulations! The inaugural issue of the Spirituality and Social Work Communicator is superb. It certainly reflects a lot of hard work on your part as editor to bring together the contributing authors and to form the nucleus of what promises to be a vital source for the profession. I am anxious and ever-ready to participate with you in establishing a working network to promote a spirited investigation into transpersonal/spiritual issues. How exciting to watch the coming-together of some of the great scholars in social work today around a topic so important as this. Max Siporin's contribution had me nodding in agreement throughout. *Elizabeth D. Smith, Laurel, MD.*

As a graduate student currently pursuing an MSW who also experienced a spiritual awakening during the charismatic renewal of the early '70's, I have been both challenged and frustrated. Believing as I do that my values and principles are no more than vain and empty rhetoric without some practical application, I wanted to enter the helping professions. In my academic pursuits both at the undergraduate and graduate level I quickly found that, even though we were encouraged to get in touch with and evaluate our own belief systems, I was tempted to become a closet believer. (However, I have never succumbed to the temptation.) Surrounded by students and faculty who were of the liberal, humanistic persuasion I was definitely in the minority -- part of an eccentric, fringe element to be tolerated but with no credibility. Joining the profession's national association only reinforced my feelings of isolation. This in turn began to impact my attempts to reconcile what I was hearing in the classroom and experiencing in the field from supervisors and other professionals with what I believed to be true. In their generalist approach to the human condition and environmental influences -- looking at the whole system -- a very obvious and essential component was missing: the spiritual.

Client/patient case studies were analyzed and discussed from every other imaginable angle...treatment strategies rose and fell...impressive sounding theories were espoused only to be replaced by even more elaborate (and often ludicrous) ones. Among all this intense and fervent study, which left we students, regardless of our theoretical inclinations, dazed in a kind of post-traumatic stress syndrome, nothing was ever directly addressed with regard to

spirituality (either our own or our clients).

With such emphasis on respecting client values and beliefs and the obvious import of our spirituality (however it may be defined) this is incredulous to me and could almost seem to be a blatantly conscious effort. It certainly is an essential omission whose absence implicates those guilty of it.

Then I began to hear about organizations such as yours. I look forward with great anticipation to future articles and responses that too long have been neglected. Hopefully the additional insight into problems presented by clients will enhance and complement those areas already being addressed. I for one am confident that this is a definite step in the right direction -- one that should have been taken long before now. *Ray E. Burmood, Columbia, MO.*

Congratulations on the first issue of the COMMUNICATOR. You did a great job. Even a "little newsletter" takes a lot of work. There are not many who are prepared to invest the kind of time that this takes. Keep up the effort!

Your "Afterword" makes a real contribution to the use and misuse of both "spirituality" and "religion." Unlike you, I am not convinced that the use of the term spirituality, rather than religion, really solves the problems that you raise. In fact, I am convinced that using spirituality adds one more problem, that of misunderstanding what we mean. Religion, such as in "civil religion", need not be tied to any specific theistic, organizational framework; on the other hand, it is a term that is in common use and understood. As long as we hold out for a pluralism in religion, as we do in all other areas of life, I think it would be preferable to use it. Anyhow, that is how I would vote. *Frank M. Loewenberg, Bar-Ilan University, Israel.*

Grandfather, Great Spirit, once more behold me
on earth and lean to hear my feeble voice.
You lived first, and you are older than all need,
older than all prayer.
All things belong to you -- the two leggeds,
the four leggeds, the wings of the air
and all green things that live.
You have set the powers of the four quarters
to cross each other.
The good road and the road of difficulties
you have made to cross;
and where they cross, the place is holy.
Day in and day out, forever,
you are the life of things.

- from a prayer by (Nicholas) Black Elk, as written
by John G. Neihardt, quoted from Black Elk
Speaks (New York: Washington Square Press,
1932, p. 232).

UPDATES

* The NASW Annual Conference "Social Work 90" will include a networking session on spirituality, November 14 - 17 in Boston. For information, call the NASW Conference Office at 1-800-638-8799. - Ed.

* The International Association of Schools of Social Work sponsored a workshop on "Spiritual, Philosophical and Ideological Crises: Dilemmas in Social Work Education and Practice," March 12 - 16, 1990 in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia. My correspondence with the IASSW Secretary-General, Dr. Vera Mehta, and one of the workshop coordinators, Professor David Brandon (author of Zen in the Art of Helping) indicates that there is growing interest in the spirituality/social work connection in Europe. For more information, write: Dr. Vera Mehta, Secretary-General, IASSW, Palais Palfy, Josefsplatz 6, 1010 Vienna, Austria.- Ed.

* Thanks to Patrick J. O'Brien, MSW (formerly of Honolulu, recently moved to San Francisco). In support of the Network on Spirituality and Social Work, he placed a related ad in NASW News. His summary report follows. - Ed.

A one time ad in the NASW News (Jan 90, p. 39) was placed to assess the level of interest regarding the neglect or integration of spirituality in social work. Thirty-two colleagues from twenty-one different states responded and indicated strong agreement with the need to address the neglect of spirituality by the profession. Many shared how spirituality directly relates to their work context (terminal illness, addictions, healing relationships, and personal growth). The ad led to additional colleagues being connected to the Communicator, initiated the exchange of helpful resources, and circulated a working paper on a trans-religious model of integrating spirituality into practice. - Patrick J. O'Brien.

* The Gandhi Society of Social Workers is a forum for social workers interested in pursuing peace and justice through nonviolent, spiritually-sensitive means. The director, Tom Walz, has been conducting research and conferences on this topic in India, Latin America, and the United States. For information, write: Dr. Thomas Walz, University of Iowa, School of Social Work, North Hall, Iowa City, Iowa 52242. - Ed.

* Social Thought is a journal that supports strongly the publication of articles linking issues of philosophy, spirituality, and social work. The editor especially invites members of our network to submit articles. Also, be sure that your library maintains this subscription, since it is an important reference source on this topic. Write: Eleanor Hannon Judah, Editor, Social Thought, 1319, F. Street N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20004. - Ed.

* The Study Group for Philosophical Issues in Social Work is an evolving group which began with ten of us at a weekend meeting in May 1985. Until that point we

had known of each other and our common interests for the most part only through our publications or conference presentations. We all, however, had felt the need for a collegial group in which to share ideas and find mutual support for the search for more adequate philosophical foundations for this profession. All of us were frustrated by the largely unquestioned, and often unrecognized, dominance of the philosophy of positivism in academic social work. While we recognized the cultural origins of this philosophy and the ways it has permeated most areas of our society, including most disciplines in academia, we felt it was particularly inappropriate for a field concerned with complex human problems and the need to understand in some depth what it means to be a human being and what is most valuable and important in human lives.

In the five years since that first meeting we have expanded to a mailing list of about 250 academics, practitioners and students, with about one fifth of that group subscribing to our recently inaugurated newsletter edited by Stan Witkin at the School of Social Work at Florida State University. Because of the wide geographical area represented by our membership, until now our activities have largely been associated with the Annual Program Meetings of the Council on Social Work Education. At the 1986 conference in Miami we began what has become an annual open discussion meeting, usually on Saturday afternoon. In addition, we have participated in the development of the symposium structure of the conferences and have qualified for a symposium each year. At these symposia refereed papers of relevance to philosophical concerns are presented and discussed. Many good ideas and personal friendships have grown from these meetings and some new activities have had their beginnings there, as for example, the newsletter and an independent small discussion group meeting regularly in the Boston area.

We would like to invite anyone from the group subscribing to this newsletter on issues of spirituality and social work to join with us in our endeavors. Perhaps our most notable common ground is the emphasis on the importance of openness to possibilities of learning from a wide variety of perspectives. We believe that new insights for the improvement of social work can come from many different directions and that an unnecessarily narrow philosophical position should not be allowed to foreclose the use of common and uncommon resources for this purpose. From the content of your first newsletter it seems that you share our concern for clarifying and strengthening our understanding of how to teach and practice good social work as emotionally connected and simultaneously morally and intellectually disciplined. Such a practice requires a receptiveness to whatever resources have the potential to help us in our efforts to understand the many important dimensions of human life.

(Continued on page 5.)

Updates, (Continued from page 4.)

Anyone interested in joining the Study Group for Philosophical Issues in Social Work should write to Roberta Imre, Study Group Coordinator, at 697 Bement Ave., Staten Island, NY 10310, or at the Princeton Theological Seminary, CN821, Princeton, NJ 08542, and we will send you an application form. If you wish to subscribe to our evolving newsletter you should also send a check for \$12 made out to the Study Group for Philosophical Issues. We are not as yet sure how many issues you will receive for this amount, but our editor, Stan Witkin, who originated the newsletter following last year's special meeting at the conference in Chicago, is enthusiastic and optimistic about future plans. We look forward to an ongoing interchange with the spirituality network. - Roberta Wells Imre, Coordinator of the Study Group.

Before we were born,
we were in the womb of our mother.
Every person came
from the womb of a mother.
We call the earth our Mother Earth
and when the door of the sweat lodge
is closed,
we feel we are reborn
in the womb of our Mother the Earth.
We are there,
the heat, the water, the rocks,
the beginning of time
and the end of time.

- Pete Catches, Sr.

Quoted from *Meditations with Native Americans* --
Lakota Spirituality by Paul Steinmetz (Santa
Fe: Bear and Company, 1984, p. 49).

A Native American Practice Framework

Venida S. Chenault

INTRODUCTION

In my search to find meaning and purpose in life, I returned to Native American people for answers. The teachings which were given and which I continue to seek understanding of, were instrumental in my decision to continue my professional education in social work. These teachings continue to provide direction and meaning for my life and have sustained me throughout my formal education.

The intent of this paper is to explore how my spirituality relates to my social work practice.

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Spirituality or the wholeness of a person as one strives to attain a sense of meaning in relationship to individuals, communities and the universe (Canda, 1988a, pg. 35), can be related to a shamanistic perspective (Canda, 1988a, pg. 33). Although I do not consider myself to be a shaman, the beliefs, values and practice related ideas of this conceptualization reflect most accurately the base from which I perceive my spirituality. A shamanistic perspective emphasizes beliefs that include: the need for people to remain in harmony with nature and the spirits, as well as beliefs in cultural traditions and spiritual visions (Canda, 1988a, pg. 33).

In the beliefs of a shamanistic perspective, the concepts of worldview and cosmic harmony are important. Worldview refers to a people's concept of existence and their view of the universe and its powers (Hultkrantz, 1987, pgs. 21-26). A recognition of the powers of both the natural and supernatural world and the interplay between the two is a consideration that frequently arises in my assessment of certain events and occurrences in which a state of imbalance is suggested. In addition to Creator, my spiritual understanding extends itself to include other powers of life, equally as important, i.e., Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, Grandfather Sun, the Grandfathers of the East, South,

West and North. These teachings of the Drum Religion of the Prairie Band Potawatomi share similarities to the beliefs of other Native American people. For example, supernatural powers can be found in the mythic world of the Navajo people, as well (Hultkrantz, 1987, pg. 25). I have observed the four sacred mountains (Mount Blanca, Navajo Mountain, Mount Taylor and the San Francisco Peaks) and witnessed the respect demonstrated for these sacred places in the spiritual practices of Navajo people. My acceptance of my own tribal teachings about the supernatural powers of life enables me to transfer an understanding and respect for the beliefs of other tribes' spiritual practices.

Cosmic harmony refers to the balance which exists between all of life and from which respect for life is derived (Hultkrantz, 1987, pgs. 27-29). My personal experience participating in the Drum religion of the Potawatomi is one avenue through which I've learned about cosmic harmony. My participation in various ceremonies has enabled me to learn about the songs and prayers that honor all of life. As a result, I've received a greater awareness of the need for balance in life and the responsibility of each living creature towards the maintenance of balance.

In addition to Drum "doings", balance is also sought through the use of the sweat lodge. This sacrifice of self through suffering also seeks to restore balance in life, including balance of self. Participation in these lodges has enabled me to rid myself of ailments (both physical and mental) which have created situations of imbalance.

I have also participated in the Beauty Way ceremony of the Navajo. This ceremony was performed after I'd been told by my physician that my child would be born with genetic defects. The

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ceremony was undertaken to correct the imbalance. Upon its completion, we were told that all would be well and to think positive. When I returned to the doctor to have another series of tests taken, the results gave no indication of any problem and the first set of results were declared in error. The medicine man who performed the ceremony had also told us that this would happen.

My belief in the strengths of the cultural traditions of Native Americans and the teachings derived from traditional practices provides me with an alternative way of viewing existence and reinforces my commitment to all of life. The similarities I've found among tribes in relationship to worldview and cosmic harmony provides me with a foundation for a holistic approach to the provision of services for Native Americans.

VALUE ORIENTATION

The values identified as reflective of a shamanistic perspective include: (1) a primary task of upholding harmony in the universe and well-being of people (2) a commitment to help people and to honor the earth and sky powers (3) the cultivation of skill, wisdom and compassion (Canda, 1988a, pg. 33).

These values are also reflected in social work practice. The practice of social work has as its purposes: (1) assist individuals and groups to identify and resolve problems arising out of disequilibrium between themselves and their environment (2) to identify potential areas of disequilibrium between individuals and groups and the environment in order to prevent the occurrence of disequilibrium and (3) to seek out, identify and strengthen the maximum potential in individuals, groups and communities.

RELEVANT PRACTICE STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES:

The practice implications identified for a shamanistic perspective include: (1) caring and directive helping relationships (2) aim of helping client towards wholeness and harmony with the world and (3) the potential for use of meditation, ritual and nature retreats in the work (Canda, 1988a, pg. 33-34).

My commitment to helping people and to honoring the earth and all the powers of life is ever present. Depending on the client, and the individual perspective, I may choose to discuss the concept of harmony/balance in identifying where imbalance is occurring, or I may choose to use prayer (outside the session) for the individual for whom I feel imbalance exists but who may not share my perspective. My belief that problems result from a lack of balance in life and my commitment to assisting people to regain balance are values which form guidelines for my work. My appeal, by prayer, to the powers of life, that may be considered

as supernatural, is important for the client, as well as for myself.

The recognition of the shamanistic perspective rooted in cultural tradition is very important. In determining what resources may be available to assist the client, I believe it important to assess the role (if any) of cultural traditions. I do not hesitate to refer clients to traditional medicine people when work is not progressing. An example of this can be found in the following example in which I was attempting to provide services to a Hmong refugee, who continually failed to meet the requirements of a work program because of stomach pains. Medical exemptions had been provided but when several statements were received that indicated no medical reason had been found for his stomach pain, this exemption could no longer be used. In exploring the Hmong culture further, I asked whether there were traditional healers in the community and suggested the client seek services for his problem through this avenue. He eventually moved out of state to be closer to his family - where a traditional healer was available. It could be argued that the illness was only an attempt to avoid working and a penalty could have been applied that would have closed the state aid case for this family. My commitment to help people, to respect cultural tradition and to work towards balance contributed, in my mind, to a more positive outcome. This family moved hundreds of miles closer to their extended family and traditional support system. They were also encouraged to make use of that which made sense to them, i.e. the traditional healer and the ceremonies that go with this way of life, which in itself is likely to produce a more positive outlook.

The potential for use of cultural traditions in work with Native Americans is also important to consider. The sweat lodge, as with other traditional healing practices, can serve as an important ritual for healing of both the worker and client. The rebirth and strengthening which occurs in each lodge, enables the participants to identify areas with which they struggle as well as joining with the powers of life to invite healing and resolution of difficulties. The combination of Native American practices with social work practice offers the potential for a culturally sensitive approach to services. As a Native American who is living in two worlds (Native and Euro-American), I have found that my budding spirituality has provided me with a foundation for service which extends to a diversity of tribes and cultures. Although there are differences in particular ceremonies from people to people, my personal experience has increased my awareness of basic similarities among practices which are reflected in the values and beliefs of a shamanistic perspective. My worldview and the importance I place on cosmic harmony enable me to negotiate and respect ways that are different from my own. In many ways, my spirituality has developed into an eclectic one in which I have incorporated that which has worked and which makes sense from other Native people.

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The professional values of social work and the development of my practice skills contribute to the formation of a powerful holistic practice strategy for work with Native and non-Native clients. As I come to understand my own spirituality, my scope of concern for all of life continues to expand.

* Venida S. Chenault, MSW, is a Social Worker in Lawrence, Kansas.

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Holotropic Breathwork **and Native Americans**

Maikwe Parsons Cross

This article presents a brief overview of Holotropic Breathwork, developed by Stanislav Grof, M.D. and Christina Grof, with a focus on its use with Native Americans. It is my experience in social work with Native Americans that traditional Western therapeutic approaches often do not fit with their indigenous spirituality and world view. Breathwork is a technique I have used in clinical practice for two years to incorporate a spiritual or transpersonal perspective that is consistent with the world view of Native Americans.

Holotropic Breathwork is a powerful and comprehensive approach to self-exploration and healing, combining insights from modern consciousness research, depth psychology, and various spiritual practices, including shamanism. The name holotropic means aiming for totality or moving toward wholeness (Grof, 1988). As in shamanism, the approach mobilizes the spontaneous healing potential of the psyche in non-ordinary states of consciousness. The goals of Holotropic Breathwork are pursuit of a more rewarding life strategy, self-discovery, personality transformation, philosophical and spiritual quest and consciousness evolution.

The holotropic model respects the social work values of honoring the worth, dignity and uniqueness of the client and client self-determination. It validates the client's core experience and places the locus of control within him or her, fostering a sense of mastery and independence. The client is the real expert because of his or her immediate and direct access to the intrinsic wisdom in the experiential process. The expertise of the breathwork facilitator, or clinician, is the capacity to be present in a powerful transformative process, to remain unperturbed no matter what arises and to instill confidence.

Grof's model differs from the thinking of mechanistic science and parallels that of Native American philosophy in several respects. He views the universe as an infinitely complex and interrelated creation involving from the beginning cosmic intelligence as a critical factor. The phenomenal world of holotropic consciousness, or ordinary reality, is just one of many experiential realms. Consciousness is mediated by the brain but does not originate in the brain, and there is potentially extrasensory access to any aspect of existence (Wilber, et al., 1985).

The main objective of Holotropic Breathwork is not gradual exploration of the individual unconscious as in most verbal Western psychotherapies, but facilitation of a powerful transforming experience of a transcendental nature, which is similar to shamanistic

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experience. This transforming experience is also similar in many cases to the "spiritual experience" or "spiritual awakening" as referred to in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1976).

Holotropic Breathwork seeks to activate the unconscious within the context of a safe and supportive set and setting, to unblock the energy bound in emotional and psychosomatic symptoms and to convert the stationary balance of this energy into a stream of dynamic experience by supporting the emerging symptoms as they arise until resolution is reached (Grof, 1988). Symptoms represent not only a problem but an opportunity, since they are the place at which the healing process begins to manifest. They typically have a multilevel arrangement with biographical, perinatal and transpersonal bands of consciousness of the client having a common emotional theme which Grof calls systems of condensed experience, or COEX systems (Grof, 1988).

The breathwork technique is simple since it consists basically of an increased rate of respiration, music or sound technology, focused bodywork, and subsequent mandala drawing. However, it should only be attempted under the guidance of a trained facilitator, ideally in the context of a group setting in a retreat environment. During the sessions, the participants are encouraged to suspend analytical activity and to let whatever experience emerges be there with acceptance and full trust in the process. They focus attention on the breath and body sensations and maintain a respiratory pattern that is faster and more effective than usual, while intensely stimulating music is played for a period of two to three hours. Some of the music, such as shamanic drumming, is developed in other cultures specifically for the purpose of changing consciousness. Participants may experience strong emotions and physical tensions which build up to spontaneous release and resolution. There may be powerful biographical, perinatal and transpersonal experiences, or phenomena characterized as "death and rebirth" phenomena such as those described in shamanic initiation rites. Most participants naturally reach a stage of deep relaxation, peace and serenity, but if not, resolution may be facilitated at the end by focused body work. At the end of the actual breathwork session participants draw mandalas related to their breathwork experience and then verbally process their experience in a group setting. During this processing stage, Grof's map of consciousness, which has many parallels to the world view of Native Americans, is presented as a useful way to order the experience. He maps four bands of consciousness. The first is the sensory barrier that one passes through before the journey into the psyche begins. The second is the recollective-biographical level and the individual unconscious to which most traditional verbal psychotherapeutic approaches are limited. The third is the level of birth and death, or the encounter with the dynamics of four basic perinatal

matrices. These death and rebirth phenomena are typical of those experienced in shamanic initiation rites. The fourth is the transpersonal dimension in which the participant commonly feels his or her ego boundaries have expanded. There are three major categories within this rich and varied band of transpersonal dimension: transcendence of linear time, transcendence of spatial boundaries, and experiential exploration of domains that Western culture does not consider to be part of objective reality. Many of the latter non-ordinary realities are described in shamanic traditions. Experiences in the collective unconscious or transpersonal dimension challenge the traditional worldview of Western mechanistic science and more closely resemble various branches of mystical or perennial philosophy, like that of Native Americans.

A well-known Native-American Kiowa educator has expressed that it is commonly known among Indians familiar with traditional ways that Native American tribes used the breath for purposes of spirituality and healing (J. Bread, personal communication, November 10, 1989). An Ottawa pipecarrier, or spiritual leader, has reported that in his experience, both Holotropic Breathwork and shamanism provide direct lines to the spiritual process. He views breathwork experiences the same as experiences in the native sweat lodge ceremony. In his opinion it is the spirit which gives the experience validity no matter what the channel. (L. Sawaquat, personal communication, April 11, 1989).

A case example. A male Native American client was raised in a Native American community. He was jailed and then court-ordered to alcoholism treatment and therapy after a series of convictions for driving while intoxicated. Although he worked the twelve-step program of recovery, sobriety was a constant struggle for him until he participated in breathwork. During the experiential process he experienced a variety of extremely intense physical symptoms and other phenomena. Afterward, he expressed that for the first time ever he had a deep "knowing" of the existence of his higher power and its operation in his life. Later, he reported that there was no longer a sense of struggle in working his twelve-step program or living his daily life.

Many types of people benefit from Holotropic Breathwork, regardless of their worldview or spiritual discipline, such as those simply seeking personal growth, mental health professionals wishing to open new levels of awareness and knowledge about the healing process, and those suffering emotional and psychosomatic symptoms, including addictions. It appears to be very helpful for clients with post-traumatic stress disorders and sexual abuse survivors.

Since Holotropic Breathwork is a relatively new technique there are several questions which need further study, such as issues involving screening of clients for the technique, effectiveness with different types of clients, safeguards to be taken with certain

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types of client problems (particularly severe dissociative disorders), the nature and degree of integrative work that should be required outside the experiential sessions and with whom, the effect of practitioner skill, pacing between sessions, and whether its best clinical use is as an adjunct to traditional therapy.

There appear to be advantages to the use of breathwork. It can be a powerful adjunct to the clinical process since it helps release blocked emotions and makes material available for processing and integration into the personality. It appears to greatly shorten the time the client needs to remain in therapy. It gives many clients a sense of purpose and value and the strength to work through their pain, especially when they experientially connect with their spirituality.

*Maikwe Parsons Cross, MSW, is a social worker in Lansing Michigan (see directory).

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BOOK REVIEW

Frank M. Loewenberg

Religion and Social Work Practice in Contemporary American Society.

New York: Columbia University Press. 1988, 176 pp.

Reviewed by Sadye L. Logan

A little over three decades ago F. Ernest Johnson edited a textbook entitled *Religion and Social Work*. The focus of this text was on the role and nature of social welfare activities in American churches and synagogues; it also identified and discussed issues related to theology, social policy, and the impact of religion on social work. Loewenberg's book *Religion and Social Work Practice* extends Johnson's text and serves to refocus the profession's attention at the interface between the practice of social work and religious values and practices.

The author has done a credible job in addressing a timely and important area of social work practice and education. Emphasis is placed on the need for social workers to understand religion and its impact on human behavior as a prerequisite for effective practice.

Loewenberg stated that his intent in writing this book was to indicate points of departure for further study and research. He attempts to approach this line of inquiry in an objective way. For example, he describes himself as a believer, stating that "this book is not about my belief or about my theology" (p XII). A major constraint on his attempt at objectivity is his narrow focus on belief systems defined in terms of Christianity and Judaism. Further, it is not clear what is meant by being a believer. Despite these shortcomings, the author for the most part has approached the subject matter in a comparatively neutral way.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I begins with attention to the broad area of values, but more specifically religious values within the context of social work practice. This section develops the background against which practice issues and problems are later examined. Also identified are some of the general attitudes of social workers. For instance the author asserts that "most social workers ignore religion as if it were not relevant"; "a much smaller number attack religion ... as being harmful to the client ... and the profession", and "still other social workers, less prominent in the literature and fewer in number, attribute to religion a central role in both their personal and professional lives" (p. 5).

Part 2 examines various practice issues and dilemmas encountered by social workers. It is pointed out that all social workers, those holding religious and non-religious values, encounter practice dilemmas that involve religious issues. Sensitivity and empathy are emphasized as important but not sufficient treatment tools in working with religious clients.

One might consider part 2 the heart of the book, because it is here that the author not only identifies major practice concerns, but also discusses specific treatment strategies. One of the most important questions raised in this section is how a religious social worker can reconcile his or her beliefs with the professional ideology when there is conflict between the

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two. Practice situations are used to illustrate and resolve some of these conflicting value sets as well as to define problems and units of attention. The case vignettes, their analysis, and suggested interventions, however, are somewhat simplistic. One of the several cases that reflects this simplicity is *Gladys Cheats On Her Husband*. Gladys was referred to the social worker by her physician because she complained of constant headaches for which there appeared to be no physical cause. The author cautioned that before analyzing this vignette, it should be recognized that not everyone who is involved in an extramarital affair will feel guilty or have headaches. However, for many others the traditional sanctions against adultery are very strong. The case analysis becomes fuzzy when the author attempts to illustrate differences in practice decisions of the practitioner who is guided by religious values and the practitioner who is guided by secular values. Essentially, it is suggested that the religiously oriented social worker would define Gladys's problem in terms of deviant behavior and identify change in that behavior as a desirable goal. The social worker whose decision is based primarily on secular values, on the other hand, may identify Gladys's guilt as the problem that must be corrected without trying to achieve behavioral changes. The factor most overlooked in these suggestions for intervention is the client's right to self-determination in deciding what she defines as the problem and how she wishes to change it. Further the emphasis on behavioral change as the most desirable goal for the religiously oriented social worker as opposed to the secular oriented social worker is not substantiated. The practice issues considered within this section include religious diversity, rituals, sin, guilt, and work with sectarian agencies and members of the clergy.

Part 3 contains the epilogue, which concludes the book. This section is concerned with the next steps for the social work profession in general and for social work research and education in particular. Specific research questions are proposed with emphasis on the need for further study in the area of practice and education.

Despite the author's attempt to remain neutral and to focus on the need to provide the practice and education community with additional knowledge about the religious aspects of social work practice, several ambiguous areas emerged. These include lack of clarity about the concepts of spirituality and religion and their relationship and meaning to each other, and, the seemingly false dichotomies between secular humanist principles and religious beliefs and between social values and spiritual values. These supposed dichotomies, not unlike the topology of client-worker value relationships (p. 86-94) oversimplify a very complex reality to make the author's point. This oversimplification is also reflected in the narrow focus and definition of religion. Overall, however, the book represents a major contribution to a difficult and often neglected aspect of the social work literature. It is an important first step in comprehensively addressing this area of study which is now on the cutting edge of research, practice, and education.

*Sadye L. Logan, DSW, ACSW, is Associate Professor at The University of Kansas School of Social Welfare.

TRANSDISCIPLINARY NEWS

Editor

COMMON BOUNDARY RESPONDS

In volume 1, issue 1, I reviewed the journal Common Boundary, that deals with the interface of spirituality and psychotherapy. I sent a copy of my review to Anne A. Simpkinson, a journal editor. She recently telephoned me to express her interest in our network's activities. She agreed with my review that Common Boundary has not emphasized social work and social justice issues strongly enough, but they would like to expand this aspect of the journal. She has invited me to write an article for Common Boundary on the history and current state of activity regarding spirituality in the social work profession. I am very pleased to make this link with a popular forum for psychotherapists and social workers who are interested in spirituality and religion. My thanks to Ms. Simpkinson.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

The American Academy of Religion is the primary national organization for scholars of religion in the United States. It is similar in function to CSWE. It supports an annual national conference, regional conferences, and the Journal of the American Academy of Religion. This is an excellent organization for social workers who wish to develop transdisciplinary connections with religious studies scholars.

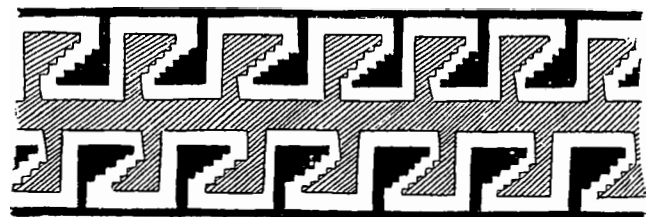
AAR does not have an applied research or social service focus, yet there may be ways for social work scholars of religion and spirituality to make important contributions through collaboration.

The next annual meeting (November 17-20, 1990 in New Orleans) includes special sections on diverse religious topics, for example, Buddhism, Korean religions, Lesbian-Feminist issues, liberation theologies, person/culture/and religion, religion/peace/and war, as well as numerous other papers.

People who are interested can obtain further information from : AAR Membership Services, Scholars Press, P.O. Box 15288, Atlanta, Georgia, 30333, (404)636-4757.

PSYCHOLOGY JOURNALS ON SPIRITUALITY

Two psychology journals that emphasize publication of articles dealing with spirituality are The Journal of Humanistic Psychology and The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology. I would like to invite a network member to review one or both journals for the next issue of the Communicator.



AFTERWORD

Native American Spirituality and Social Work

Editor

Native American Indian peoples have been subjected to policies of genocide, assimilation, and isolation throughout United States history. It is especially ironic to consider the ways in which avowedly religious clergy and laypeople, mainly Christians, have participated in this. As the Catholic monk, Thomas Merton (1966), pointed out, European and American Christians conveniently justified the destruction of native peoples by appealing to such ideas as "saving their souls may require destroying their culture," "they are not really human anyway," "their religious beliefs are the work of the devil," "our divine manifest destiny is to expand from the Atlantic to the Pacific." Many of the settlers who came here to the United States had fled religious persecution in Europe, only to spread persecution here. As a Chippewa-Cree remarked to me, when his ancestors were forced to flee from the Eastern great lakes states down through Pennsylvania and further west, finally up into the remote Canadian Rockies, the only religious group that opposed the bounty killing of his people were the Quakers.

The life of the famous Lakota shaman Black Elk, until his death in 1950, epitomized the strained effort of many Indian people to harmoniously converge Christian and native spiritualities. Besides being a shaman, guided by sacred vision to help heal his people of the wounds of genocide, he was a Catholic Catechist. (Brown, 1971; De Mallie, 1984; Neihardt, 1959). Unfortunately, certain priests did not approve of his continued practice of traditional rituals. Brown (personal communication) tells the story of how Black Elk and his friends carried on their rituals in private. If they saw a cloud of dust blow up the trail leading to Black Elk's home, they knew the priest's car was coming. So they put away their sacred things until after the visit was over. Fortunately, an attitude of mutual respect between Christian clergy and Lakota medicine people has increased in the past twenty years. Some clergy have become students of native medicine people, engaged in interreligious dialogue, and incorporated Indian religious objects and practices within the liturgical celebration (for example, see Stolzman, 1986; Zeilinger, no date). Indian/Christian reconciliation has been encouraged by a widely publicized declaration of formal apology by nine major denominations to the Indian and Eskimo peoples of the Pacific Northwest for participating in the destruction of traditional spiritual practices (Blevins, et al., 1987).

Most social workers may not have practiced sectarian motivated persecution of Indians, but some have certainly practiced secular motivated persecution. For example, the Indian Child Welfare Act was established in part to stop the coercive taking of Indian

children by white people who wished to adopt or impose missionary education upon them (Unger, 1977).

It would be overly simplistic and unfair to portray this attempt to destroy the traditional lifeways of native peoples as only a "white against Indian" situation. Genocide against Indian peoples continues on a horrific scale throughout Latin America, where people of Anglo, Spanish, Portuguese, and mestizo heritage are often engaged in the persecution of Indians and the exploitation of their lands for timbering, conversion to cattle pasture, building hydroelectric dams, and oppression of liberationist movements (see the journal, *Cultural Survival*, for documentation of these problems).

Indians also experience conflict among themselves regarding such matters as cultural preservation versus assimilation or economic empowerment versus economic cooptation. Intertribal conflict is evident in the ongoing Hopi-Navajo land dispute, for example. Thousands of Navajo people, who have settled on land formerly permitted for joint Hopi/Navajo use, are being forced to relocate by the U.S. government as the land converts to exclusive Hopi use. Yet this conflict is more complicated than simple tribal competition. Some Hopi and Navajo are allied in opposing the relocation as a veiled scheme by government and resource industries to take control of traditional sacred land and mountains for the purpose of economic exploitation. Among the Hopi, some traditional spiritual leaders are strongly opposed to this threat to sacred places and have come into conflict with other Hopi who might benefit from the plan.

On August 2, I conducted a workshop on the use of DSMIII-R in the context of culturally sensitive practice with Native Americans. This was part of a three day annual conference for mental health and psychoactive substance abuse workers in the Oklahoma Area Indian Health Service. The conference organizers asked me to include consideration of spiritual issues. This conference was an excellent opportunity to ascertain some of the spiritual and religious concerns of Native American workers in the human services. I will summarize my major observations of spiritual strengths and difficulties as mentioned by Indian participants.

Spiritual Strengths

A few presentations included delivery of a prayer. As one participant expressed, a traditional strength of the Native American is to begin and end all activities and each day in prayer. In this way things are done in a sacred manner, with proper intention. Given the

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prevalence of Christian belief among participants, the prayers all used a combination of Christian and traditional ideas.

Religious resources for prayer and ritual were recommended for personal and professional use in helping people as well. One participant explained that he helps his children deal with nightmares and spiritual fears by fanning them with cedar smoke, a traditional way to purify. A participant mentioned that his substance abuse treatment program has had success by combining Native American Church peyote ceremonies for healing with the conventional treatment programs. Similarly, some other participants' programs use the sweat lodge for helping people overcome substance abuse and mental health problems. There was much interest in linking 12 Step recovery programs with Native American spirituality. Several people expressed strong support for the idea that effective service for Native Americans must be sensitive to the distinctive cultural and spiritual experience of the client. Some participants are cultivating the ability to be comfortable in multiple cultural and religious contexts in order to serve as mediator and promoter of intertribal, interreligious, and intercultural understanding.

Spiritual Difficulties

All of the above listed strengths were recommended as resources to address the many difficulties associated with genocide, such as socio-cultural disintegration, family violence, substance abuse, suicide, public violence, and religious conflict. On the micro level, ethnic identity confusion resultant from macro policies of genocide and assimilation, is a frequent problem. Some participants emphasized the need to revitalize traditional Native American culture and spirituality as a way of providing a sense of identity, meaning, and self-esteem. Yet, participants pointed out various ways in which this effort is made difficult.

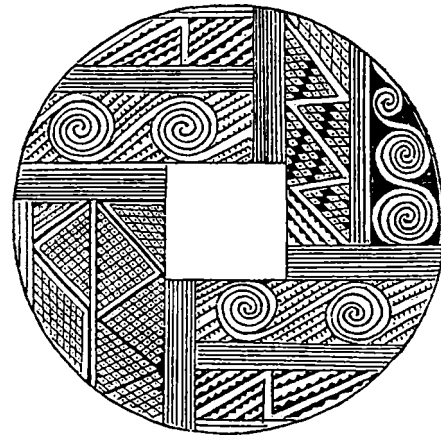
Some participants mentioned that there are religious conflicts at times between Native Americans who are Christians and traditionalists. Some Native American Church members also expressed concern over the intent of certain state governments and professional helpers to restrict and persecute their sacramental use of peyote. Another cited problem was that the health and mental health service systems for Native Americans often neglect or belittle the use of culture-specific religious ways of healing.

Several participants said that my presentation was a rare occasion to hear a helping professional emphasize the strength and beauty of Indian cultures and to advocate for culturally and spiritually sensitive service. While I was gratified for the praise, I was saddened that such a view is not often expressed. My fervent hope is that participants in the Spirituality and Social Work Network will play a part in raising helping professionals' consciousnesses (in both political and

spiritual senses of the term) about Native American issues.

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Father Steinmetz...presented the Papal Blessing
for the Native American Church
at the memorial meeting for my son.
During that night
as I looked at the Papal Blessing
I realized that I had lost a son
but had gained a blessing for the Church.
He blessed my son's grave
through the Papal Blessing,
the Sacred Pipe
and the Chief Peyote.
Only the Almighty could bring
these three together.
And it all happened right here
in the same place.
So, I knew my son was in a good place.
- Beatrice Weasel Bear
Quoted from Meditations with Native Americans
(op. cit., p. 135).

**Spirituality and Social Work
Communicator**

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Spirituality and Social Work Communicator

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Edward R. Canda, Ph.D., Editor

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In this issue: Christianity and Social Work
Spirituality and Social Work Education

FOREWORD Editor

This issue contains articles dealing with two controversial topics: inclusion of Christian perspectives within social work generally and inclusion of content on spirituality within social work education. The Society for Spirituality and Social Work includes members of diverse Christian and non-Christian perspectives. We share a sense of the importance of dealing with spirituality in social work in a way that creatively accommodates spiritual diversity. So we may be in a unique position to promote dialogue about these two controversies in a way that is honest about disagreement and serious about finding common ground.

It is well known that American and European social work owes much of its early historical impetus to Christian individuals and sectarian institutions. Much of social work continues to be practiced in Christian church or social service agency contexts. Yet the social work profession as a whole, and its organizations such as NASW and CSWE, exist in tension with many Christian sectarian beliefs and practices. There is no consensus in the profession about how to transform this tension into a more creative interaction or even whether this is desirable.

This issue of the Spirituality and Social Work Communicator does not attempt to solve these difficulties. It does attempt to let Christian social workers speak for themselves in a way that might illuminate further some of the potential benefits of creative interaction as well as some of the obstacles to attempting it. I would also like to direct the readers' attention to the Updates section, which gives information about significant opportunities to move this dialogue further. In addition, I wish to emphasize the need for respectful yet contentious point-and-counterpoint debate within the pages of this publication. While I appreciate the letters of support from readers, I also seek more letters of constructive criticism in response to our articles. Hopefully, our "Readers' Response" section will be a forum for this lively debate.

Gluchman's article offers an unusual glimpse of the role of a Christian church in social action, both at times of state oppression and revolutionary social change. His description of the Slovak Lutheran Church's situation in Czechoslovakia

is extremely timely. Lee's article, adapted from an Asian-American United Methodist Fellowship Meeting keynote address, reverses the usual vantage of writings on Christians in social work. Rather than focusing on the impact of Christian witness on social work activity, the article reveals the impact of social work values on Christian witnessing, yet still from a Christian faith stance. While Lee draws from Biblical sources and theological language, his emphasis upon egalitarian cooperation between clergy and laity reflects a creative mutual influence between Christian social gospel (or its current manifestations in liberation theology and Korean minjung theology) and social work professional values. Judah shares her observations and suggestions about publishing articles on Christian social work. As editor of Social Thought, her advice and insights are cogent and useful. Titone is a clinical social worker who presents some considerations for dealing with spirituality in psychotherapy. Her case examples illustrate application of a spiritually-inclusive perspective to helping clients of Judeo-Christian backgrounds.

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Marshall's article gives historical context for the urgent present task of advocating with the Council on Social Work Education to include standards in its curriculum policy that support course and practicum content about the spiritual aspect of human behavior. One of the most common reactions I receive from present and former students to my teaching about spirituality is that they never received information about this from another social work educator. The main exceptions to this have been those who reported classroom or practicum instructors making insulting comments about the topic, declaring it off limits for discussion, or making general recommendations to be sensitive to the religious aspects of clients' cultural backgrounds. Advocacy efforts are urgently needed because the CSWE curriculum policy is now being revised. Marshall offers valuable suggestions for such advocacy efforts.

CHALLENGE OF INCLUSIVENESS

SSSW advocates for inclusion and accommodation of diverse perspectives on spirituality. Each of us, as persons committed to particular values or faiths, have different preferences for how to accomplish this. Each of us sets different limits for what is unacceptable to include. For example, many social workers, including some Christians, object to inclusion of Fundamentalist and Evangelical Christian perspectives within social work. This may be due to incompatibility between social work values and the conservative theological and political values promoted by some fundamentalists and evangelicals. Contrariwise, some Christians view the social work profession as hopelessly coopted by secularism and narcissism. Yet sometimes the incompatibility is more a matter of mutual misunderstanding than actual irreconcilable differences. Dialogue toward mutual understanding is necessary. Certainly, when we advocate for a spiritually-sensitive approach to social work that accommodates and appreciates diversity, we are presenting a difficult challenge for both the profession as a whole and Christian social workers. In particular, how can the profession have an inclusive approach toward exclusivist denominations or groups? How can exclusivist religious groups respond effectively to the human service needs of spiritually diverse clients? If we cannot resolve these dilemmas, if we cannot dissolve the apparent paradox inherent in them, we may be trapped in endless conflict.

Perhaps reflection upon the New Testament book of Acts would be illuminating. It recounts the debate between the initial Jerusalem-based Christian community and the expanding Gentile Christian communities. Some members of the Jerusalem community were skeptical of allowing Gentile

converts to avoid Jewish religious customs and regulations, such as prohibition of eating certain foods. At one point, a perplexed Peter in prayer had a vision as if in response to this quandary. He saw a large sheet, filled with animals of every kind, descend from heaven. Peter was told that it was acceptable to eat such things, since nothing God made can be unclean. Then, messengers came to invite Peter to the home of a Roman Centurian. Peter accepted for he understood the vision to mean he should spurn no one (Acts 10:1-11:18). This story illustrates a perennial question for all religious traditions and spiritual perspectives. Perhaps it can serve as a challenge to all of us, Christians and otherwise, to be clear about whom we exclude, and why, and whether this is in accord with our most profound understandings of reality and our most deep commitments to help people deal with suffering.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR SSSW

Having completed one year of activities, I consulted with several members of the advisory group in order to reflect on our current status and consider new developments. I would like to acquaint the membership with these new developments.

We continue to operate primarily on a volunteer basis. Subscription payments (\$8 for 1991) cover the costs of copying and mailing this publication, as well as incidental costs related to publicity and outreach. The University of Kansas School of Social Welfare donates clerical support for preparation of our publication. Editorial, advisory, and other help are all volunteer. In recognition of the volunteer and nonprofit nature of this organization, we have applied for nonprofit corporation status with the state of Kansas. We hope to be granted this status by the necessary government authorities and the Internal Revenue Service in the near future. I will confirm this in the next issue.

In conformance with regulations for acquiring nonprofit status, we have changed the name of the organization from the Spirituality and Social Work Network to the Society for Spirituality and Social Work (SSSW). Also, in order to support scholarly standards for quality and colleague review, all future article submissions for publication will be refereed anonymously. However, we will continue to encourage informal style and innovative perspectives that would be less likely accepted in "mainstream" social work journals. In recognition of the referee process and expanded size of the newsletter, we will in future issues refer to it as a journal.

I will continue to consult members of the advisory group in a flexible manner by mail, telephone, and conference gatherings. Advisory group members expressed

support for this informal, non-bureaucratic approach. In any case, we do not have resources for formal regular meetings between people located in different parts of the country. Also, I am eager to hear from any member who has suggestions for promoting the work of the SSSW.

We wish to extend the international connections of SSSW, in order to increase the range of perspectives and insights of people working together for the development of spiritually-sensitive social work. International understanding and cooperation among spiritually diverse people is urgently needed at this time of war and strife. This effort is impeded by the difficulty of people in many countries to send subscription payments in U.S. dollars or foreign currency accepted by local banks. For this reason, I am offering free subscriptions for 1991 to international subscribers. Please spread the word about our activities and the free subscriptions to interested colleagues in other countries.

As an additional benefit to all subscribers, the Summer 1991 issue of the Spirituality and Social Work Journal will include a directory of members and an updated topical bibliography on spiritual diversity in social work.



Early Christian depiction of a peacock, symbol of resurrection.

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The History, Principles, and Practice of Symbolism in Christian Art, by F. Edward Hulme. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1969; reprint of original 1891, no copyright.

TRANSDISCIPLINARY NEWS

Editor

SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The Society for Biblical Literature is an academic organization for biblical scholars. It holds joint national meetings with the American Academy of Religion (see last issue of SSWC). SBL will hold an international meeting in Rome during July 1991. For information on the Society and its activities, contact Assistant Director Eugene H. Lovering,

Jr., Society for Biblical Literature, 1549 Clairmont Rd., Suite 204, Decatur, GA 30033-4635.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON RELIGION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

NCRPE provides a forum for organizations and individuals who are concerned with issues involving religion and public education, including academic non-sectarian perspectives. Its journal, Religion and Public Education, provides articles and information about legal issues, current events, and educational resources. For information, contact: John E. Donovan, National Council on Religion and Public Education, 508 Cedar Crest Drive, West Des Moines, IA 50265.

"BOOKS AND RELIGION"

This new quarterly magazine provides reviews and advertisements of a wide range of publications on religion. It is useful for keeping abreast of current developments in many academic, literary, and popular fields of religious writing. For information, write Books and Religion, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. LL, Denville, NJ 07834.

THE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SLOVAK LUTHERAN CHURCH

Vasil Gluchman

The Slovak Lutheran Church (official name is The Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in CSFR) is a minority church in Czechoslovakia, but it is the most numerous among the other Protestant churches in our country. The Lutheran Church has approximately 300,000 members (1980). This is about 6 percent of the inhabitants of Slovakia.

The historical roots of the Slovak Lutheran Church are in the 16th century, but it formed organizationally after the arising of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1919. Its social activities began to form at the turn of the 20th century. In this time arose the first social institute in Stara Tura. The social activities of this church increased in the period after World War I. There were established other social Evangelical unions and institutes in Liptovsky Svaty Mikulas and Banska Stiavnica. The social organizations of the Evangelical Church included, for example, the hospital, orphanage, workhouse and also the help which was organized in each individual church body.

The situation of social activity of churches was worse after the communist revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1948.

All official social activities of churches were finished gradually under the pressure of the state in the 1950s. The state took control of the whole of social policy in the 1950s in order to prevent the church from influencing society. For all churches, including the Slovak Lutheran Church, there was only the possibility of limited and individual activity in society; for example through pastoral activity and service to their own members. But this activity was also under strong police and political pressures by the state.

When the Slovak Lutheran Church was in a very complicated and difficult situation, a new theology was created. This theology emerged thanks to J. Michalke in the 1950s. Its name is "theology face to life". This theology focused on service to the secularized world, on solidarity with the world, and efforts to overcome and remove its mistakes and shortcomings. Theologians emphasized Christians' responsibility for the society in which believers are living and the role of religion and church in secularized society. They emphasized especially the role of believers to protect life on earth, to protect nature, and also to improve human relations. The problem of this theological thinking was that it didn't sufficiently consider the political, economical and social problems of the society in which we were living, including the violation of political and religious liberty. Of course, it was influenced by the police oppression of the church and also the effort of the church and its representatives to survive this period of oppression and non-liberty.

The Slovak Lutheran Church began to increase the effort for spiritual and moral revival of humanity and society during the increasing moral, political and economical crisis of society in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s. According to Evangelicals, there is an urge for people to return to Christian values and to faith in God.

"The faith is the heart which keeps an organism alive, it is an engine, which drives us forward... From this belief emerges a virtuous life, a pure morality and honest work" (Filo, 1972, p. 65).

The belief in God is for them the source of all human power; it helps people to overcome obstacles, fear, and mistrust. This is possible because the love of God is infinite and human beings are only the administrators of God's grace.

The effort to bring about spiritual and moral revival of society had positive social moments for the work and the life of Evangelicals in this society. The Christian has to grant the service of life for everyone who needs it, because God loves all people alike and all people who need help are one's own people. Human service is a display of the belief of God because "those who don't believe in God, don't love their own people" (Michalke, 1985, p. 58).

The believers must understand the needs of contemporary humanity and strive to forgive mistakes, shortcomings and faults. The Christian has to be the refuge, the asylum for contemporary humanity in isolation and abandonment. On the other hand the believers must demonstrate in their life that they have been called in from the darkness to the light. Their life principle is the respect of person to person. They must demonstrate the ability to live not only for themselves but for God and their own people. They have to respect God's interest and the interest of humankind. The lives of the believers have to emit peace, pleasure, love, and moral purity. Believers have to show their coherence to Jesus Christ so that they prove to overcome every grudge and disfavor in relation to their own people. They include everybody, they don't omit anybody from the range of their service regardless of differences of world outlook. The Christian service mustn't cool and relax. The need of service will be actual as long as humanity will be sinful. Christians witness to God about the source of their activity through their service.

The aim of this Christian service is to remove all alienation between persons, nations, and races. Above all, it is the effort to overcome the alienation between people and God. The believer can show with his/her own service the overcoming of this alienation and the return of the human to God.

This Christian service to people is oriented above all toward the solution of complicated social problems of society like help for the physically stricken, for abusers of alcohol and drugs, for divorcees, and for the reformation of all human relations. The form of this help was limited only to activity of individuals, because the state didn't permit to organize any church social institute.

The theology "face to life" contributed to forming the relationship of the Evangelical believers to the social problems of the contemporary world. All the world is the creation of God; humanity has to help in the realization of God's intention for this world.

"Only an active life is pleasing to God; an inactive life witnesses about a dead faith and love. The duty of a Christian is to follow Christ in active thinking and making" (Filo, 1972, p. 65).

Believers should have open eyes for real life. They should act on threats of danger. They mustn't distract from life and its problems, but they must investigate this world and think about it and try to understand its events. They must do it with all Christian responsibility for the fate of this world in all spheres of life. Christian service to the world is oriented to the search for ways of removing injustice, poverty, hunger, and other social problems.

The Slovak Lutheran Church performed almost the maximum possible in the social sphere in the political situation which existed in Czechoslovakia before the 17th of November 1989. The Slovak Lutheran Church roused the consciousness of the believers into a struggle with the indifference that was a symptom of the great moral crisis of this society.

The November revolution in 1989 in Czechoslovakia brought the revolutionary removal of the dictatorship of one party, and also brought other democratic changes into our society. This revolution allowed for the extension of social activity of all churches, including the Slovak Lutheran Church. Today's possibilities for the social activity of the Slovak Lutheran Church are marked by the oppression which existed for more than 40 years. The plans for social activity are extensive but this social work emerges very slowly. Now the social activity of the Slovak Evangelicals concentrates above all on health services for long time patients. There are also efforts to establish services and an institute for mentally ill people. The Slovak Lutheran Church will unfold this social work on an ecumenical basis in cooperation with other Protestant churches in Slovakia. In the future, there will be greater space for the social activity of the church, because the restoration of a democratic society will reveal problems such as the increase of criminality, unemployment, and adjustment difficulties of discharged prisoners. There is a space for churches and believers to show their love to people who need their help. We believe that the members of the Slovak Lutheran Church contribute to the happiness and contentment of our people.

*Dr. Vasil Gluchman is a lecturer on the Philosophical Faculty of Shafarik University in Presov, Czechoslovakia.

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The "four evangelists".

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CLERGY AND LAITY

Daniel B. Lee

Adapted from a keynote address delivered at The United Methodist Church North Central Jurisdiction Asian-American Fellowship, 1982 Annual General Meeting, November 26-27, 1982, Dixon, Illinois.

"Bridging the Gap: Clergy and Laity, Our Weakest Link" is the theme and task set before us for the 1982 General Meeting. Today, we, the Asian-American Methodists, are gathered here at Camp Renoldswood to meet this crucial challenge of Christian discipleship. I am deeply grateful for the wisdom of our Lord in allowing the Asian fellowship to be responsive to such a cardinal issue and for letting me witness about some essential aspects of our weakest link, laity and clergy, as we are attempting to bridge the gap.

Then, what is central to the issue of clergy and laity? All begins with the very fundamental issue of human relationship. I believe that God does not need theology, rather God needs humanism and love of humanity. It is human beings who need theology because of our failure to relate to other human beings properly in God's love. The roots of true theology are reflections of God's love in God's image--human beings. Let us consider what makes human relationships dichotomous in Christianity.

Rather than making Christ the center of the mystical body and all the believers its members, arbitrary institutional sanctions and role dichotomies in churches are set up. "Superior," "more responsible," "more qualified," "more

committed," these distinctions are all false dichotomies separating the equally important spiritual functions and gifts of different members. These distinctions derive from the elitist concept of "the specially elect," which is a false image of God's messenger creating distance and alienation rather than love and unity in Christ. In contrast, this is the true central theme: all authority belongs to Christ. Laity and clergy need to find a common commitment and shared responsibilities. Different functions of disciples refer to individual gifts from the Spirit, various talents and training, not rigid roles and hierarchy. The head of the church is Christ; all are members of the mystical body--no one greater than another.

What are contributing factors to role rigidity, hierarchy, and alienation between laity and clergy? Human relations begin with dependency, like the child depending upon parents for survival and care. This is also the early stage of faith development, that is, dependency of believers upon "religious experts" or leaders for guidance. But, as our faith matures, we are all called to grow beyond such dependency.

John Wesley and other early European Christian immigrant leaders' experiences are relevant to modern Asian immigrant situations. This century is seeing a large Asian immigrant influx. The American Asian Christians need to devote all energy to remaining true to Christ's message.

Many clergy who have trained extensively may believe that laity are less crucial to the Christian community or even unnecessary. Many experienced laity may believe that clergy are not necessary. Thus mutual exclusion alienates clergy and lay leaders, hindering mutual partnership and satisfaction. Ministers are paid to be mediators not dictators; they are called to serve, not to be glorified. God's work is not limited to paid staff. Many laity feel manipulated, abused, and exploited by clergy who pass off their responsibilities. Yet, many clergy complain of their burden of the cross because of scapegoating upon paid staff by laity. Such self-enhancing displacement of responsibility is not the work of Christ. The gospel of Matthew, chapter twenty three, reveals the warning of Jesus:

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. (verses 8-11)

What can we do to share between clergy and laity?

1. We work together with God in seeking and saving the lost (2 Cor. 5:18-20). To bring people to harmony between themselves and deity is Christ's mandate for his disciples, both clergy and laity. But harmony is easy to lose

and hard to find. The missing link only increases loss rather than gain. Clergy and laity conflict scandalizes and creates dissonance.

2. Two developmental principles must be observed: Glorification of Deity and Actualization of Humanity. Human development is regulated by two principles of growth. The cephalocaudal principle refers to the developmental process in which growth begins at the brain and continues down the body. The other developmental principle is that growth begins from the heart, the center of the body, to the peripheral extremities. These principles apply to church development also. The authority of the church structurally begins with the head which is God and the love of God. Christ Jesus is the center of harmony from which all members of the church are united (I Cor. 11:3, Col. 1:18, Eph.:15-16). The central theme is that the church is Christ's body--all are useful (I Cor. 12:23-31). A healthy organism has harmonious relations among all parts according to natural law and God's mandate.

There is no exception! Asians must use ethnicity as a resource to come together. Professionalization should not be a barrier.

3. We need to recognize and overcome barriers. To do this, we must view the church as an integrated living system--the body of Christ. In the gestalt of the church, the whole depends upon every member. Individual differences should not be viewed in terms of superiority/inferiority.

Clergy unfortunately may view their professional role as prior to the equality of all in Christ. Clergy must remember that their role distinction does not belong to the Kingdom of God or the communion of saints. It is only a practical and provisional means toward community service. Anyone can serve as teacher, preacher, or leader depending upon talents and spiritual gifts. Rigid role differentiation between laity and clergy is arbitrary.

Leadership structure and the religious bureaucracy must only serve the needs of the community in the body of Christ. We must be always reevaluated and realigned with Christ's message.

4. We need a biblical, progressive view requiring the concepts of complementarity, interdependence, partnership, and role sharing. This can help actualize the Kingdom of God through the church, Christ's body. Struggling over who does what, when, and where wastes energy and hampers love.

No members, clergy or laity, are superior to the head (Christ) or any member. Mutual inclusion requires spiritually mature behavior including the abilities to listen, to empathize, to risk, to heal, and to forgive. It requires parity and accommodation between all the parts of Christ's body.

The following principles are important for achievement of harmonious mutuality between clergy and laity:

- (1) Glorification only of Christ the Head.
- (2) Actualization of love in the community of saints.
- (3) Recognition of the institutional church organization as a means to actualizing love, not as an end in itself.
- (4) In love, no one is superior; functional difference is not superiority or inferiority.
- (5) Glory goes to God not to ministers.
- (6) If a person is glorified in the name of the church, then there is idolatry. Even Paul said, "It is not I, but Christ in me."

5. There is no human between a human and God. Spiritual pride, like the hubris of Icarus who flew into the sun, separates and destroys. Structural separation can cause functional disharmony, conflict, and ineffectiveness in the church. Many clergy like to dictate to laity what to do while receiving glory themselves. Putting one's self in God's place will create tension among laity. Some laity feel they are "getting the dirty jobs while clergy get the glory." Clergy often do not know how to empower laity because it threatens their own power. It is critical for clergy to overcome this fear and the belief that clergy must control.

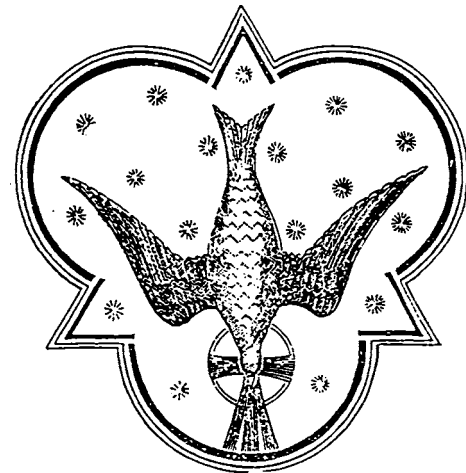
6. We need to uphold the concept of fellowship. The purpose of theology is to discover our true selves in God's love and the unity of all together as the body of Christ, the church. We must actualize God's love in society to accomplish a universal human connection to God. In this context, lay/clergy separation is the worst threat to the living communion. This problem is especially serious regarding Asian Christians. Raised in patriarchal unquestioning authority systems, clergy become like Monarch or Father, rather than as brother or sister. This deforms Christ's body; its parts are put in the wrong places. If clergy are regarded as the head, laity become dependent and submissive. By avoiding spiritual responsibility, pathological symbiosis develops.

Let Christ reign in His church. We, both clergy and laity together, as brothers and sisters, must be united in Asian fellowship in the spirit of Methodism, to exalt Christ's glory and to fulfill his everlasting love by actualizing our Christian mandate to bring harmony between all people and God.

In conclusion, let me recall to you an appropriate story. A Christian was once invited to visit Heaven. During the tour, the gatekeeper first brought the person to the eastern hall which was filled with thousands of gaping mouths. In surprise, the person asked what could they be. The gatekeeper replied, "These are the mouths of ministers who

always preached but never acted according to their words. Therefore, only their mouths came to Heaven." In wonderment, the person proceeded with the gatekeeper to the western hall. There were thousands of ears. With awe, the visitor asked the meaning of this. The gatekeeper answered, "These are the ears of lay people who enjoyed listening to ministers but never acted on what they heard." The visitor was shocked at these experiences. But the gatekeeper instructed the visitor that there was one more place to visit. They came to a center hall hidden behind closed doors. From behind the doors could be heard laughter of happiness and merriment. But the gatekeeper told the person that the time had not come to open the doors. Instead, the visitor was told to first visit the Asian-American Fellowship of the UMC NCJ to find out if the clergy and laity were working together in harmony. Let us prove that there will be good reason for laughter in Heaven by our harmonious fellowship, today, tomorrow, and always.

*Daniel B. Lee, DSW, is professor of social work at Loyola University of Chicago. He is also a Methodist diaconal minister active in the Asian American Committee on Diaconal Ministry. Dr. Lee advises the Spirituality and Social Work Network.



The Holy Spirit descending as a dove.

SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHOTHERAPY IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Anita M. Titone

Adapted from Presentation to the Dallas Unit of the
National Association of Social Workers, 1989.

My topic is healthy spirituality in the context of psychotherapy in social work practice. Let me give you my definitions of spirituality and religion so we can set some

boundaries around this thing. Spirituality may or may not include belief in God. It is one's personalized experience and identity pertaining to a sense of worth, meaning, vitality, and connectedness to others and to the universe. It is incorporated faith - one's pattern of response to the uncertainty inherent in life where the limits of material and human effectiveness are exceeded. It pertains to one's relationship with ultimate sources of inspiration, energy, and motivation; it pertains to an object of worship and reverence; and it pertains to the natural human tendency toward healing and growth. Spirituality is a basic ingredient in the human condition, and, if it is not nurtured, the individual personality will be less integrated and less individuated and less fulfilled.

The definition of religion I use is: a set of beliefs and practices concerning the relationship between a superhuman power and humanity. Religion may or may not be organized. So religion is a set of beliefs, whereas spirituality is a much more internal, incorporated process. Faith is an assent to belief which cannot be scientifically or historically proven.

Not only is there a psychological context to this, but I think that, in the context of our culture, there is currently a strong undercurrent of interest in spirituality. I think an awareness of our limits has grown. We are much more vulnerable to anxieties based on lack of anchors, or lack of solutions to all that we deal with, and I think that is the context for a great deal of spirituality. Spirituality deals with ways of responding in a hopeful way to things that cannot be controlled. In order to further define this, and how it relates to clinical practice, I want to share with you some experiences with a few clients.

My client, Bob, had been working a great deal on some of these issues and had attended some of my seminars. He wrote:

The spirituality seminars, together with my psychotherapy, have helped me to focus on the fact that what I initially understood as a "mid-life crisis" was (and is) more fundamentally a spiritual crisis. By this I mean a need--at mid-life, after twenty-plus years of hard work and above-average success in a law practice and civil work--to find a deeper meaning in my life apart from my work and to come to terms with the inevitability of my own death. The seminars have helped me to get in touch with the fact that I am seeking a greater sense of connectedness with others, with myself, and with the transcendent and infinite (God). Through the seminars and the therapy, I have been able to identify a lack of trust (or faith) as being a fundamental barrier which I must work through to achieve this connectedness; and I have learned that my

high need to be in control (or my fear of not being in control) lies at the bottom of my reluctance to trust. Perhaps, most important, my work in the seminars and the therapy has enabled me to let go of much of my compulsive need for control, to establish a greater degree of intimacy with others and with myself, and thereby to open the way for greater trust, connectedness, faith, and a sense of being a part of something much greater than myself.

So in his own words, that is what Bob's own spiritual integration has been about. It involved, as he stated, a fear of not being in control, which is not uncommon. In crisis points throughout life and transitional stages of development periods, there is a lack of control. There is a movement from one stage of stability and balance to another stage, and, in the meantime, we're not in balance; we are in disequilibrium. So there is a vacuum there in which uncertainty is the name of the game. Then at mid-life when one faces the peak of one's success or whatever one has done with one's life, one faces aging and loss of abilities, loss of life itself, loss of important relationships. Carl Jung said that this is the age--mid-forties--where spirituality becomes extremely important for people.

Bob came into therapy with some suicidal tendencies; I never felt like he was high on the lethality scale, but he had a definite suicidal ideation, and I think it was related to his fear of losing control with the recognition that he was going to die. And since he was going to die, he was going to control when he died rather than go through some kind of slow process of losing his prowess and his many abilities. He, I think, fits very well into the theme that Alice Miller presents in her book Prisoner of Childhood. He was really squelched in his childhood in terms of his "free child". At a very early age, he was groomed to take over a huge law practice. So he has obsessive-compulsive and narcissistic traits.

He would parenthetically mention his interest in faith and his habit of praying when he would wake up at 4 a.m. with the jitters about what he was going to do with himself. So there were little hints that he was open to spiritual issues. When he went into one of the spirituality seminars and we gave permission and assistance to talk about spirituality, this man became more genuinely excited than I have ever seen him before.

Another client: I'll call him Pierre. Pierre was a young minister. He was in therapy at this time with a mild depression, talking about feeling that his work was losing its vitality. He was in a group with Bob. At one point, he said, "I'm getting real frustrated with you, Bob. I feel like I keep trying to help you and tell you things and tell you how I feel, and I don't get anything back." That sounded like an

important statement to him, so one of us therapists asked him to think about it and where else it might apply in his life that he's "giving all this and not getting anything back." He said, "Well, it definitely applies to my father." So we asked, "What about anywhere else?" He thought a minute, then said, "Oh, my God, it applies to my prayer life, too." So we had a transference situation in this group; he was able to make a connection with his relationship to God, which was very meaningful to this young minister.

And then there was Melissa, who had been abused very severely emotionally, physically, and sexually. In response to this abuse, she did some things that were very self-protective and nurturing. Among them, she had a fantasy relationship with some stuffed animals; she did what she could do to protect herself from her parents; and she prayed. When I tried to explore her use of prayer, she didn't want to talk about that because "He" had let her down; "He" didn't answer her prayers to stop the abuse. A pastoral counselor with whom I consulted said, "Probably what you didn't do was connect with the dynamic of the relationship with God the same as you did with the parents." Unfortunately I didn't get into that because she had already terminated. I realized it would have been interesting to explore the transference in terms of the dynamic in her prayer life being the same as the dynamic in her relationship with her parents.

From these case examples, I think you can glean some indications about things that enriched my assessment of the person's dynamics. I was not able to achieve a thorough understanding of the clients until they dealt with their spiritual issues. This suggests relationship-building issues, in that, if I'm not willing to talk about any subject, that does something to diminish the nature and the quality of my relationship with my clients. Regarding treatment interventions, obviously we need to be willing and able to individualize our clients, to see them as clearly as we can and give them what they need. Also, there's the issue of transference and countertransference. So sometimes spirituality and therapy have nothing to do with each other, but sometimes they definitely affect and color each other.

Here is a list of eighteen questions which can be used in pursuing spiritual interests with your clients. They are pertinent to both assessment and relationship-building. They are:

1. What nourishes you spiritually? For example, music, nature, intimacy, witnessing heroism, meditation, creative expression, sharing another's joy?
2. What is the difference between shame and guilt? What is healthy and unhealthy shame and guilt?
3. Do you believe there is a Supreme Being?
4. If yes, what is that Being like? What does he/she

look like?

5. What were some of the important faith or religious issues in your family background?

6. What do you mean when you say your spirits are low? Is that different from being sad or depressed?

7. What are the areas of compatibility and conflict between you and your spouse (or other significant persons) regarding spirituality?

8. What is an incident in your life that precipitated a change in your belief about the meaning of life?

9. What helps you maintain a sense of hope when there is no immediate apparent basis for it?

10. How and when have you prayed or meditated? What is the difference?

11. What does God think about your feeling angry, inadequate, guilty?

12. Do you need forgiveness from yourself or someone else?

13. How long do you think God wants you to feel guilty?

14. How is your spirituality a rebellion against your parents; a conformity to your parents (or one of them)?

15. Which is the most sensitive subject between you and your spouse: (or other significant persons): money, sex, spirituality, children's discipline?

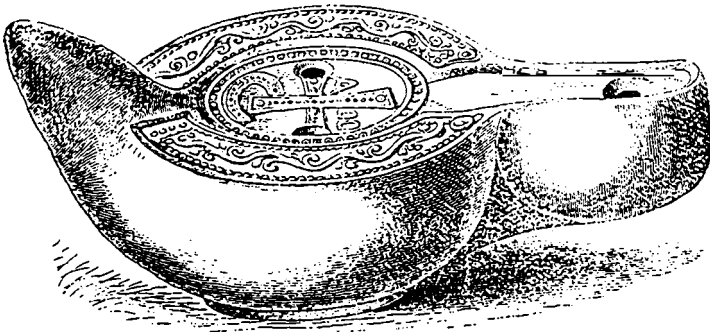
16. What is most frightening to you about death? What do you think would help you have a peaceful death?

17. What is your opinion of the meaning of suffering?

18. Do you have rituals in your family? Have they diminished or stabilized or increased recently?

So, in terms of therapy, my opinion is that the area of spirituality is the last taboo for therapists. We have been unwilling to talk about people's spirituality, and now we are getting curious about it and we're doing something about it. The people who are talking about co-dependency and dysfunction are saying, "Hey, spirituality is important." So large numbers of therapists and other social workers are getting into seminars and learning about spirituality. Though I don't think spirituality is only relevant to those who have addictions or who are co-dependent or who have been abused. Let's not be co-dependent on co-dependency. Spirituality is relevant to people, period.

* Anita M. Titone, CSW-ACP, ACSW, is a clinical social worker in private practice in Dallas, Texas.



Early Christian oil lamp: Cross with "Alpha and Omega".

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE: ONE EDITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Eleanor Hannon Judah

I welcome the request of Dr. Canda to offer observations on writing about religion, specifically Christianity and social work practice, from my perspective as editor of *Social Thought*, a quarterly journal sponsored jointly by two professional organizations, the school of social service of the Catholic University of America and Catholic Charities USA. The need to develop a literature which relates religion and social work practice has never been more pressing, and the interest finally seems present to do so (Siporin, 1985). But the manuscripts which I have seen as editor are few in number.

Christianity is "the religion derived from Jesus Christ, based on the Bible as sacred scripture, and professed by Eastern, Roman Catholic and Protestant bodies" (Webster, 1973). The great diversity within Christianity as it is manifested today precludes any easy generalizations about its relation to social work practice (See Sanzenbach, with response from Canda and Joseph, 1989). Thus there is a need to identify and define precisely what is being discussed. There is great diversity among the various Christian denominations, and even within what some consider a monolithic Roman Catholic Church (Hehir, 1988; Ryle 1989). Further, "Christianity" may be viewed from many perspectives, for example, as a religious profession of faith, a social institution, and a body of literature and teachings.

One of the main challenges in developing the literature may be to demystify the process of doing so, in the sense of realizing that papers on religion and social work practice, as any scholarly papers, must adhere to the rigorous standards of scholarship to be credible. They must have a clear focus, a theoretical framework, define terms, reference the literature, state assumptions, identify biases, give examples of what is meant, and finally pass the test of relevance, the "so what?" test. And so, before proceeding further some terms as used here must be defined.

Canda's (1989) succinct exposition is most helpful here.

He distinguishes "...religion, an institutionally patterned system of beliefs, values and rituals, and spirituality, the basic human drive for meaning, purpose, and moral relatedness among people, with the universe, and with the ground of our being" (p. 573).

Having made the point that papers must be held to standards of scholarship, if the writer tries to take on the truly transcendent, the "spiritual", it should be recognized that the writing may be somewhat idiosyncratic to the extent that it is arising out of the writer's own unique experience. Not only are words inadequate to capture spirit, but we and our society are painfully inarticulate and unaccustomed to trying to do this. Nonetheless, as the writings of the great mystic writer Teresa of Avila (1960) show, while repeatedly stating her inability to express what she means, she does her best, to the benefit of all who study her. Like Teresa, but conceding less ability, we can only do what we can do. Whatever is finally written, while explicitly recognizing its own inadequacy, should then be related to some existing or devised conceptual framework or scheme so as to be more intelligible, orderly, and of use to other scholars.

In order to write about social work and another body of knowledge, such as Christianity, writers must first of all know their own profession thoroughly, and in addition, must have a certain level of competence and comfort using the content, structures and concepts, that is, the literature and tools, of another discipline (for example, history, theology, psychology, sociology and the like). Dealing with knowledge and conceptual tools of another discipline is not unexpected nor unprecedented for social workers, for as a practice profession, we draw on knowledge from other disciplines repeatedly. Perhaps we are less acquainted with philosophy and its branches, particularly theology, epistemology, moral theology, and in the case of religion, dogmatic theology, ecclesiology, scripture and traditions of various religions. But we can learn. Certainly anyone writing about Christianity and social work practice must have some grasp of the contents, principles, precepts, and history of Christianity, as well as its plurality of manifestations and its base in Judaism.

We are social workers first, not theologians, sociologists, historians, or philosophers. Above all, as social workers, we have seen first hand, more than most, the trials, triumphs, fears, aspirations and beliefs of ordinary people; how they manage and are managed by others. We have seen, read, and heard about the use and abuse of religion in individuals and in institutions, and we, as self reflective professionals, have tried to make sense and to theorize about meanings in our own lives and practice with our clients. And we have tried to "put things together" in our lives and

practice.

I have been editor of *Social Thought* for only two years. I have thought about religion and social work practice, however, since my own religious convictions propelled me into the field four decades ago. My disappointment in the level of attempt or accomplishment of integration of these two spheres in literature, classroom and professional parlance then and now, has been profound. I have tried to integrate my professional persona, from time to time to write in this area and haltingly to bring it into the curriculum and classroom. I know that it is hard to do, will be resisted by some, but is worth the effort. I am convinced that this needed literature will, in many instances, be tentative and groping, needing to be nurtured and helped along if it is to develop. Interested editors are in a position to encourage and to help. They call upon their own expertise, but very importantly, upon that of others, from social work and other disciplines, as referees to critique papers and to offer comments and suggestions for revision to authors if the paper shows promise for publication. These suggestions and feedback have, in my experience, made the difference in the author's being able to bring a paper to the degree of quality warranting publication.

Most papers addressed to this area which fail to measure up, do so, in my experience, because of inadequate clarity, scholarship and writing. Often statements seem more polemical than scholarly, based more on opinion than fact, without substantiation. They simply are not well done in that they may lack the attributes of a good paper.

Obviously, not all publications are equally interested in papers dealing with social work practice and religion or spirituality, although, in the current climate, writings of non-theistic spirituality would find a wider audience than ones on Christianity and social work (Peck, 1978). This might be due to perceived lack of relevance to the journal's mission, level of scholarly interest, or even hostility to or fear of the subject.

Finally, it is important to note that social and political considerations also play a role in publications directed to Christianity and other religions and social work. Our secular society and the secular profession of which we are part, characteristically look with suspicion and in some cases hostility on what may be perceived as "mixing" religion and a profession. It is a well-known cliché that discussion of politics or religion in many quarters of "polite" society is taboo. A further inhibition is that, especially as social workers, we do not wish to even appear to exclude anyone, and our democratic values stress individual freedom of thought. There are varying positions on the role and value or disvalue of religion in the society. There are some who

contend that professional social work service, if given through religious organizations, is not social work but the promotion of religion. With all the ramifications for public funding to sectarian agencies today, this pressure can be another powerful incentive to clarify the role and function of religious values and beliefs in social work practice. Sectarian nonprofit organizations are certainly energized to address this issue today, for, as Dr. Johnson once observed to Boswell, the threat of hanging concentrates the mind wonderfully. The time is ripe it appears, for many reasons then, to seize the moment of opportunity we now have, to concentrate our individual and collective minds wonderfully.

* Eleanor Hannon Judah, DSW, ACSW, is editor of *Social Thought* in Washington, DC.

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Early Christian mosaic: Christ as the vine and the good shepherd.

THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Jacquelyn Marshall

Introduction

Social workers provide services to people from diverse spiritual perspectives. Yet, many social work students have never received instruction in the spiritual aspect of human growth and development. This paper about the spiritual dimension in social work education emerges from a research project that I conducted at Smith College School For Social Work (Marshall, 1990). The master's thesis examined social work literature to gain knowledge about the profession's perspectives on spirituality as it relates to education. Content analysis of literature identified major themes while tracing social work's varied interests in spirituality from the 1920s through the 1980s. The study's stated goal was to use the readings to develop how social work thought on spirituality interfaces with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Curriculum Policy Statement (1984) that guides contemporary social work degree programs. The study provides the foundation for this report that focuses on the spiritual dimension in past, present, and future curriculum policy statements.

The thesis used the definition of spirituality formulated by Canda (1990). This social work definition of spirituality is diverse, inclusive, and holistic. It is not limited to religious expression, but expands the person-in-environment paradigm by incorporating the universe. Yet, this open-ended definition may not be acceptable to some who prefer a definition based upon specific beliefs.

The study showed that social work thought on spirituality is critical for core CSWE curriculum content and professional foundation areas. Major conclusions derived from the analysis of the professional literature on spirituality suggest that spirituality is an essential social work value, necessary to theory, practice, and research. This finding contains clear implications for the future of social work education. Yet, an examination of four CSWE curriculum policy statements suggests changing perspectives over time toward the spiritual dimension in social work education.

History

In the early 1950s, the newly formed CSWE established standards and goals for social work education that served as an evaluation tool in accreditation procedures. Educational principles supported the curriculum policy statement that included requirements for social work degree programs. Under the Human Growth and Behavior section in the first CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement (1953), the Commission on Accreditation set forth the following standard for social work education and activity:

"Normal physical, mental, and emotional growth should be considered with due regard to social, cultural, and spiritual influences upon the development of the individual (Section 3543). References to the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual dimensions of human growth and development were easily understood in this statement.

Toward the end of the decade, Boehm (1959) presented the results of a major CSWE curriculum study that included the spiritual needs of people within a list of essential social work values in the volume that outlines future educational objectives. Similarly, Pumphrey (1959) distinguished between social values and spiritual values in another volume from the same study that discusses teaching values in social work education. Social values, she says, refer to appropriate behaviors while spiritual values refer to nonobjective ways of knowing the mystery of the universe and humanity's relationship with it.

The next decade's Official Statement of Curriculum Policy (1962) for the Master's Degree Program in Graduate Professional Schools of Social Work continued to acknowledge "spiritual...influences and attributes" under the content area designed to help the student understand "the essential wholeness of the human being." (p. 12). During this period, the literature review shows an expansion of the professional perspective beyond Jewish and Christian spiritual perspectives as social workers formulated theories based upon existential thought and Eastern spiritual philosophies for application to casework practice.

The Curriculum Policy Statement (1970), in the decade

that followed, no longer contained direct guidelines about spiritual values, needs, influences, or attributes. Under the Content Pertaining to Human Behavior and the Social Environment section, the statement reads as follows:

"This objective is achieved through the retrieval, specification, and extension of theories and bodies of knowledge derived from the biological, psychological, and social sciences as well as from the humanities which are needed for an understanding of social work values and practice" (p. 2).

Here the educational emphasis is on the bio-psycho-social dimensions. Inclusion of the spiritual dimension in education and practice becomes ambiguous. Whether the reference to "the humanities" includes the spiritual dimension is subject to interpretation.

The latest Curriculum Policy Statement (1984) includes neither direct nor indirect references to human spiritual growth and development. Although the policy states that the curriculum should contain content about oppressed special population groups who are distinguished by their religion, the statement makes no distinction between religious belief systems and the spiritual dimension. Also, the document does not provide guidelines to facilitate student knowledge and understanding of diverse spiritual perspectives that influence both special and other population clients. Ironically, the absence of formal recognition of the spiritual dimension in this statement occurred during the 1980s, a period when more was written about the subject of spirituality in the social work literature than in the previous six decades.

Discussion

The premiere CSWE foundation curriculum study and early policy statements in the 1950s and 1960s identified concern about the spiritual needs of people as a social work value through the incorporation of the spiritual dimension into educational objectives and guidelines. Yet, changes in curriculum policy statements promulgated during the 1970s and 1980s no longer support the social work values and educational objectives related to the spiritual aspect of human growth and development in social work practice. Therefore, many students have not had the opportunity to explore and clarify their knowledge and understanding of the spiritual dimension in social work. Yet, clients continue bringing their spiritual concerns to social work practice settings. This situation suggests that social work practitioners without an adequate understanding and knowledge base for responding to spiritual issues in practice may be ineffective in serving some clients. The need for guidelines on the topic of spirituality in social work practice leads to the question about

what students and practitioners can do to express their concern about this dilemma to social work education leaders.

A discussion about this problem is timely since the task force responsible for the upcoming curriculum policy statement has already begun the revision process. The Commission met at CSWE in September before meeting again at the 1990 NASW Annual Conference in November. The next scheduled meeting will take place at the CSWE Annual Program Meeting (APM) in New Orleans, March 14-17, 1991, where presentations about values, ethics, Eastern and Western philosophies, as well as religious issues in social work education are on the agenda. According to R. Gershenow, APM Director (personal communication, December 4, 1990) social work students, faculty, and practitioners can ask that the spiritual dimension be raised as a topic for discussion by writing Don Beless, CSWE Executive Director, and Grace Harris, Chairwoman of the Commission on Educational Policy (see address at conclusion). Open forum meetings at APM provide another opportunity for social workers to express their concerns about restoring the spiritual dimension to the next curriculum policy statement (see "updates" for information).

This top-down approach that advocates curriculum policy change may present a challenge to educators who hold different political positions and spiritual perspectives at the national leadership level. Many policymakers who work amidst ongoing unresolved conflicts inherent in the task of setting guidelines and goals for social work education may be reluctant to take on another issue. Some may want to examine spiritual factors in social work practice, but fear that doing so might weaken or discredit the profession. For example, there is concern that the social work value of self-determination might be distorted by well-intentioned missionary-minded practitioners. Others who recognize the merit of professional interest in the spiritual dimension may simply prefer limiting social work to the bio-psycho-social dimensions, arguing against the feasibility of dealing with everything.

The impetus for the restoration of the spiritual dimension in social work education can come also from bottom-up activity. Students and seasoned professionals can contribute to the integration of spiritual content in the curriculum and course objectives at the social work school within the realm of their influence. School administrators can conduct assessments to decide the need for elective courses on the subject of spirituality. Teachers can incorporate the spiritual dimension into social work content and professional foundation course objectives. Students can circulate petitions requesting elective course offerings that address the spiritual needs of clients. Researchers can focus

projects on spiritual issues in social work. Scholars can meet the need for well-written integrative materials on spirituality applied to different social work practice settings.

Finally, some educators have already responded to the relevance of the spiritual dimension in social work graduate training. For example, Smith College School For Social Work offered an elective course entitled *The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Psychotherapy* in the summer of 1989. According to instructor, T. Northcut (personal communication, June 12, 1990), course evaluations suggest that students "benefited by having the opportunity to think about and discuss spiritual issues openly with colleagues." In the summer of 1990, the spiritual dimension was integrated into Female Development course objectives, Senior Integrative Treatment seminar discussions, and a continuing education course on *Non-Western Healing: An Alternative Approach to Our Internal World*. During the same academic summer, social work students and faculty spontaneously formed different groups for meditation and the sharing of spiritual perspectives in the evenings. Thesis colloquia about spiritual topics were also well attended. Further research can be designed to discover to what extent other state and private schools across the nation are responding to the need for including the spiritual dimension in social work education.

Conclusion

From the 1920s through the 1980s, scholars have documented the educational need for professional knowledge and understanding about the spiritual dimension in social work practice, which shows something of the tenacity and strength of spiritual awareness in the social work culture. Spirituality is a long held social work value firmly rooted in the contemporary social work culture as reflected in the professional literature. Yet, a significant value discrepancy currently exists between the social work culture and the CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement (1984) about the place of the spiritual dimension in social work education. Still, the restoration of the spiritual dimension to social work education can come from state and private social work school elective curriculum changes as well as future national CSWE curriculum policy statement recommendations or mandates. Persons who hold the position that the spiritual dimension has a place in social work education can initiate discussions about the spiritual aspect of practice in classrooms, supervision, workshops, conferences, research projects, professional publications and policy meetings.

The multifarious dimension of spirituality presents social work educators in the United States with an ongoing challenge as researchers continue to study the subject in macro, meso, and micro practice settings in the 1990s. The

final decade of the twentieth century seems opportune for studies on spirituality that require the cooperation of international social work researchers. A global exploration of social work thought on the question about the essential nature of humanity might contribute to the profession's knowledge and understanding of spirituality. Research from diverse spiritual perspectives throughout the world will enrich both workers and clients as it enhances the future of social work education and practice.

* Jacquelyn Marshall, MSW, CSW, is a social worker in Houston, Texas.

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Contacts for CSWE Policy Advocacy:

Grace Harris, Volunteer Chair
Commission on Educational Policy
Council on Social Work Education
c/o School of Social Work
Virginia Commonwealth University
827 West Franklin Street
Richmond, VA 23284

Don Beless, Executive Director
Commission on Educational Policy
Council on Social Work Education
1600 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3421
(703) 683-8080

BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed by the Editor

Donald F. Krill, Practice Wisdom: A Guide for Helping Professionals. Newbury Park: Sage, 1990. 134 pages. ISBN 0-8039-3606-0. \$14.00.

Don Krill is recognized in the social work profession as a major proponent of an existential perspective on helping. His book, Existential Social Work (Free Press, 1978) is a detailed exposition of this perspective applied to practice. The Beat Worker (University Press of America, 1986) is a criticism of dehumanizing trends in social work and psychotherapy. His course at the University of Denver, on existential social work, has a reputation for popularity, controversy, and vitality. He once described himself to me as a gadfly--someone who enjoys prodding us to examine our consciences. I have admired this quality of his for the several years of our acquaintance. He is an advisor for the Spirituality and Social Work, a task that requires willingness to take on a controversial but crucial subject. So I was excited to learn of his newest book Practice Wisdom, about a much touted but evasive attribute of successful practitioners. In this review, I will focus on the spiritual aspects of the book.

The book can be understood as an existential nonsectarian approach to what Catholics call "examination of conscience." It is a guide to experiential learning about who we are, and how our distinct personhood affects our practice, for better or for worse. The major strength of the book is that ideas and activities are offered as starting points for self-exploration, rather than for intellectual analysis or for a "quick fix" approach to practice. This is consistent with Krill's existentialist emphasis on the primacy of moment-to-moment clarity of awareness and integrity of relationship in helping.

Chapters one through nine serve as a guide for students to reflect on themselves by the use of structured exercises, journaling, and discussion with a partner. Excerpts from student journals in reaction to exercises provide interesting examples of possible outcomes as well as food for thought. These chapters are written for use in a classroom, but the

suggestions can be adapted easily for student field supervision, continuing education workshops, and self-guided study. Chapters ten through thirteen offer guidelines for a workshop tailored to continuing education and employee assistance program settings.

The term spirituality is not defined explicitly, despite the fact that chapter 8 is entitled, "Matters of Spirituality." Krill links spirituality with such ideas as archetypes (in the Jungian sense), concepts of God, institutional religion, personal belief systems, and questions of meaning and truth. His language and espoused religious perspective are primarily Judeo-Christian. Yet he encourages openness to diversity and disagreement concerning matters of religious belief and behavior. His approach is to heighten awareness of one's spiritual and religious views and their implications for practice. For example, on page 79, he suggests that the student write down brief answers to four queries: "Your concept of G-- when you were a child. Your concept of G-- now. A view of G-- you wish you had, but don't. Your response to views of G-- that differ from your own." He suggests filling in the blank of G-- any way one wishes, e.g. "God, Goddess, Godot, godlessness." Krill frequently refers to Twelve Step program approaches to self-help, which emphasize reliance upon a "Higher Power", however conceived, as a spiritual support for personal change.

Even where spirituality and religion are not mentioned explicitly, Krill focuses on profound existential issues of self-identity, meaning, morality and world view. For example, the first nine chapters explore the nature of individual subjectivity, characteristics of each person's "world design", moments of self-transcendence and deep insight, implications of basic values and ideals, quality of freedom or bondage with respect to conformity and social conditioning, distinguishing realistic from unrealistic guilt, and developing a truly client-centered helping relationship. Chapters ten through thirteen focus on the role of excess or insufficient desire in producing addictions and burnout. Certainly, self-identity, world view, and desire are central concerns for many religious traditions, as well.

Practice Wisdom is excellent as a handbook for self-exploration to be used by students and established helping professionals. It can be used in courses, continuing education workshops, student field supervision, and self-guided study. It is best read little by little, with performance of exercises, and self reflection on one's own reactions as well as Krill's commentary. The book, when conscientiously used, does seem to be conducive to enhanced self-awareness and growth, prerequisites for effective practice.

The strength of the book, its experiential focus, is also its limitation. Insufficient attention is given to clarifying key

concepts, such as spirituality. It is also puzzling that Krill gives slight attention to political forces when dealing with issues of alienation and empowerment. The near exclusive emphasis on intrapsychic dynamics seems incongruous with existentialism's critique of social oppression. Many brief diagrams and lists are presented. Some of these are useful summaries and encapsulations. But one must repeatedly read the text in order to understand certain diagrams. Sometimes valuable ideas are simply listed without any explanation.

On page 14, Krill says that practice wisdom is the most crucial factor in effective practice, and defines it as "how a particular worker integrates what he or she knows about him or herself and the client, and the present happening between the two (the creative factor)." He asserts that practitioners can be taught the ingredients of practice wisdom. Unfortunately, these ingredients are not stated explicitly, so one needs to infer what they are from the issues and themes addressed throughout the book. It would have been helpful to have a more precise description of "practice wisdom" as well as guidelines for evaluating one's own progress in developing it.

Nonetheless, I am impressed by this book as a guide for practitioner's self-exploration and growth. It is a rare attempt by a social worker to integrate experiential learning with formal education and to complement knowledge and skill with wisdom. I am sufficiently impressed to incorporate sections into my course on Spiritual Dimensions of Social Work Practice.

READERS' RESPONSES

"As a person of two disciplines, education and social work, I am especially appreciative of the Spirituality and Social Work Communicator. In both disciplines, there has appeared to be scant middle ground between secularism based upon empiricism alone or a fundamentalist approach not radically different in epistemology from the secularism which the fundamentalists loath. Thank you!" Charles H. Hill, MSW, ED.D., Dallas, Texas.

"As an ordained minister, seminary graduate, and soon to be M.S.W. graduate (5-91, University of Kansas), I was excited and surprised to be handed a copy of "Spirituality and Social Work Communicator" by a fellow student. I had often felt that spirituality was dead within our profession. Your publication is a breath of fresh air... "This is a good thing and I'm glad to be a part of it. Thanks for being sensitive to the needs of the whole person." Fred H. Besthorn, Topeka, Kansas.

"I am excited with your development of Spirituality and Social Work Network. The timing both of your dissertation (which I have bought) and formation of the Network are very "in sync" with my work. In 1983 when I started my doctoral studies I was strongly discouraged from looking at spirituality and social work practice. However, I am now in the data collection phase of my dissertation which concerns spiritual growth and recovering alcoholic adult children of alcoholics." Maria Carroll, LCSW, Baltimore, Maryland.

UPDATES

Information regarding joint degree programs between theological seminaries and schools of social work is being sought. Any information about specific programs and how well they are working, would be most appreciated. Please contact Dr. Roberta Imre, at the Princeton Theological Seminary, CN 821, Princeton, NJ 08542, or at 697 Bement Ave., Staten Island, NY 10310.

The Study Group for Philosophical Issues in Social Work is planning its usual open meeting at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education in New Orleans on March 14th. The Curriculum Policy Statement and possible input into the current work on revising it will be discussed. The Study Group meeting will be on Thursday, March 14, 2:30-4:30 in the Kenilworth room. Anyone interested is invited. In order to estimate numbers it is helpful if you let us know that you are coming, but advance notice is not required. Contact: Roberta Imre, 697 Bement Ave., Staten Island, NY 10310, or at Princeton Theological Seminary, CN 821, Princeton, NY 08542.

Three recent articles on spirituality in Journal of Social Work Education: Canda, E.R. (1989). Religious content in social work education: A comparative approach. 25(1): 36-45; Denton, R.T. (1990). The religiously fundamentalist family: Training for assessment and treatment. 26(1): 6-14; Elling, F.E., Thibault, J.M., and Ellor, J.W. (1990). Integrating content on organized religion into macropractice courses. 26(1): 15-24.

Upcoming CSWE-APM Events on Spirituality

For those of you attending the Annual Program Meeting March 14-17 in New Orleans, there are many opportunities to meet and discuss issues relevant to spirituality and social work education. This is also an important opportunity to advocate for inclusion of spirituality as an area in the

revision of the Curriculum Policy Statement. In addition to related presentations in the Philosophical Issues Symposium, events include:

(1) March 14, 9 a.m.-noon, Elmwood room. Christians in Social Work Education Discussion. Sponsored by the North American Association of Christian Social Workers in Cooperation with the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. Organized by Lawrence Ressler. 9-11 a.m. Will include presentations by Lawrence Ressler, "Life and Thought of Alan Keith-Lucas"; Ed Canda, "The Challenge of Diversity for Christian Social Workers"; other, to be announced. 11 a.m.-noon will include an open discussion of current issues. People of all spiritual perspectives are welcome.

(2) March 15, 8:30-10 p.m., hotel room of Ed Canda and Daniel Lee (check Hyatt Regency hotel desk for location). Spirituality and Social Work Informal Gathering. Friendly conversation and getting acquainted, sponsored by the Society for Spirituality and Social Work.

(3) March 17, 8:30-10 a.m., Dauphine room. Religious Issues in Social Work Education. Supported by the CSWE long range planning committee. Larry Ortiz, presenter. Panelists will respond (tentative: Ann Davis, M. Vincentia Joseph).

The Spirituality and Social Work Communicator is a biannual journal (Winter and Summer) sponsored and edited by the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. It is published with the assistance of the School of Social Welfare at the University of Kansas. SSSW and its journal promote inquiry and dialogue about the connections between diverse perspectives on spirituality and social work. Editor and SSSW Director: Edward R. Canda. Advisors: Monit Cheung, University of Hawaii; Robert Constable, Loyola University of Chicago; Maikwe Parsons Cross, Lansing, Michigan; Lowell Jenkins, Colorado State University; M. Vincentia Joseph, Catholic University of America; Donald Krill, University of Denver; Daniel Lee, Loyola University of Chicago; Sadye Logan, University of Kansas; Patrick J. O'Brien, San Francisco; Max Siporin, SUNY-Albany. Thanks to student assistants Mitsuoko Nakashima and Regan Scantlin.

The opinions expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SSSW or its staff. Endorsement of these opinions

should not be inferred unless it is indicated.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Spirituality and Social Work Journal invites articles on these and other topics:

1. Diverse perspectives on spirituality and social work theory, research, practice, and education.
2. Transpersonal psychology and social work.
3. Application of religious practices to social work.
4. Spiritual aspects of self-help movements (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous).

Items appropriate for Transdisciplinary News, Updates, and Readers' Responses are also welcome.

Use APA style; 6-7 double spaced pages in length; WordStar 6 (or WordPerfect) word processing on disk is desirable. Send 3 copies of manuscript. Self-addressed stamped envelope please.

Deadline for next issue: June 1, 1991.

Articles will be refereed anonymously by two reviewers and the editor.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Includes Winter (Jan/Feb) and Summer (July/Aug) issues, 1991.
Mail to: Edward R. Canda, Society for Spirituality and Social Work, School of Social Welfare, Twente Hall, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045.

NAME _____

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I wish to have my name and address listed in a public directory of social workers and other helping professionals interested in spirituality for the purpose of networking.

Yes No

Enclosed is my check, payable to Society for Spirituality and Social Work, for \$8.00.

Please note: all subscriptions are automatically cycled on a calendar year basis. International subscriptions for 1991 are free.

PLEASE SPREAD THE NEWS

Spirituality and Social Work Journal

Volume 2, Number 2

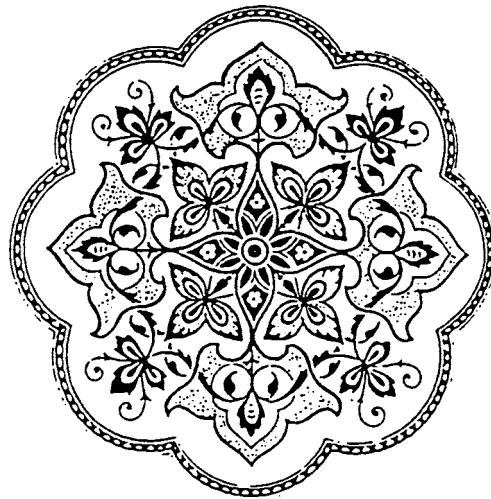
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Editorial Foreword
by Edward R. Canda

Inauguration of the Journal

As promised in the last issue of the *Spirituality and Social Work Communicator*, this publication has now become a refereed journal. In this way, the Society for Spirituality and Social Work hopes to expand its contributions to scholarship and service. The journal will focus on high quality articles that reflect the insights of scholars, practitioners, and consumers pertaining to diverse spiritual perspectives and their relevance to social work and the human services.

The journal continues to be produced through a volunteer effort in order to keep subscription costs to a minimum. Faculty and staff of the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare provide most of the help in production. However, as we expand the manuscript review process, publicity, circulation, and sophistication of production format, this arrangement will not continue to be adequate. I am seeking suggestions from all interested persons concerning development of additional funding, staffing, publication assistance, and institutional sponsorship. During 1992, I hope to identify and implement ways to further refine the content and format of the journal.

In This Issue

This issue offers an opportunity for reflection upon basic professional concerns about the link between spirituality and social work. Sheridan and Bullis apply qualitative data analysis to shed light on the specific beliefs and helping activities of direct practitioners who are concerned about spiritually-sensitive practice. Ortiz provides insight from his vantage of close association with the North American Association of Christians in Social Work on current worries expressed by the Council on Social Work Education about the connection between religion and social work. Titone presents a practitioner's view of the development of a workshop that promotes the spiritual growth of clients by combining approaches from clinical social work and pastoral counseling.

I have included an updated Topical Bibliography on Spirituality and Social Work as a supplement to the bibliography provided to subscribers in the first issue of the *Spirituality and Social Work Communicator*. Finally, a directory of society members who indicated an interest in networking is available to assist collaboration and the formation of local groups of social workers interested in spirituality.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Spirituality and Social Work Journal invites articles on these and other topics:

1. Diverse perspectives on spirituality and social work theory, research, practice, policy, and education.
2. Transpersonal psychology and social work.
3. Application of religious practices to social work.
4. Spiritual aspects of self-help movements (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous)
5. Book reviews.

Use APA style; 12-16 double spaced pages in length. Send 3 copies of manuscript and, if possible, WordStar, WordPerfect or ASCII file on disk.

Articles will be refereed anonymously.

PRACTITIONERS' VIEWS ON RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Michael J. Sheridan

and

Ronald K. Bullis

Both theologians and social workers recognize that the roots of social work are intimately connected with religious philosophy. Reinhold Niebuhr, writing in 1932, discussed the underlying religious and moral philosophies common to both religion and social work. For example, Niebuhr asserts that both targeted problems arising from the technological nature of our society and developed "techniques for increasing the range of human sympathy" (1932, p. 79).

More recently, Fauri (1988), a social work educator, proposed that religion is one of the principal historical themes of the social work profession. Indeed, some authors trace the religious foundations of social work into ancient times (Day, 1989; Pople & Leighninger, 1990). However, the mutual recognition and appreciation between social work and religion has not always been cordial. Much of the modern history between religion and social work has been characterized on both sides by ambivalence, if not outright hostility. Marty (1980) and Midgely (1990) outlined the objections of some conservative Christian groups to social work's "godless" ideologies during two different decades. On the other side, Biestek (1956) challenged what he took to be the prevailing intolerance of social work toward religious or spiritual subjects, while more recent authors have highlighted social work's neglect of the area (Siporin, 1980; Loewenberg, 1988; Joseph, 1987).

Current offerings in the social work literature have addressed the importance of religion and spirituality to different client groups (Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982; Haber, 1984; Lusk, 1986; Bell & Whitefield, 1987; Logan & Chambers, 1987; Greif & Porembski, 1988; Berthold, 1989; Pinderhughes, 1989; Rauch & Kneen, 1989). Because social workers are becomingly increasingly aware of the significance of this dimension to clients, other writers have begun to explore social worker beliefs, attitudes and practices regarding religion and spirituality. Joseph (1988) published the results of 61 responses from field instructors from the Washington, D.C. area. Canda (1988) interviewed 18 social workers, all of whom had published or presented on the topic, regarding their beliefs, values and practices in their work with clients. Fifty-three social work educators were surveyed by Dudley & Helfgott (1990) as to their views on integrating religious or spiritual content in social work curricula. Most recently, Sheridan & Bullis (1991)

reported on responses from 328 practitioners including licensed clinical social workers, clinical psychologists and professional counselors, which revealed both similarities and differences in how these professional groups view the role of religion and spirituality in their respective clinical practices. The current paper contributes to this literature by presenting a qualitative summary and analysis of practitioner responses to an open-ended query on the topic of religion and spirituality.

Method

Subjects

One hundred fifty-nine subjects were drawn from a larger sample of 328 licensed clinical social workers, licensed clinical psychologists and licensed professional counselors. This larger sample, which was randomly selected from listings from the appropriate licensing boards in the state of Virginia, completed a multi-faceted questionnaire which included both closed format and open format questions. Findings regarding the responses to the closed format questions have been reported elsewhere (Sheridan & Bullis, 1991). The 159 subjects for the current analysis were selected because they all responded to an open-ended question about religion and spirituality.

Examination of these subjects reveals a fairly even distribution among the three professional groups (55 LCSWs, 49 Psychologists and 55 LPCs); thus, no one group is over or under represented by this subsample. Furthermore, there were no significant differences between responders and nonresponders in terms of age, race, gender, work setting, years working as a clinician, and average number of hours spent counseling. However, a significant difference did emerge for religious affiliation (chi square = 10.709, $p = .03$). Specifically, although responders and nonresponders did not show notable differences in their involvement with the major denominations (Protestant, Catholic and Jewish), they did show significant differences in reporting "no religious affiliation" (responders = 17%, nonresponders = 24%) and "other affiliation" (responders = 21%, nonresponders = 13%). These differences suggest that the responders may have more interest or stronger views concerning the general topic area than those who chose not to respond. Consequently, any attempts to generalize the current findings to the larger sample must take this possible sample bias into account.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The current study is exploratory in nature and does not involve the testing of any formal hypotheses. Therefore, the research question addresses what practitioners would deem important regarding religion and spirituality when given the stimulus of a very broad, open-ended question about the

topic:

"Please use the space below to make any additional comments you would like about the topic of religion and spirituality, especially as it relates to your professional or personal life. These remarks will be read and taken into account."

A full blank page was provided for responses to this question.

Given this exploratory focus, the constant comparative method, described by Glasser and Strauss (1967) in their discussion of grounded theory, was utilized in analysis. In this approach, analysis moves from individual data elements to larger categories based on an inductive processing of data in which each data element is compared with every other data element. To increase the validity and reliability of this process, a two member research team was involved in the various stages of analysis.

The first step of this procedure was to unitize the written comments into logical and consistent coding units, by enclosing each identified coding unit within brackets ([...]). The coding unit selected for our analysis was the "thought unit" (Danish, D'Augelli & Brock, 1976). Briefly, a thought unit refers to each comment by a respondent about one thought, idea or content area; and it may consist of one sentence, several sentences or a partial sentence. The first author initially identified the thought units, which were then reviewed by the second author. Discrepancies were resolved by consensus. The 159 questionnaires yielded from one to twenty thought units per questionnaire for a total of 668 thought units.

The next step involved each researcher independently assigning codes to each thought unit based on a coding schema comprised of 15 mutually exclusive categories.¹ Following this coding process, category designations were compared and some reassignments were made based on consensus between the two researchers. During this initial coding process, an unacceptable number of "other" categories emerged. These thought units were reexamined and, based on their content, some additions and revisions of the original coding schema were made. The majority of "other" thought units were then assigned more specific categories, leaving only 28 thought units coded as "other." These ranged in content from comments about therapy in general, to statements about wanting to learn more about the topic, to references to particular books on the subject. Another 107 thought units were coded in referring to the study or questionnaire (61 "supportive of the study or questionnaire" and 46 "providing suggestions or critiques of the study or questionnaire"). The remaining 533 units pertained to either the respondents' personal or professional life relative to the topic of religion or spirituality. These were coded as one of 12 mutually exclusive

subcategories under the major categories of Personal Life or Professional Life. It is these 533 units which will be presented and discussed below.

Findings

As stated, two major categories and 12 subcategories were derived for analysis. The first major category is Personal Life, which refers to all thought units which addressed some personal aspect of religion or spirituality. The five subcategories include: "personal experience" (previous history and current role of religion/spirituality in one's life); "personal beliefs" (orientation to one's own belief system and stance regarding others' beliefs); "personal practices" (attendance or participation in religious or spiritual services, rituals, activities, etc.); "changes/continuity of beliefs/traditions" (any shifts in either beliefs or practices over time); and "general beliefs about religion/spirituality" (views on the role, nature or processes of religion or spirituality for people in general).

The second major category is Professional Life, which refers to all thought units which addressed some aspect of religion or spirituality concerning subjects' lives as practitioners. The seven subcategories include: "professional experience" (current role of religion/spirituality as it impacts professional self and professional identity as a religious or spiritual counselor); "client and referral descriptions" (prevalence of clients presenting religious/spiritual issues, referrals to and from religious or spiritual sources, and types of clients or client issues which cause discomfort); "assessment and diagnosis" (importance of obtaining religious/spiritual information in assessment and role of religion/spirituality as either a positive or negative factor in clients' lives); "role of religious/spiritual dimension in practice" (importance to clients' lives); similarities with the process of therapy, role in effective practice, relationship to positive therapy outcomes, and presence of transcendent force in work with clients); "means of addressing topic in practice" (the if, when and how of addressing spiritual/religious concerns in practice); "clinical interventions of a religious/spiritual nature" (approaches and practices considered to be either appropriate or inappropriate); and "education/training in religion/spirituality" (views on previous education and training and participation in receiving or providing post-graduate training).

Based on this coding scheme, the first level of analysis computed the number of thought units and percentage of respondents addressing each major category and subcategory for the total data set. Table 1 provides a breakdown of these data.

In terms of both overall thought units and percentage of respondents, more data was generated about the subjects' professional lives than their personal lives. Specifically, the top four subcategories all fell within the major category of

Table 1

Number of Thought Units and Percentages of Respondents for Total Sample

	# Thought Units	% of Total Respondents (n = 159)
Personal Life		
Personal Experience	34	18%
Personal Beliefs	49	26%
Personal Practice	11	5%
Changes/Continuity of Beliefs/Traditions	24	15%
General Beliefs about Religion/Spirituality	26	16%
Professional Life		
Professional Experience	33	16%
Client & Referral Descriptions	22	13%
Assessment & Diagnosis	61	33%
Role of Religious/Spiritual Dimension in Practice	61	37%
Means of Addressing Religious/Spiritual Topics in Practice	59	36%
Clinical Interventions of a Religious/Spiritual Nature	117	48%
Education/Training in Area of Religion/Spirituality	36	22%
Total Thought Units re: Personal Life	= 144	
Total Thought Units re: Professional Life	= 389	
Total Thought Units	= 533	

Note: Percentages do not equal 100% because most respondents provided data for more than one category.

Professional Life: "clinical interventions of a religious/spiritual nature"; "assessment and diagnosis"; "role of religious/spiritual dimension in practice"; and "means of addressing religious/spiritual topics in practice."

Comparisons of the number of thought units were also made between the three professional groups. Table 2 illustrates these data. A pattern similar to the total data set emerged from this analysis in that there were more comments about one's professional life than comments about one's personal life for all three groups. However, differences were noted for various subcategories. Specifically, LCSWs produced a higher number of thought units concerning "assessment and diagnosis" and "means of addressing topic," while LPCs generated more thought units about their "personal beliefs," "professional experience" and "role of religious/spiritual dimension in practice." Both LCSWs and LPCs commented more often on "general beliefs" and

Table 2

Number of Thought Units by Professional Group

	LCSW's (n = 55)	Psychologists (n = 49)	LPC's (n = 55)
Personal Life			
Personal Experience	9	12	13
Personal Beliefs	11	13	25
Personal Practices	4	4	3
Changes/Continuity of Beliefs/Traditions	7	9	8
General Beliefs about Religion/Spirituality	11	5	10
Total Thought Units about Personal Life =	42	43	59
Professional Life			
Professional Experience	8	9	16
Client & Referral Descriptions	5	9	8
Assessment & Diagnosis	28	17	16
Role of Religious/Spiritual Dimension in Practice	19	16	26
Means of Addressing Religious/Spiritual Topics in Practice	28	15	16
Clinical Interventions of a Religious/Spiritual Nature	40	42	35
Education/Training in Area of Religion/Spirituality	12	8	16
Total Thought Units about Professional Life =	140	116	133

"education and training" than psychologists. Finally, both LCSWs and psychologists offered more comments concerning "clinical interventions" than LPCs. Although psychologists did not emerge as substantially higher in any one subcategory, it should be noted that there were six fewer respondents in this professional group than in the other two groups, which potentially reduces the number of thought units generated.

The percentage of respondents addressing each area was also analyzed for each professional group. In this analysis, the number of respondents in each group is not an issue because percentages are based on the total number of subjects within a particular group. As with the number of thought units, the subcategories receiving the highest percentages generally fell within the Professional Life subcategories for all three groups. However, differences between the three groups were also noted (see Table 3).

Table 3

Percentages of Respondents by Professional Group

	% of LCSW's (n = 55)	% of Psychologists (n = 49)	% of LPC's (n = 55)
Personal Life			
Personal Experience	13%	22%	20%
Personal Beliefs	18%	25%	35%
Personal Practices	4%	6%	5%
Changes/Continuity of Beliefs/Traditions	13%	18%	15%
General Beliefs about Religion/Spirituality	20%	10%	18%
Professional Life			
Professional Experience	15%	12%	20%
Client & Referral Descriptions	9%	18%	11%
Assessment & Diagnosis	42%	31%	25%
Role of Religious/Spiritual Dimension in Practice	36%	29%	47%
Means of Addressing Religious/ Spiritual Topics in Practice	49%	29%	29%
Clinical Interventions of a Religious/Spiritual Nature	56%	47%	40%
Education/Training in Area of Religion/Spirituality	18%	20%	25%

Note: Percentages do not equal 100% because most respondents provided data for more than one category.

Specifically, LCSWs again emerged with the highest percentage of respondents in "means of addressing topic" and "assessment and diagnosis," as well as the "clinical interventions" subcategory. LPCs again revealed the highest percentage in "personal beliefs" and "professional experience," and also showed the highest percentage in "role of religious/spiritual dimension in practice." Both LCSWs and LPCs had higher percentages of respondents in "general beliefs" as compared to psychologists, while psychologists and LPCs both produced higher percentages in "personal experience" than LCSWs. Psychologists only showed notably higher percentages than the other two groups in "client and referral descriptions." In summary, analysis of the three professional groups shows similarity in overall focus, but also reveals differences in emphasis, especially in the arena of clinical practice.

The next level of analysis was to examine in more detail

particular experiences, views or positions reported in each subcategory by the total sample. Major themes or perspectives are summarized with examples below. It should be noted that the percentages reported for different types of comments in each section represent the percentage of respondents who addressed that particular subcategory, not the percentage of the total sample.

Personal Life

Personal Experiences. Eighteen percent of the total sample provided 34 thought units concerning either their previous history with religion or spirituality or the current role it plays in their personal lives today. In terms of past history, both positive (24%) and negative comments (11%) were offered. *"I was reared in a strong, loving Christian home which provided much guidance and support for me"* and *"My parents' religion and beliefs had a strong negative impact on my adult life. My [.....] upbringing took years to overcome, especially guilt."* As to the role of religion or spirituality in their current lives, all the comments (65%) were of a positive nature: *"Provides a sense of tranquility in my personal life - always something to turn to in times of stress," "I find myself feeling more centered, calm and focused than ever before"* and *"Has given me values and direction in my own life."*

Personal Beliefs. Twenty-six percent of the respondents produced 49 thought units about their personal beliefs. In this case, 46% reported a belief in the spiritual dimension of life rather than adherence to any specific religious faith (20%), and only 10% reported having no explicit religious belief system. Perhaps related to these positions, only one person (2%) suggested that there was only one true way to believe (*"I think it is important for counselors to believe in and follow the teachings of Jesus Christ"*), while the remaining subjects (22%) made comments which reflected acceptance of various beliefs and orientations (*"I think that there are limitless possibilities to effective religious beliefs"*).

Personal Practices. Only 5% of the respondents commented on their personal practices, yielding 11 thought units. Of those who addressed this issue, 75% stated that they were involved in some regular religious or spiritual practices. Those practices most often mentioned were attendance at religious services, participation in other religious or spiritual activities (such as Sunday School classes) and the regular practice of meditation. Twenty-five percent of those commenting on this issue stated that they did not engage in any religious or spiritual practices.

Changes/Continuity of Beliefs/Traditions. Fifteen percent of all respondents provided 24 thought units on either changes or continuity in their beliefs or traditions. Of those remarking on this area, only 13% reported continuity by adhering to a particular faith throughout their lifetime. Others

stated that they had moved from one faith to another particular faith (8%), from no faith or tradition to a particular one (8%), or from a particular faith to no faith or tradition (8%). The greatest number of respondents reported a general shift in religiosity or spirituality during their lifetime (without reference to a particular faith), by finding themselves becoming more religious or spiritual as they grow older (55%). However, an additional 8% reported growing less religious or spiritual as they grow older.

General Beliefs about Religion and Spirituality. The remainder of thought units pertaining to one's personal life addressed views on the role, nature or processes of religion or spirituality for people in general (26 thought units produced by 16% of the total sample). The greatest number of respondents addressing this subcategory (50%) spoke to beliefs that spirituality was a natural part or capacity of all people: *"I believe that all persons have spiritual capacities, although not all clients access this," "All people have a 'religion' even if they deny the existence of God and believe in man or themselves," "All people are spiritual beings and are searching for harmony with that dimension of their being" and "We all have a sense of spirituality whether we recognize it or not."* Another 27% commented on the very personal nature of anyone's religious or spiritual experience: *"Spirituality is an individualistic, personal and internal process."*

Finally, 23% made a point of distinguishing religion from spirituality by offering their own definitions of the two terms: *"I make a very clear distinction between religions (man made) and spiritual (of god, of nature, of connectedness between all men and nature)", "Spirituality can be a part of an individual's life without a sense of connection to formalized religion" and "Spirituality is a more personalized set of beliefs that an individual attempts to sort out in relation to themselves and their place in the world. Religion can and does involve spirituality but can also be very separate from one's search for personal meaning."* As can be seen by these examples, a common thread was to view religion as a socially-derived phenomenon involving formalized codes, dogmas, etc., whereas spirituality is characterized as being a process which involves a personal search for meaning and purpose in one's life.

Professional Life

Professional Experience. Sixteen percent of all respondents produced 33 thought units related to aspects of religion or spirituality and their professional lives. The greatest number of respondents (27%) focused on the positive role that respondents felt that religion or spirituality played in their professional practice with clients. *"As a clinician, being aware of my spiritual side was as important to me as 'being in touch with feelings," "As a counselor, my own spirituality lets*

me value myself and other humans and assist others in discovering personal assets and alternatives as they progress with the task of self-actualization" and "The integration of my spiritual understanding with my clinical training is a critically important part of my work." The remainder of comments in this subcategory (28%) addressed whether or not respondents thought of themselves as a religious or spiritual counselor. Specifically, only one person claimed this identity, while six other persons stated explicitly that they did not consider themselves to fit this description.

Client and Referral Descriptions. Thirteen percent of the total sample provided 25 thought units which described either client characteristics or referral patterns. Of those falling within this subcategory, 25% stated that they had many clients who presented religious or spiritual issues in therapy, while another 25% commented that they had few or none such clients. Another 25% cited some discomfort with particular clients or client issues. The most frequently noted uncomfortable client issues related to fundamentalism and client situations involving abortion. The remaining 25% commenting about this subcategory remarked on significant referrals either to or from religious or spiritual sources (e.g., ministers, priests, rabbis, spiritual leaders, etc.).

Assessment and Diagnosis. Thirty-three percent of all respondents produced 61 thought units concerning the importance of religion or spirituality in assessment and diagnosis. About one-third (33%) of the respondents addressing this area stated that they consider religious/spiritual background and current status as very important for assessment and a general understanding of their clients: *"It is extremely helpful in understanding clients' belief systems and cognitive processes to have some understanding of their religious training and spiritual values," "Spirituality must be taken into account in assessing a client just as any and all other values, beliefs . . . this is in order for me to understand the client in his/her context" and "I use a client's spiritual beliefs as a way of knowing their values and their emotional and social supports."*

The remaining 67% commented on religion or spirituality as either a positive (37%) or negative (30%) factor in their clients' lives. Examples of positive factors included: *"as a source of strength; reassurance and comfort; emotional support and security; positive traditions and moral codes; sense of belonging, acceptance and pseudo-family; building of self esteem and conscience; capacity to accept death and aging; ability to empathize with others; sense of meaningfulness regarding one's own existence and value; purpose and direction."* Conversely, religion or spirituality was considered to produce such negative effects as: *"exploitation of naive and weak people; harmful views which prescribe that the wife*

should be subservient to the husband; creation of separation, hatred, isolation and rigidity and prohibition of introspection and inquiry; negative self-concept and excessive guilt; discouragement of personal autonomy; dogma and authoritarianism of many organized religions is often antithetical to mental health, e.g., self-sacrifice, discouragement of questions, etc."

Role of Religious/Spiritual Dimension in Practice.

Thirty-seven percent of the total sample reported 61 thought units in this area. There were a variety of ways respondents commented on the religious/spiritual dimensions in practice with the greatest number of subjects (41%) stating that religious or spiritual matters were an important part of life and should be addressed like anything else that was of significance to clients. *"Religious issues should be treated the same as other issues in the client's life, such as sexual orientation, marital values, etc."*, *"I have identified (spirituality) as a necessary part of the whole person which should be addressed in practice"* and *"I personally feel that one's spiritual being is an important aspect of life, and that those who deny this leave out a significant portion of personhood."* Another 20% regarded the process of therapy itself to have a spiritual, if not religious, component--that spirituality was an integral part of practice: *"I feel spirituality is part of the therapeutic process where we assist people in finding inner peace"; "I think that the intimacy of clinical work can be a deeply spiritual experience and I'm sure that is one of the attractions for me"; "Given the assumption that religion or spirituality permeate all aspects of one's life and of course 'therapy,' ignoring something so essential is incompetent"; and "I view psychotherapy as similar to contemplation since there is a turning inward as well as reflection of one's feelings and concerns . . . the increased sensitivity and attention to one's inner life is both a psychological and spiritual journey."*

Fifteen percent expressed the viewpoint that the ability to understand and work with religious and spiritual diversity was a positive asset for a practitioner to have and could increase his or her effectiveness: *"It has been my experience that the therapist's understanding and appreciation of the client's faith tradition can have a significant influence on therapeutic outcome"; "It is helpful and comforting, according to clients themselves, to have this understanding (of belief systems)"; and "Clients feel more comfortable and free to communicate with someone who can understand their spiritual lingo."*

Twelve percent addressed the issue of receptivity of the practitioner to religious or spiritual content, stating that non-receptivity may be a function of fear or discomfort on the part of the therapist: *"Most counselors either are afraid to counsel a client in the fourth dimension (spiritual) or they don't know where they, themselves, stand in spiritual matters"* and

"Probably if I were more content and more well-founded in my own spirituality it would be easier to discuss religion some." Several of these respondents also speculated that clients would probably present more of this content if they felt the practitioner would be open to it: *"I suspect many clients are more concerned with the transcendent than they verbalize to therapists, for fear of being 'psychoanalyzed' or ridiculed"* and *"I do think when clients feel a therapist understands or is receptive to working on spiritual issues related to their lives, they produce more spiritual material."*

Another seven percent stated that there was often a link between the degree of exploration of spiritual issues and other positive therapy outcomes: *"My own personal and professional conviction is that for a person's well-being, those who have some cosmological view of their place in an infinite universe, are less prone to disturbances, or stress reactions, than those without or those who have not given time or thought to higher questions"; "I have noticed that the maturity clients gain through therapy and the peace of mind they achieve comes after, or along with, a reckoning with religious issues," and "I think that increased spirituality can represent a positive outcome of psychotherapy."*

Finally, five percent reported having experienced a transcendent force which seemed to be supportive of the therapy process: *"I have actually experienced a centeredness and harmony in the healing process with my clients in a kind of peak experience, although it is rare"* and *"I have sometimes felt a transcendent force of support in my work with clients which results in a deeper, richer process."*

Means of Addressing Religious/Spiritual Topics in Practice. This area was addressed by 36% of the total sample and yielded 59 thought units. Again, there were a variety of views on if, when and how practitioners should approach religious-spiritual issues with their clients. Thirty-seven percent stated that they only address the topic when there appears to be psychological or social implications which should be explored or when it otherwise seemed "appropriate." Another 32% reported that they only dealt with this arena when the client brought it up. Furthermore, only 21% stated that if the subject became a major focus or concern, they referred the client to some other appropriate source. Seven percent said that they addressed the topic in indirect ways and that it may never be targeted as "religious or spiritual." Finally, three percent reported that they always addressed the subject as part of working with the whole person. The following are representative examples of these varying perspectives:

"I will bring up these issues if there is some indication that their beliefs or practices are interfering with their psychological or social well-being."

"I only deal with issues of religion or spirituality if a client is the one to bring the issue up first--otherwise, I never make mention of such issues in therapy."

"If our discussions go past a superficial discussion of such issues, I admit to my limitations and refer them to a more appropriate resource."

"This (religious or spiritual issues) can be expressed in a counseling session without any direct mention of religion or spirituality."

"In counseling clients I always feel that the client must examine his or her belief systems."

Clinical Interventions of a Religious/Spiritual Nature.

The highest percentage of all respondents (48%) produced the most thought units (117) on this topic. Comments primarily delineated what approaches and practices respondents did themselves or thought to be appropriate (57%) and those which they believed were not appropriate (43%). Sometimes the same interventions considered appropriate by some respondents were cited as inappropriate by others. The following summarizes approaches targeted as either acceptable or unacceptable for clinical practice.

1) Appropriate Interventions: *"indicating respect and acceptance of client's beliefs; using religious language or metaphors; supporting a family's belief system when working with children; encouraging involvement in supportive religious or spiritual organizations; helping to clarify religious and spiritual issues and values; exploring personal meaning and purpose; identifying religious backgrounds and effects on clients' lives; investigating defenses and negative views against religion; prayer in session if client requests, if same faith is shared and after determining that there is no negative psychological connotation to this request; prayer at deathbed; exploring religious involvement with certain groups or faiths if they appear to be damaging or dangerous; using Scripture when appropriate, e.g., as concept of forgiveness; asking client to do penance for a deed/action for which they feel guilt; and sharing own values and beliefs."* Many of these approaches or practices were expressed as appropriate only if they were consistent with the client's own belief system or practices.

2) Inappropriate Interventions: *"sharing own beliefs or imposing own beliefs on clients; disagreeing with clients' beliefs; making recommendations about clients' beliefs or practices; praying or meditating with a client; addressing the client's religious life at all; using my values as the model for clients; and use of 'God told me' or extreme charismatic or fundamentalist positions."* Although the list of inappropriate interventions is relatively brief in comparison to appropriate interventions, many persons strongly stated the unacceptability of imposing one's own beliefs on clients or disagreeing with their faith in any way.

Education/Training in Area of Religion/Spirituality.

Twenty-two percent of all respondents provided 36 thought units concerning education and training. Of those addressing this topic, 38% stated that religion and spirituality was addressed very little or not at all in their clinical training and believed that it should have been highlighted more. Conversely, another 14% felt that the amount of focus on the topic in their training was appropriate. Twenty-one percent reported receiving specific religious or spiritual training, either through formal theological programs or through training of therapy approaches which included a spiritual component. Another 15% stated that they have sought out post-graduate training on the subject, primarily through special workshops and seminars. An additional 12% reported that they themselves have provided religious/spiritual education through lectures, workshops and writings.

Discussion and Implications

Any interpretation of these findings must be done within the context of the study's limitations. As stated previously, this subsample of responders reported a higher percentage of "other religious affiliations" (primarily Eastern or other spiritual traditions) and a lower percentage of "no religious affiliations" than nonrespondents. Thus, the group may have a greater interest in the topic than the subjects who chose not to answer the open-ended question. This difference must be taken into account when generalizing the data to the larger, representatively drawn sample of licensed practitioners in Virginia. It should be noted, however, that this factor did not result in homogeneous views; a great deal of variety is apparent in the subsample's comments. Secondly, analyzed comments only reflect views that the respondents chose to write about in the space provided. It is very likely that they have opinions on other areas that they did not address, as well. The data only represent those areas that the respondents targeted at the point they were completing the questionnaire.

Given these limitations, it is apparent from the data that there is a wide range of views concerning religion and spirituality held by this sample of practitioners. This variability is evident in comments about both their personal lives (history, beliefs and practices) and their professional lives (importance, clients' presenting problems, assessment, role in practice, means of addressing topic, clinical interventions, and education and training). Regardless of this variability, however it is also apparent that this area is one with which many of these practitioners struggle, given the relative lack of direction provided by their clinical training. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents addressing training and education stated that they thought the topic should be presented more in graduate training and 15% reported seeking postgraduate training on the subject. These figures support recent writings

which call for the inclusion of more content on religion and spirituality in schools of social work (Canda, 1989; Dudley & Helfgott, 1990; Kilpatrick & Holland, 1990; Netting, Thibault & Ellor, 1990).

The findings also provide some implications about what areas might be most useful to highlight in professional education. The first area which produced much comment was that of assessment and diagnosis. Specifically, how much should practitioners attend to religious and spiritual factors when taking a history of their clients? Furthermore, how should practitioners weigh these factors as either potential supports or barriers to healthy functioning? Although there are no easy answers to these questions, particularly the second, it is apparent that students would benefit from content and discussion on assessment and diagnosis before they found themselves grappling with such issues upon graduation. Such content could include how to develop a religious and spiritual history, how to conduct a spiritually-sensitive interview, and how to determine the meaning and role of religion and spirituality to particular clients and evaluate its positive and negative impacts.

The second area addressed frequently by the respondents was the role of the religious/spiritual dimension in practice. How much emphasis should there be on this dimension in our work with clients and how should that emphasis be expressed by the practitioner? Comments from the survey suggest that there needs to be an awareness of this dimension both in terms of its importance to clients and the possible part it might play in the therapy process itself. Furthermore, it is apparent that the level of receptivity to religious and spiritual issues on the part of the practitioner may determine whether or not these issues are presented, even when they may be of prime importance to clients. The educational process could address these issues by encouraging students to critically explore their own beliefs, values and behaviors and the impact of these on their work with religiously diverse clients. Such exploration could include how one acknowledges and integrates the religious and spiritual dimension in practice while respecting the beliefs and values of clients and practitioner alike. Additionally, students would benefit from identifying which client situations or issues they can handle competently and comfortably and which they cannot. Thus, knowledge of referral sources and processes is also important, in order to facilitate the right fit between the client and religious or spiritual resource.

Related to this area is the issue of the means of addressing religious/spiritual concerns with clients, which was another major topic targeted by the respondents. A wide range of approaches was reported, from never discussing the topic unless the client brings it up to addressing it at some point with

every client. Many stated that they only did so if "appropriate," such as when there was evidence of psychological or social problems or disturbance. Although there are probably no right or wrong answers to this issue, it is an important one to discuss. Graduate education could provide guidelines for when and how to address religious and spiritual issues with clients, which would allow practitioners to act from a more knowledgeable and confident position.

Finally, the area which received the most comment was that of appropriate and inappropriate clinical interventions of a religious/spiritual nature. Many acceptable approaches and practices were identified by respondents, while several others were noted as unadvisable or even unethical. Many of the same interventions (such as sharing one's own beliefs with clients, exploring or challenging client's beliefs, and the use of prayer) were cited as either appropriate or inappropriate by different respondents. Given this lack of agreement and the depth of feeling about the topic, it appears critical that this area be addressed by social work education. Again, although agreement may not, and perhaps should not, be reached, a critical look at actual practice interventions is warranted. Proposals for ethical guidelines to practice, such as Canda's (1990) recent discussion of the use of holistic prayer, are invaluable as a starting point for this critical look and could be used effectively in the educational process. With such guidelines, the indications and contraindications can be addressed along with the knowledge of how to appropriately use spiritual or religious techniques.

In addition to these areas concerning direct practice applications, additional content should be included in human behavior, macro practice and policy, and minorities and diversity courses. Such content is essential to a comprehensive understanding of human behavior, knowledge of the role of religion in developing policy and programs, and the ability to practice spiritually-sensitive social work. In order to put into practice the values of respect for the individual and acceptance of diversity, both social work practice and education must attend to the religious and spiritual dimensions of life and the role they play in people's lives.

Note

1. Data category decisions are available on request from the first author.

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*Michael J. Sheridan, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor and Reverend Ronald K. Bullis, M.Div., J.D., is a Doctoral Candidate at the School of Social Work of Virginia Commonwealth University. The authors would like to acknowledge Dr. Mary K. Rodwell, Assistant Professor with the VCU School of Social Work, for her consultation with the analysis of the data and Charles Adcock, MSW, Susan Berlin, MSW and Pamela Miller, MSW, graduates of the VCU School of Social Work, for their assistance with data collection. Correspondence may be directed to the first author at the school of Social Work, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1001 West Franklin Street, Box 2027, Richmond, Virginia 23284.

A SPIRITUALITY AND PERSONAL GROWTH SEMINAR FOR CLIENTS

Anita M. Titone

This article describes the development of a seminar created to help clients to integrate spirituality into their psychotherapy. The seminar now takes place in a private practice of clinical social work; however it originated in an academic setting--a seminary--where I was a consultant. The process of moving it from the academic setting to a private practice office is one focus of this article. The other focus is the content of the current seminar, its structure and the results.

FIRST STAGE: 1976-1988

I first became interested professionally in integrating psychological growth and spirituality when I was a consultant

to the ministerial training program at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University starting in 1976. As one of a group of mental health professionals who were consultants to the faculty, I led groups of ministerial interns on a rotating basis in what was called a "growth group." The purpose was to give the intern the opportunity to focus on personal growth issues, while in the process of his or her field placement in a church. Some of the seminary faculty were interested in the group leaders' finding ways to teach the interns in these groups how to integrate theological concepts into the experience. They were afraid that the growth group would otherwise be either irrelevant or detrimental to the seminary's purpose. In short, some perceived the growth groups to be emphasizing personal issues in such a way that the effect was promoting anti-Christian self centeredness: "navel-gazing", as one put it.

At the same time other faculty members were pessimistic about any effort to distract the interns from their personal issues—the proper nurturing of which they saw to be crucial to the purpose of the students' learning of the numerous personal and relationship skills essential to effective ministry. Still others liked the idea of introducing theological concepts because they felt that theology came alive best when related to concerns that carry emotional weight. I saw validity in all sides but was most committed to the latter. I felt that not only would the theological learning be brought alive, but also the personal learning might take on a new vitality, when seen through the language native to the "calling" of these men and women. Therefore I included a discussion of theology at the end of each group session.

The format of the group began with the interns exploring only personal concerns; there was no emphasis on theology for approximately the first two-thirds of the session. The last part was devoted to reflection on the theological significance of the first part. Initially, when it was time for this theological aspect, participants responded with awkward silence and/or verbal groping. The students were adept at sermonizing and writing papers on the whole gamut of theological concepts. But they were not practiced in the spontaneous application of those ideas. However, with gentle encouragement their silences and groping turned to fresh and moving insights. For example, common themes in the sessions were alienation and reconciliation. Once the themes were identified in such terms, the theological underpinnings of the interactions that had occurred in the first part of the session were accessible. Making that kind of insightful connection was exciting to the interns. Eventually the final segment of the session became its climax for many. From their reaction and my own, I began to wonder how I could introduce something similar into my private practice.

EVOLUTION, 1988-1991

In 1988 I introduced the seminar to my clients. All seminars held in the private practice setting have had a similar format. It consists of two basic activities: 1) free discussion of therapeutic goals, and 2) structured exercises pertaining to spirituality. An attempt is made to balance structured and unstructured time, in order to "set the stage" for each individual to internalize new learning. It is a nine-hour seminar, conducted for three hours on three consecutive evenings. I led the group with the assistance of pastoral counselors, thinking that they replaced the formal theological education of the interns in the seminary groups. Since 1988, I have led eight of these seminars with pastoral counselors and led the ninth and last one unassisted. A part of the paragraph from the flyer which describes the seminar is as follows:

There is a rich life experience which comes from integrating psychological growth with vital personal spirituality. The seminar leaders believe that many people are sincerely interested in such integration. Often, however, persons wonder if they have to sacrifice one for the other. The leaders do not believe such is the case. In fact, this seminar is based on the assumptions that genuine psychological growth and spiritual vitality are frequently interdependent and are always compatible.

Seminar enrollment has been limited to eight participants; each seminar has included six to eight clients. Participants have also given frank feedback, which I have begun to request in writing. In addition there are usually two or three therapists or pastoral counselors in attendance as observers, for the purpose of their learning; and they have given valuable input.

Along the way we have made changes in the format of the seminar in order to adapt to the interests and needs of the participants and to the talents and interests of the leaders. I gradually became aware that I would like to lead the seminar alone as I became more cognizant of my ability, and as my long-held definition of spirituality (Titone, 1991) became more internalized and more clearly distinguishable from religion/theology. In addition, my clients and colleagues who were not involved in organized religion expressed their reticence to participate in a group led by ordained ministers. This was the case even though the ministers with whom I worked were non-judgmental in their compassionate sensitivity to the needs and beliefs of members. Nevertheless, as suggested by Judah (1991), I did "not wish to even appear to exclude anyone." (p. 10). It was difficult enough to communicate the purpose of the seminar without adding to the misgivings of many who are wary of any activity (especially

one conducted by a psychotherapist) that may encourage the misinterpretation that I am promoting specific religious beliefs.

A DESCRIPTION OF ONE SEMINAR: APRIL 5-6, 1991

The April, 1991, seminar was a departure from the others in my leading group alone. Another change was the intentional introduction of the creativity of group members and the elimination of any introduction of theological concepts except as they appeared spontaneously in the process. In that case they were taken as seriously as any other relevant subject.

I prepared registrants for participation by telling them to 1) decide upon a personal growth goal that was achievable in the allotted time; 2) select any object(s) which represented creativity to them, and which were favorites of theirs; and 3) bring and plan to display and talk about these object(s) with the group. The group consisted of six participants, including four women and two men, ranging in age from twenty-nine to sixty-four. They were all highly functioning persons with good ego strength. Another change in the last seminar was the schedule, which was as follows: Friday, 6-9PM; Saturday, 9AM to 4PM, with no time away from the Seminar setting, which was my home and large yard. They were asked to bring a sack lunch. All breaks including lunch were observed in silence.

With this structure and setting, and through the vehicle of creativity my intention was to support the participants' desire to explore their personal/spiritual goals. Just as the ministers reached spirituality through theology, I hoped these clients would reach theirs through creativity. Woodman (1985), a Jungian analyst, indicates that creativity and imagination are at the heart of spirituality and that spirituality is crucial to one's ongoing development. She believes that the process of integration is stymied when "cut off from instinctual and imaginative roots. . ." (p. 70).

On arrival for the seminar all brought artistic items, some which they had produced themselves, some created by others, but all which they liked. One of the participants, Cindy, who had expressed grave misgiving about her own "lack of creativity" before we started, brought three items: an arrangement made of flowers which she grew, dried, and arranged; a jar of pickles that she pickled; and a paper that she wrote chronicling her life story. She also showed the group pictures of her daughter in whose creation, she pointed out, she "had a hand". She described her experience as follows:

By sharing our creativity early on, I believe an atmosphere of safety and trust was created that allowed more personal disclosure and openness. For this reason I believe that what I shared and what others shared had more depth and personal relevance than would have been shared at other types of growth experiences.

Another example was that Sharyn brought a picture of a duck struggling to get out of the water, or splashing into the water, she didn't know which. She commented as follows:

I felt more open to the group after showing my paintings. I was not inclined to try to put on a false face when my paintings, which are, to me a representation of my real and honest self, were on display. The paintings set a suggestive mood for a spirituality seminar. Since art can't be consumed, serves no necessary function, being around artworks is like a break for me--like being in the mountains or at the ocean or watching birds--it's something very good in the world that makes me feel that there is some kind of good design to the universe.

By the end of the first evening I perceived the group to be a cohesive unit, looking forward to continuing the next day. I suspect that a major factor in the depth of the connection and the sound trust level was that, as Boszormenyi-Nagy (1990) said, ". . . the resources of stability, security, and trustworthiness in relationships . . ." had been tapped. And these resources go "beyond the psychology of the capacity for trusting" (p. 9). The way I think of it is that by way of the creative we touched the spiritual and also the deeply personal. Doing this in a group compounded the benefit.

Before we adjourned that evening, I gave the group two assignments: to 1) dream a dream for work the next day; 2) write their epitaphs for their tombstones, assuming that they had died on the day before the Seminar began. They all agreed to do their best on these assignments, even though some found it amusing that they might dream in order to fulfill an assignment.

Saturday morning began with our noticing a pretty painting of a bouquet of flowers that was not there the night before. Nick said he brought it, since we didn't have one like it. And Dea was especially inspiring. An artist in avocation, she expressed her struggle to justify her continued interest in pursuing art rather than commit to activities that she thought helped or pleased others. She displayed some of her art work and her obvious pleasure in it, as well as her fears that she was frittering away her life. The group empathized with her. They also expressed concern about her bloodshot eye. Dea then told us that she had noticed it and intended to get medical attention soon if needed but in the meantime she had assigned a certain meaning to it: uncharacteristic of herself, after registering for the seminar, she had asked God for some sign that she was doing a good thing by attending it. The prospect was frightening to her since she had misgivings about the validity of concentration on art work as a serious personal matter. But

discussing spirituality was also scary (since she is Jewish and she knew that I am Christian). She decided that God had sent this message by the eye problem: use your eyes while you have them . . . think about the connection with your spirituality.

Over lunch, the group wrote new epitaphs assuming that they would die five years from now, in contrast to the first one, which was written assuming that they had died the day before the seminar began. Dea wrote this epitaph during lunch time: "She used her vision (physical, mental and spiritual) to find new realities and truths for herself and to share with others." Interestingly, the epitaph she had written earlier read, "She will let you determine her self worth." She was pleased with the difference in the

Matt, a therapist, provided the work which I thought allowed the group to coalesce in a unique way most pertinent to our purpose of integration. At one point he was expressing good feelings about his work as a therapist, but also great angst that there is nothing creative about him or his work. He outlined what he felt good about in his work: helping clients to see patterns or issues they alone didn't see; describing problems in a new, more meaningful way or taking something a client says and putting it in a therapeutic context. After listening intently, Billie told Matt that what he's doing she thought was the heart of creativity: taking what you perceive in the way of patterns or essence, framing it in a personal way and then communicating it to others. At the time I wasn't sure Matt really accepted what Billie said to him. But on Saturday he shared a dream he'd had Friday night. In the dream the group was standing behind him (he especially noticed Cindy and Billie). The group was encouraging him. It appears that he may have let in Billie's positive reframe of his creativity.

At the end of the allotted time I asked the group to reflect upon and share the highlights of their learning and their regrets regarding their experience. The major regret expressed was that the time was too short; another was that no time was spent on an explicit discussion of spirituality. By far the majority of responses were favorable, indicating that the seminars stimulated insights for growth in an atmosphere of safety and trust.

CONCLUSION

The seminar demonstrates an effective means by which clients can learn to integrate psychological and spiritual learning. It may be useful for a clinician or faculty person to offer a similar learning experience in any setting where clients or students have an interest in spirituality and personal growth. Some obstacles to such a transfer might be the difficulties in screening registrants in order to increase the likelihood of success; the necessity to use a greater amount of time building the required trust and rapport than would be necessary in cases

where one is working with clients with whom there is already a close working relationship; and insecurities in leadership skills on the part of the potential leader. A way of addressing the latter concern is to include experiences similar to this seminar in social work courses in which spirituality and/or group processes are being taught.

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*Anita M. Titone, CSW-ACP, is a clinical social worker in private practice in Dallas, Texas.

RELIGIOUS ISSUES: THE MISSING LINK IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Larry P. A. Ortiz

The Council on Social Work Education's Faculty Development and Program Committee extended an invitation to the author to present a concept paper on religious issues in social work education at the 1990 37th Annual Program Meeting. Three concerns raised by the Committee, which precipitated the invitation, were: (1) the increasing number of "fundamentalist" Christian students in social work programs, who are unwilling to work with clients experiencing difficulties with lifestyle or choice issues incompatible with the student's Christian beliefs; (2) the increasing number of colleges and universities with strong religious ties which are either applying for or recently obtained accreditation; (3) questions regarding whether certain religiously oriented requests for service from clients are somehow incompatible with either social work values or accepted forms of service delivery, i.e. prayer, consultation with a faith healer, etc. This article is a revised version of that presentation. It summarizes major current scholarly work which responds to concerns raised by the Committee. Although there is an outstanding need for continued research and writing on the interface of religion and social work practice and education, the author believes there is currently sufficient material to respond to questions regarding incompatibility.

The three issues posed above need to be addressed in

terms of the historical relationship between religion and the profession as well as the curricular deficiencies that spawn such problems. These issues will be addressed through four basic points: (1) historically, religion and social work were viewed as intrinsically related; (2) social work curricula generally do not adequately address the religious and spiritual dimensions in practice or HBSE courses, nor do they deal sufficiently with the role of religion in social welfare institutions; (3) despite tensions, sectarian oriented social work education has a rich history and will continue to have a significant role in professional education; and, (4) not all Christians are suited for social work; but Christians do not have a corner on the unsuitability market.

Before developing these points further, there is a need to briefly define terms such as religion, spirituality and faith, which are used somewhat interchangeably throughout this paper. Of the three terms, religion is the easiest to distinguish. Religion generally refers to an external expression of one's faith reflected in a code of living (Joseph, 1987). Faith and spirituality refer to similar ideas: the quest for meaning. Faith refers to the knowledge of the source of power and value that is at the center of a person's life. This knowledge is developmental; it evolves throughout one's life in a manner consistent with and dependent upon personality, cognitive and moral maturation (Fowler, 1975; 1981; 1984). Spirituality is a pervasive drive of the person toward finding meaning in relationship with the physical and social environment and an ultimate source of power (Canda, 1988a; Joseph, 1987). Dudley and Helfgott (1990) give a narrower definition, stating that spirituality requires a belief in the existence of a soul.

Historical connections between religion and social work

Religion and social work are not inherently contradictory. Professional social work was born from three historic perspectives of which one was religion (Leiby, 1985). Judeo-Christian values are deeply embedded in social work values and ethics (Biestek and Gehrig, 1978; Bubis, 1976; Canda, 1988a; Joseph, 1988; Keith-Lucas, 1985; Kohs, 1966; and, Leiby, 1977). Leiby (1985) states, "The oldest rationale for our work was religious and rested on notions of personal and social responsibility that were found in the Bible" (p. 324). For example, Micah 6:8 states, "And what does the Lord require of you, But to do justice, to love kindness, And walk humbly with your God?" (New American Standard Bible, 1976). In Mark 12:28-31, there is a command to love your God and neighbor as much as oneself; and, in Matthew 5:40 Christ states that to do love and act justly . . . "towards one of the least of these my brethren, you have also done it unto me". Scriptural passages like these were used as rationales for doing social work. Besides acting rightly and justly, the social gospel theology in the late 19th century also had a motive of

bringing an age of harmony to the earth. Social gospel proponents stated that the ". . . essential purpose of Christianity is to transform human society into the Kingdom of God by regenerating all human relationships" (Stott, 1984, p. 7). Besides the church, the social agency and the profession of social work were regarded as an acceptable vehicle to meet this objective. A reciprocal relationship existed between the church and the profession, as evidenced by Mary Richmond who wrote in 1930, "The Church furnishes us with the motive for all our work . . . and sends us forward . . . in a campaign that involves wider issues" (cited in Netting, Thibault and Ellor, 1990, p. 17).

There is some evidence that social work is an ecumenical product. Joseph (1989) identifies "dignity and worth of persons, social responsibility, self determination, confidentiality, justice and equality, social welfare and altruism" (p. 7) as professional social work values that emerged from Judeo-Christian and humanistic traditions. Canda's (1988a) research demonstrated that ecumenism is still present in contemporary social work literature and practice. In the analysis of five different spiritual perspectives with respect to beliefs, values, practice and concepts of spirituality, Canda found there was convergence among social workers from Buddhist, Christian, Existential, Judaic and Shamanist traditions. Convergence was found in values which stress: dignity of persons; compassion towards others; helping relationships as mutual respect and caring; holistic perspectives that included the physical and spiritual; and, the willingness to use ritual, prayer or meditation as well as consultation with religious helpers as legitimate professional techniques of helping (pp. 34-35).

Because of the rich religious heritage of the social work profession, spiritual and religious values are rationally a part of social work practice. It has been suggested that social work, by its very nature is spiritual. Comments like, ". . . social workers are like sleep walkers. They are engaged in deeply spiritual activities but often lack awareness of this" (Canda, 1988a, p. 45); or, Keith-Lucas's reference to social workers as "unconscious Christians," i.e. God's use of people to carry out the work of love and justice without their knowledge of the plan (personal communication 1991), underscore this theme.

Considering the history of the profession and contemporary practices which integrate faith systems and social work, it seems incomprehensible that social work and religion in general will ever be truly incompatible. The question it seems, is not whether these two are incompatible, but rather what causes tension between them? What kind of social work practice and what sort of religious beliefs seem incompatible? Keith-Lucas (1960, p. 87) noted "the really

important question in the rapprochement between religion and social work has not been, 'how do social workers and religious workers cooperate?' or even, 'how do we as social workers take into account a client's religious beliefs?' Instead, the question has essentially been, 'How does a social worker who professes through religion a particular world view reconcile this view with . . . professional practice, in which (s/he) also believes?' Keith-Lucas' point is well made. Far too often important specific questions regarding the interface between religion and social work are not asked. Instead, there has tended to be a general suspicion toward religious issues and social workers who advocate these concerns.

Social work education and religion

Social work educators are not adequately preparing students to deal with faith, religion, or spirituality in the lives of clients (Canda, 1983, 1988a, 1988b; 1989, Denton, 1990; Loewenberg, 1988; Joseph, 1987; 1988; Siporin, 1985). Accreditation standards do not require content on religion or faith in the curriculum, there are very few books which address these issues, and there are only a handful of publications with small circulations which address this topic at all. This curriculum deficiency is contraindicated in professional education which stresses an holistic approach to practice (Canda, 1983; Denton, 1990; Dudley and Helfgott, 1990; Towle, 1957).

Although all major areas in the social work curriculum need to have an infusion of religious content, HBSE and practice are the two which receive the most attention in the literature. In human behavior courses changes in the curriculum need to consider an understanding of the role of religion in the lives of clients, from cultural, developmental and existential perspectives (Canda 1988a; 1989; Joseph 1978). Specifically, attention needs to be given to the developmental nature of faith throughout the life cycle. For example, James Fowler's (1975; 1981; 1984) paradigm considers faith throughout the lifecycle in relation to cognitive and moral development within the context of life experiences. Life experiences gain meaning in view of one's spiritual or religious understanding of ultimate truth. Without such a paradigm to understand the existential meaning of a client's experiences, social worker's responses to client's needs are limited and potentially harmful (Canda, 1988b).

Practice curriculum also needs to be expanded in the areas of assessment and intervention. Social workers need to know how to assess the saliency of religion and the operative level of spirituality in client's lives, as well as the functional and dysfunctional uses of religion (Denton, 1990; Joseph, 1988). Practitioners also need to know when and how to use client's faith/religious beliefs therapeutically. The intent of this point is not to advocate proselytizing, a fear which seems

to grip the social work profession. Rather, it is intended to suggest workers use the client's faith system as a resource in problem solving or management. This could involve encouraging the client to use their religious rituals/practices, i.e.. prayer, meditation, etc., or obtaining consultation from a person familiar with the client's religion, as a means of promoting greater use of this resource (Denton, 1990). At the same time, Joseph (1988) states that, ". . . workers need to know when to . . . help the client ventilate anger, separate feelings about God from significant others, and differentiate between passive and healthy dependence on God and religion (Ibid, 1988; p. 448)." However, as both Canda (1988b) and Joseph (1988) point out, unless social workers, themselves, are aware of their own religious/spiritual/faith development and perspectives, they will be unable to help clients with these issues. Like values clarification exercises, religious clarification exercises for social workers are also warranted.

Because social workers are more inclined to confront religious/spiritual issues in direct service contexts, there tends to be an overemphasis on the relevance of these issues in HBSE and individual and family practice courses. However, these concerns permeate well beyond direct service. Netting, Thibault and Ellor (1990) present a convincing argument for integrating content on religion into administration and policy courses, too. This is pertinent to the unique role the private sector plays in delivering social welfare services in this country. In consideration of the large percentage of services delivered under the auspices of religious institutions and churches, it seems imperative that knowledge of religious participation in social welfare services be included in policy and administration courses. Throughout the history of social welfare as well as today, religious groups have played an integral role in the delivery of social services.

Presently, our social work curricula inadequately prepare students to consider the spiritual dimension of human life. This is an inadequacy that merits attention at all levels of social work education, from the classroom to the accreditation standards. Currently, very few models or frameworks exist that explore, assess, and intervene in this area. Canda's (1989) comparative approach for teaching religious content in social work, and Fowler's (1981, 1984) texts on faith development, are good references for beginning to formulate such a framework. Further research should be directed towards identifying functional and dysfunctional uses of religion by clients and in social work practice. However, beyond the classroom, CSWE curriculum guidelines need to require content on religion and spirituality. Without such a requirement, inclusion in social work curricula of important and relevant material such as this will be dependent upon the enlightenment of social work faculty members. Without

CSWE commitment to inclusion of content on spirituality, social work education falls short of its stated claim to be holistic.

Social work education in religious institutions

Social work educational programs in religious institutions have existed for decades. The relationship between religiously oriented instruction and social work education has not been compromised; this is affirmed by the quality control mechanism of accreditation. Therefore, when the issue of increased numbers of religious institutions gaining accreditation is raised as a concern, the problem is not altogether clear. One might assume that these concerns are related to questions of whether social work education is being compromised by religious values; and if perhaps these programs are turning out "evangelist social workers." However, if accreditation is working as it is intended, this fear can be put to rest. The integrity of social work education will be protected.

However, there are two related issues which need to be raised. One, there may indeed be tensions which social work educators experience in religiously oriented institutions; and, two, social work education is always an ideological/value activity.

Especially in conservative Christian institutions there are inherent structural values or plausibility structures that mitigate against social work precepts. Tensions often emerge over the different value orientations of the profession, college and faculty persons. Social work faculty in these settings are constantly working with the tension of reconciling these values. Although a wearisome task, this tension can also produce an integrative balance that benefits students, the profession and institution. It is important to appreciate the tight-rope these faculty walk, balancing the varied interests of program, profession and the institution.

This sort of tension or working out process is not an uncommon experience in social work education. Social work education, like the profession, is value laden. Although accreditation standards are elaborate guidelines for social work education, the pedagogy itself is not prescribed. During a site review, an evaluator does not assess whether a program follows a lock step approach in their education, but rather how closely the curriculum conforms to guidelines. What goes on day to day in the classroom is largely up to the professor's interpretation of the guidelines, based on his/her own values, ideology, professional and educational experiences. On any given day in any social work classroom across the country, this interpretive process takes place, whether the instructor is religious, politically conservative, feminist, or Marxist. This interpretive process is a healthy dialogue that is important to the profession that no one believes should be ideologically

regulated. Since social work education is at all times ideologically based, the role of accreditation ought to be to promote dialogue, synthesis, and dialectical analysis, within the context of the standards. This process should be protected, promoted and not influenced by political or religious persuasions of institutions which fall outside the professional comfort zone.

Despite concern regarding social work programs in religious colleges and universities, the overarching question that is most important is: Are they teaching good quality social work which is consistent with the curriculum guidelines as they are reflective of professional values? This qualitative goal can be met, whether the faculty person is a fundamentalist Christian, feminist, Marxist or psychoanalyst. Values and ideology play a major role in social work education and practice (Ortiz, 1990). These should not be ignored or otherwise sacrificed on the altar of scientific technology. Ignoring values in social work is neglecting the foundation of the profession. Regardless of the need to promote the profession as more empirically based, the value roots of social work remain the distinctive feature which separates it from the academic disciplines. Failure to work with the disparate values and inherent tensions within the profession is unwise. Merely because a faculty member or institution is identified as Christian, is not by itself, an adequate reason for concern.

Students and religious intolerance

There is cause for concern when educators are confronted by students who cite religious conviction as the reason to either work prescriptively or not at all with certain client groups. Mostly, students who take this position are misguided or confused. In this case it is incumbent upon educators to provide counsel for these students designed to help them clarify the implications of their religious commitments for social work. There are many social workers who view their practice as an extension, or at least consistent with their religious values (Bubis, 1976; Canda 1988a; Keith-Lucas, 1985; Leiby, 1985; Popple and Leigninger, 1990). However, if conflict is not reconcilable, it should receive the same attention and be subject to the same process of professional ethical review as any other student performance problem.

To be sure, there are some Christians who, because of their doctrinal beliefs, are not well suited for the social work profession. Of the dominant religions practiced in America, certain Christian doctrinal beliefs are probably the most problematic (Popple and Leigninger, 1990). Keith-Lucas (1983; and personal communication) supports this point when he states that there are at least four different "religions" in Christianity, that have nothing to do necessarily with denominations. Of these four religious types, two are consistent or at least reconcilable with social work values while

two are more problematic. Keith-Lucas identifies these four "religions" as:

(1) Christians of Grace, whose values are similar to social work's, but who add an understanding of spiritual values to their perception of humanity. They are, in a sense, God's clients sharing with their clients the Love they have received.

(2) Christians of Ethics are people who express their values in religious terms, but in comparison to Christians of grace don't believe in it, nor think in theological terms. They have little problem integrating social work values with their religious beliefs.

(3) Christians of Law are those who are likened to the welfare client. They are eligible for God's grace, but only if they are very sure to keep all the regulations, i.e., doing everything the Bible commands. Accommodation of social work values for people in this group is somewhat difficult, but possible.

(4) Christians of Morality are those people who, believing themselves to be 'saved' or 'justified', stop being God's clients and join his staff. Their job, as they see it, is to stop people from sinning. They believe they have been commissioned by God to stop other people from sinning, and rid the world of particular evils which offend them. In the 19th century these vices were alcohol, promiscuity and sloth. Today it is abortion and homosexuality. They also feel justified in using harsh measures to achieve their aims. For these folks, the social work profession is quite incompatible (Personal communication, 1991).

Knowing how students interpret their religious beliefs is of crucial importance in helping them resolve perceived dilemmas between their faith and profession. However, this can only be done by educators who are comfortable addressing these issues. Otherwise the issue will be avoided.

Given the pluralistic nature of the profession, tensions between various belief systems within the profession are likely. Concerns about how one group interprets and practices are natural questions which will occasionally arise. As long as there is instructive dialogue, tension is desirable and necessary for growth within the profession. Value or ideology based tension is no stranger to the social work profession (Germain and Hartman, 1980). However, ignoring these differences

benefits no one in the profession and possibly victimizes clients whose needs may be misunderstood or inadequately met because of their religious orientation. It is a mistake to ignore the role of religion in social work as an integral part of social work history, social welfare institutions, and the lives of individuals and families served. Recognizing the role of religion and acknowledging the spiritual nature of humans does not make the profession any less empirical or rational. Or, for that matter, more or less judgmental - just more responsive to human nature. Increased dialogue and reconciliation regarding spirituality, religion and faith in social work education and practice is very much needed.

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*Larry P. A. Ortiz, Ph.D., ACSW, is Associate Professor of Social Work, Worden School of Social Service, Our Lady of the Lake University of San Antonio.

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Topical Bibliography on Spirituality and Social Work

Edward R. Canda

Introduction

This bibliography is intended as a resource for social workers and other helping professionals who are conducting research on the connections between spirituality, religion, social work, and social welfare. It serves as an expansion of the Topical Bibliography on Religion and Social Work provided in volume 1, issue 1 of The Spirituality and Social Work Communicator (1990). The bibliography is arranged according to topical categories in order to assist comparative study. Topical category names have been revised to reflect current themes in social work scholarship. Entries have been assigned to categories according to the spiritual perspective predominant in each text. Whenever possible, the bibliographer has read the full article or book; however, in some cases decisions were based on reading of an abstract or title. Topical categories are: Asian and East/West Synthetic Perspectives; Christian Perspectives; Existentialist Perspectives; Jewish Perspectives; Shamanic, Spiritist and Native American Perspectives; Nonsectarian or General Perspectives; Other.

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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

Edward R. Canda

An Urgent Call for Support

In the Winter 1991 issue of the Spirituality and Social Work Communicator, Jacquelyn Marshall presented an historical review of the connection between spirituality and social work education. She pointed out that during the 1950s and 1960s the Curriculum Policy Statement, which governs our educational accreditation, explicitly recognized that the person-in-environment perspective of social work education should attend to the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of human behavior. During the 1970s, references to spirituality were dropped. This policy change mirrored the general professional trend of divorcing spirituality from social work practice.

Presently, there is a brief window of opportunity for supporters of spiritually sensitive social work to impact the history of social work education. The Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Educational Policy and Planning is working on the final draft of the new policy statement. This statement will establish guiding principles for accreditation of social work education for the 1990s. Now is the time to make our concerns known to the commission so that social work education can return to a truly holistic perspective, by reforging the link with spirituality.

At the CSWE Annual Program Meeting in Kansas City at the beginning of March, this issue emerged at my faculty development institute on Teaching Spiritual and Religious Content in Social Work Education and the North American Association of Christians in Social Work's panel on the thought of Alan Keith-Lucas, who has been a pioneer and champion of spiritual awareness in social work. Momentum of concern built in these two forums, so that a petition was circulated in support of dealing with spirituality within the Curriculum Policy Statement (CPS). This petition was submitted to the commission and had a positive impact.

At the open session on the MSW version of the CPS, commission members indicated a genuine willingness to consider ways of addressing the topic of spirituality. They already have recommended making reference to religious diversity in sections dealing with human behavior and human diversity educational content. They are also willing to consider restoring the term "spiritual" to the expression bio-psycho-social-spiritual when referring to the person-in-environment perspective of social work education, whether in private or state institutions. This would go a long way toward overcoming the bias against such discussion that many of us have encountered.

The commission is struggling, however, with finding a way to mention spirituality without implying support

for exclusivism, sectarian competition, or proselytization. Since constructive dialogue and mutual understanding among diverse spiritual perspectives are exactly what the Society for Spirituality and Social Work stands for, we can play an important role in helping the commission to resolve this problem. Therefore, it is crucial that concerned members write to the commission expressing support by April 15. This is certainly a rare historic opportunity which should not be missed!

Readers are encouraged to write to the following address:

Grace E. Harris, Chair
Commission on Educational Policy and Planning
Council on Social Work Education
1600 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

It would be helpful to send copies to: Roland Meinert and Julia Norlin, in care of the same address.

In This Issue

This journal is intended as a forum for diverse viewpoints, not only in terms of spiritual perspectives, but also in terms of vantages on the helping process. Accordingly, this issue presents insights from the vantages of scholars, practitioners, and consumers. This helps to break down the divisions between these vantages, which are so prevalent in social work journals and the field in general. The contributions in this issue reveal that each of these vantages share concern and capacity for critical, insightful reflection. Indeed, the strict distinction between these vantages may be recognized to be artificial, and we might explore the possible strengths of the "scholar-practitioner," "practitioner-consumer" and other possible combinations. The varying strengths of the three vantage points and their combinations are crucial to join in a creative professional dialogue.

O'Brien, a practitioner, returns our consideration to conceptual basics--what do we mean by spirituality? In particular, he proposes a conceptual framework that attempts to image and explicate various subcomponents of spirituality. Simons also deals with this basic level of understanding "what do we mean." As a consumer of mental health services, he emphasizes the importance of nonpejorative and supportive understandings of spirituality, since it is often key to the recovery and coping of persons with severe mental illness. Sullivan presents results of current scholarly research that support Simons' basic contention by analyzing the accounts of persons diagnosed with severe mental illness. These insights are very significant because many helping professionals in mental health settings tend to assume that religious and

spiritual concerns of consumers are simply manifestations of pathology, rather than important life issues, resources, and strengths.

Capozzi offers an innovative model of cognitive therapy for stress reduction that draws on the spiritual insights of the nonviolent social activist, Mahatma Gandhi.

The final contribution brings to bear the insights of a religious counselor who has been active in legislative action on controversial issues of great relevance to social workers and other helping professionals--state control of professional licensure. Buhner suggests that we pause to reflect and reconsider possible dangers in the head-long dash of social workers and others to promote state control, especially regarding encroachment upon the domains of spirituality and religion.

The Spirituality and Social Work Journal is a biannual publication (Winter and Summer) sponsored and edited by the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. It is published with the assistance of the School of Social Welfare at the University of Kansas. SSSW and its journal promote inquiry and dialogue about the connections between diverse perspectives on spirituality and social work. Editor and SSW Director: Edward R. Canda. Advisors: Donald Chambers, University of Kansas; Monit Cheung, University of Houston; Robert Constable, Loyola University of Chicago; Lowell Jenkins, Colorado State University; M. Vincentia Joseph, Catholic University of America; Donald Krill, University of Denver; Daniel Lee, Loyola University of Chicago; Sadye Logan, University of Kansas; Patrick J. O'Brien, Ft. Meade, Maryland; Max Siporin, SUNY-Albany; Ann Weick, University of Kansas.

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SOCIAL WORK AND SPIRITUALITY: CLARIFYING THE CONCEPT FOR PRACTICE Patrick J. O'Brien

Need for Clarification

The recent attention being given to the theme of spirituality in social work is a clear indicator that many colleagues believe it to be a vital dimension (Siporin, 1990;

Dudley & Helfgott, 1990). A similar observation is being made by a large circle of other service providers in the fields of: health (Fahiber, 1991); nursing (Clark, Cross, Deane & Lowry, 1991); psychotherapy (Rosen, 1991); addictions (Corrington, 1989; Clemmons, 1991); gerontology (Payne, 1990), and terminal illness (Millison & Dudley, 1990). Spiritually-sensitive care givers appear to want to reclaim the soulfulness of their work (Holland, 1989). The failure to include the dimension of spirituality within the domain of service provision will diminish the area of life experience to which providers are equipped to respond to.

Despite the attention to spirituality within and outside of social work, recent interpretations appear to form a mixture of divergent themes, functions, and expressions. A need exists to unpack, simplify, and integrate levels of analysis. Reaching this goal may help move the concept into the working domain of social work practice. This objective will be accomplished by focusing on how the concept is defined.

Redefining the Definition

Any definition of spirituality is limited by the temporal and relative nature of who is defining it (Jaffe, 1990). The inability of previous efforts to present a unified definition of spirituality that can be applied in social work may stem from an over-emphasis on content. There is not enough attention being given to unpack the basic essence, from the structure and function of spirituality. Such a framework may be thought of in terms of primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of analysis. Without looking closely at what is put into a definition of something, it is easy to confuse the essential nature of something with: (1) What symbolically represents that essence (2) How that representation is expressed and understood (3) What functions such expressions seek to accomplish. Even though such a distinction is somewhat artificial, the author hopes it will help clarify interpretations.

Canda's (1991) definition of spirituality acts as the baseline and springboard for this discussion. Canda notes that:

Spirituality designates the human striving for a sense of meaning and fulfillment through morally satisfying relationships between individuals, human communities, the surrounding universe, and the ontological ground of our existence (whether conceived in theistic, nontheistic, or atheistic terms).

Canda's work appears to be what could be called the total lasso perspective. This position attempts to resist reduction. It encircles all the content so as to be inclusive; but such a position complicates operationalization (Canda, 1990, p. 14). It is agreed that spirituality can not be reduced, but certainly it is possible to partialize and unpack the interpretation of what is meant by the term spirituality. Canda's work can be enhanced by distin-

guishing the relationships between spirituality's essence, symbols, and functional enactments.

The alternative definition begins by identifying the basic essence of spirituality; then it highlights the structure and explains the symbolic representations of that basic essence; finally it considers why symbolic themes find enactment to accomplish certain functions. It is important to note that getting to know spirituality on these different levels may require a different awareness at each level. Access to understanding each level may require the worker to switch on different ways of knowing depending on what is trying to be understood. One psychologist calls this concept state specific knowledge (Tart, 1989).

The Essence of Spirituality

What is the essential aspect of spirituality? The bare primary essence of human spirituality is not content but capacity. The essence is potentiality for growth and development on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal levels. Being aware of this capacity makes it a human characteristic. The subjective awareness of its presence is a function of each person's own human developmental experience (Helminiak, 1987). The essence of spirituality is invisible, and can be verified only by its interaction with other elements. Just as the music of a gentle breeze is silent and heard only as it flows through chimes, so spirituality sounds its presence only as it interacts with other elements in a person's life space.

The Structure of Spirituality

Using a model offered by educators at Rush University (Farran, Fitchett, Quiring-Emblen, & Burck, 1989), the permeating structure of spirituality can be viewed as shown in Figure 1.

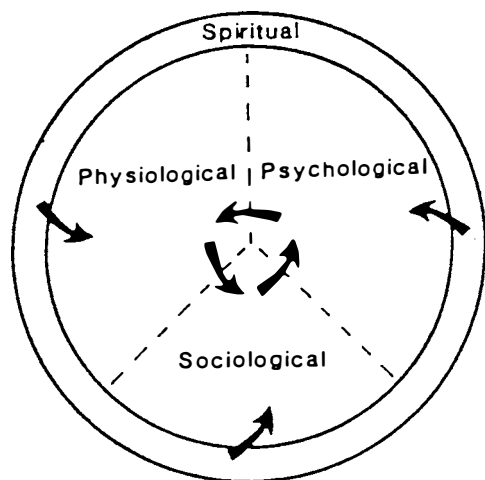


Figure 1

In its primary state there is only process, there is no form. Yet, like molecular interaction, it carries something like an ionic charge which creates and alters structures, it motivates affirmative action. It challenges perception and cognition; and can lead one to believe beyond what one can see, and to see beyond what one believes (Middleman & Wood, 1991). The ability to create and alter structures is at the heart of what growth, advocacy, and empowerment are all about.

Symbolic Themes & Functional Expressions

Symbolic Themes

The simplification of spirituality into its bare essence of capacity obviously leaves a large remainder of material unaccounted for. The unaccounted material can be recovered through a second and third order of analysis, symbolic representational themes and functional enactments.

Symbolic representations can be thought of as the basic essence of spirituality having coalesced into form. Just as fruit comes from a seed inside a shell, so spirituality needs embodiment if it is to be grounded in a person's life space. The symbolic themes are the bridges that allow the essence to cross into experience. The essence flows into the shape of some form just as water takes the shape of the pitcher that holds it, while retaining its own essence. Certain themes form and collect into images shaped by the influence of person, place, time, and events over the life cycle. This is an ongoing process that helps to create, mold, and contain the images that provide and nourish personal meaning in life to each person. The themes of spirituality are like the colors of the rainbow which blend in overlap with one another. No one theme contains the full essence of spirituality and to limit the expressions of spirituality to only one or two colors (i.e. religion or theistic beliefs) will only diminish the spectrum of possible meaning it may offer. The themes have a trans-religious (across and beyond religion) characteristic; for spirituality doesn't preclude or require theological doctrine. The following table lists twenty themes often related to spirituality in some way. They are presented here as symbolic themes of the basic essence (capacity) of spirituality.

Table 1

Symbolic Themes of Spirituality

1. Morality, ethics, justice, and right effort.
2. The nature and meaning of self and the intention and purpose of human existence.
3. Inter-connection, wholeness, alignment, and integration of persons, place, time, and events.
4. Creativity, inspiration, and intuition.

5. Altruistic service for the benefit of others.
6. The mystery and wonder that is woven into nature, the universe, and the unknown.
7. Socio-cultural-historical traditions, rituals, and myths.
8. Virtues (i.e. compassion, universal love, peace, patience, forgiveness, hope, honesty, trust, faith).
9. Mystical, altered states of consciousness of a non-egoic nature.
10. Sexuality.
11. Openness, willingness, surrender, and receptivity.
12. Having the power of choice, freedom, and responsibility.
13. Special wisdom or revealed knowledge.
14. Prayer, meditation, and quiet contemplation.
15. Answers to pain, suffering, and death.
16. Identity and relation to the ontological ground of existence, ultimate reality, and life force.
17. The relation of cause/effect regarding prosperity and/or poverty.
18. Beliefs or experience related to noncorporeal reality or the unobstructed universe.
19. Path to enlightenment or salvation.
20. Sensitive awareness of the earth and non-human world.

Functional Enactments

Once a theme has been shaped by the influence of time, person, place and event, it is ready to be expressed or enacted to carry out some type of function. The specific and unique expression of a symbolic theme by an individual can take place in many different ways but there are certain functions that all expressions of spirituality can try to accomplish. For example, the expression of a specific theme in a certain way can help to provide identity, security, and establish connection; it can be used as part of a motivational system to energize movement and use goal directed behavior; it can be used as part of an adaptational response like a defensive buffer to negotiate a stressful situation; it can be used in an experiential or educational manner to instruct or teach; it can be used in a communicative fashion to translate ideas, express emotion, and explain behavior.

The spiritually-sensitive social worker may do well by getting beyond the paradox of establishing specific cause and effect relationships in the analysis of spirituality. The working of spirituality in motion is dynamic, nonlinear, and multilevel. The relationship between the representational aspect of the symbolic themes, and the functional aspect of its expression is an overlapping one. For example, representation itself is a function. Representation and function both imply some type of capacity. The important issue to consider is not so much content, but how the content is used to carry out certain functions.

Social Work Contexts

Social workers find themselves in a host of different contexts. Are there some contexts where social workers can be expected to run into the issue of spirituality regularly? The author feels that every context offers opportunities for spirituality to manifest itself. Yet, there are some contexts where the frequency of such encounters are more likely to happen. The following areas of practice are examples: addiction, recovery, and Twelve Step work; acute hospital care, chronic and terminal illness; work with senior adults; work in certain minority or ethnic cultures where spirituality is an important dimension with special individual or community value; work with persons who struggle with and through psychotic processes, and work in agencies that are closely associated to traditional religious faiths.

Conclusion

We have examined the need to include spirituality within the continuum of human experience and focused attention on how the concept of spirituality may be interpreted. An alternative perspective has been offered to enhance the integration of this dimension in social work. We have identified specific practice areas where spirituality is an important consideration.

The key point for the spirituality-sensitive social worker will be to find the proper balance of becoming more aware of the dimension of spirituality in social work, without neglecting the social work that exists in the dimension of spirituality. In the busy world of social welfare, where time, numbers, and money control the level of intervention, there always is the temptation to displace the important (purpose-meaning-quality orientation) for what is considered the urgent (time-related task-quantity orientation). But people are creatures of significance, and people strive to create and connect to the meaningful in life. Although social workers can not "make" truth and meaning for others, we are challenged to extend our own frames of reference from which we can facilitate a person's ability to look into meaning and recognize truth. One well known creative worker involved with the process of "people making" expressed it this way:

Each of us emerges as a bud on a universal spiritual tree. That tree links all human beings through its roots. The challenge of becoming more fully human is to open to and to contact that power we call by many names . . . I believe that successful living depends on our making contact and accepting a relationship to our life force (Satir, 1988, p. 334 & 341).

As time unfolds, we learn about misplacing an emphasis on one aspect to the neglect of some other parameter. In learning new ways of looking, new sights are seen. And so the key to discovering the path of becoming a spiritu-

ally-sensitive social worker begins, not so much with the concern of being relatively right (as in right/wrong); but it begins with the decision to make an investment towards right being regardless of who wins the debate.

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*Patrick J. O'Brien, ACSW, QCSW, is a clinical social worker in Ft. Meade, MD.

ACKNOWLEDGING SPIRITUALITY IN RECOVERY: A MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER'S PERSPECTIVE

Bill Simons

"Spirituality is being with people where they are and as they are. . . . Spirituality is being with people in the midst of the distortion of life and meaning."-John E. Keller

In the Winter, 1991 issue of *Spirituality and Social Work Communicator*, Anita M. Titone stated, "Spirituality is a basic ingredient in the human condition." She goes on to say that, "it (spirituality) pertains to the natural human tendency toward healing and growth. . . . Spirituality deals with ways of responding in a hopeful way to things that cannot be controlled." (Titone, 1991).

A basic premise of this paper is that spirituality is indeed a basic ingredient in the human condition and that any healing, growth and/or recovery that does not acknowledge and address this aspect of the human make-up will be incomplete. Many of us struggling with long-term mental illness or recovering from one of the many addictive afflictions (i.e., alcohol/drug abuse, eating disorders, co-dependency, etc.), are coming to believe that one of the major failures of the therapeutic community is the avoidance of spirituality.

Perhaps part of this is due to a common confusion between the concepts of spirituality and religion. Many recovering persons are not only recovering from a history of abuse/addiction but are also recovering from a judging, moralistic "religious"/church background. As Keller (1985) puts it, "Many recovering and nonrecovering alcoholics perceive religion, the church, and clergy as symbols of moralism. Therefore, we have to make it clear to alcoholics that when we are talking about spirituality, we are not necessarily talking about religion or being religious, because in their perception religion is synonymous with moralism, and moralism is always experienced as rejection. It offers them no hope for dealing with their pain, brokenness and limitation." (p. 94).

Although scholars may draw a concise academic distinction between religion and spirituality in their journal articles, many "lay" people still see the two terms as either synonymous or closely related. This is important to recognize and acknowledge because when a person connects negative life experiences with religious experiences or symbolism it can radically affect that person's attitude and openness to "spirituality". For example, in my own spiritual search, I found that, within my traditional

Christian framework, I could not trust a "God, the Father" and that this was deeply rooted in my childhood abuse experiences with my step-father.

Unfortunately, many "religious" approaches, including many of the Judeo-Christian based churches, address the person in need/recovery from the moralistic "do's - don'ts" and/or "shoulds - shouldn'ts" continuums. There is a clear cut "we - they" dichotomy where the "wes" have "the answers". So the person in recovery perceives himself/herself as being in a situation where "I'm this way but need to become like you"; I'm a "they" and need to become a "we" before I'm fully accepted. This can not only invalidate the newcomer's life experiences but diminish the value of where he/she is in the "spiritual growth process". Many times this further "shames" a person who has been shame-based from childhood. No wonder then that there are so many spiritually hungry people in Twelve Step programs who loudly trumpet their atheism/agnosticism or their bitterness toward "organized religion".

For many who begin the walk down the road of recovery an immediate leap to a divinely focused spirituality is too much. This is particularly true for persons with backgrounds of abuse or neglect because the capacity for trust has been deeply wounded and it is clear that trust is a key element necessary before one is willing or even capable of thinking about such Twelve Step concepts as "surrender", "God as I understand Him", "turning one's life and will over to a Higher Power", etc.

Keller, drawing on his 30 years experience of working with alcoholics and observing A.A. meetings, addresses the importance of the commonality of the human experience and how this relates to a developing and sustainable spirituality. "They (members of A.A.) learned that spirituality is not and can never be just one-dimensional. They experienced that there is not only the divine involvement in spirituality but also the human. They experienced the human environment of spirituality in their non-moralistic, understanding, accepting, and caring fellowship. There they could admit their pain, brokenness, and human limitation, and also experience human dignity and personal moral responsibility for attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. This fellowship (A.A.) maintains that the beginning of spirituality is letting go of the moralism about our condition and wholeheartedly accepting the reality of our human limitation and our responsibility in relationship to it" (Keller, 1985, pp. 93-95).

Twelve Step programs, by implication and practice, recognize this dual nature in spirituality i.e., divine and human. "The Steps suggest a belief in a Power greater than ourselves - 'God as we understand Him'. This can be a human love, a force for good, the group, nature, the universe, the traditional God (Deity), or any entity a member chooses as a personal Higher Power." (Emotions

Anonymous, 1978, p. 3). Thus, a full range of possibilities from a traditional God to the "human" E.A. group itself are offered as possible Higher Power alternatives.

Further recognizing both the crucial "trust issue" and the human dimension of spirituality, the Emotions Anonymous, "Big Book", when discussing a "power greater than ourselves" states, "If we have difficulty finding our Higher Power, we can begin by trusting another human being." (Emotions Anonymous, 1978, p. 47).

In Twelve Step programs the divine dimension of spirituality is not ignored but usually the first "mystical/spiritual" experiences come at the human level where fellow Twelve Step members see not only others but themselves as sharing a "common human condition".

John Keller (1985), says that persons who come to A.A. meetings may feel they know each other immediately. "They knew each other because within the fellowship they had mystically already met and now were meeting personally in the common reality of their essential human limitation. Out of the common pain of their human limitation they had found a common hope and a new life. They didn't know everything about one another. But they mutually had experienced and accepted the powerlessness of the human condition. It happened in a human fellowship as they experienced together the human-to-human dimension of spirituality." (p. 104).

Within this human fellowship, spirituality is experienced as people see their own pain in others and find new ways of responding to old situations as recovering members "share their experience, strength and hope". Through this experience, on the human level, an understanding of the divine dimension of spirituality becomes possible. Even old symbols that were meaningless or that had become symbols of despair or shame can take on new meaning. For example, coming from a traditional Christian background I was able to renew and redefine my faith within the context of the Twelve Steps and, for the first time, my faith became a source of strength rather than a source of fear and condemnation. As Keller's (1985, p. 103) discussion of redefining the symbol of the cross illustrates, "There is not only the divine-human vertical dimension to spirituality; there is this human-to-human horizontal dimension. Within the Christian faith this is symbolized by the cross."

What does all of this mean, on a practical level, to the practicing social worker and other members of the therapeutic professions? As a consumer, not trained in the mental health professions, I cannot articulate a list of "dos" or "don'ts" or "how tos" in your professional jargon. But, let me share a few thoughts for your consideration.

First, I would suggest that you evaluate your own thoughts and feelings about spirituality and come to terms with any confusion that you may have about your own understanding about the difference between religion

and spirituality. Check your own biases.

I would further suggest that one of our society's biggest strengths is also one of its biggest weaknesses - that of over emphasis on issues of individuality ("rugged individualism"), freedom of choice and independence. An end result of this many times, in counseling, is to isolate the client.

Self-empowerment is a worthy goal that we in the mental health consumers advocacy group, Project Acceptance, encourage. However, we have come to recognize that self-empowerment seems to be a natural outgrowth of a broader "corporate-empowerment". This "corporateness" is the recognition that we are sharing a common human condition or, as John Keller might put it, we are able to admit, acknowledge and share our common "pain, brokenness and human limitation".

That this process is both empowering and spiritual has major implications for your profession. More group work stressing this type of sharing and corporate-empowerment is one possibility. And, although there are risks involved, professionals need to examine ways to ease the boundaries of the counselor/client relationship so that the counselor and the client can share the human-to-human horizontal dimension of spirituality.

Regardless of the specifics of any practical application, let me just reiterate that it is past time for social workers and other members of the therapeutic community to acknowledge a spiritual dimension to human existence.

The issues that bring clients to you will ultimately be dealt with on a spiritual level, or the client will lose hope and the issues will go unresolved.

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*Bill Simons is Co-coordinator of Project Acceptance, Lawrence, Kansas.

SPIRITUALITY AS SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS William Patrick Sullivan

The advent of psychosocial interventions and programming for severely and persistently mentally ill clients has contributed to a sustained interest in the measurement and function of social support networks (Faloon & Liberman, 1983; Lipton, Cohen, Fischer, & Katz, 1981; Kennedy, 1989; Sullivan & Poertner, 1989; Tracy & Whittaker, 1990). Not only has there been interest in studying the social support networks of the severely mentally ill, but increasing available social supports has been held out as an important goal of intervention (Sullivan, 1991; Sullivan & Rapp, 1991). The perceived relationship between available social support and client outcomes has contributed to the development and refinement of specialized assessment tools and methods. In turn, empirical research in the area of social support has encouraged further clarification of basic concepts and has revealed important conceptual issues that stimulate current study (Barrera, 1986; Starker, 1986; Sullivan & Poertner, 1989; Tracy, Catalano, Whitaker, & Fine, 1990).

Spiritual beliefs and practices are central to the lives of many people, including the severely and persistently mentally ill. Furthermore, empirical research has indicated that spiritual beliefs and practices are associated with an increased sense of personal well-being and can be effectively employed as a coping strategy in times of stress (Ellison, 1991; Hathaway & Pargament, 1990; Maton, 1989; Michello, 1988; Pargament et al., 1990; Pargament et al., 1988; Petersen & Roy, 1985; Ross, 1990). Accordingly, understanding and assessment of spiritual beliefs, practices, and participation should be a regular feature of any attempt to decipher the social support network of mentally challenged consumers.

This paper will discuss the role of spiritual beliefs and practices in the daily lives of the severely and persistently mentally ill. The importance of spiritual beliefs and practices has been identified in an ongoing qualitative study that is attempting to discern factors associated with the successful community adjustment of current and former consumers of mental health services. The results of this study suggest that spiritual beliefs and practices are central aspects of social support and should be explored when social network analysis is conducted.

Methodology

In the past decade, there has been a renewed interest in designing interventions, and conceptualizing services, from a strengths or, competence framework (Goldstein, 1990; Maluccio, 1981; Pray, 1991; Saleebey, 1991; Weick, Rapp, Sullivan, & Kisthardt, 1989). When a new framework or paradigm is considered, the nature of

inquiry, including the specific questions that are addressed, changes commensurate with the emerging perspective.

Indeed, while there has been much research into the factors associated with the relapse and rehospitalization of severely and persistently mentally ill individuals, there has been less research framed in a positive manner. From a strengths-based perspective, there is also interest in those current and former clients who have been successful. Thus, an exploratory study was undertaken to discern those factors that are associated with successful community functioning.

Informants in this study have met, at some point in their lives, standard criteria used to define the severely and persistently mentally ill. These standards include diagnosis (schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder, major depression), disability (difficulties in major life activities including vocational activity and the ability to live independently), and duration (in general, condition is present for over 1 year and requires some form of intense care).

In addition, to be included in the study, participants have been judged to be successfully surmounting their mental challenge. Simple measures of success were used. Informants in this study have remained free of psychiatric hospitalization for at least 2 years, are residing in at least a semi-independent residence, and are engaged in some form of vocational activity, to include volunteer work, school, or serving as a primary homemaker. This does not suggest that these informants are free from symptoms, or that their difficulties with mental illness have ceased.

All informants were paid to participate in an interview that lasted approximately 1 hour. The interviews were open-ended; however, three general areas were consistently explored: the informants' past and previous involvement in the mental health system, perceptions of the reason for their successful adjustment, and their assessment of the quality of the mental health care they have received thus far. There were no preconceived notions as to what factors would emerge, and the discovery of unforeseen and idiosyncratic factors was desired. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and were analyzed using elements of Spradley's (1979) ethnographic research method.

Informants were recruited from a chapter of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill and from two urban community mental health centers. Information about the study was shared with representatives of the various organizations who, directly or through staff members, notified potential candidates. Interested respondents were encouraged to contact the researcher directly, or arrange an appointment with the assistance of a staff member. Interviews were conducted at a time and place agreeable to the respondent.

This report is based on interviews with 40 informants who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Table 1 summarizes basic data about the respondents. Note that the majority of respondents have been diagnosed with schizophrenia and, as a group, they have averaged over five psychiatric hospitalizations.

TABLE 1
MEAN CHARACTERISTICS OF
STUDY INFORMANTS
(n=40)

Sex	Age	Diagnosis	Number Of Previous Hospitalizations	Years Since Last Hospitalizations
F (48%)	42.7	Schizophrenia (68%)	3.9	7.2
		Bipolar (21%)		
		Other (11%)		
M (52%)	35.3	Schizophrenia (81%)	7.3	6.5
		Bipolar (19%)		
Total Sample Means	39	Schizophrenia (75%)	5.6	6.85
		Bipolar (20%)		
		Other (5%)		

Results

A variety of factors are regularly mentioned by participants as important to their success. Medication, the support of family and friends, and vocational activity have emerged as the most commonly mentioned success factors. Unquestionably, these are important areas of focus, and traditional community mental health programming reflects an attempt to address these concerns.

This work examines one of the unforeseen findings of the study. Among the 40 respondents interviewed, 19

(48%) specifically mentioned spiritual beliefs or practices as central to their success. The frequency of this response ranks spirituality as one of the more commonly mentioned factors identified by respondents. The importance of this finding is amplified when one recognizes that the spiritual concerns and needs of clients are rarely reflected in the range of services offered in community mental health, or in the interpersonal helping technologies customarily employed in these settings.

The term spirituality is purposely chosen over the more narrow term, religion, to account for differences in the manner in which respondents described their faith, experience, and practice. For in the words of one informant, spirituality is "a personal matter which I pursue on my own." Titone (1991) suggests that:

Spirituality may or may not include belief in God. It is one's personalized experience and identity pertaining to a sense of worth, meaning, vitality, and connectedness to others and the universe. It is incorporated faith — one's pattern of response to the uncertainty inherent in life where the limits of material and human effectiveness are exceeded. It pertains to one's relationship with ultimate sources of inspiration, energy, and motivation; it pertains to an object of worship and reverence; and it pertains to the natural human tendency toward healing and growth (p. 8).

Titone's (1991) definition helps illuminate the potential role of spirituality in the lives of the severely and persistently mentally ill. Clearly, the limits of human effectiveness are dramatically revealed to those facing severe mental challenges. Furthermore, one's sense of worth and role, as well as life purpose, is intensely questioned at such vulnerable moments. Estroff (1989) has suggested that schizophrenia, for example, "is an I am disease, one that is joined with social identity and perhaps with inner self, in language and terms of reference" (p. 189).

Yet, in spite of empirical evidence and client self-reports, it is difficult for many social workers to consider spirituality as potentially helpful to those classified as severely and persistently mentally ill. In mental health practice it is not uncommon to encounter clients who have become excessively preoccupied with religious and spiritual concerns. In more destructive instances, this preoccupation can result in delusional thoughts and harmful behavior. Observation of these experiences can render many social workers suspicious of the role of spirituality in helping. Such suspicion can hinder their ability to assess healthy versus pathological spiritual expressions.

This is unfortunate because personal spirituality can be of prime importance and genuine help to many mentally challenged adults. Empirical research has

indicated that spirituality serves as an effective coping device (Ellison, 1991; Hathaway & Pargament, 1990; Michello, 1988; Pargament et al., 1990; Pargament, et al., 1988; Petersen & Roy, 1985; Pollner, 1989), is an essential aspect of the social support network for many (Ellison, 1991; Hathaway & Pargament, 1990; Maton, 1989; Pargament et al., 1990; Pollner, 1989), and helps sustain a sense of meaning and coherence in life (Allport, 1963; Petersen & Roy, 1985; Titone, 1991). The following section will discuss the role of spiritual beliefs and practices as an important source of social support and as an important aspect of an individual's social support network.

Spirituality and Spiritual Involvement as Social Support

Hammer, Makiesky-Barrow, and Gutwirth (1978) have described a social network in the following manner: An individual's social network consists of his or her direct social contacts, the relationship among them, and their relationship with others who are not directly connected with the focal individual. (p. 523)

Using this general framework, there have been efforts to explore differences between the social networks of those defined as mentally ill and those categorized as normal controls. The most general finding is that those defined as severely mentally ill tend to have smaller social support networks in comparison to normal controls (Hammer et al., 1978; Pattison, Defrancisco, Wood, Frazier, & Crowder, 1975; Sokolovsky, Cohen, Berger, & Geiger, 1978). It also seems that overall network size shrinks after the onset of illness, particularly after the first psychiatric hospitalization (Lipton, Cohen, Fischer, & Katz, 1981; Westermeyer & Pattison, 1981).

There also appear to be structural differences within the social support network. Specifically, it has been reported that there is more "kin" contact within the networks of individuals with mental illness, and more dependent and nonreciprocal ties (Hammer et al., 1978; Lipton et al., 1981; Pattison et al., 1975; Sokolovsky et al., 1978; Tolsdorf, 1976; Westermeyer & Pattison, 1981). The latter finding suggests that it is more common for mentally ill individuals to be the recipient of support than it is for them to be the provider of support.

Two dimensions, or points of analysis, of social support are identified above. One area of focus is the overall size and structure of a social support network. To measure the size of an individual's social support network requires that we inventory those people, objects, and activities which provide important sustenance and support in daily life.

Another point of inquiry in the analysis of social support networks is to assess the nature and quality of interactions within the network. To assess how a social support network functions requires that we examine the relationship between network members and the target

individual, as well as the general reciprocity of support activities. We may also be interested to learn when support is requested, how it is requested, and when it is given.

It is argued here that to measure accurately the size and function of a social support network, an assessment of an individual's participation in formal religious rituals, ceremonies, and activities should be conducted. For not only does religious participation result in increased contacts with others, it may also result in a symbolic connection with a larger entity: the congregation (Allport, 1963; Oates, 1955; Pargament et al., 1990; Petersen & Roy, 1985; Shifrin, Cohen, & Kraft, 1990; Taylor & Chatters, 1988). Taylor and Chatters (1988) have noted that the church is often a primary social agency, an organization that provides everything from a surrogate family to direct aid. Oates (1955), in a similar vein, states that "the religious group, apart from the coherence of its teachings, provides a sense of community for individuals who have hitherto been isolated and alone in the world" (p. 76).

Several of the informants in this study identified their religious participation, and congregation, as important sources of support:

Sunday school just renurtures — it feeds us spiritually with things that we need, you know, in the spirit of God and prayer. . . . They [the congregation] support you and always ask for prayer requests and things like that, and they know about my mental illness. And I believe in faith in God, and so I believe those prayers are answered by God.

Others noted the diverse functions their congregation provided:

It's not always spiritual. That's the part where you worship together, but when you get involved afterwards . . . they have donuts or something and that's important. I know quite a few people there and they help me out quite a bit. Just be my friends.

Yet, while attending to the spiritual participation and activities of individuals will refine our efforts to carefully evaluate the strength of social support networks, the total supportive function of spirituality can still be lost in traditional analysis. The potential supportive power of spirituality extends beyond the act of participation in rituals or social functions. Indeed, just as personal spirituality may not include a belief in God, participation in a formal setting is also not required. While spirituality, thus conceived, may be enormously important to a person's sense of well-being, it can be difficult to measure and assess as a social support variable. Specifically, the sense of having a relationship with, or benefiting from, the guidance of a higher power, may not be captured in standard social support assessment tools. Here we are not

dealing with an entity that can be included in a simple count but are instead dealing with an immaterial force.

Consequently, Pollner (1989) is in agreement that social networks consist not only of actual acquaintances but also mythical and divine others. Pollner (1989) notes that "individuals come to feel that with the support and consent of a divine other they can manage or control life events" (p. 91). This contention is certainly supported by the respondents in this study. Several of the informants of this study clearly look to God, or a higher power, to help them manage the stress of life in general and, specifically, the stress that accrues from dealing with severe mental illness. To these informants, God provides answers that mere mortals cannot: "I really don't look to people, I look to God — because people are not able — they're able to help a certain amount, but the Lord has been my true strength . . . God has seen me through everything." Another informant remarked that "you have someone to depend on. Even when no one else is there, you've got God on your side, or Jesus Christ. You don't have to do it on your own."

Informant reports underscore the tremendous pressure and tension they endure in daily life, and how their illnesses can create a sense of aloneness. In many instances, spiritual beliefs and practice serve as a buffer and as a coping device in the face of this struggle:

It puts the worries off on someone else. I feel that there is someone else out there that has the power to help . . . this world can be a bit frightening when you just think about the reality of it. You just feel like an ant at a picnic . . . it [spirituality] just makes you feel more secure.

Informants also reflected on the role of spirituality in coping with their fears, worries, and difficulties. In the words of one informant: "You can't do it on your own, but if you give it to Him, he can take the burden off your shoulders and make it light." Sometimes relief was sought for specific areas of difficulty, for example: "I can pray and ask the Lord to get rid of the voices and help me relax."

Finally, several informants talked of the importance of their spirituality and spiritual practices at those times when they were the most troubled by their psychiatric condition. Much like the reports of the terminally ill, or those who face catastrophic situations, spirituality is reported as central to their ability to survive.

I knew there was a way out and that God was always watching or taking care of me and that in the end result he had it in control — and so I didn't have to do anything stupid or desperate. . . . I might go through heck but he wasn't going to let me go to the bottom.

The reports of informants in this study underscore the potential supportive aspects of spirituality and spiritual practice. To fully delineate the power of social

support requires that we understand those sources from which support is drawn. Support may be drawn from family and friends, from a faith community, from God or a higher power. Sullivan and Poertner (1989) noted that people have varying needs for affiliation. Some individuals prefer solitude, while others need constant companionship. Drawing inferences from simple counts of activities and personal involvement ignores this basic reality. In addition, such counts may overlook important and powerful sources of support, such as the sense of having a relationship with a higher power. This relationship with a divine power may be particularly important to the severely mentally ill, given the possibility that they feel shunned by others or that they have relied too heavily on friends and family. Therefore, whether the focus is on assessment, intervention, or research, not only should all potential sources of social support be explored but the individual's satisfaction with those available supports must be assessed.

Discussion and Implications

Exploratory studies, by definition, suffer many limitations. Retrospective analyses, particularly when dealing with feelings, emotions, and reconstructed events, are inherently suspect. There are also many technical problems that arise in longitudinal analyses. For example, diagnostic standards have changed over time, and it is certainly possible that some informants in this study were classified with schizophrenia at a time when broader parameters were used.

This study, like much qualitative research, features a small sample because of the amount of time involved in data collection and analysis. This study sample is also limited by the preponderance of informants who were involved in some fashion with traditional treatment facilities. Efforts continue to attract informants from a wide variety of sources, including consumer-based support networks and consumer-directed programs. Simply put, it is difficult to draw firm inferences from this small sample.

Yet, because of the exploratory nature of the study, the emergence of spirituality as a commonly identified factor for success demands *more*, not less, attention. There were no hypotheses to test, or set variables to explore in this study. The prominence of spirituality in the lives of informants was not anticipated. Indeed, this project was specifically designed to identify such unforeseen factors.

Certainly, a subsequent review of existing empirical research, and basic reflection on human behavior, suggest that this finding might have been anticipated. Personal crises or challenges often force us to recognize the marginality of our existence. To suffer from severe mental illness is to face an invisible enemy that, at times, wields tremendous power and influence and that forces one to question

the very meaning of life and individual existence. Oates (1955), some years ago, noted that religion is of great importance to the mentally challenged and is central to their struggle for identity and meaning in life. Significantly, in the words of one informant, "It is a big deal for me. It helps me to be a whole person."

The findings of this study have implications for conceptual and practical aspects of social network research. Specifically, it is important to assess the spiritual beliefs and activities of individuals given the varied and, at times, central role of spirituality in people's lives. In addition, considering the sense of support and comfort people receive from their relationship with divine and mythical others, efforts must be made to account for these less visible affiliations and associated activities.

The findings also have implications for social work practice. Given the primacy of spirituality in many people's lives, social workers should be cognizant of the spiritual needs of clients and become familiar with available spiritual resources in their communities. For example, organizations such as Pathways to Promise (see Shifrin et al., 1990) are forming to develop helpful liaisons between faith communities, clergy and professionals. Much of this work involves the dissemination of current knowledge about severe mental illness and the spiritual needs of consumers of mental health services. The practicing social worker could benefit clients by calling on the services of such agencies and taking an active part in the development of similar projects.

Spiritual issues and concerns should not be neglected in individual practice, for as Conway (1989) has noted, if we "are to truly understand, study, and help people change, we must address issues that influence people's lives" (p. 624). Obviously, clients retain the right to keep such personal information private. Yet, where appropriate, the spiritual beliefs and activities should be a regular feature of social histories and assessment procedures. Several assessment instruments have been developed to aid in this review (Dombreck & Karl, 1987; Titone, 1991; Tracy & Whittaker, 1990). Changes in spiritual belief and practices can also be assessed and monitored. Clients who once valued regular attendance at church services may feel a void should they discontinue such involvement at the onset of illness. Rapid shifts in belief structure should also bear attention. In addition, there have been attempts to develop conceptual criteria and instruments to assess the relative health of individual spirituality.

Social workers will naturally vary in the degree to which they feel comfortable dealing with spiritual matters (Sheridan & Bullis, 1991). In general, when spiritual needs and concerns are identified as important issues by clients, three choices for a social worker emerge: ignore them, deal with them, or make a referral. Given the

importance of spirituality to the lives of many clients, ignoring their spiritual concerns reflects poor professional practice. An appropriate referral, in contrast, is proper professional practice when we feel uncomfortable or unqualified to address a client concern. Such situations suggest that liaisons should be established with pastoral counselors, faith communities, and helpful clergy.

In summary, spiritual beliefs and activities have emerged as an important factor in the successful community adjustment of former and current consumers of mental health services. Furthermore, this study suggests that spiritual beliefs and practice are a critical source of social support. Actual support can come from prayer, a congregation, or a relationship with a higher power. Accordingly, these varied sources of spiritual support should be included in any assessment of an individual's social support network.

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*William Patrick Sullivan, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of social work at Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, IL.

NONVIOLENT SOCIAL WORK AND STRESS REDUCTION: A GANDHIAN COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING MODEL

Leonard Capozzi

Social work is a challenging profession; not only are caseworkers and therapists involved with people who are confronting significant personal and family problems, but

also they are asked to work within bureaucracies, human systems that present them with a variety of challenges in addition to the demands of client contact (Watson, 1978). One result of these challenges is quite often a high level of stress and sometimes "burnout," a state in which the strain of one's professional responsibilities becomes so great that work performance, personal life and health are gravely affected.

Most social workers can attest to the stressful nature of their jobs and are familiar with some of the debilitating effects of extreme stress: depression, anxiety, frustration, physical exhaustion and unhealthy coping behaviors such as overeating, smoking and substance abuse (Caplan, 1980). Despite this awareness, however, not much is widely known within the profession about how stress is caused and how it can be effectively reduced (Ratliff, 1988).

Fortunately, stress does not have to be a mysterious force that moves into and out of our lives, entirely beyond our control. We can learn to reduce stress and its effects on us by candidly and creatively approaching the problem. For that purpose this article will examine the relevant literature on stress and explore a cognitive approach to understanding its etiology. It will then present a model of nonviolent social work, based on Gandhi's practical philosophy of *ahimsa* (nonviolence), to serve as a constructive program for implementing cognitive and behavioral changes aimed at reducing stress and increasing effectiveness in social work practice.

The causes of and solutions for work-related stress in the human services, social work included, are not easily categorized. Ratliff (1988) blames this on the difficulty of evaluating studies that often employ varying "definitions of stress and burnout, weak controls, . . . failure to use a control group, measurements that are primarily subjective in nature, and numerous environmental and personal variables" (p. 153). Due to the limitations and inconclusive nature of past research further inquiry into stress and its effects on social workers is imperative.

Unfortunately, social workers do not have the luxury of waiting for the results of a definitive study on stress to begin addressing this issue. The problem is too pressing. It is the responsibility of individual practitioners to experiment with ways to reduce stress in their professional (and personal) lives, thereby enhancing their ability to be of service and to enjoy their work.

Despite the limitations of past research some interesting facts have come to light about stress and its effects on social workers. Pines and Kafry (1978) identified social workers as a group especially susceptible to stress given their generally high level of sensitivity to clients' problems. Walsh (1987, p. 281) makes the point that burnout, the end product of extreme stress (Taylor-Brown, Johnson, Hunter & Rockowitz, 1982), is seldom limited to

individuals; it usually affects groups of individuals, "the work environment, and the life situation in general. The effects of milder forms of stress are also not limited to individuals; even relatively low levels of stress can hamper a social worker's ability to function effectively and compassionately with clients and colleagues. In addition, stress exacts a substantial economic toll, with industry losing as much as \$75 billion a year due to stress-induced illness (Arndt and Chapman, 1984). No similar statistic is available for social work in particular, but the dollar losses are likely to be high. The remainder of this discussion will focus on the subject of stress, considering the topic of burnout to be superfluous if one adequately deals with stress and its causes. It is more useful and beneficial to attack a problem at its root rather than to focus on its late stage symptoms (i.e., burnout as a result of stress).

The following definition of stress is quite helpful, as well as quite hopeful. Stress is a "condition in which perceived demands exceed previous adaptation" (Keefe, 1988, p. 476). "Perceived" is the key term in this definition; it recalls the brilliant aphorism of Epictetus (circa 50-130 A.D.) in *The Enchiridion*: "Men are distressed not by things, but by the views which they take of them" (quoted in Childress and Burns, 1981, p. 1017). Donovan (1987) supports this view when she identifies negative perceptions of work and the work environment as the prime factors contributing to stress-induced mental and physical health problems. She mistakenly concludes, however, that focusing on a person's perceptions places an "unrealistic and unfair burden on individual workers" (p. 264) and argues that efforts to reduce stress must be directed at changing one's objective working conditions.

There is no doubt that a chaotic work environment contributes greatly to the stress level of social workers and that changes can and should be made in this area. But if we are to get to the root of the problem we have to give perceptions, attitudes and cognitions primacy over environmental conditions. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) agree when they write that stressful "situations be considered in terms of their significance to the individual" and his or her appraisal of the situation (p. 25). Freeman and Simon (1989) believe that anxiety results when a person perceives that a particular situation is dangerous or threatening. Only by accepting responsibility for the ways in which we perceive ourselves, others and our environment can we hope to alter the effects of stress in our lives, thereby enhancing our effectiveness as social workers. Dass and Gorman (1987) put this beautifully when they write:

Reperception itself, we've found, has the power to transform situations. Things change as they are seen differently, not necessarily because we are altering circumstance. From these

shifts in perspective, in turn, we ourselves change. As we reach a deeper sense of who we are, we discover how much more we have to give (p. 187).

A Gandhian Model

How does someone go about changing his or her perceptions of the world in order to reduce stress? This can be accomplished through a process of cognitive restructuring that is informed by Mahatma Gandhi's teachings on nonviolence. These provide a constructive model for practitioners interested in making the cognitive and behavioral changes needed to reduce stress in social work practice.

At the heart of Gandhi's practical philosophy is his concept of ahimsa. Literally, this word translates as "nonviolence," but in its deepest meaning it encompasses what Gandhi phrased "a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer" (A. Hingorani & G. Hingorani, 1985, p. 6). By "evil-doer" Gandhi is not only speaking about heinous criminals; this term can be understood to include those people we come in contact with everyday that somehow violate our self-will, our competitive ego that demands "My way or the highway!" As Flinders (1978) points out, the work environment can play host to numerous battles of conflicting self-interest if people are stubbornly giving their own opinions, projects and plans top priority. Already Gandhi is challenging us to change our perceptions of "the other," to go against our mind's conditioned response to consider the "evil-doer" as someone to be feared, an emotional response that invariably leads to stress and strain.

Ahimsa is a potent tool for personal change. It is not about the negation of self, but about the lifting up of the other in a way that makes it impossible for us to consider doing harm, whether physical or emotional, to any individual or group. Ahimsa is about working for the good of all, guided by a unified purpose, without being attached to the results. When service is performed in this spirit, the conflicts we experience each day that lead to stress and that drain so much of our vitality cannot help but diminish (Easwaran, 1984).

This approach is not entirely new to social work. The profession is built on the "religious/humanist conviction that man[kind] has value and that each [person] has some responsibility for the well-being of fellowmen [and women]" (Watson, 1978, p. 6). Gandhi stated that "ahimsa must express itself through acts of selfless service" (A. Hingorani et al., 1985, p. 6). Thus, social work lends itself exceedingly well as approving ground for ahimsa.

Ahimsa refers to a quality of unconditional respect and compassion that we can have for people, whether they are clients or colleagues, when we let go of our own preconceived agendas, attitudes and prejudices. Ideally, unconditional respect and compassion are integral parts

of social work practice (Perlman, 1979). In practical terms, this means seeing people at all times as human beings, not as clients to be "dealt with" or "processed" through the social service system. Karger (1981) highlights this problem in his discussion of the objectification of clients. Objectification takes place as a result of agencies emphasizing fiscal accountability and the speedy turnover of cases instead of humanistic service — e.g., tending to the needs of the board of directors instead of the clients and staff. This is not to say that financial responsibilities and bureaucratic necessities are unimportant in social work. This simply points out that for social work to truly be of service, people must always come first (Watson, 1978). When they do not, Karger (1981) argues, frustration and stress arise, especially in those workers who prefer to invest their energies with clients, but instead are forced to play the bureaucratic games of the modern social service agency.

Striving to put the needs of people before the needs of the "system" can often be quite frustrating, if not downright dangerous to one's job security. A term to become acquainted with in this regard is *satya*. *Satya* means truth, and a *satyagrahi* is one who holds firm to truth (Erikson, 1969). For Gandhi, being a *satyagrahi* means having the courage to stand up for one's selfless ideals, regardless of the personal consequences. In relation to this concept and its practical applications Gandhi wrote: "A man cannot practise [sic] Ahimsa and be a coward at the same time. The practice of Ahimsa calls forth the greatest courage" (A. Hingorani et al., 1985, p. 7). At first glance this may appear quite anxiety-provoking. But in its fullest sense, standing firm in truth means having the selfless desire to serve people through all of our thoughts and actions, confidently knowing that this is the highest truth that we can aspire to.

Even for Gandhi achieving this state of mind did not come easily. He was a shy and doubt-ridden young man until he went through a rigorous process of value clarification that resulted in a reorientation of his life on the practice of ahimsa, a transformation that enabled him to cast off the fears and anxieties that plagued him as a youth (Easwaran, 1978).

Social workers can learn much from Gandhi's example in this area, whether one chooses to experiment with ahimsa or not. For the caseworker or therapist the frank reappraisal and delineation of what his or her values are can help initiate activity that is in line with those values and therefore less inclined to be tainted by the attitudinal and cognitive ambiguities that can lead to stress and that lower one's ability to be an effective practitioner. Every social worker needs to ask him or herself: "Why did I choose to be a social worker and what values and beliefs are informing my practice?" Ratliff (1988) puts it succinctly when she says that "clarifying

one's beliefs and values and operating from a clear and consistent value base can significantly reduce stress" (p. 153). Value reappraisal is not enough, however. Assuming that a social worker decides that his or her cognitions are stress-provoking, and assuming that the worker decides to begin applying Gandhi's concepts, the value reappraisal process simply provides a baseline from which the worker can begin to experiment with Gandhi's prescriptions. This word "experiment" is significant—the practice of nonviolence is a dynamic process that taxes all the intellectual, emotional and spiritual resources at the worker's disposal. Only if an individual is willing to open the mind to the concepts presented thus far and exert the effort required to implement the cognitive and behavioral tools that will be presented shortly can ahimsa bring about personal and social transformation.

A large part of this personal transformation is learning to identify potentially stressful situations as challenges instead of threats. Gandhi would have agreed, and modern cognitive theory helps us to understand the process. When an individual confronts a potentially stressful situation and analyzes its personal significance [what Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 32) call the "primary appraisal process"] there are three possible outcomes. The individual can decide the stressor is: 1) irrelevant, 2) benign-positive or 3) stressful. If it is either of the first two we are home free. If it is perceived as stressful, the best way to cope, from a Gandhian perspective, is to accept the situation as a life-enhancing challenge instead of a life-draining obstacle. This change in attitude requires the awareness that we have choices as to how we perceive ourselves, others and the world. With practice one can learn the skill of "decentering" (Safran & Segal, 1990), i.e. experiencing one's role in constructing perceptions of reality. Indeed, if one is faithfully practicing nonviolence it becomes quite natural to treat the vicissitudes of life with an even temperament and to perceive every situation as an opportunity for learning and mastery.

The term that Gandhi used to describe this state of mind was detachment. The Gandhian ideal of detachment, however, entails much more than just perceiving potential threats as challenges. He wrote: "By detachment I mean that one must not worry whether the desired result follows from your action or not, so long as your motive is pure, your means correct" (A. Hingorani et al., 1985, p. 78). Maintaining detachment has very practical consequences. According to Gandhi, when a person is detached, one is more likely to choose right means. By choosing right means, Gandhi would explain, one can rest assured, without anxiety, that justice will be served. It is a simple ethic that states that all one can do is his or her best in any given moment to be of service in the world, the rest is up to God, or Spirit, or Destiny. Gandhi put it best

when he wrote: "If you work with detachment, you will refuse to be rushed and you will refuse to let anything get on your nerves" (A. Hingorani et al., 1985, p. 77).

Gandhi knew that detachment was not easy, but he saw it as being a vital prerequisite for anyone interested in practicing nonviolent social service and promoting peace, both inside oneself and in the world. "Detachment . . . is the hardest thing to achieve, and yet it is . . . absolutely necessary for perfect peace and for the vision of both the little self and the greatest Self" (A. Hingorani et al., 1985, p. 78). In order to experience this "perfect peace" and in order to initiate nonviolent action one must be able to live in the here and now, detached from concerns about the past and fears about the future. Only in this way can we clearly perceive what needs to be done in the present. Brandon (1976) puts it well when he writes: "I can be guilty about the past, apprehensive about the future, but only in the present can I act" (p. 64).

The most important area of Gandhi's thought, the area that enables one to bring ahimsa into practice, is the search for Self-awareness and peace of mind through prayer and meditation. The positive returns of prayer and meditation in helping to enrich one's spiritual life are chronicled in all of the world's great religions. Their efficacy in helping to combat stress is being recognized by many researchers. Benson (1975), Woolfolk, Lehrer, McCann and Rooney (1982) and Keefe (1986) all advocate various types of meditation that work to calm the mental processes in order to deal with stress where it originates — in the mind. By stilling the mind through these practices one is able to mollify the cumulative effects of stress and safeguard the mind against incursions of the dysfunctional thinking that engender stress in the first place.

Research into cognitive functioning tells us that meditation operates as a potent tool to bring the agitated mind under control and to help us shape and choose our cognitions according to our most cherished ideals. Woolfolk et al. (1982) found that subjects in their experiment comparing the relative effectiveness of meditation and progressive relaxation techniques "evidenced significant decreases in cognitive arousal" (p. 464) when they were involved in the systematic practice of meditation. Thomas Keefe (1986), a social worker, writes that when one is systematically practicing meditation that "eventually, thoughts that constitute new tasks and new opportunities for mastery . . . can be sustained intentionally and used as guides for action . . ." (p. 167). The power of cognitive restructuring is further highlighted in the famous words of the compassionate Buddha: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought: we are formed and molded by our thoughts" (The Dhammapada, v. 1-2; quoted in Easwaran, 1982, p. 32).

Meditation was the cornerstone of Gandhi's per-

sonal transformation and his success as a social activist (Easwaran, 1978). "Heartfelt prayer [meditation] steadies one's nerves, humbles one and clearly shows one the next step" (A. Hingorani et al., 1985, p. 225). It enabled him to integrate the concepts of ahimsa and satya into his consciousness where they were allowed to take root and flower over the course of his adult life. What better evidence do we have for the effectiveness of this method than Gandhi's very own life, a life dedicated to social work on the grandest scale, a life dedicated to improving the spiritual, political, economic and social conditions of an entire nation, if not the whole world.

Gandhi was not asking us to become agents for social change on the same scale that he was, but he did have faith that each of us possesses the internal resources needed to realize the same personal transformation. Gandhi shows this faith when he writes: "I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith" (Easwaran, 1978, p. 144). Brandon (1976), also a social worker, gives similar encouragement while writing about his own meditation practice: "The periods of meditation helped to quieten my mind and enabled a clearer perception of clients. It seemed that I could travel closer to my own essence as well as theirs" (p. 2). Brandon shows us that it is not necessary to be Gandhi in order to experience the benefits of meditation, benefits that are wide-ranging and very applicable to social work.

Another contribution of Gandhi's thought is the idea of maintaining significant and meaningful contact with people. The pressures of work often times impinge on one's ability to be with other people. Whether we are isolating ourselves due to work demands or personal preference or whether we are just not "present" with people when we are with them the effects can be the same: eroding personal relationships and exacerbating the anxiety they bring with them. "Man is not born to live in isolation, but he is essentially a social animal, independent and interdependent" (A. Hingorani et al., 1985, p. 181). This sentiment is shared by Nessel (1979) and Donovan (1987) who believe that social support and the feeling of belonging to a community of people with shared values can significantly reduce stress. This might lead one to actively seek out community with like-minded people, whether it be around interests related to work, play or spiritual life. Without a doubt it is important to take time out to be with people.

Conclusion

In summary, stress is clearly a problem for many social workers. Not only does it have emotional and physical manifestations in the worker, but it also affects the quality of the worker-client relationship and the relationships between colleagues. This discussion asserts that the primary source of stress is within the mind of the

individual and his or her perceptions of the environment. This insight is related to the cognitive therapy model, showing that by changing the way we perceive and think about ourselves, our clients, our colleagues and our work we can significantly reduce the stress in our lives.

To facilitate making the necessary changes in perception that help to reduce stress, a nonviolent approach to social work based on Mahatma Gandhi's concept of ahimsa is recommended. His message of nonviolence blends beautifully with the ideals of the social work profession and provides a constructive model with which individuals can restructure their cognitive approaches to their work and lives, thereby bringing about a peace of mind that greatly reduces stress and its debilitating effects. The key component in bringing the theory of ahimsa into practical use is the systematic practice of meditation.

Importantly, this nonviolent approach to social work not only enables a practitioner to effectively manage stress, but also provides a standard against which to judge the wisdom and compassion of all our actions as social workers, whether they relate to clinical practice or administrative and social policy decisions. Finally, Gandhi's message of nonviolence can be applied to every area of life, regardless of a person's position or status. Our challenge is to assume the responsibility of finding nonviolent solutions to the many problems we face, always drawing on the highest ideals of what it means to be human to help us in our task.

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**Leonard Capozzi is a second year MSW student at University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration.*

CONTROVERSIES IN THE REGULATION OF SPIRITUALLY ORIENTED HELPING

By Stephen Buhner

There is a growing movement to regulate strongly the mental health professions in the United States. Historically each profession in the mental health system struggles for recognition of its specific type of work. In this struggle, they fight established groups which already possess organizational and licensure recognition. For example, in Colorado, the social workers struggled with the licensed psychologists for over 10 years before finally achieving licensure. In this recognition process, groups seeking status go through similar procedures, make similar claims, and define competence along parallel lines. Yet, there is considerable question as to whether the procedures being followed and the areas being explored bear any relation to competence or ability to help (Friedman, 1962; Friedman, 1980; Spivak, 1984; Andreas, 1991; Hillman, 1990; Report of the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) on Mental Health Licensing, 1991; Michel, 1990; Baker, 1991; Haley, 1990). When spiritually oriented helping, whether ministerial or lay, is defined as a part of the mental health system (either through regulatory or licensed professional action) the assumptions about competency, protecting the public, and legitimacy of practice orientation become even more questionable (Canda, 1990). Adding to the difficulty of regulating spiritually oriented helping are the constitutional prohibitions against regulation of religion.

The purpose of this paper is to examine traditional regulatory concerns regarding helping, licensure procedures and claims, and the impact of these on the regulation of spiritually oriented helping. The ongoing regulatory policy debate in the state of Colorado will be used to illustrate the discussion. While regulation may be commendable for its overt intent, the attempt to protect the public by regulating the ministry creates specific and, perhaps, insurmountable problems. There are difficulties in allowing a few individuals on regulatory boards the power to determine the legitimacy of spiritually oriented helping approaches. The mental health field needs to have broad and diverse views of helping. Through this it may eventually be possible to determine what approaches do help those in need. Most certainly, consideration must include approaches from diverse cultures and spiritual traditions, some of which may entail radical departures

from conventional Euro-American mental health perspectives. The willingness of professionals and regulators to engage in cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural dialogue could help address the problems of regulating spiritually oriented helping.

This discussion is divided into four sections: Licensure Processes and Claims, which examines licensure procedures and evidence of the efficacy of licensure in protecting the public; Spiritually Oriented Helping, which considers the structure and content of spiritually oriented helping in contrast to secular modalities of mental health practice; Constitutional Limits on Regulating Religious Practice, which reviews the struggles that states have faced in exercising their mandate to protect the public without infringing on constitutional freedoms of religion; and Alternatives for Regulation, in which suggestions are offered regarding the interface between state concerns, professional practice concerns, consumer protection, and freedom of religious practice.

Licensure Processes and Claims

Common arguments for licensure are the needs to protect the consumer from shoddy or unsafe practices, to raise the standards of the profession, and to protect titles associated with specific groups. Generally unspoken but acknowledged by nearly all legislators and students of licensure is the desire on the part of the groups seeking licensure to obtain economic control of their practice domain and to receive third party payments (Friedman, 1962; Spivak, 1984). Finally, because of the exclusivity of practice rights granted to certain groups, other competing groups seek licensure to allow them to work within protected realms.

Any group wishing to be granted licensure by a state must show that the consumer is at risk of being harmed and that licensure will correct that harm. The state, through its mandate to protect the public health, safety, and welfare, exercises its police powers to regulate a profession. Hearings are held, laws are drafted and passed and boards established to regulate the profession. The primary regulators are representative members of the associations being regulated (Friedman, 1980; Michel, 1990).

The professional groups, in their desire to show public harm, often accuse each other of providing inferior and inadequate services (Spivak, 1984; Proceedings of the Colorado Sunset Committee on Mental Health Licensing, 1991; Fretz and Mills, 1980 [quoted in Spivak]; Baker, 1991). Yet there is no general agreement from the research in the field that educational training or licensure are related to competency.

"For every report that concludes that experience and credentials are related to competence (measured by successful therapy outcomes), there is a conclusion in another that they are not. Traditional licensing theory assumes

that competent practice is derived from the educational base, the skills development and the supervised experience that licensees must demonstrate prior to licensure. There is not, however, a lot of empirical data that supports this assumption as accurate" (Colorado DORA Report on Mental Health Licensing, 1991, p. 11).

In fact, the national test used for licensure of psychologists (EPPP) emphasizes research and methodology (55% of questions) over treatment interventions (6% of questions) (Spivak, 1984). Additionally, there is evidence suggesting that treatment by paraprofessionals, or just being on a waiting list to see a counselor, result in outcomes equal to or better than treatment by a licensed professional (Gambriel, 1990; Andreas, 1991).

"[A]s disputed as the research may be, there is empirical evidence that paraprofessionals have successful treatment experiences with clients. Even though researchers attack those studies, some of the latest data on the subject concludes 'Overall there still is not overwhelming evidence for a substantial superiority for either paraprofessionals or professionally trained therapists' (Berman, Norton and Arbisi of the University of Minnesota Medical School cited in Colorado DORA Report on Mental Health Licensing, 1991, p. 12).

There is some speculation among experts that higher degrees of training and education may actually result in poorer outcomes for clients (Spivak, 1984). As Carl Rogers (1962) put it, professionals are often too burdened by professional roles, theories, and techniques to exhibit the genuine warmth that clients need.

There is also debate about what constitutes effective treatment. For example, comparisons between varying (and competing) modalities often show virtually the same outcomes. For instance, a massive National Institute of Mental Health study compared cognitive behavioral therapy, interpersonal psychotherapy, and pharmacotherapy in the treatment of depression. "The study concluded that all three treatments were about equally effective, even though tricyclic medication produced the most rapid improvement" (Simon, 1991, p. 2). In general, there is no overall agreement in the mental health field that any particular type of therapy is superior to another or that education or licensure is relevant to competency to help. The one element which seems to be widely recognized as important in successful psychotherapy is a warm or wise personality, "the love factor" (Weiss, 1990; Spivak, 1984).

Though there is no agreement that licensure ensures competency there is agreement that licensure does not protect the consumer from harmful practices (Friedman, 1962, 1980; Winokur, 1991; Haley, 1990; Andreas, 1991). "Yet experience in other fields has indicated that licensure does not effectively protect the public. For example, licensing in the real estate field has

not had a significant impact on preventing land fraud. And in a study done by the FTC regarding regulation of the television repair industry, the report concluded that there was no more fraud in the state when there was no regulation than in the state with a comprehensive licensing scheme. As would be expected, prices were higher in the state with the comprehensive licensing scheme." See Rose, *Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Analysis*, Ariz. St. L. J. 189 (1979)" (Michel, 1991, p. 3).

The type of harm now commonly cited as primary justification for state action and restrictive licensure is sexual impropriety with clients (Colorado State Grievance Board 2 year report, 1990; Colorado DORA report, 1991; Winokur, 1991). Numerous groups have formed to advocate consumer rights on this issue. Most sources agree that sexual improprieties between counselors (religious and secular) and their clients are a growing national problem. However, licensure has had little impact on reducing it. "Despite years of controversy and public debate over the problem, thousands of troubled, disordered, addicted and deviant practitioners among California's 74,000 licensed mental health professionals continue to use their positions for sexual advantage, leaving patients emotionally scarred for life." (Winokur, 1991, p. A-2). A survey compiled by the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies in 1986 showed that knowledge of sexual improprieties between client and therapist was directly proportional to length of training, i.e. psychiatrists having the most knowledge of sexual misconduct by professionals (53.1%); professional counselors having the least (35.8%); licensed social workers were in the middle with 43.5% (DORA, 1986, quoted in Andreas, 1991). Articles are commonly appearing expressing concern about the clergy's sexual misconduct (Schoener and Milgrom, 1989, *Fortune*, 1989). It would seem reasonable, therefore, to promote specific legislation against sexual misconduct rather than to promote state regulation over types of therapy practice. In addition to the ambiguities surrounding licensure in general, there are specific problems that arise when secular standards are applied to regulate spiritually oriented helping.

Spiritually Oriented Helping

Spiritually oriented helping is significantly different from secular psychotherapy modalities, even if secular methods are included in the spiritual treatment approach (Colorado Association of Holistic Healing Professionals, 1991; Carlson, 1991). The primary difference lies not in what is done but why (*Destefano v. Grabrian*, 763 F. 2d 275 [Colo. 1988]). Those working as religious or spiritual counselors hold different assumptions about the cause of distress than do those working as secular psychotherapeutic helpers (Darling, 1990; Eddy, 1875; Eliade, 1964; Horn, 1991). In fact some religious helpers are now beginning to criticize the conventional assump-

tions held in the fields of psychology and social work as inappropriate to solving problems basically spiritual in nature (Zeiger, 1991).

"If you're out of your mind in another culture, or quite disturbed, or impotent, or anorexic, you look at what you've been eating, who's been casting spells on you, when you last missed reverence to the gods or didn't take part in the dance, broke some tribal custom. Whatever it could be thousands of other things - the plants, the water, the curses, the demons, the gods, being out of touch with the great spirit. It would never be what happened to you with your mother and your father forty years ago" (Hillman, 1990, p. 16).

Some issues facing social work and other therapeutic disciplines in relation to spiritually sensitive helping revolve around expanding the assumptions upon which helping is based. Tests of scientific legitimacy are not sufficient when one enters realms where widely varying religious beliefs hold sway. Helpful outcomes are dependant on defining the problem in a culturally specific manner and then applying a remedy. The application of therapeutic remedies to people whose fundamental assumptions about the origin of disease and health are at odds with contemporary psychotherapeutic theories is inappropriate without first understanding their culture and religious specific assumptions. Healing approaches can then be applied in terms designed to enlist the aid of the client's belief systems (Ortiz, 1991; Tieraona, 1991).

Just as clients hold varied cultural or religious belief systems, there is a wide variety of healing professionals who specialize in culturally or religiously specific healing approaches (Canda, 1986). "Religious beliefs may take many forms, ranging from theism (e.g. the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition) to non-theistic monism (e.g. Hindu Vedanta or Buddhism), to animism (e.g. shamanism). Religious social organizations range from large formal institutions (such as Roman Catholicism) to private friendship associations of like minded individuals who are not members of any formal religious institution. In the field of social work currently, there is a trend to refer to religion in this most comprehensive meaning as 'spirituality'. Typically, the person who regards him or herself as a religious helper understands and practices helping within the context of explicit moral commitments and cosmological beliefs that have the qualities enumerated here. There is usually a sense of vocation, that is, having been called in a sacred way to the path of compassion. Of course what this "sacred" way is varies tremendously" (Canda, 1990, p. 2).

There is serious question as to the appropriateness of secular regulatory bodies determining the legitimacy of religious practitioners' work. It seems impossible for a board to have the necessary expertise in such diverse spiritual perspectives. Further, Maslow (1970) contends

that control by organizational hierarchy is itself antithetical to free and spontaneous religious experience. Regulatory boards are typically composed of secular licensed professionals whose assumptions about the nature of healing and disease could often be at odds with the assumptions guiding religiously specific counseling. A Roman Catholic admonition that one's problems derived from sinfulness, a shamanic practitioner's attribution of disease to possession by spirits, or a Christian Scientist's assertion that the disease is an illusion would all be in conflict with contemporary psychotherapeutic assumptions (Ortiz, 1991). The regulatory boards setting guidelines for proper behavior would base their guidelines on accepted secular practices, thus forcing religiously based helpers to emulate systems of healing which may conflict with their fundamental religious beliefs. This can result in prohibitions against such things as the ministry allowing the indigent to volunteer at counseling centers to offset costs of helping (e.g. Colorado State Grievance Board, 1989) despite the fact that this practice is a well established part of Christian helping. Further, in attempting to define what a legitimate religious practitioner is or is not, the State comes perilously close to creating a state religion, something prohibited by federal and state constitutions.

Due to racism, ethnocentrism, and sectarian competition, there is some tendency for Americans to disparage culturally or religiously specific healing practices different from their own (Moore, 1979; Erdoes, 1972; Buhner, 1991; Van Tuyl, 1991). Also, there has been an historical conflict between science and religion. This can lead to mockery (Baker, 1990) or the assertion that all successful therapeutic interventions must be based on science (Martinez, 1991).

Social work is involved with people of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Therefore, social work experiences conflicting demands from individuals of diverse cultural or religious backgrounds for helping; from the states regarding separation of church and state; and from its profession regarding standards of practice, ethics, and protection of professional turf. When the social work profession, and other mental health professions, attempt to deal with these conflicts through regulation, services for people seeking spiritually sensitive helping may be unfairly restricted

As social workers move more and more into political regulatory activity, they may begin to lose sight of their primary mission of supporting client self-determination. Regulation for consumer protection is often entrusted to conventional psychotherapeutic disciplines. Often social workers, psychologists and other licensed professionals actively seek it (Proceedings of the Colorado State Sunset Committee Hearings on Mental Health Licensing, 1991). But regulation of spiritually based helping has direct

limits placed on it by the first amendment.

Constitutional Limits on Regulating Religious Practice

The first amendment both mandates freedom of religion and also prohibits the creation of a "recognized" or state religion. Yet how spiritual and religious issues are recognized and responded to is a matter of continuing concern. Since no specific guidelines were laid down in the constitution, states must deal with the boundaries between legitimate state interest and infringement on protected liberties. When the state and the individual come into conflict and neither will cease their activity, the conflict becomes a matter for the courts. Some of the religious issues in conflict regard tax concerns, military service, and healing.

"Defining 'religion' for legal purposes is an inherently tricky proposition. For one, the very attempt brings the government exceedingly close to involvement with ecclesiastical matters against which the First Amendment carefully guards. Additionally, the tremendous diversity in which human beings may perceive of the universe and their place in it may make the task virtually impossible" (Sherr v. Northpoint Union Free School District, United States District Court, NY, CV 87-3116).

Over time, the courts have determined ways in which they, and the states, can evaluate if religious practice is genuine rather than a ruse designed to circumvent the state's legitimate right to regulate for the general welfare. In this legal context, it is not necessary that the person claiming religious freedoms believe in "God" (Torasco v. Watkins, 367 U.S. 488, 81 S. Ct. 1680 [1961]). "[T]he test of belief in relation to a Supreme Being is whether a given belief that is sincere and meaningful and occupies a place in the life of the possessor parallel to that filled by the orthodox belief in God" (U.S. v. Seeger, 380 U.S. 163, 165-66, 85 S. Ct. 850, 854, [1965]).

Another primary consideration is whether the individual "will categorically disregard elementary self-interest rather than transgress religious tenets" (U.S. v. Allen, 760 F. 2d 447, 450, 2nd Cir, [1985]). The final test is whether or not the beliefs espoused by an individual are sincerely held. "Sincerity analysis seeks to determine the subjective good faith of an adherent . . . the goal, of course, is to protect only those beliefs which are held as a matter of conscience. Human nature being what it is, however, it is frequently difficult to separate this inquiry from a forbidden one involving the veracity of the underlying belief" (Barber, 650, F.2d at 441). In attempting to determine sincerely held beliefs, the courts also look at how long the beliefs have been held, whether there is a pattern of behavior based on the beliefs over time, and whether the person holds membership in organizations which advocate those beliefs.

In contrast to courts, state governments generally assume legitimacy of their regulatory boards' evalua-

tions. The court's function is to adjudicate disputes; the state's function is to regulate. Mental health boards usually depend on advice given them by a representative of the State Attorney General's office. How they interpret statutes regarding their power over religiously based helping often depends on the quality of the advice received from that office. Successful adjudication of disputes regarding exemptions from state regulation often depend on the position and financial strength of the parties in question. The Catholic Church will have much less trouble defending its right to exemption than a Native American Medicine Teacher, a small congregation, non-denominational Christian minister, or a representative of a Wiccan Church.

The states, in attempting to solve problems, may support widely varying recognitions of religious freedoms. In a recent tax law, the Colorado legislature stated in part: "The General Assembly hereby finds and declares that religious worship has different meanings to different religious organizations; that the Constitutional guarantees regarding establishment of religion and the free exercise of religion prevent public officials from inquiring as to whether particular activities of religious organizations are in the furtherance of the religious purposes of such organizations; that such religious activities are an integral part of the religious worship of religious organizations; and that activities of religious organizations which are in furtherance of their religious purposes constitute religious worship. . ." (C.R.S 39-3-106, quoted in Hofgard, 1990).

During the same period Colorado also passed more restrictive and narrow regulations, through the advocacy of the Mental Health Board. In these regulations, so-called legitimate spiritual practitioners must be connected to a formal religious institution, have a congregation, and not advertise or charge for services (Daraghy, 1988). Although these regulations were eventually rescinded, they led to the investigation of numerous ministers by the state. The state's new rulings, though much clearer, if applied to Jesus, Mary Baker Eddy (the founder of Christian Science), or Black Elk (the Lakota Sioux Medicine Teacher) would not find these practitioners to be religious (Colorado State Grievance Board Rules, 1991). Though such practitioners, if willing to go to court, would presumably win under current court decisions, the cost, time involved, and the chilling effect of such state activity in religious realms are immense. This interference seems contrary to the view of the Supreme Court. In 1890, it affirmed that the first amendment "was intended to allow every one under the jurisdiction of the United States to entertain such notions respecting his relations to his Maker and the duties they impose as may be approved by his judgement and conscience, and to exhibit his sentiments in such form of worship as he may think proper, not

injurious to the equal rights of others, and to prohibit legislation for the support of any religious tenets, or the mode of worship of any sect" (Davis v. Beason, 133 U.S., [1890], quoted in Hofgard, 1990).

Alternatives for Regulation

Although the mandate to protect the public is often taken sincerely by those trusted with regulatory enforcement, the unique structure of the United States constitution places severe limits on such enforcement. The drafters of the constitution recognized that encroachments on religious freedoms, even for such factors as protecting the public, were, in the long run, more harmful than allowing an unregulated practice of religion. Though this puts tremendous pressure on regulators and can lead to cries for public reform, it is a limit which should not be exceeded. Further, evaluations of treatments in the mental health field do not lead to clear conclusions as to what constitutes competency or efficacy to practice. Thus doubt is cast on the arguments traditionally used to support controls over religious (or even secular) counseling.

An alternative to regulation and restriction of spiritually oriented helping that supports protection of the public is informed disclosure. Informed disclosure means giving all pertinent information to clients which would allow them to make an informed choice. By allowing the client to make informed choices and providing a method for obtaining redress for grievances, the primary obligations of the state are taken care of in the least restrictive method possible. The controversial issue of defining legitimate practice is circumvented. The person seeking services is supported to determine what he or she wishes to choose in the search for health. The problems of regulating religion are avoided.

In addition, the state may determine what specific behaviors (not therapeutic modalities) are dangerous to clients and pass legislation forbidding them. Thus behaviors such as sexual exploitation of clients, kickbacks for referrals, and violation of confidentiality can be prohibited. Again, the problematic efforts to define legitimate therapy and to regulate religious practice are avoided.

A further crucial step in dealing with controversies in the regulation of spiritually oriented helping is encouraging overt interfaith and interdisciplinary dialogue. Though this exists on a small scale in a number of areas, notably in services for refugees by social work professionals, a large scale endorsement is missing from within the mental health system itself. Such dialogue could address conflict about professional turf and alternative cultural and spiritual systems of healing.

The suggestions offered above may serve as a beginning point for future solutions to regulatory problems. They support minimum government intrusion, constitutional protections, and consumer self-determination. They

also support openness to diverse approaches to helping, so that the mental health field can continue to grow through its rich tradition of experimentation and exploration.

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*Stephen Buhner is a religious counselor and lobbyist on health issues in Boulder, Colorado.

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EDITORIAL FOREWORD

Edward R. Canda

Recent Accomplishments

1992 has been a year of much activity and accomplishment for the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. Membership has increased to approximately 250. Various society members have developed workshops and curriculum innovations throughout the country. For example, Patrick O'Brien, of the Advisory Group, has been active promoting SSSW at national and local meetings of social workers and mental health professionals. His efforts included an information exchange presentation on "Spirituality, Social Work, and Empowerment" at the NASW World Assembly in Washington D.C. last July; 200 people expressed interest. I conducted national presentations and networking at the annual Council on Social Work Education program meeting and the international CSWE/International Association of Schools of Social Welfare meeting in Washington, D.C. The latter meeting opened up more opportunities for international networking, which I believe is one of the most important tasks to be addressed in future SSSW efforts. (See the article on "International Networking" in this issue.) One of our members, Donald Brickell of Massachusetts, has co-founded a student caucus on social work practice and spirituality at Boston University School for Social Work. That group is also reaching out to other area social work schools. Several students from other schools have called me for help in developing theses and dissertations on spirituality and social work. In addition, several faculty have contacted me about developing courses on the subject at their schools. These activities suggest that momentum continues to grow.

Society activities have attracted national publicity in *Common Boundary* journal (issue May/June 1992), and *Religion Watch* (July/August 1992).

Advocacy by SSSW, the North American Association of Christians in Social Work, and others resulted in an important accomplishment with national impact. As mentioned in the last issue of this journal, the Council on Social Work Education has been engaged in the process of revising the curriculum standards for accreditation of social work education programs. Since the early 1970s, references to spirituality had been deleted. In the revised draft of new standards, there are three references to religious diversity and spirituality as important topics for education. The Curriculum Policy Statement (Draft 7/19/92) requires that each program must include content about "population groups that are particularly relevant to the program's mission" and

"populations-at-risk," including those distinguished by religion (among other types of diversity). It affirms that "Practice content also includes approaches and skills for practice with clients from differing social, cultural, racial, religious, spiritual, and class backgrounds and with systems of all sizes" (p.9, emphasis added). The statement does not go as far as we wished, in terms of recognizing spirituality as a basic aspect of human experience and behavior relevant to all curriculum areas. However, this is an important accomplishment because the wording recognizes that religion and spirituality are legitimate and valuable topics for education. Further, the references and their professional value context make it clear that the topics need to be addressed in terms of diversity, rather than imposition of any one spiritual perspective. It will no longer be possible for social work schools or individual faculty to argue that these subjects are unacceptable.

SSSW has also developed a possibility for expansion of its publication activity. Until arrangements are confirmed, I cannot explain the details. However, it would involve establishing content on spirituality as a regular feature in a quarterly scholarly journal published by a well established company. Since this would involve a change of subscription rate and procedure, *do not renew your subscription for 1993 at this time*. You will receive a renewal form and explanation as soon as negotiations are completed.

These accomplishments and developments make it important for the SSSW membership to reconsider its future direction and structure. Please respond to the letter enclosed with this issue, which explains possible future developments of SSSW and solicits your input. This is extremely important for SSSW to remain viable and creative.

In This Issue

As a special service to subscribers, this issue contains the third topical bibliography on spirituality and social work. This bibliography follows the format of the update in volume 2 number 2 (1992) which supplemented the extensive bibliography distributed to members in 1991. If readers discover other social work writings on the topic that have not been included in any bibliography, please send the information for a future possible update.

The articles in this issue provide a significant contrast of spiritual perspectives and assumptions. Seplowin describes the basic assumptions and therapeutic approach of "karma therapy," which she has applied in her clinical social work practice. Karma therapy, as she defines it, draws on Euro-American theosophical and esoteric writers, such as Helen

Blavatsky, Alice Bailey, and Benjamin Creme. These writers, in turn, adapted ideas from Vedantic (Hindu) philosophy and religion, as well as other metaphysical sources. In the following article, Singh provides an overview of concepts and treatment approaches from Asian Indian yoga, biofeedback, and auto-genic training, all of which have been influenced by Vedantic philosophy. Although Seplowin and Singh share some Vedantic assumptions, their specific formulations are distinct. For readers who would like to extend their knowledge of Vedantic and karma yoga applications to social work and human service, I highly recommend the following two books: *Compassion in Service*, by Ram Dass and Mirabai Bush (New York: Bell Tower, 1992), and *Vivekananda's Approach to Social Work*, by Indira Patel (Mylapore, India: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1987, available from Vedanta Book Center, 5423 S. Hyde Park Blvd., Chicago, Il., 60615).

Ressler presents a comprehensive review of the seminal contributions of Alan Keith-Lucas concerning the connection between religion and social work. Keith-Lucas has been one of the most continuous and prolonged advocates for linkage between religion and social work in the history of the profession. His particular vantage is that of Christianity. The assumptions and terms differ markedly from the first two articles. Yet, Keith-Lucas has argued consistently for the need to be respectful and supportive of diverse spiritual perspectives. Ressler's article is followed by Keith-Lucas' review of the new book, *Church Social Work*.

The juxtaposition of Eastern and Western spiritual perspectives in this issue challenges readers to consider how their own spiritual belief commitments relate to these contrasting views and whether it is possible to establish common understanding and cooperation among them. I suggest that the reader approach these articles not just as an intellectual exercise, but also as a self-clarification challenge. Consider what it is about one's own personal strengths, limitations, commitments, and biases that predispose to a particular reaction. I learned an appropriate metaphor to describe this way of reading from Juan Hernandez, a social work professor at California State University-Sacramento. He explained that Aztec scribes instructed their students to read the sacred texts as though they look through a mirror with a hole in the center. Through the hole, it is possible to read the text as though it's meanings are objective, outside of oneself. But since the hole is surrounded by a mirror, reading through it shows that the meanings revealed, and the reactions to them, are also a reflection of oneself.

* * * * *

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SOCIAL WORK AND KARMA THERAPY

Virginia Montero Seplowin

As social work professionalized, it became eager to rank as a science and replaced its religious roots with secular values, skills, and dependency on government (Canda, 1988b). This thrust away from religion gave way to clinical theories that fostered ego-centered functioning and relationships. Intervention no longer supported spiritual values for those so inclined as a way of shoring up inner strengths. The present social conditions indicate a need to return to spirituality and religion with a new stress on both self-awareness and social responsibility particularly since a changing population, with an enormous increase in peoples of color, responds to spirituality and religion. (Garcia, 1968; Brandon, 1976; Delgado, 1977).

Fortunately, as part of a larger world pattern, social work is rekindling an interest in a spiritual approach (Siporin, 1985). Spirituality is distinct from religion. Spirituality as essence involves inclusiveness and compassion as non-religious humanitarian values. Religion, as form, involves particularistic rituals and practices which subordinate values of transcendence. Both are an intrinsic aspect of the helping process (Brower, 1984). Recently, efforts to incorporate eastern and western insights useful for social work theory building and practice have multiplied (Keefe, 1975a, 1975b, 1986; Imbrogno and Canda, 1988; Canda, 1989). In fact, efforts to articulate a conceptual framework that encompasses an international social work perspective based on converging eastern and western values are well under way (Patel, 1987).

For instance, Ajaya (1983) has categorized four views derived from a variety of cosmological assumptions that can be related into a unified eastern-western psychological paradigm: reductionism (representing the western mechanistic view); humanism (wherein conscious experience is primary); dualism (with a dichotomy between human and universal consciousness), and monism (unitary consciousness: self as Self). Each view represents succeeding levels of consciousness expansion and universal comprehension, the broader including the narrower. Concepts and methods from the ancient Vedantic-monistic psychology of yoga have augmented western psychology: consciousness (beyond ego, superego, and sub-consciousness), the structure of inner reality, the mind-body unity and its multi-level functions, the value of *prana* or life force for physical-emotional alignment, and meditation are a few (Keefe, 1975b; Rama, Ballentine, & Ajaya, 1976; Wilber, 1980; Dass & Gorman, 1985).

When practices cross cultures, the original language may be borrowed. (Bright, 1968; Jaynes, 1976). Some foreign words are absorbed; others are eventually replaced by new terms. This article is an attempt to facilitate the cross-over of valuable eastern concepts to the social work community as free of uncommon terminology as possible. Its underlying assumptions fall in the monistic category mentioned above.

The ideas presented herein are derived from the writings of esotericists Helen P. Blavatsky (Theosophical School), Alice A. Bailey (Arcane School), and Benjamin Creme (Share International). They provide a progressive development (from 1877 to the present). Each subsequent writer builds on the previous works yet each offers new insights. For instance, Blavatsky offered a complex cosmological

view of impacting energies, forces, and patterns behind the universal order; Bailey reiterated the laws and principles of the energies that underlie human psychology and offered techniques helpful to human growth and development. Creme simplifies the language, encourages intelligent thinking, and motivates listeners to get involved in world sharing and justice at any preferred level. Thus while esoteric teachings deal with the subjective side of human experience they do not exclude practical action. The teachings offer a conceptual framework that includes a "higher psychology" concerned with the expansion of consciousness, as well as "a science of being." That is to say, the personality and the soul are one unit. The personality without the soul aspect is incomplete, and the person is not truly individuated until this soul aspect is recognized and integrated. The human struggle reveals multitudinous degrees of advancement in this process.

These esoteric theories begin with the premise of wholeness. Wholeness is defined as the basic unity of energy (called life or active intelligence), its physical and non-physical manifestations, cycles, patterns, and frequencies—from dense inertness to luminescent pervasiveness. The apparent illogicalities that exist are paradoxes resulting from our nascently developed minds which do not perceive nor understand deeply enough at this stage. Nevertheless, there is a constant consciousness expansion going on all the time. The concepts belong to a distinct body of knowledge with laws and formulated principles as well as a results-oriented methodology. This psychospiritual view encourages the development of the intuition. Intuition is the capacity for inner vision, the non-intellectual grasp of an underlying truth. At present, empirical studies of hypotheses that would bring esotericism into the mainstream of academic science await to be made—this is a wide open field for the innovative and courageous. On the other hand, the persistence of the esoteric viewpoint lies in the fact that there is widespread, historical and ongoing experiential evidence and personal testimony that attest to its veracity. In short, esoteric science is still outside the pale not because it is invalid but because academic science has not taken it seriously nor yet created instruments of measurement that are sufficiently sensitive.

The concept of karma therapy is offered as an alternative to mainstream social work approaches. If the profession is to re-integrate spiritual and religious values into its theory and practice, it must also include new interpretations of the old wisdoms. What follows is (a) a definition of karma therapy and descriptions of its methodology; (b) an introduction to

the science of energy from a particular esoteric viewpoint; (c) a discussion of energy movement in group meditation; (d) a perspective on the social worker as a model of these spiritual values; and (e) some implications for social work practice. Obviously, the approach will not appeal to everyone. This method of work appeals to those therapists and clients who have a strong intuitive sense of the whole and who seek to fulfill a yearning that can be interpreted as "the sweet call of the soul."

Karma Therapy: Description and Method

Karma therapy is the distillation of the mentioned esoteric writings whose core is the concept of undivided, cyclic, and intelligent energy moving toward a conscious synthesis of all its manifestations. Furthermore, the concept of energy is understood as charged movement whose dual negative-positive nature functions throughout the cosmos. On the human plane, the constant friction between these polar opposites impels evolutionary change and offers opportunities to exercise awareness, will, and choice.

Karma therapy is soul-oriented because the soul is the directing agent of its counterpart on the physical plane, the personality. The soul has its own agenda which the personality must eventually carry out. Thus, the therapist sees the client as being where s/he needs to be in order to learn the next lesson. That is, the karmic process and point of evolution combine (Bailey, 1953). The karma therapist may work with fragile egos that need grounding. In that case, the therapist defines the problem and the psychodynamic pattern of the client, supports strengths, normalizes negative feelings, and teaches methods of coping. The therapist also introduces the client to here-and-now thinking and responsibility for all personal thoughts and feelings. When acceptable, the therapist encourages the frequent practice of gratitude for life which engenders a sense of joyful abundance; together these are preludes to the habits of love and forgiveness. The therapist teaches the client to connect with the inner aspect of light, understood as a manifestation of soul, through visualization and active imagination. Meditation is encouraged. For example, when appropriate, the therapist uses the focusing technique (Bailey, 1953; Krishnamurti, 1973; Gendlin, 1979) in which disturbing feelings are concentrated on as much as possible without thoughts. In the presence of the therapist, the client is less fearful of the inner violence and pain pressing for recognition and release. When done correctly and repetitively, this direct technique allows feelings to fully register in conscious awareness. Sudden images or insights may

emerge. The client is in control here and learns that the doorway to health and wholeness requires going through the dark density of the personality self to reach the pure light and life within. When the soul is recognized as the true Self, the client begins to see the "good" and "bad" in terms of a deeper on-going process—the soul's need to experience the opposites on the earth plane in order to integrate them. The balancing leads to greater personality detachment, centeredness, and consciousness expansion. Life with soul identification becomes more free and adventuresome.

In a sense, the work gets done on the soul plane, impelled by the therapist's healing but non-attached guidance. The client's natural pacing is respected. The important, distinguishing feature of karma therapy is that the therapist's frame of reference consciously includes the unity of the soul and personality, an understanding of the laws and cycles of energy, and the distinctions between soul and personality impulses. The concepts of karma therapy stretch the psychological field beyond the ego to the whole.

The Science of Energy

The nature, laws, cycles, and appearances of energy comprise part of an ancient body of knowledge known as the Ageless Wisdom (Bailey, 1962a and 1962b). This fusion of eastern and western disciplines is based on the notions that all things in the universe originate from one source, that human separateness is illusory, and that the way to understand outer chaos is to go inward, each individual being a holographic fragment of the whole.

Modern science substantiates that a myriad of energy streams and forces sweep across the cosmos, weaving a web from which all forms, from "thought to thing," emerge (Brunton, 1972). At that level everything is interconnected with everything else. (Toben, 1975). These energy streams have been classified into seven major qualities each with specific characteristics: Ray I, Will or Power; Ray II, Love or Wisdom; Ray III, Active Intelligence; Ray IV, Harmony (through conflict), Beauty or Art; Ray V, Concrete Knowledge or Science; Ray VI, Abstract Idealism; Ray VII, Ceremonial (or Organizational) Magic (Bailey, 1962). These penetrate the human form through seven major energy centers or chakras. Much pioneering remains to be done in charting the kaleidoscopic changes of energy from the cosmic to the physical planes and the effects on human behavior.

The energies manifest in nature as mineral, plant, animal, human and spiritual ranging from dense to pervasive concentration. "Spiritual", here,

is defined as a self-initiated activity that moves an individual from a lower to a higher vibratory plane (Bailey, 1962). The human unit is constituted of the etheric-physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects. In other words, an individual is not one definitive body but is composed of interconnected and interpenetrated layers of atomic bodies (aspects) which direct or influence, complement or counter each other. The criss-crossing action of energy creates many focal points in the physical body. The seven major centers (chakras) control the energy flow from the underlying web into the individual endocrine system producing in the human a host of physical, emotional, and mental conditions (Bailey, 1953).

According to these esoteric sources, the mental plane consists of the higher, intuitive mind and the lower, rational mind. The intuitive mind is the seat of the higher Self or soul and connects the transpersonal energies with the lower mind. The soul is the vital center of each human unit, capable of directing the personality when the latter opens up to it. In other words, as the personality advances in awareness (through alignment which is accidental at first and becomes habitual eventually) the sense of connection with the whole increases and demonstrates as genuine service to the whole. This growing sensitivity has a reciprocal action in that the soul is then able to deepen its hold on the personality. The term "personality" subsumes the lower physical, emotional, and rational aspects. Thus, it is at the mental level—the point where human power can be exerted—that the spiritual and material planes meet. Through alignment of the soul, the mind, and the brain, energy from the higher Self center penetrates the dense, physical body and brings about a harmonious fusion of the disparate forces (Bailey, 1962a). When the refined energies of the soul cannot flow freely through the various bodies of the human being, physical and psychological imbalances occur. All growth and transformations result from that radiation.

The familiar "obligatory scene" (Haddick, 1985) in a novel or drama which presents the inescapable conflict to be faced and resolved and which forever changes the character is what life presents to us as *karma*. It literally means action or work. In the larger context, karma as the "law of cause and effect" keeps all the energies in balance. Blavatsky described it as, "that unseen and unknown law which *adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably* each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer" (1888). Karma is a force inherent in matter according to Bailey (1962a). No plane of energy, even the highest or most subtle, is outside the karmic wheel.

We produce good and bad karma all the time; it is not necessarily from a previous life (Creme, 1987). There is karma for an individual, group, family, society, nation, and, all of humanity. Individual karma combines to form that of a group. The basis of karma is attachment, that is, strong driving desires.

Karma is linked with reincarnation. It is the permanent atom of the soul—not the impermanent personality—that is expanding its consciousness as part of the cosmic evolution. For this reason the soul requires repeated cycles of return to the physical plane through different bodies or rebirths since the earth's temporal zone wears out the material bodies quickly (Bailey, 1962a).

The physical plane sojourn allows the mind to construct a tiny reality and to focus on specific, limited events. This circumscription permits experience to take place (Toben, 1975). By expanding through the various planes, from subtle to dense and back again, cosmic energy gains knowledge of itself. The increasing intelligence of a vast consciousness as a result of human experience and its impact on each new generation of humans is explored by morphogenecist Sheldrake (1981).

The permanent atom of the individual higher Self or soul manifests as part of a group, hence the collective karma of family and other groups. As the personality matures into a conscious and detached individual, free will and choice are exercised to gradually submerge personal desire into the intelligent will of the group. The cyclic laws of energy express as reincarnation in the human domain, much as the cycles of nature are seen in recurring plant life, the seasons, and in the earth's rotations. From the holistic perspective, the energies constantly strive toward unification on the grosser material planes to reflect the non-separativeness of the subtle planes. When human beings cooperate with that thrust, they benefit; when they resist, life becomes exceedingly difficult. The Romans stated it succinctly, "The fates lead him who will, him who won't they drag" (Campbell, 1988).

Through the use and development of a refined intuitive faculty, it is also possible to gain illumination—transpersonal knowledge that comes directly, complete, and clear. Flashes of illumination increase from accidental and rare to progressively frequent when the head center is activated. Illumination breaks the barriers of the rational mind, activates the heart, and makes the individual willingly adaptable to the needs of the inner life. With practice, the individual or group *invokes* the totality and eventually a response is evoked.

Meditation With Groups

Meditation is a discipline that aligns the brain, mind, and higher Self, as well as the seven major physical centers. Practiced regularly by a group, the combined energies of the meditators intensely focused on the mental plane form a powerful integrating force over time. Successfully achieved, an influx of radiation from a higher dimension releases unlimited amounts of energy into the lower plane (Taimni, 1974). The process is similar to what occurs when the sun's energy is directed through a magnifying lens.

When a group functions as a unit on the mental plane, it produces internal activity leading to integration within the personalities. The precipitated higher energies stimulate the physical, emotional, and mental vehicles. This process does not always lead to relaxation. Reactions depend on the quality of energy that the individual is contacting. The "cleaning out" activity may feel unsettling. But an integration process takes place when the individual perseveres. Often the meditator may begin to undergo "tests" and the outer life condition reflects the inner reorganization going on. When this occurs, the meditator often discovers new centeredness and strength in facing challenges that produced fear in the past. The effects will differ for each group, among the individuals, and from time to time.

Service, which is the nature of the soul, must be undertaken sooner or later to prevent a congestion of energies. Service is not simply good deeds; it includes consciously relaxing the ego to reach out and meet the needs of others. It also eventually includes commitment to the soul-mind-brain connections so that the giving is the result of *being* rather than *doing*. Thus, meditation and conscious service are powerful therapeutic tools. Psychotherapy purports to heal the splits within the self, but meditation heals "*the split from life as a whole*" (Welwood, 1983).

The Social Work Therapist as a Model

The self begins life expressing selfishness, while psychologic and spiritual growth increase the expression of *selflessness*. The very process of freeing the "I" simultaneously expands the boundaries to include the world. Psychological difficulties are universal, not unique. Life, the ultimate teacher, trains those willing to learn to accept what comes up each moment, to endure the inner turmoils with dignity and strength so that effectiveness is not impaired, and to forget oneself in the larger pain of others. Done consciously, this forgetting is not denial. It is *mind training* for greater impersonality. Crises evoke focus and determination and, when resolved, they also evoke a sense of joy, gain, and freedom, at any stage of development.

In karma therapy, the therapist is an instrument of service with the responsibility of keeping the self centered and exercising *love*. Love, from the energy point of view, is not an emotion but a principle of magnetism that works against separatism. (Bailey, 1962a). Love is the fusion of energies, the result of vibratory coherence. The therapist must also develop the quality of *harmlessness* via the use of a disciplined mind. Love demonstrates magnetism while action demonstrates radiation. These two qualities are essential; when cultivated by the therapist with a conscious will-to-serve, healing powers develop.

The attitude of the therapist is compassion but the work is mentally disciplined. It is the constant awareness of the therapist in contact with the whole that differentiates karma therapy work with energy from traditional therapy. When right action is accompanied by aspiration, the higher aspects of the physical, emotional, and mental bodies are stimulated. Their magnetic power increases to attract new high grade atoms (Bailey, 1962b). For this reason, the therapist must retrain personal thinking patterns by replacing negative thoughts with here-and-now attention. The habit of conscious choice holds the ego in check. Ultimately, however, it is not will but love—heartfelt, propelling and selfless—that heals both therapist and client. It becomes clear that the therapist cannot serve as a guide unless meditation, study of esoteric principles, and practice of the spiritual will are undertaken.

Clients resonate with karma therapy when it is presented to them in a way that re-inforces their own spiritual belief systems. They leave with a better understanding of inclusive values and direction. The principles of energy lead to a truly holistic approach in therapy. So much so that from this view clients come to us as a result of *our* karma. They mirror attributes of ourselves that need to be looked at and resolved. Our clients serve us even as we serve them. Conclusion: Implications For Social Work Practice

Although social workers have a tendency toward compassion and social justice, intellectual training and bureaucratic demands are constraints that work against the highly fragile holistic inclinations, if these are not deliberately vitalized. The personal challenge for social workers is to sense the excitement and authenticity of spiritual and religious paradigms. The inner-outer boundary is crossed when the spiritual dimension in oneself is developed. Meditation allows "bubbles" of self-truths to emerge. Only to the degree that there is clarity about oneself can genuine understanding and effective influence occur. The healing energy does not reside *in* us but

passes through us.

Concern about ethical values and advocacy skills is urgently called for. For instance, the world is emerging as a planetary culture; that reality must color all present thought and action. Science is beginning to penetrate the mystery of the mind. New behavior techniques and methodologies must be experimented with to avoid anachronistic solutions. Since the democratic process is perpetually in flux, individuals and groups must remain vigilant to constricting impositions. Ultimately, society's failures stem from moral failures. Ethical behavior is borne out of introspection (Mouravieff, 1989). Clear-minded, selfless efforts on behalf of the larger community are important. The present grass roots movements must be heard and assisted because their felt needs signal the new directions. People power must grow to vie equitably with the highly organized vested interests of the world. This provides a wide arena for social workers to be sensitive, informed, and creatively active. Yesteryear required muscle power; the present requires mind power. Social work can lead other helping professions in this regard so that together we can undertake the great work of transforming the world that lies before us.

Accordingly, this article draws on esoteric philosophy and psychology to describe the energy constitution of humans. The laws of energy substantiate the spiritual inclination as a response to the reality in nature. Karma therapy includes this basic energy factor and its effect on human behavior. The practice of meditation is encouraged. This perspective suggests that a holistic propensity, familiarity with a metaphysical orientation, studies in comparative religions, and a commitment to the exercise of a spiritual discipline be included in the preparation of future social workers.

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**Virginia Montero Seplowin, D.S.W., BCD, has a private clinical practice in New York, New York. She is also a non-governmental representative to the United Nations for Share International.*

INTEGRATING CONCEPTS FROM EASTERN PSYCHOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY: A TREATMENT APPROACH FOR ASIAN-AMERICAN CLIENTS

Ram Naresh Singh

Many social workers, regardless of their personal religious affiliation, look at spirituality or religion as having no relevance to social work practice. Perhaps this is due to concerns about separation between church and state and non-sectarian democratic values. Even though they themselves might follow some religious practices and might seek some reassurance from the religious sources, they often

fail to fully appreciate the bearing on their professional career (Wilson, 1982). Lost in their deep concern for impartiality and non-judgemental attitude, social workers have been described as radical, libertarian, irreligious and even anti-religious (Siporin, 1984, 1985). Recent years, however, have witnessed a change in social workers' attitude. There has been a greater realization of the need to develop a coherent body of knowledge assessing the impact of religion in determining people's attitudes towards society and personal philosophy of life (Judah, 1985; Sheridan and Bullis, 1991). Many social workers have played a pioneer role in conceptualizing the link between spirituality and social work. Some prominent names to mention are those of Biestek (1953), Bowers (1969), Canda (1991 and 1988), Canda and Phaobtong (1992), Keith-Lucas (1960, 1972, 1983, 1985, 1989), Leiby (1985), Loewenberg (1988), Netting, Thibault, and Ellor (1990), Ortiz (1990), Siporin (1984, 1985) and Spencer (1956). Also, in the general public, many social scientists have noticed a "burgeoning religious revival" in the 1980's (Siporin and Glasser, 1987; Yankelovich, 1981). Within the context of spiritual revival, social workers and psychotherapists have engaged in a search for new models of helping, many of which have been derived from Asian spirituality and psychology as developed in India, China, Japan and other countries in the Far East. Some of the psychotherapy masters and social work professionals who have been inspired by Eastern concepts are Jung, Maslow, Carl Rogers, Paul Watzlawick, Jay Haley, Kubler-Ross, Imbrogno and Canda (1988), Chung (1992), and Patel (1987).

This paper explores some concepts from Eastern psychology and spirituality that have great potential to enhance therapeutic effectiveness. It limits itself to reviewing just a few modes of therapies, namely yoga, biofeedback and Autogenic training, as these have heavily borrowed their basic concepts and treatment modalities from Eastern psychology and spirituality. Social work treatment philosophy is based heavily on Judeo-Christian ethics and Western culture, whereas the above three systems have developed under the influence of the East. Social work treatment process, in spite of its theoretical commitment to prevention, has often been a "band-aid" work through problem focused services; it appears to have lost its commitment to the social change. The above three systems, on the other hand, are more holistic and prevention oriented. The need for a broad-based intervention that focuses not only on treatment but also on creating an attitude conducive to preventing numerous social problems can hardly be over-emphasized. It calls for providing a holistic perspective

towards life and re-framing the clients' attitude towards problems. This article explores these three therapeutic systems to help develop such a perspective. It also explores their applicability to promoting changes in the Asian-American clients' world-view and soliciting their motivation for engagement in treatment. In particular, it examines how these three systems address issues of stress, confusion, isolation, fragmentation, bondage to desires and poor self-image.

YOGA

Yoga, according to Patanjali, the father of the yoga system in ancient India, is a process of concentrating on one's own self and uniting oneself with the inner true self. We are usually so pre-occupied with mending the ways of others that we have no time to look into our own. Yoga emphasizes and teaches the techniques of inner integration and withdrawing oneself from pre-occupation with others. Based on a strong determination to achieve self-control, it teaches the techniques of conquering the inferior "I" - the lower self identified with the body and worldly problems, and unifying with the supreme "I" charged with divinity. Yoga believes in the potential divinity in each human being and aims at its unfoldment to its fullest potential (Delmonte, 1987).

Yoga represents the culmination of Indian philosophical thought into the first comprehensive psychological system (Murphy and Murphy, 1968). Patanjali minutely studied the mental processes and grouped the mind into four distinct types: intellectual, emotional, active and meditative. He prescribed numerous physical, emotional and spiritual practices to control the mind. The purification of mind through rigorous physical and mental discipline was considered essential for the development of ethical qualities leading to spiritual uplift. Yoga, according to Patanjali, is a combination of various methods aimed at purifying one's mind and reaching a state of self-realization. This state is achieved through the fusion of the mental and physical energies reaching a level of existence known in yoga as the "pranic sheath" or the "energy body" (Rama, Ballentine and Swami Ajaya, 1976). This state is analogous to what Christian mystics have called the "purgative state" (Akhilnanda, 1965). Patanjali defined yoga as the complete control of the mind-stuff. His yoga focused primarily on modifications of the thinking principle, i.e., confused thought processing, obstacles, and the methods of overcoming the obstacles (Coster, 1968). Swami Vivekananda, the great enlightened yogi of India who emphasized universal spirituality and oneness of all human beings, describes the following four kinds of yoga:

- 1) Karma yoga - the realization of the divinity through complete selfless dedication to work and duty;
- 2) Bhakti yoga - complete dedication of oneself to the devotion and service of a personal God;
- 3) Raja yoga - working on unfolding the inner divinity through mental and physical exercises;
- 4) Jnana yoga - the realization of one's own divinity through knowledge.

The disciplines of yoga are much broader than meditation that focuses attention upon a single thing while physically relaxed. Meditation enhances an individual's capacity to focus attention on a single thing or task, to discriminate among internal stimuli and achieve an altered mode of perception (Keefe, 1986), whereas yoga, as propounded by Patanjali, has a much broader connotation with a wide range of application to stress management, mental clarification from confusions, self-unification, emancipation from bondage of suffering and enhancement of self-image.

For example, yoga handles stress by controlling the agitation of the mind. It is a psychological method by means of which it becomes possible for one to plunge from the finite (worldly problems) to the infinite (unlimited inner potentials) and coordinate feeling, willing and thinking (Smith, 1986).

Shankaracharya, (Dasgupta, 1988) the great Indian philosopher, proposes four methods to get out of the confusion of life: 1) *Vivek* — discrimination between real and unreal, 2) *Vairagya* or renunciation — realizing the temporary nature of the problems and worldly pleasures, 3) Possession of the "Six Treasures": a) *Sama* — calmness, b) *Dama* — self-control, c) *Uparati* — a state when the mind does not react to external objects, d) *Titiksha* — or forbearance - a state when a mind can maintain a calm and peaceful attitude under all circumstances, e) *Sraddha* — firm faith in oneself based on right judgement, f) *Samadhan* — self-settledness — the concentration of the mind that comes by constantly affirming one's divine existence, g) *Mumukshutvam* — an intense yearning for freedom.

The yoga perspective is well illustrated by the following story. A man was captured by some cannibals. The man exclaimed that they had not captured his real self; he took out his false teeth, false hair, false beard and false eye lids. The cannibals were shocked as they could not understand what he had that was his and real. They saw him only as parts and not a human being and, therefore, let him go. Yoga aims at getting rid of false attachment to external identifications and at reuniting different parts of the body, mind and soul for achieving a desired object. It

teaches a process of concentration and reunification.

Yoga proposes two approaches to daily life to get rid of the suffering created by bondage to desires: 1) Dispassion — it is a discipline created by knowing the right value of things and 2) Discrimination — it brings us in touch with reality — true self. By controlling the modifications of mind and not others, the individual is able to attain freedom (Gnaneswaranda, 1975). According to yoga, the root cause of problem and suffering is our lack of understanding of self and not-self, of conscious Noumenon, “Purusha”, and unconscious noumenon, “prakriti”. The true self is not the body, mind, ego, or intellect. These are only the instruments of self true. “Self” is the pure consciousness, changeless, and ever-present, behind all these states. All the problems of daily life are resolved by themselves when an individual realizes his/her true self (Satyananda, 1981).

Yoga employs various forms of meditation to help achieve self-realization. In empirical studies, meditation has been found useful in treating hypertension (Frumkin, et al., 1978; Seer, 1979; Hafner, 1982), type A coronary-prone behavior (Muskatel et al., 1984), stuttering (McIntyre et al., 1974), and sleep-onset insomnia (Woolfolk et al., 1976; Miskimau, 1977). It has been found quite effective in treating addiction and alcoholism (Shapiro and Zifferblatt, 1976; Brautigam, 1977; Marlatt et al., 1984). Such studies demonstrate how innovative ideas can be incorporated into the current therapeutic processes for an enriching and effective experience (Smith, 1986).

Bio-feedback

Bio-feedback, as it developed in the West, focuses on the person's psycho-physical reaction to external or internal stresses. It is a therapeutic method of studying and monitoring body processes and forming an information loop that allows the client, the therapist, or both to observe and modify internal psycho-physical events while they are in process (Forgione and Holmberg, 1981). Adler and Adler have reviewed the application of bio-feedback in current psychotherapy (Adler and Adler, 1983). There is an abundance of literature reviewing the application of bio-feedback to cardiovascular disorders, rehabilitation, spasticity control and psychosomatic disorders (Basmajian, 1979).

Bio-feedback gauges the impact of stress on the person's cardiovascular system and focuses on training general relaxation. The person is taught to counteract the eroding effect of stress through many avenues which lead to a healthy life style such as appropriate perceptions, proper diet, exercise and a balance of work and play. The basic tenets of this

integrative approach are derived from the yogic philosophy. The tension reduction process usually goes through the following steps:

Step 1. Developing awareness of muscle tension.
Step 2. Forearm EMG (electromyographic) Training in which the patient is helped to experiment with the feedback, “What makes it go up? What makes it go down?”

Step 3. Frontal EMG Training which encourages awareness of internal cues.

Step 4. This phase of training is intended to produce control of peripheral vasodilatation.

Step 5. Systematic desensitization of anxiety (Stoyva, 1983).

One of the significant bio-feedback methods of calming the patient's confused state of mind is focusing on the “here and now”. Rumination into the past or future, the main source of confusion, is discarded by inducing a profound state of relaxation. Usually profound relaxation does not occur unless there is a shift in conceptual processes. The latter involves a change from reality-oriented thinking, e.g. problem-solving, processing information, making decisions and so forth, to mental activity which may be described as non-voluntary, free flowing, and drifting. The objective of the entire process is to lift the patient from a stage of other-directed confusion and ruminations to self-awareness.

Bio-feedback helps a person to reflect upon his/her physiological reactions and monitors the discrepancies between reactions and thinking or feeling (Adler and Adler, 1983). The entire process focuses on facilitating self-integration by gently removing the fragmentation between physical reactions, emotional processes and cognitive activity. However, biofeedback's propensity to evoke a state of mild disassociation, which is beneficial for most clients, makes it potentially dangerous with clients who have had pathological dissociative reactions in the past, such as fugal states of depersonalization (Adler and Adler, 1983).

Bio-feedback teaches clients to control physiological processes. It re-establishes the power of mind over body. It reiterates the ancient Eastern philosophical view of individual energy being a part of the universal energy that we must get in touch with to realize our inner potentials. It engages the person in deep introspection and self-scrutiny previously available to yogis only through years of introspective meditation. The therapeutic process has a great potential for releasing the inner energy to its maximum potential.

Biofeedback aims at integrating the psycho-physical aspects - the self-regulatory processes -

under the client's control. It opens up new intervention tactics to work on improving self-image through conscious control of physiological systems.

Auto-Genic Training

Auto-genic training shares many concepts with biofeedback, meditation, psycho-imagination and stress management. It emphasizes focusing on selective positive memories and visualizing alternative behavior and feelings with an objective to create a new set of expectations and self-control.

Auto-genic training proposes a formula for triggering a peace response by controlling reactions to outside disturbances. By means of a process of auto suggestion, mind-control, and visualization, it facilitates emotional and behavioral pattern changes leading to a reduction in physical and emotional stress.

Confusion results from an overload of the autonomic nervous system due to conscious and unconscious forces. The trainee, by learning the techniques of accessing various experiences from the unconscious, can organize his/her thinking in creative directions. It acknowledges the flow of thoughts in awareness all the time, but the trainee learns not to pay active attention to them for the moment. By doing so he/she reorganizes the thinking process in a creative direction. As the training progresses, the individual is encouraged to foster a greater feeling of well-being, safety and security. The trainee moves towards leading a fuller and richer life and visualizing himself/herself as an integrated whole, synthesizing body, emotion, and spirituality into one being.

Through a schedule of rhythmical body exercise and visualizing gradual expansion of a white light (aura) to surround the body to heal the trainee, the therapeutic process leads to unleashing great physical, emotional and spiritual potential inherent in the individual. The self is visualized as a powerful, problem-free state of being temporarily beset by the external limitations simply because the individual has not learned how to keep his/her inner identity separate from the outer identity disturbed by a specific problem.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH ASIAN-AMERICAN CLIENTS

Since the Asian-American population has been emerging as the fastest growing minority, it is important that social workers respond by enhancing knowledge of their specific needs and cultural tensions. In order to integrate concepts from Eastern psychology and spirituality to which clients from this population are more likely to respond, social workers need to develop new models of treatment. Such a model must

respond to the following common tension polarities experienced by minority groups in general: 1) oppression vs. liberation, 2) powerlessness vs. empowerment, 3) exploitation vs parity, 4) acculturation vs. culture-maintenance and 5) stereotyping vs. unique person (Lum, 1982). One of the crucial therapeutic tasks consists in helping clients to transcend the process of defining situations in dichotomous terms of right or wrong or good or bad. Then perspective-taking becomes flexible so situations can be seen both as right or wrong, good or bad, depending on who defines the reality and where and when (Singh, 1990A). The same problem, for example, in a family situation, may be perceived differently by each family member and each one may be right, considering his/her perspective. Problems, perception of problems and solutions, are culture-specific; social work education must respond to the current need for teaching cross-cultural practice by infusing such content into curricula (Chau, 1990) and by clearing out the social work students' epistemological blindspots (Saba, Karrer and Hardy, ed., 1989).

Some salient cultural values of Asians such as filial piety, patterns of parent-child relationships, respect for authority and roles, self-control, social consciousness and communal responsibility, fatalism, high regard for the elderly and close familial ties, that influence their perception of the problem and the problem-solving process must be interwoven into social work practice (Ho, 1978; Dhooper and Tran, 1986). The concept of self in the Asian culture is inclusive and holistic — more of a "group self" rather than an "individual self", or a separate identity, as conceptualized in the West (Sheriff and Meemeduma, 1986; Hirayama and Hirayama, 1984). In Asian psychology, the aim of the individual is self-realization without negating (but actually complementing) the society's good. Social service and spirituality are viewed as both necessary for self-realization (Patel, 1987).

This paper has used yoga, biofeedback and auto-genic training as examples of how Eastern ways of conceptualizing life holistically can be used in treatment. Similar models to train and sensitize social workers to cue into their frame of mind and value orientation need to be developed (Singh, 1990B). Moreover, concepts from Eastern spirituality e.g. the inherent value and dignity of an individual as part of society within the cosmic reality, and potential divinity embedded in each individual, need to be integrated with the individual worth and dignity emphasized by social work. Patel (1987) observes that Vedantic "oneness" (wherein dichotomies disappear), self-realization, and inner transformation, provide

stable motivation and dynamic base for social work.

A model for developing a culture-specific treatment for Asian-Americans must address their state of stress, confusion, sense of fragmentation and bondage involved in being caught between the two sets of rules and expectations from life — all of these with serious bearings on their self-image, spirituality, and the adjustment to society in general. The therapeutic process must focus on reintegrating the individual's personality, i.e., uniting oneself with oneself (which is also the objective of yoga). The objective is to help the individual transcend the so-called dichotomies of the world exemplified in the opposite pairs of values, i.e., the good and the bad; the end and the means; the actual and the potential; the subjective and objective; and the pure and mixed (Bahm, 1980). The social worker must be a participant in this process—not only exploring the client's differential perception of reality and value dilemmas but also observing and exploring his/her own value system and perception. A continuous practice of this may lead the social worker to reach a point of departure in his/her own life when he/she starts seeing unity in diversity and how the problems and their solutions are interwoven like a tapestry. It is the idiosyncrasy and individuality of each thread that constitutes the uniqueness of the tapestry and separates it from common pieces of cloth (Singh, 1989). The treatment for each client thus needs to be designed and carefully worked out keeping in view the unique individuality of the client as it has emerged within its own socio-cultural and spiritual context.

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*Ram Naresh Singh, Ph.D., is a professor of Social Work at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is presently a visiting professor at the School of Social Work at Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi, India.

THEOLOGICALLY ENRICHED SOCIAL WORK: ALAN KEITH-LUCAS' APPROACH TO SOCIAL WORK AND RELIGION

Lawrence E. Ressler

It is common for persons interested in spirituality, religion and social work to bemoan the dearth of literature on the subject (e.g. Joseph, 1988; Loewenberg, 1988; Judah, 1991). While such criticism is clearly warranted, there have been those in the profession who have been thinking and writing about the subject even during these lean years.

One such person is Alan Keith-Lucas, Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus in Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Keith's first published remarks on religion and social work can be found in the discussion section of *Social Casework* (1958b) in response to two articles in *Social Casework* and *Social Work* (Spencer, 1956; Spencer, 1957). During the 34 years since then, Keith, as he prefers to be called, has written extensively on the subject, albeit primarily in obscure journals and by small publishers. Nevertheless, he has developed an

important body of literature on the subject which interested persons should be familiar with. The purpose of this article is threefold: to provide some background information about Alan Keith-Lucas; to summarize some key features of his approach to social work and religion; and to provide a beginning reading list.

Background

Alan Keith-Lucas' long and varied life can be divided roughly into four periods (Ressler, 1990). The first period, from birth in 1910 to 1937, was spent in England where he was born, raised, received a masters degree in English literature at Cambridge University, and worked for a time as a principal of a private school for elementary children. After graduating from Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve University) in 1939, Keith worked full-time in social work practice for 11 years in a number of different social work jobs in child welfare. In 1950 he joined the faculty at the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina where he worked for 25 years as professor, acting dean, founder and director of the Group Child Care Project, and consultant to children's homes. Keith retired from the University in 1975. The 17 years since retirement have been among his most productive years with respect to writing, speaking, and consulting.

Three issues have been predominant in Alan Keith-Lucas' life: children, social work, and the integration of religion and social work. Keith-Lucas' interest in the latter issue came relatively late in his development. Until the age of 43, he was not a particularly religious person nor concerned about such things. His mother was a Quaker and he was exposed to Anglicanism growing up in England, but like his father, Keith was an agnostic during the early years.

According to Keith (Ressler, 1990), three factors in mid-life influenced his turn to religion. First, he was impacted by working with denominational children's homes as a consultant. Second, he was stimulated intellectually by a Ph.D. course in political theory at Duke University which was taught from a theological basis. The third influence came from the theological instruction he received while preparing to become an elder in a church which was recovering from a pastoral dismissal.

While the positive impact of these influences took place over several years, Keith points to a specific time in 1953 when he was awestruck by the connection between Christian theology and the helping process. He was particularly impressed by the parallel between the roles of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit and his own tri-part

model of helping: reality, empathy, and support. He had found a satisfying framework with regard to some troubling questions he had about human behavior and helping. Christianity suddenly made sense to him. The challenge which resulted is clearly visible in the first public comments he makes on the topic of religion and social work:

It is clear that unless we are to hold that traditional religious belief...is in error, the possibility of a synthesis must and does exist. Moreover, this synthesis would be much more than an accommodation between two systems of thought and would result in enrichment of both social work and theology...The task of beginning to make such a synthesis will not, however, be an easy one. It will require an exploration, for those willing to undertake it, of what theology really teaches and not what most people take for granted nor remember from Sunday School. It may also involve some re-examination of the implicit values that lie behind our helping efforts and a consideration of whether we have not sometimes accepted as an absolute an apparent scientific truth that is in fact conditioned by the kind of question to which it purports to be the answer. It must be intellectually rigorous, conducted by people who are amateurs neither in theology nor social work. It will have to deal with the hard paradoxes rather than the "easy correspondences." (1958b, p. 237-8)

The comments Keith made in 1958 are somewhat prophetic about the contribution he would make in the subsequent years. The relationship between religion and social work became a central focus of his writing as can be seen in many of his published works. (1958a, 1958b, 1960a, 1960b, 1960c, 1962a, 1962b, 1962c, 1963a, 1963b, 1964, 1965a, 1965b, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1978, 1979a, 1979c, 1983, 1985b, 1985c, 1988, 1989a, 1990).

Keith's primary emphasis and contribution with respect to religion and social work has been in examining the specific relationship between Christianity and social work. This narrow focus is not due to religiocentricity but, he suggests, it is due to the fact that this is the only religion he knows well enough to comment on. Indeed, he calls for others to examine their own religions in a similar fashion (1979a, 1983, 1989a).

One of the difficulties in Keith's writings is that most of his writings pre-date the current efforts to clearly define and distinguish such terms as religion,

spirituality, spiritual, theology, and beliefs. This article will use the terms as he used them even though there may be some ambiguity or inconsistency in their use.

Epistemology

At the core of Keith's shift is a changed personal epistemology. Until 1953, Keith accepted what he calls "humanist, positivist utopianism" (1983). This "pattern" of beliefs, he suggests, was (and remains) the prevailing belief pattern inherent in social work. As the term connotes, this pattern of thinking includes a humanist and utopian understanding of human beings undergirded by a positivistic approach to epistemology.

Beginning in 1953, Keith rejected HPU as the only foundation for social work theory and practice. First, he rejected positivism as the only way to know (See points 11 & 12 in Table 1). While he remained supportive of the role of science, he rejected the positivistic notion that only that which can be counted is important. In contrast to positivism, which minimizes or denies the importance of religious beliefs, Keith began to incorporate religious beliefs feeling that they can make a positive contribution to understanding human behavior. In other words, Keith continued to accept the use of empirical evidence and logic as tools for knowing while also placing value on religious tools for knowing including the Bible, prayer, and theological thinking.

Furthermore, Keith became convinced that social work theories and practice, like all theories and practice, involve belief systems which posit explanations about the nature of human beings, society, the universe, why problems exist, what can and what should be done about them, and so on. Humanism and utopianism, he concluded, are the belief systems incorporated in most present day social work theories. Through the influences described above, Keith found that Christian beliefs provided satisfying answers to some nagging questions he had which HPU had not been able to answer up to that point. It is just as appropriate, he became convinced, to begin with Christian beliefs as non-religious beliefs (1983, 1985b).

Just as Keith argues that positivism has its limits, so he argues that religious beliefs, while useful, are limited. The enrichment model he promotes holds that both disciplines have something to offer the other. He states, "[This] does not assert for one moment that one can find in religion all the answers. That has been the error of many religious groups. The pragmatics of social work and the insights of religion need to illumine each other" (1960a, p. 90).

A Typology of Belief Systems

Keith has developed a limited but useful typology of belief systems which is critical to understanding his enrichment model. This typology is presented most fully in a brief monograph entitled *The Client's Religion and Your Own Beliefs in the Helping Process* (1983). In addition to HPU and one other general religious system which he labels cultic religionists, a catch-all category characterized by non-Christian religious belief systems, Keith identifies four Christian belief patterns: Christianity of Ethics, Christianity of Law, Christianity of Morality, and Christianity of Grace. According to Keith, the central characteristic of Ethical Christianity is its emphasis on the exemplary ethical behavior of Jesus, whereas legalism dominates the Christianity of Law, punitive judgmentalism typifies Christianity of Morality, and love is at the center of Christianity of Grace.

The distinction between Christian belief systems is fundamental to understanding Keith's integration of Christianity and social work. Christian theology, he argues, is not a uniform phenomenon. Some Christian belief systems are more conducive to social work than others; Christianity of Morality is the least compatible. Moralistic Christianity, which he suggests is responsible for stimulating the social work criticism levelled against Christianity, is criticized quite appropriately. The pessimistic, judgmental, punitive approach to people and society it espouses, he agrees, is not helpful. It is, he believes, bad Christian theology which leads to bad helping.

The pattern of belief which undergirds his synthesis of Christianity and social work is the Christianity of Grace position. According to Keith, Christianity of Grace holds that all things were created by a Creator who created a perfect creation. Creation is now in turmoil, however, due to humans getting out of touch with the intent of the Creator (which is Keith's definition for sin). God's response to the turmoil has been one of grace. He states, "Man (sic), in the midst of the sin, was loved, forgiven, redeemed by the Intender, who is even said to have suffered human death of a particularly unpleasant sort — execution as a criminal — on his account. Out of gratitude for this, man tries to keep the Law, calling on the Intender for help when this proves difficult" (1983, p.12).

A summary of Keith's personal philosophy as it relates to social work is summarized in Table 1. While he uses very little theological language in the list, the influence of the Christianity of Grace pattern of beliefs is clearly evident.

The Helping Process

A key part of Keith's transformation to theologically enriched social work was the link he saw be-

tween how humans help one another (as he understands it) and how God helps humans in turmoil (as Christianity of Grace theology understands it). To help another human, Keith suggests, one must assist the person to face reality, be empathetic about the client's situation, and be supportive as he or she works to bring about changes (1972, 1983, 1963a, 1965c, 1985b, 1985d, 1989a). These conditions are similar to the Christian triune understanding of the personas of God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father, viewed as the creator of all things, corresponds with helping those in need face the reality of their situation. The incarnation of Jesus and his willingness to live, suffer, and die to help a troubled creation is a divine illustration of empathy at work, a fundamental part of the helping process in Keith's model. Finally, the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is comparable to the role of being supportive when helping people in need.

Furthermore, Keith suggests, the process of receiving human help is similar to receiving divine help. To be helped, a person in need must recognize there is a problem, be willing to admit it to another, allow others (including social workers) to be involved, and risk changing which involves the unknown. This process, Keith believes, is similar to what the church calls repentance, confession, submission and faith (1960, 1965c, 1983, 1989a).

Helping Attributes and Attitudes

Christianity of Grace theology, Keith believes, encourages a number of attributes and attitudes which enhance helping (1965a, 1965c, 1983, 1985b, 1985c, 1989a). Christianity of Grace first engenders a humble helping attitude. The belief that all are fallen should result in a personal humility so that clients needing help are approached with a sense of comradeship rather than superiority. In addition, since Christians of Grace have experienced unconditional love, they should remain committed to their clients regardless of the condition the person is in or the behavior they exhibit.

A Christianity of Grace view of the human condition provides a balanced foundation for helping. The concepts of a perfect creation, sin, and grace enable social workers to neither deny the reality of problems nor lead to despair when they are confronted. They provide a framework for hopefulness while avoiding becoming utopian. Such a belief system encourages social workers to be neither surprised that problems exist nor discouraged by client or social failure. Furthermore, no matter how noble the cause or right the idea, Christians of Grace understand that distortions tend to follow and correc-

tions will be necessary. Finally, Christianity of Grace theology provides a firm foundation for client self-determination believing that choosing is a divinely ordained human right and responsibility.

The Church and Social Welfare

Keith has also written frequently about the relationship of the church and social welfare (1958a, 1960d, 1962a, 1962b, 1962c, 1963a, 1964, 1965b, 1974, 1979a, 1979c). Just as Christian beliefs enlighten the helping process, so he believes it has implications for social policies and programs. These ideas are laid out most clearly in a book entitled *The Church and Social Welfare* (1962d). As he holds that different Christian belief patterns impact the helping process differently, so they impact social issues and social welfare differently.

Keith identifies what he calls three great heresies in Christian theology (1962d, 1973). The first heresy, the medieval heresy, encouraged charity for personal salvation. The second heresy, the moralistic heresy, identified poverty with moral failure, and wealth with being among the elect, resulting in restrictive, punitive services. The third heresy, the modernist heresy, holds that people are naturally good, needing only guidance and advice from the educated and successful. Material need, in this way of thinking, is viewed as less important than counseling and good examples.

The relationship between the church and welfare which Keith endorses revolves around the Christianity of Grace pattern of beliefs. It values both the spiritual dimensions of life and the material. The challenge of the church, Keith holds, is "to show that the amazing gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has relevance to the problem of social need" (p.16, 1962d). Among the guidelines he suggests in *The Church and Social Welfare* are the following: the use of law for judgement; supporting freedom of choice within the law; the need to assert belief in the possibility of positive change even for the most unlikely; the importance of divorcing welfare from morality; the necessity of championing adequate provision for those in need; rightness of emphasizing stewardship rather than pity; and importance of advocating professional training and knowledge.

Keith also speaks frequently to the issue of church-sponsored social services (1958a, 1960d, 1962a, 1963a, 1979a). While he holds that the church ought to be providing services, he suggests the services should be limited to meeting needs other services aren't meeting. Speaking directly to the issue in an article entitled "Is Welfare the Church's Business" (1964), Keith states his position in this way:

Good and strong reasons for the continu-

ance and evolution of a social service under church auspices are seen when the church finds for itself or adapts its service either to fulfilling a special need that the state or community has not touched, or where, although in a way "duplicating" other services, it does so in such a manner as to provide leadership in the field or witness to a particular and important truth. (p 35)

Recommended Reading List

Many of Alan Keith-Lucas's publications are in small, difficult to find journals or were published by publishers with limited circulation. Following are some of the more available and important publications which contain many of his insights:

Essays from more than Fifty Years in Social Work (1989a). This book is a collection of 14 previously unpublished essays dealing with family and child welfare issues, the integration of faith and social work practice, and social work and social workers. Published by his friends in honor of 50 years in social work, this anthology gives great insight into the thought of Keith-Lucas including, he suggests in the preface, his more unconventional thoughts. A limited number of copies of this book are still available.

Giving and Taking Help (1972). This book, considered by some to be a classic, describes Keith's insights into the helping process. He concludes with a chapter entitled "Helping and Religious Belief" which summarizes the Christian religious beliefs which he holds contribute to healthy helping.

The Church and Social Welfare (1962d). This book describes Keith-Lucas' vision for the role of the church in the provision of social services. It is out of print, but it is available at many libraries.

The Client's Religion and Your Own Beliefs in the Helping Process (1983). This brief monograph, addressed originally to social workers at the Veteran's Administration Medical Center, lays out Keith-Lucas' thoughts on the practical significance of belief systems. Particularly helpful is a chart in which he compares HPU, cultic religionists, and the four Christian belief systems. A limited number of these monographs are still available.

So You Want to be a Social Worker: A Primer for the Christian Student (1985b). This brief monograph is addressed to young aspiring Christian social work students. It presents many of his convictions about the integration of Christianity and social work in a clear concise fashion. He briefly addresses some of the difficult integration issues including the matter of witnessing and working in a secular agency.

Biblical Insights Into the Helping Process (1991). This 35 minute video presents an Alan Keith-Lucas lecture on the insights from the Bible which enlighten helping. The lecture is a distillation of many of the ideas he has on the positive relationship between Christianity and helping.

Conclusion

Alan Keith-Lucas presents a distinctive view of religion and social work. In contrast to social work theory as it has developed in the 20th century which minimizes or dismisses the relevance of religious beliefs, Keith asserts that religious beliefs may contribute as much or more to understanding human behavior and to helping as non-religious beliefs. Religious beliefs, he agrees, can misunderstand human behavior and hinder the helping process, but they also contribute to it. Furthermore, Keith suggests, theological metaphors and religious experience may help religious social workers in their helping.

Keith presents a balanced approach to the integration of religion and empirically-based social work. Empirical evidence is valued but so are religious beliefs. Religion and empirically-based social work are treated as distinct entities, but entities which can illumine each other.

Theologically enriched social work may be controversial because it raises the issue of monolithic versus pluralistic approaches to social work theory and practice. If Christian beliefs are permitted to influence social work theory and practice, then all other religions should be permitted to do the same. Some may object to the ideological pluralism which results from such openness.

This is an issue which needs to be discussed and studied. The clients that social workers work with clearly hold varying beliefs. Should the profession of social work strive for one theory of social work and force abandonment of competing belief systems, or should it encourage the development of different theories of social work, each with a shared commitment to empirical outcome studies? In what ways would clients benefit or be harmed if there were numerous clearly expressed competing religious approaches to helping? In what ways would Zen enhanced social work differ from agnostic enhanced social work, or New Age enhanced social work? Are there times when a practicing Jewish social worker, a Hindu social worker, a Marxist social worker would be more helpful to a client who is a practicing Jew, Hindu, or Marxist. When are religious beliefs unimportant or harmful? Should some aspects of our service delivery system be organized around religious belief systems?

For years the profession has focused on the dangers of social workers who take their religious beliefs seriously. Keith has strived for 34 years to find the positive connections between Christianity and social work. Maybe it is time the profession change its perspective on religion and encourage religious social workers to carry on the work that Keith has begun.

TABLE 1
ALAN KEITH-LUCAS' PHILOSOPHICAL
FRAME

1. Human beings are of infinite worth, irrespective of gender, race, age or behavior.
2. At the same time human beings, including myself, are fallible, limited creatures. They are not capable, and never will be, of solving all their problems or of creating the perfect society. Nevertheless they are sometimes capable, with appropriate help, of transcending their nature in acts of courage and compassion.
3. As a fallible being myself I have no right to pass moral judgements on others, to assume authority over them except as mandated by law, or to imagine that I know everything about them.
4. Human beings have been endowed with the faculty of choice, which must not be denied them except by due process of law, or where their actions or threatened actions are demonstrably gravely harmful to others or self-destructive, or where they voluntarily surrender this right for a prescribed purpose.
5. They are, however, responsible for the consequences of their choices, and may need help in perceiving what these are likely to be.
6. No person is beyond help, although at this time we may not have the knowledge or skill to help.
7. All programs and policies that depreciate people, treat them as objects rather than subjects, seek to impose on them behavior not mandated by law, manipulate them without their knowledge and consent or deny them choices permitted others in our society, are to be avoided or resisted.
8. Our society is far from perfect, and it is not my business to act as its representative, but rather to help people determine their relationship to it.
9. Love, understanding and compassion are the sources of well-being and acceptable behavior, rather than the reward for them.
10. While force is sometimes the quickest way of obtaining an immediate result, in the long run it is self-defeating. Compassion, understanding

and concern are the eventual victors.

11. The social sciences provide much useful knowledge for practice, but cannot explain all phenomena and their pronouncement need constantly to be evaluated in terms of the values they subsume.
12. There are outcomes to human beings that cannot be measured statistically as well as those which can.
13. All human institutions, ideals and commitments are liable to subtle perversion of their values, unless these are constantly examined. The new is not necessarily the best, nor does new knowledge always invalidate the old.
14. Professional education and training in self-discipline are indispensable to good social work.
15. As a Christian committed to the dissemination of what I believe to be the truth, my task as a social worker is not so much to convince others of this truth, as to provide them with the experience of being loved, forgiven and cared for so that the Good News I believe in may be a credible option for them. (1985b, pp. 34-35.)

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- *Lawrence E. Ressler, ACSW, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Social Work, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027.

**CHURCH SOCIAL WORK:
A BOOK REVIEW
Alan Keith-Lucas**

Church Social Work: Helping the Whole Person in the Context of the Church, Edited by Diana S. Richmond Garland. The North American Association of Christians in Social Work, 1992.

This is the second full-length book to be published by the North American Association of Christians in Social Work. The book has a strong Baptist background — all but one of the essayists work for a Baptist church or agency. It is none the worse for that, but it would have been valuable to represent more variety in church structures, including Catholic social work which does have a distinct identity of its own. The historical material also did not address the insights of the Church Fathers, from Chrysostom to Aquinas, or of the great papal encyclicals such as *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadregesimo Anno*, which had so much to say about the mission of the church. But if we consider the church to be a local and probably a fairly autonomous group, the book has much to offer.

Church social work, as Dr. Garland defines it, is not a field such as child welfare, work with aging, or medical social work; it is social work of any description in the context of an organized church. As such it is comparable, say, to social work in a school system or on a military base. The host organization has other goals than social work, although social work may in fact make it more possible for it to achieve its mission. This is not therefore a book on Christian social work, which Dr. Garland doubts exists. I would disagree with her here. I do think that social work predicated on a Christian view of the universe and humanity's place in it is different from that based on secular presuppositions, just as in earlier days of social work's ideological war, when Rankian and Freudian social work were different. And I cannot imagine a social worker in a church setting not sharing, or at least respecting, the church's primary mission. Despite Dr. Garland's doubt, it seems these essayists might agree with me. In fact, Dr. Garland herself insists that a church children's agency does not simply respond to need but also acts on its redemptive and reconciliatory mission. Church social work is not a stop-gap, making up for the deficiencies of an imperfect secular system. It is, or should be, what enables a church to implement the second half of the Great Commandment — to love one's neighbor as one's self.

As is perhaps natural in a collection of essays, it is not entirely clear, to this reviewer at least, to whom this book is addressed. Certainly it addresses the professional social worker. The essays are in scholarly form and the references abundant. Also, perhaps it addresses the social worker who is to some extent theologically literate. One or two of the essays are rather hard to read at first, although they usually manage to end in valuable insights. But anyone, and in particular volunteers, with whom church social

work is largely concerned, would profit by Jane Ferguson's account of her work at the First Baptist Church of Montgomery, Alabama. This is an absolute gem of an essay; it alone makes the book worth publishing. It is down to earth, and deals with the real problems of social work in a church setting - for example, lack of knowledge of what a social worker does, suspicion from secular colleagues of the church's intentions, the use and non-use of religious language, attitudes in the congregation towards those whose life-styles are seen as sinful. Yet it is a triumphant story and contains, incidentally, the best theological base, or perhaps I should say Biblical imperative, for a church's social ministry that I have seen. It stresses the importance of planning and preparation. Ms. Ferguson sees herself as both social worker and minister and yet there is no confusion of roles. She sees her own function quite clearly. And there's both a warmth and a humility about this essay, despite its academic respectability, which is most endearing.

This is not to down-grade the other six contributions. All of them do have something to say. I recommend the book as a whole to teachers in social work programs and to serious students who see church social work as something they would like to do. Its bibliographies, too, are valuable and pin-point resources that might otherwise be ignored.

**Alan Keith-Lucas is Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

Edward R. Canda

International Conferencing

The Council on Social Work Education and the International Association of Schools of Social Work sponsored the 26th International Congress of Schools of Social Work in Washington D.C., from July 15-19, 1992. I was invited by the conference program chair to co-present a one-day institute on "Spirituality and Social Work: Issues for Teaching and Curriculum Development." Professor Gokarn, from India, originally was scheduled to present, but was unable to attend. This was an excellent opportunity to brainstorm and soul-search with colleagues from many countries. The institute led to further group discussion dealing with the internationalization of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. Many attendees at my presentation on "Contemporary

Asian Spiritual Perspectives on Human Service,” also expressed an interest in networking. These activities involved about 50 people. Those who expressed interest in linking with SSSW came from Austria, Canada, India, Korea, Phillipines, Saudia Arabia, South Africa, Taiwan, and the USA. In order to facilitate continuation of dialogue between these people, SSSW will send complimentary copies of this issue along with an invitation to contribute notifications of related activities beyond the USA.

The workshop format included 4 detailed presentations, brief summaries of current work by other participants, and much open discussion. Summaries of the four detailed presentations follow. (Thanks to Patrick O’Brien of the SSSW Advisory Group for contributing his notes.)

Curriculum Issues

I began the workshop with an historical overview of connections, controversies and current efforts of SSSW within the United States. I then presented a comparative methodology for teaching about religious and spiritual content in social work courses, including modules for content dispersed throughout the curriculum and a specialized practice course. As examples, I presented an HBSE learning module on assessment of visionary experiences and reviewed a syllabus for “Spiritual Dimensions of Social Work Practice,” an MSW practice elective at the University of Kansas. This teaching approach links personal self-reflection, experiential exercises, cognitive content on diverse spiritual perspectives, and in-class dialogue.

Professor Lionel Louw, University of Cape Town, South Africa, presented a stimulating overview of religious conflict and social action in a paper, “Spirituality as a Base for Social Justice and Change in South Africa.” This serves as an excellent example of linking spirituality, cultural variation, and politics in educational content. He explained that 90% of the South African population claims a religious affiliation, the vast majority being Christian. A grave dilemma results from the contradictory positions of pro-apartheid and anti-apartheid Christians. On the one hand, the white Dutch Reform Church established support for apartheid as a theological position in 1857. The South African Council of Churches is anti-apartheid. Even the world-wide Reform Church has excluded the white Dutch Reform church from membership due to its apartheid stance. Therefore, Christians of different denominations and political orientations come into conflict. Prof. Louw emphasized that the anti-apartheid Christian groups in South Africa have been able to use their spiritually-based social justice concern to establish inter-religious dialogue and cooperation for

social action.

Professor Ibrahim Ragab, of Imam M.I.S. Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, challenged the positivistic and secularistic orientation of social work education, research, and practice in a paper, “Urgently Needed: Scientific Revolution in Social Work.” Professor Ragab started by pointing out the philosophical flaws of positivistic science (e.g. linear causality, reductionism, mechanistic determinism) that influence social work research, theory, and research-based practice. He advocates for a link between spiritually-based approaches to inquiry and conventional scientific approaches. Using the Judeo-Christian-Islamic theological stream as an underpinning, Prof. Ragab suggests that a holistic methodology of inquiry should include triangulation between the revealed truths of scripture (the Koran), empirical observation and testing, and rational analysis. Since he views Koranic scripture to be inerrant, the priority for truth-testing is placed on Koranic evidence, subject to religious scholarship and dialogue.

Next, Professor William Hutchison of Saint Louis University gave an overview of his course syllabus, “Religious and Value Dimensions of Social Welfare and Social Work Practice.” He emphasizes issues of social policy, especially the application of democratic principles to spiritually-sensitive social work in particular and American social life in general. His course illustrates a connection of a Catholic perspective on ecumenism and social justice with professional and national commitments to democracy and religious pluralism.

Need for International Networking

General discussion emphasized the need for networking among social workers who struggle with the connection between spirituality and social work in different national contexts. Some participants felt relieved to discover that precedence for such linkage is being established in the USA. None of the participants were aware of similar non-sectarian professional efforts in other countries. However, sectarian organizations as well as independent individuals and groups are dealing with similar issues. We can learn from each others’ experiences and support a process of global spiritual clarification among social workers.

Several themes to be considered in this effort emerged: self determination versus religious proselytization; separation between church and state; divorce between scientific and spiritual/religious ways of knowing; difficulty finding appropriate language for professional discussion of spirituality; spiritual diversity as source of conflict and resource for creativity; developing a theory of suffering; inclusive versus exclusive spiritual perspectives; transpersonal

theory applied to social work; neglect of Native American spiritual perspectives; feminist concerns.

A Global Initiative

Dr. Vera Mehta, Secretary-General of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (Vienna), asked us to hold a special networking session to discuss UNESCO's request for input to a United Nations draft policy document that would advocate for integration of spiritual and religious values into education at an inter-government level. This presents the challenge of accommodating spiritual diversity on a global scale. In the subsequent networking session dedicated to this task, the group seemed to reach a consensus about several themes that should be addressed in such a global statement on spirituality in education. (Thanks to Charles deWatteville for sharing his notes.) These themes suggest a direction for resolving the difficulties identified in the previous discussion. Following is my paraphrase of this discussion.

A global perspective on spirituality should be:

- (1) *holistic* — each individual needs to be understood as a whole, including bio-psycho-social-spiritual aspects; the person needs to be understood in relationship with all things, human and nonhuman; the distinctiveness of each individual is important, and so is the basic unity and interrelatedness of all; this holistic spiritual understanding implies an ethic of mutual responsibility among all people and the natural ecology; it also implies an ethic of granting respect and dignity to every individual.
- (2) *supportive of spiritual diversity* — diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives need to be recognized and their right to exist must be supported; respectful interreligious dialogue is needed urgently in order to foster mutual understanding, establish common spiritual ground, and mediate conflict; principles of democracy need to be applied in regard to spirituality; diverse understandings of ultimate reality, theistic or otherwise, need to be understood, including as they change for individuals throughout the life span; people's distinctive faith experiences and positions deserve respect;
- (3) *social justice oriented* — spiritually-based compassion needs to extend to all people, especially those afflicted by war, oppression, poverty, and discrimination; the founders of various religious traditions should be studied for their examples as "the first social workers," those who worked for the material, social, and spiritual uplift of humanity; spirituality needs to link personal growth with action for social change.

If you have further ideas you would like to offer to Dr. Mehta, you can write to her at: Dr. Vera Mehta, Secretary General, International Association of

Schools of Social Work, Secretariat, Palais Palfy, Josefplatz 6, A-1010 Vienna, Austria.

International Contrast

One of the most fascinating international contrasts concerning spirituality and social work emerged from discussions with social work scholars from Saudia Arabia, Prof. Ibrahim Ragab and Ms. Asaf Dabbagh, a doctoral student, both of Imam University in Riyadh. The USA and Saudia Arabia appear to share a common challenge of building a new perspective on spiritually-sensitive social work. Despite the historical links of our philanthropic systems to various religious roots (i.e. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), both countries' professional social work and social welfare systems have been developing along secular lines in recent time.

A contrast emerges from the different religious contexts. Since the United States is highly pluralistic religiously and spiritually, the Society for Spirituality and Social Work has been promoting a non-sectarian approach to spirituality that is inclusive of spiritual diversity as a basis for spiritually-sensitive social work. However, since Saudia Arabia is primarily Islamic, a different approach is advocated by Ragab and Dabbagh. In accord with Islamic principles, separation between "church and state" is not desirable. In their view, all of life ought to be infused with Islamic spirituality, both personal and political dimensions. Thus, their challenge is to establish a thoroughly Islamicized social work. They recommend a book that helps to explain this position: *The Islamization of Knowledge*, written and published by The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1989, in Herndon, Virginia.

This contrast suggests an analogy between the challenge facing social work in the United States and the challenge facing social work on a global level. Within the United States, it is necessary to develop an inclusive approach to spirituality that recognizes both nonreligious and religion-specific variations. On a global level, it is necessary to develop an approach that recognizes national contexts which are monoreligious or theocratic as well as those which are spiritually pluralistic and nonsectarian in government. Of course, there are few countries that truly are monoreligious; even where one religion is pervasive, there are likely to be various spiritual perspectives within it. As with the USA situation, this involves dealing with potential controversy between conflicting spiritual positions and situations in which certain groups attempt to dominate others.

Resolution is only possible if all these disparate positions can be brought together in dialogue. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the international dia-

logue at this conference was the willingness of everyone to relate to each other in a congenial, respectful manner, demonstrating sincere interest in learning from each other. If social workers throughout the world could engage in such spiritual sharing, we might make an important contribution to world peace.

Next Steps

In order to move ahead with international dialogue, the SSSW will send ten free copies to each of the IASSW/CSWE spirituality networking participants. Each participant is asked to distribute extra copies (and to make more if possible) to colleagues in other countries. Participants also agreed to notify me of new developments on spiritually-sensitive social work in their countries. Hopefully, this will encourage ongoing interchange and conferencing. I am also sending this report, along with other reference materials from the SSSW, to Dr. Vera Mehta in order to assist her efforts with UNESCO. I will make a formal request of the various international social work organizations to continue to encourage networking on spirituality through their conferences and journals (e.g. *International Social Work* and *Social Development Issues*). Finally, I will send a call for articles to colleagues around the world in order to encourage manuscript submission for publication. It would be helpful if current members of SSSW would send copies of this journal to social workers in other countries, in order to expand the network.

SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL WORK: 1992 BIBLIOGRAPHIC UPDATE Edward R. Canda

Introduction

This bibliography is intended as a resource for social workers and other helping professionals who are conducting research on the connections between spirituality, religion, social work, and social welfare. It serves as an expansion of the Topical Bibliography on Religion and Social Work provided in volume 1, issue 1 of *The Spirituality and Social Work Communicator* (1990) and the 1991 update. The bibliography is arranged according to topical categories in order to assist comparative study. Topical category names have been revised to reflect current themes in social work scholarship. Entries have been assigned to categories according to the spiritual perspective predominant in each text. Whenever possible, the bibliographer has read the full article or book; however, in some cases decisions were based on reading of

an abstract or title. Topical categories are: Asian and East/West Synthetic Perspectives; Christian Perspectives; Existentialist Perspectives; Jewish Perspectives; Shamanic, Spiritist and Native American Perspectives; Nonsectarian or General Perspectives; Other. Thanks to Cathleen Lewandowski, LMSW, ACSW, for assistance compiling this bibliography.

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Spirituality and Social Work Journal invites articles on these and other topics:

1. Diverse perspectives on spirituality and social work theory, research, practice, policy, and education.
2. Social activism and spirituality.
3. Application of prayer, meditation, and ritual to social work.
4. Cultural variations of spirituality and religion applied to helping.
5. Book reviews.
6. Readers' responses and debates.

Use APA style (see articles in this journal as examples); 12-16 double-spaced pages in length. Send 3 copies of manuscript and, if possible, WordStar, WordPerfect, or ASCII file on disk.

Articles will be refereed anonymously.

**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Newsletter**

Fall 1994

Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

FALL 1994

Rebirth of Society for Spirituality and Social Work:

Retrospect and Prospect

Edward R. Canda, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, University of Kansas

School of Social Welfare, Lawrence,

Kansas 66045-2510. Founder and Former

Director of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work

Rebirth

It has been a long transition period, nearly two years, for the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. During 1993 and much of 1994, publication activities of the Society were suspended while I sought to establish new leadership and broader institutional and personal support for the various operations of the Society.

During this time of flux, the society may have appeared to have passed away and sometimes I thought so myself. But I've found it helpful to recall the myth of the phoenix that is reborn from the ashes of its own conflagration. This myth suggests that significant new life must often be preceded by the disruption and transformation of the old.

I am happy to announce that the Society has finally achieved rebirth under the enthusiastic leadership and vision of Robin Russel at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Dr. Russel brings a fresh perspective and new ideas, combining interests in legal/social justice, community organizing, feminism, and creation-centered spirituality. She combines excitement for both scholarly and experiential approaches to developing spiritually sensitive social work. I believe this is precisely what is needed for the future of the society and the profession in general.

Retrospect

Since the inception of the Society in 1990, it has attained several important accomplishments. The society disseminated information about innovative approaches to spiritually sensitive social work practice and education nationally and internationally through its publications and conference presentations by members. This also facilitated the establishment of professional networks extending through most of the United States as well as Canada, and several countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

General professional support for dealing with spirituality in social work has increased significantly during this time, in part due to the advocacy and activity of the society. For example, publications on this topic have become more prominent in major journals, such as *Social Work*, *The Journal of Social Work Education*, and *Families in Society* (formerly *Social Casework*). The *Spirituality and Social Work Journal* has merged with the journal *Social Thought* in order to expand its circulation and professional impact. Presentations and workshops at national conferences of NASW and CSWE are now common. This support is given formal expression in the new curriculum policy statement of the Council on Social Work Education, which acknowledges spiritual and religious diversity as legitimate topics for professional education.

I wish to give sincere thanks to all those who have given tangible and moral support to the Society since 1990. Without your help, these accomplishments would not have been possible. In particular, I wish to thank those who served in the advisory group: Donald Chambers, Robert Constable, Monit Kam-Fong Cheung, Lowell Jenkins, Donald Krill, Daniel B. Lee, Sadye Logan, Patrick J. O'Brien, Maikwe Parsons Cross, Max

Siporin, M. Vincentia Joseph, and Ann Weick.

Prospect

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in order to create connections and mutual support among social workers of many contrasting spiritual perspectives who share a commitment to the well-being of the whole person in the web of all life. Continuing examples of ideological and religiously based strife throughout the world, and within our own profession, convince me that this mission still has great imperative and even great urgency. I believe that the magnitude of human suffering and planet-wide ecological destruction do not afford us the time and energy to waste on spiritual chauvinism and divisiveness. We must learn how to embrace each other in cooperation, honoring our differences and disagreements, while celebrating our common human heartedness and our oneness in the sacred ground of all that is.

Such an ideal can easily become nothing more than a sentimental platitude. The only way for this ideal to be real is for each one of us to remain clear about the deep inner source of compassion that motivates us to do social work. Our intellectual understanding of spirituality must be completed by diligent experiential participation in whatever spiritual path we uphold and by practical expression in daily personal and professional living.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work can play an important role in the realization of this ideal within our profession by finding new ways to bring together practitioners, clients, and scholars in both intellectual and experiential encounters leading toward practical, spiritually sensitive cooperation on both local and global issues. This would fulfill the promise implied in the myth of the phoenix—that the new life of the Society will involve more than just a physical rebirth, but also transformation into a more profound way of being. I look forward to continuing to support it to make this ideal real.

SSSW

Envisioning the Society

Robin Russel, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, School of Social Work,
University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE
68182-0293. Director, Society for Spirituality and
Social Work.

I first heard about the Society for Spirituality and Social Work when I received a flyer about the organization from a social worker from Maine who I'd met at a conference during the summer of 1993. In fact, the focus of the conference had been the spirituality of work. At the time, as a social work educator, I was struggling with issues related to how to integrate my spirituality with my job. There had been quite a few other social workers at this conference and we talked about how wonderful it would be to be able to network with others in our field around the integration of spirituality and practice.

The flyer had Ed Canda's name and address on it. It sat in my desk drawer for a number of months before I called Ed to ask, "What is the Society for Spirituality and Social Work?" It was during this conversation that I learned that Ed had been looking for someone to take over the directorship of the Society and was contemplating letting it die if someone could not be found. After a couple further conversations, and support from my program's director, I volunteered to take a turn at leadership. My volunteering to do so, was not because I believe I have any special expertise for doing so, but grew out of a conviction that spirituality is a very important aspect of social work practice that has been neglected all too often. If I was hungry to meet and dialogue with other social workers interested in spirituality, certainly there must be others looking for the same opportunity.

During the past half year the Society has sponsored informal networking meetings at the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education in Atlanta and at the Menninger Transpersonal Healing Conference in Topeka. I was excited and encouraged by the large numbers of social workers who participated in these meetings and who shared their desire in developing

connections with others in their field interested in spirituality.

I envision the Society as a vehicle for facilitating connections and dialogue. Toward that end, I've developed the following goals for the Society for the coming year:

- Development of a newsletter that will appear at least twice a year. I hope this Newsletter will give members an opportunity to share information about their efforts to integrate spirituality with social work practice and education.
- Sponsoring of informal networking sessions at national professional meetings. A half day Society meeting has been scheduled for the CSWE Annual Program Meeting in San Diego on March 2, 1995. I hope to be able to schedule a similar meeting for next year's NASW Conference.
- Development of a national conference on spirituality and social work. Our first conference has been scheduled for July 7-11, 1995 at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Keynote speaker will be author and social worker, Jacquelyn Small.
- Development of a syllabus bank. I hope to gather syllabi from faculty who have taught courses on spirituality and social work that could be made available to educators at other schools who are developing or teaching such courses. If you have a relevant syllabus or course outline please forward it to me.
- Gathering of information about local and regional groups of social workers and related professionals who are meeting around topics related to spirituality and practice. I hope to be able to share information about these groups in upcoming issues of this newsletter to facilitate networking, information sharing and mutual support at the local level. If you are a member of such a group, whether it be a formal or informal organization, please send me a description of your group and its activities.

I'd like to thank Ed Canda, from the University of Kansas, and David Derezotes, from the University of Utah, for their encouragement, help and support. Without Ed's vision there would be no Society. Ed is continuing to work with the organization in an advisory capacity. David will be taking on the role of associate director of the Society, particularly helping with the development of our first national conference. Both men have been invaluable in helping me get this first newsletter out.

And, I look forward to meeting and hearing from you, the members of the Society over the coming year. I hope you'll share with me your ideas and visions of what the Society could become.

SSSW

First National Conference Planned for July 1995

The first national conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work will be held July 7-11, 1995 at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. The conference, co-sponsored by the schools of social work of the Universities of Nebraska at Omaha, Utah, and Kansas will be held in conjunction with Utah's Eleventh Summer Institute in the Human Services. The Institute, which runs from July 7-15, features over 30 short courses and will include courses specifically related to spirituality and practice.

The conference will feature a one day workshop with noted author and social worker, Jacquelyn Small and a day of mountain adventure and networking in the spectacular Wasatch Mountains. Small has recently published Embodying Spirit: Coming Alive With Meaning and Purpose, and is also the author of Becoming Naturally Therapeutic, Awakening in Time, and Transformers, The Artists of Self Creation.

Inexpensive lodging will be available in University dormitories. Further information about the conference will be available in February, 1995 by contacting Naomi Silverstone, D.S.W., Director of Continuing Education, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112. (801) 581-8276.

SSSW

Announcing the Merger of the Spirituality and Social Work Journal of Social Thought in the New Publication

Social Thought: The Journal of Religion in the Social Services

to be published by Haworth Press beginning fall 1994. For information, write:

Joseph J. Shields, Ph.D., Editor
The Catholic University of America,
National Catholic School of Social Service
Shaban Hall, Washington, DC 20064

Note of Interest:

Edward R. Canda, Ph.D. presented a workshop on Spiritual Diversity in Social Work: A Peace Promoting Educational Approach, at the 1994 Congress of the International Associations of Schools of Social Work, in Amsterdam on July 10. The workshop and subsequent conversations highlighted the importance of global cooperation in the promotion of spiritually aware social action. For example, Professor N. A. Gokarn of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Bombay also presented a paper on the relevance of Vedic philosophy for the common base of social work. Professors Terry Sacco and Lionel Louw of South Africa expressed enthusiastic support for networking among social workers in South Africa, in order to support the amazing social transformation there. (Terry Sacco can be reached at School of Social Work, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050 South Africa.) Dr. Vera Mehta, former Secretariat-General of the IASSW, also emphasized the importance of spiritual clarity and compassion in her recent work among refugees in the war-torn former Yugoslavia.

SSSW

River Sounding

Joleen Benedict, A.C.S.W.
Clinical Social Worker, Family Guidance Center, Trenton, N.J.

An attempt to wed the eco-spiritual to social action is the River Sounding Project. River Sounding is sponsored by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, a nonprofit, citizen action organization in Lambertville, N.J., that works to protect and preserve the Delaware River, its habitats and wildlife.

The River Sounding Project is designed "to bring communal, creative mind to the Delaware River." Participants of the Soundings are asked to "listen to, interact with and celebrate the River and its life," at seven sites along the Delaware River, from its headwaters to the bay, during the summer/fall of 1994.

The Soundings have a dual purpose. Information from the River is sought on how to better sustain the River, and imaginative art projects that articulate what has been learned from the River are also sought.

There are two phases of the project. The first phase consists of the seven Soundings. River Sounding participants are challenged to listen in silence to the River for as long as the silence can be maintained. Drumming, poems, and stories are part of the sounding celebrations and are designed to stimulate creative listening and conversations with the River. Participants are asked to think about what was learned by listening in silence to the River and, in the months after the soundings, to create expressions of the experience in a variety of artistic media. These include visual and conceptual art, theater, dance, musical compositions, poetry, sculpture, photographs, essays, and videos.

The second phase of the project will take place a year later in 1995 and will bring these creative expressions to the public. Celebration exhibits will allow for the display and performance of the art works created by the Sounding participants.

According to Cynthia Poten, one of the creators of the project,

New insight is the goal of the River Sounding and broad participation is needed to make it happen. This ambitious project is reaching out to the entire Delaware River community and beyond. While artists of all mediums are urgently sought, the project assumes that everyone is creative and that everyone is needed to assist in this communal listening.

Anyone interested in the River Sounding Project may call 1-800-8-DELAWARE.

Call for Manuscripts

REFLECTIONS: Narratives of Professional Helping

Special Issue: Spirituality
Journal Editor: Sonia L. Abels
Special Issue Editor: Edward R. Canda

REFLECTIONS is a new journal devoted to personal narrative accounts about the process of helping others and creating social change. It will be published by University Press of California State University. This special issue will include self-reflective descriptions of professional helpers' experiences integrating spirituality into the helping relationship and activities. Accounts should be personal and rich in detail, portraying self-reflective insight into spiritually-sensitive helping. Diverse spiritual perspectives are encouraged.

Manuscripts are peer reviewed. Place identifying information such as name, affiliation, date, address, phone number, and fax number on a separate cover page. Do not include identifying information in the main text of the manuscript. Send three double spaced copies, 15-30 pages, 1 inch margin, plus a one page abstract and endnotes. Address to Edward R. Canda, Ph.D., School of Social Welfare, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045. Due by January 5, 1995.

SSSW

The Journal of Church Social Work

The Journal of Church Social Work is a new publication of the Carver School of Church Social Work, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. This semiannual, refereed, professional journal is devoted to disseminating research findings, theory development, and practice models for church social workers. Church social workers practice in congregations, denominations, and church-related and ecumenical agencies and organizations.

The *Journal* is inviting submissions of the following kinds of materials: major articles of theory and research concerning church social work and professional leadership of the church's Christian social ministries; short practice articles which describe particular models, illustrate practice principles and dilemmas, and/or make practical applications of theory and research to the context of the church for social work practice; reviews of relevant books and multimedia resources; items of news and announcements about events, changes, or information about persons in church social work; and, advertising of relevant conferences and continuing education events. For more information about submission policies or to order a subscription write or call: *Journal of Church Social Work*, The Carver School of Church Social Work, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2825 Lexington Road, Louisville, KY 40280. (502) 897-4605.

SSSW

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's newsletter. Submissions should be no more than three double spaced typed pages. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate

social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Manuscripts should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182.

SSSW

Integration of Spiritual Content into the MSW Curriculum

David Derezotes, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

Some of the faculty at the Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW) at the University of Utah have over the past five years been integrating spiritual content into both required and elective courses in the MSW curriculum. In general, spirituality is defined as an aspect of individual development, is contrasted with the social aspects of religiosity, and is presented as an important element of human diversity.

In some of the required courses, spiritual content has not replaced other important content areas; instead faculty have integrated the content into existing classes and structures. During the first year, students currently are required to take three clinical/direct practice (C/DP) courses; casework, group work, and work with couples and families. In the second year, they are required to take advanced C/DP courses in the same three areas. In most of these six core classes, students learn to consider spirituality when making assessments and interventions. Students' evaluations suggest that they need both the presentation of spiritual theory as well as the modeling and practice of specific interventions. A variety of resources from the literature are tapped by instructors teaching these courses. For example, theory is drawn particularly from Wilber's (1986) model of development, as well from the texts by Weinhold (1982) and Weinhold and Weinhold (1993).

Spirituality was taught in Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE) classes as one of the interrelated

dimensions of human development that progress across the life span, which also include the affective, cognitive, social, and physical dimensions. Students who select the Child and Family Integrated Emphasis in their second year also have an opportunity to consider spiritual issues in practice with children, youth, and their families.

Students also have the opportunity to take a number of elective courses that have varying degrees of spiritual content. For example, one of the most popular elective courses MSW students take in the second year is a course on family maltreatment that considers the spiritual dimension in the treatment of victims and perpetrators of abuse. The GSSW's Continuing Education classes include an annual summer institute that includes a number of courses on spirituality. This summer, courses are offered on such subjects as mindfulness, the enneagram, transpersonal ecology, creation spirituality, and "waking up." Instructors include faculty from the GSSW, the University of Utah, and the local community as well as such nationally known figures as Matthew Fox and Richard Olney.

Weinhold, B. (1982). A transpersonal approach to relationship therapy. In G. Hendricks & B. Weinhold (Eds.), *Transpersonal approaches to counseling and psychotherapy* (pp. 115-138). Denver: Love Publishing Company.

Weinhold, B. & Weinhold, J. (1993). *Counseling and psychotherapy: A transpersonal approach*. Denver: Love Publishing Company. (Chapter 6: Developmental process work in marriage and family therapy).

Wilber, K. (1986). The Spectrum of development, The Spectrum of psychopathology, and Treatment modalities. In K. Wilber, J. Engler, and D. Brown, (Eds.). *Transformations of consciousness: Conventional and contemplative perspectives on development*, (pp. 65-159). Boston: New Science Library.

SSSW

Ask Professor Cosmos

Courageous readers and all others are encouraged to write Professor Cosmos, in loving care of Dr. Russel and the Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter.

Dear Professor Cosmos:

I am a social worker fresh out of social work school, now living in a large urban area in the Midwest. During the last two years, I was trained in all of the classic psychotherapeutic technologies, and I have been anxious to try out my skills in my new job at a local counseling agency. Unfortunately, I keep getting clients who don't seem to understand what social work is all about. For example, my very first client was a scalp-dominant man who told me he was in a "spiritual crisis" and wanted help navigating through his "dark night of the soul." And my second client, a woman in her early 20s, actually asked me if I could read her aura in the intake session. What is wrong with clients these days? What do I do?

"Licensed cynical social worker"

Dear "Licensed cynical social worker":

I know what you mean, many of us get the same kind of clients in our practices these days too. They seem to be everywhere. When I started out, I put a note at the bottom of my business card which said, "if you are into any spiritual jazz, you've come to the wrong dude!" However, I finally gave up and started integrating spiritual issues into my practice. I found that my clients soon started getting better and I quickly had a long waiting list for my private practice. The biggest bummer I have now is that I am still as poor as ever because for some reason those insurance companies still don't want to pay for past life regressions and chakra readings. Maybe someday we will get greater acceptance that these kinds of issues exist; with luck we may even see them mentioned in the DSM XXIXVI.

P.C.



••JOIN THE SOCIETY ••JOIN THE SOCIETY ••JOIN THE SOCIETY ••JOIN THE SOCIETY ••JOIN THE SOCIETY ••JOIN THE SOCIETY ••

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

Membership dues are \$15 per year. Make checks payable to **The Society for Spirituality and Social Work** and mail to:

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0293

Please provide the following information:

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY, STATE _____

ZIP CODE, COUNTRY _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

FIELD OF PRACTICE _____

AREAS OF INTEREST _____



The Cos

Dear "Troubled Assistant Level Professor":
Hrmmmmmm, it does seem you have a problem there. I suppose we do not do a very good job warning faculty and practitioners that working on spiritual issues can result in the development of rather severe symptoms of inner joy and peace, and that this can be contagious to their colleagues and clients. Perhaps it is not too late to try to bring more misery back into your school. Have you considered asking for an early accreditation visit?

Dear Professor Cosmos:
I teach social work classes at a small university on the East Coast. One day last quarter, I was drumming in my case work class and leading my students in a chant when my dean walked into the room unannounced. I was worried that she would be upset with me for being so "New Age", especially since I am up drum herself and started chanting with us. The problem is that now my dean has all the faculty drumming in faculty and committee meetings and, although students, staff, and faculty are all much happier and less alienated from each other, no one seems to care anymore about all those refereed journal articles I worked so hard to publish the last six years.
"Troubled Assistant Level Professor":

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Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0293

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**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Newsletter**

Spring 1995

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Society To Hold First National Conference In July

The Society's first national conference, titled "Retrieving the Soul of Social Work", will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, July 7-11. The conference is being held in conjunction with the University of Utah's 11th Summer Institute in the Human Services and is being co-sponsored by the schools of social work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of Kansas and the University of Utah.

The conference will include a one day workshop with author and social worker Jacquelyn Small. The title of her workshop will be "Psychotherapy and its ever-expanding view of the self: the basics of psychospiritual integration". Small is the author of *Embodying Spirit: Coming Alive With Meaning and Purpose, Becoming Naturally Therapeutic, Awakening in Time, and Transformers, the Artists of Self Creation*.

The conference will also include a day of interactive sessions and a day-long retreat with the theme, "Celebrating the Diversity of Spiritual Paths." There will be two days of more tradi-

tional continuing education sessions on the following topics: Ethical and Professional Issues Related to Spiritual-based Practice; A Spiritual Model for Working With Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma; Transpersonal Casework; Spiritual Practice and the DSM IV; Spiritually Sensitive Practice With Native American and Chicano Populations; Geo-justice-A Vision for the New Millennium; Social Work in Religious Settings; and, Engaging the Sacred Feminine. Presenters will include Ed Canda, Michael Sheridan, Rick Spanno, Sunny Andrews, Au-Deane Cowley, David Derezotes, Michael Yellow Bird, Robin Russel, Jolene Benedict, Kathy Russell, Rivka Danzig and Jim Conlon.

Low cost dormitory housing is available on the University of Utah campus. For conference registration information, contact Kelly Fogurty at (801) 581-8913.

The Role Of Spirituality In Health Care Outcomes

Dona J. Ita, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
1207 W. Oregon Street
Urbana, IL 61801.

The World Health Organization defines health holistically, as a "state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Lee and Estes, 1994, p. 15). The health care system, currently under attack, is attempting to understand the role of nonphysical factors in health care outcomes.

Some current research indicates that the additional dimension of spirituality plays a role in health care outcomes. Spirituality can be defined as a two-dimensional construct, including transcendence in terms of purpose, and transcendence in terms of relating to a nonphysical plane of existence. Transcendence is a level of awareness which expands beyond physical boundaries and limitations. High levels of spirituality in either of these dimensions may or may not involve belief in a deity. Spirituality is distinguished as a concept from religion, which refers to membership in an organization.

Spirituality is an element in a causal model found to predict planning for death in hospice patients. In this model, spirituality has a direct influence in increasing perceived social support and decreasing death anxiety, and has an indirect effect through social support and values, on planning for death by home hospice patients (Ita, 1994b).

Preliminary quantitative analysis indicates that "rediscovery of meaning in life" and "prayer" were the primary methods of coping in a survey of HIV positive women (Kaplan, University of Illinois School of Social Work, study currently in progress). Spirituality is positively correlated with seeking social support, and negatively correlated with worrying. Responses to an open-ended question on definition of spirituality

included in part "believing in a higher being", "I pray", "being in close contact with God", "in touch with self and others", "peace, unity, serenity", "strength, always have help and can come from within", and "hope for future".

A review of the literature (Ita, 1994a) revealed that some major spiritual issues for terminally ill clients include searching for meaning in life and suffering, unfinished business, relationship with God, and fear of the unknown in terms of experience of death and nature of the afterlife. Intervention techniques being used to address these issues included allowing the client to search for answers through his/her own belief system, visual imagery, and meditation, among others.

Awareness of the importance of spirituality is growing in the social work and health care fields, as well as understanding of the nature of spirituality and its role in health care outcomes.

Models of practice are being developed to address spiritual issues and to harness the spiritual dimension for therapeutic work. Some social workers claim that spirituality is not our professional business. Many others, however, including current social work students, call for training in this area, describing a "hunger" for knowledge about spirituality.

Ita, D. (1994a). *Hospice Social Work Intervention Addressing Spiritual Issues*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Ita, D. (1994b). *Testing of a Causal Model of Acceptance of Death*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Lee, P.R. & Estes, C.L. (1994). *The Nation's Health*. Boston: Jones and Bartlett, Publishers.

Recent Society Activities

Ed Canda, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Social Welfare
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS. 66045-2510

The Society is having a flurry of conferencing activity. We were very active at the 1995 Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education in San Diego in March. The Society sponsored a networking meeting with panel presentation and open discussion about innovative ways to address spirituality in social work practice. The Society also sponsored a Celebration of Spiritual Diversity Through Dance and Drumming. About 40 attendees made this an enjoyable gathering—quite a relief from the usual academic conference fare. In addition, members presented papers, including a faculty development workshop by Ed Canda on teaching about spiritual diversity; a performance of song and guitar by David Derezotes and Robin Russel; a paper by David and Robin on experiential approaches to teaching about spirituality and social work; and a paper by Lee Furman and Suzanne Fry reporting a survey about cooperation between clergy and social workers. There were several other papers on spirituality or religion as well. So the APM has become fertile ground for this topic.

April 23-25, the West Virginia Chapter of NASW included a special track on spirituality within their annual state conference. Ed Canda delivered a keynote address on compassion as a common link between social work and religious ideals of service as well as workshops on ethical use of religious activities and teaching about spirituality in social work education. Robin Russel presented a workshop on working with women's spirituality in social work practice. David Derezotes gave a workshop on re-examining the DSM-IV in terms of spiritual and transpersonal issues. We also had opportunities for networking with West Virginia social workers interested in spirituality and practice.

Musings From The Director

*Robin Russel, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE. 68182*

It has been an exciting half year since the publication of the fall issue of the newsletter. New and renewed memberships have been rolling in. It seems that almost weekly there is a phone call or letter from a social worker who recently learned about the Society and is eager to be connected to others in their profession with an interest in spirituality. I've been particularly encouraged by the calls from social work students across the country who are excited to learn that there are other social workers addressing spiritual issues, when there is little encouragement for discussing these issues in their schools.

I have really enjoyed meeting and talking about spirituality with interested social workers at professional meetings. It often feels like we're weaving an inter-regional web of support and encouragement for our mutual concerns.

We are now in the final planning stages for our first national conference, to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah in July. The wide diversity of scheduled events looks wonderful! And, I am looking forward to meeting many more of you at that meeting.

As the organization grows, I am feeling a need for more input and direction from the membership. What are your visions for the Society? I am hoping that some of these issues can be addressed at the conference, but realize that many of you might find it difficult to attend. I encourage you to write or call me with your ideas and comments. I've thought it might be time to develop an organizational steering committee or advisory board, as well as an editorial board for the newsletter. If you have an interest in either of these areas, please contact me.

Creating Sacred Space With Clients

*Jolene Benedict, A.C.S.W.
Clinical Social Worker
Family Guidance Center
Trenton, N.J.*

It can be a major challenge to integrate a spiritual approach when working with clients in an agency setting. One simple way of bringing spirituality into your daily social work practice is creating sacred space with clients. Sacred space is an environment or container of safety and compassion which honors each client as a unique sacred being. Sacred space is the mood the worker creates when working with clients, using one's intent and awareness.

The social work axiom of "meeting the client where the client is" is certainly applicable in creating sacred space. It can be created anywhere, any time, in any situation or with any problem, using any approach or modality, and can be used regardless of any particular religious or spiritual affiliation or beliefs. The only difference between creating sacred space and what social workers usually do when working with clients is using the notion of the sacred. It is a simple application of a basic belief in the divine sacredness of each person.

Sacred space is created with a certain quality of presence. One must be totally present with a client or clients. All of one's attention is focused on the client with an attitude of honor and respect for this unique sacred being. Creating sacred space can be viewed as a kind of meditation practice, which can become challenging, especially when dealing with the pressures and demands of agency work and of working with difficult or hard-to-like clients.

Creating sacred space is done very simply. First, you need to relax and center yourself before each client contact. This can be done by focusing on your breath and giving yourself the suggestion to relax and calm down, and to be present in the moment. Any short relaxation technique may be used. Second, state silently the intent to create sacred

space through prayer or affirmation. For example, you may say, "I intend to perceive this client as a unique sacred being." Last, throughout the session or client contact, remind yourself of your intent, e.g., this is a sacred being.

Practice this throughout the day and observe yourself in the process: When do you resist, judge, criticize, or give up? When does it come naturally or easily? When is it difficult to maintain this attitude? Does this approach change the quality of your interaction with your clients? How does it change your perception of your clients?

It is hoped that by creating sacred space the quality of your interaction with clients will improve significantly over time. This will take practice and patience. There will probably be times and circumstances of effortlessness and ease as well as of frustration and difficulty. These extremes are part of the learning process. Learning from these experiences, mindfully, may provide you much information about yourself and your own process. Don't give up.

You may ask, how will I know when I have created sacred space successfully? When you experience yourself coming from a place of compassion and loving acceptance for your client—"a heart space," you will be creating sacred space. If your client senses and receives this quality of presence from you, there may be a noticeable change in the quality of interaction between you both. You may find that you work effortlessly and what is exchanged is highly meaningful—a kind of "flow experience." By creating sacred space, you create the fertile ground for much healing.

Integrative Therapy: A Transformational Approach

Lois Morton, Coordinator
Integrative Therapy Program
New York Open Center
83 Spring Street
New York, N.Y. 10012

The last three decades have seen important shifts in the culture toward more holistic paradigms. These are paralleled by shifts in individual consciousness. People today are increasingly connected to a sense of expanded vision. They have found tools for self knowledge and self empowerment, for consciously participating in their own evolution. Many seek an approach that brings a deeper sense of meaning and inner connection, a sense that their work is an expression of their own uniqueness and life purpose.

The Integrative Therapy Program offers in-depth education to human service professionals who seek to base their work in a holistic understanding of human nature and human systems. It is a holistic depth psychology, based on an integrated view of human nature which allows for a spiritual dimension; wholeness and integration irrespective of religious belief or affiliation.

Integrative therapy is based on the view that consciousness evolves through an integrative developmental process in which healing and spiritual growth are intimately intertwined. The Institute's courses offer practical tools for self-healing and acceleration of inner growth, as well as methods for working with people and social systems. It seeks to develop persons who are in harmony with their own nature, higher purpose and evolution and who may in turn become much-needed catalysts of transformation in the culture and society.

Dr. Martha Crampton, founder of the Integrative Therapy Program of the New York Open Center, described in an interview how she developed the program to answer a need not met by traditional approaches to psychotherapy.

"The ITP was born of a personal dilemma. As I began my career as a clinical psychologist in the late 1960's, the worlds of psychotherapy and of spirituality were much more split than they are today. Prevailing views of personal-

ity healing were based on a reductionist medical model. Spirituality was considered irrelevant to integration of the personality, or viewed as a pathological aberration. Spiritual approaches, on the other hand, frequently attempted to bypass the personality, taking refuge in a transcendent domain. An integrated approach to the person, bridging these domains, was lacking."

Crampton went to Italy to study with Roberto Assagioli, a psychiatrist, contemporary and former disciple of Freud, who had expanded Freud's work in Italy. Lamenting that Freudian theory omitted the higher possibilities of human potential, Assagioli developed Psychosynthesis as an alternative approach—a more balanced view of the human condition. Dr. Crampton incorporated Assagioli's holistic, growth-oriented approach into her work, while retaining valuable principles from other more traditional psychological approaches.

Another psychiatrist, contemporary and disciple of Freud, who broke with him over a similar issue was Carl Jung, who also rejected Freud's emphasis on pathology, and was committed to the importance of the spiritual dimension. His focus was on the relationship between the individual and a higher self, and toward allowing spiritual work to happen through one's own psychological development.

A third dimension of the Integrative Therapy Program is the emerging science of energy healing, which integrates the spiritual orientation. It provides ways of anchoring the process in the body while learning to connect with higher sense perception and the path of conscious evolution.

The mission of the Integrative Therapy Program is similar to that of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work in its expressed goal of bringing "together practitioners, clients and scholars

in both intellectual and experiential encounters, leading toward...sensitive cooperation on both local and global issues." This year we plan to bring our consciousness-raising programs into the community. In order to do this we will be building further affiliations with neighborhood non-profit service groups, to develop settings for internships and specialized study with people in crisis.

Integrative therapy can provide persons in the helping professions with practical tools and methods to take into the community and help others to experience the emergence of consciousness that spirituality can bring to traditional therapy. Next year the Program will feature a Foundation Year of courses in transformational psychology which can be taken independently for continuing education credits. It also offers a more extensive program of training that leads to a Certificate of Integrative Therapy. For more information call Lois Morton at the New York Open Center, (212) 219-2527, extension 166.

Call For Manuscripts

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's newsletter. Submissions should be no more than three double spaced typed pages. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Manuscripts should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE. 68182.

Spiritual And Religious Themes In The Scholarship Of Social Work Students

David Derezotes, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Graduate School of Social Work
University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

One of the missions that may continue to emerge in our Society is a commitment to support M.S.W. and Ph.D. level social work students who are interested in exploring spiritual or religious topics. Historically, students may not have felt that such topics were appropriate for papers, research projects, or dissertations. However, increasing numbers of students appear to be quite interested in exploring the spiritual and religious dimensions of social work populations at risk, methods, or theo-

ries. Examples of areas of interest recently identified by students include:

- (1) The spiritual dimension of gang membership
- (2) The religious roots of social work
- (3) The relationship between spirituality and marital status
- (4) How spirituality may be involved in outcomes of cognitive-behavioral interventions
- (5) Family violence and religious fundamentalism
- (6) Social work practice in religious settings

This rising student interest is reflected in the literature; there is grow-

ing evidence that spirituality and religiosity are important factors in social work practice. Students are particularly vulnerable, however, because of the power imbalance between them and their instructors. They may need active support from faculty before they can feel safe enough to explore the issues that really interest them. Faculty may need to remind themselves that students can teach us too; students are the future of social work and often have insight into what the profession needs to be looking more at.

Students are encouraged to submit to this newsletter summaries of their papers, research projects, or dissertations that have spiritual or religious content.

• • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • •

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$15 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$7 per year. Make checks payable to:

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE. 68182-0001

Please provide the following information:

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY, STATE _____

ZIP CODE, COUNTRY _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

FIELD OF PRACTICE _____

AREAS OF INTEREST _____

IF CURRENTLY A STUDENT, SCHOOL ATTENDING _____

ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS

Dear Professor Cosmos:

One of the things I have wondered, after religiously following your column all these years, is how you deal with your fame and fortune?

"Your Biggest Fan"

Dear Biggest Fan:

I admit it is difficult dealing with the immense fame and fortune that the universe has bestowed upon me. What is even harder for me, however, is dealing with my great spiritual insights, charismatic attraction, and unusual modesty. In making the transition from a licensed clinical social worker to a licensed clinical guru, I have learned to "let go" of my ego attachment and I now have the highest consciousness of that part of me which I like to call my "inner cosmic narcissist". From my new place of awareness, I can extend a sense of cosmic narcissism into my entire body and then throughout the local solar system.

P.S. My new line of Professor Cosmos T-Shirts, Greeting Cards and Androgenous Crystal Jewelry will soon be available at a New Age shop near you.

The Cos

Dear Professor Cosmos:

I am a LCSW in a small Pacific Coast community and I do some "alternative" therapies with my clients. How can I receive reimbursement for my work from the insurance companies?

"Pacific LCSW"

Dear Pacific LCSW:

Let me tell you a story. I was seeing a young man who wanted me to help him explore his past lives. When I sent a claim in to his insurance company for past life regression work, they sent me back a form saying that they had to deny the claim because the client had a "pre-existing condition."

When I told this to my client, he reflected for a moment and then said, "well, Dr. Cosmos, you may not receive any money for your work with me, but you will certainly become more spiritually wealthy for all the help you give me." I looked him square in his third eye and told him what my old guru once told me, "you know when your client is getting better when he starts giving you back the same old jazz you have been giving him."

P.C.

Courageous readers and all others are encouraged to write Professor Cosmos, in loving care of Dr. Russel and the Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter.



University of
Nebraska at
Omaha

Omaha, NE 68182-0293

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**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Newsletter**

**Volume 2, Number 2
Fall 1995**



Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

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Spirituality Courses In M.S.W. Programs

*Sandi Herzog, M.S.W.
Robin Russel, Ph.D.
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha*

There is growing recognition of the relevance of spirituality to social work practice, which has led to recommendations that spiritual and religious content be included in the M.S.W. curricula. Recent revisions to the Council on Social Work Education's curriculum guidelines support the inclusion of this content. Religious and spiritual content can be added to existing M.S.W. courses or new courses can be developed that specifically focus on this topic. Recently many schools of social work have pursued this second option.

During the spring of 1995 the Society conducted a survey research project for the purpose of describing the number and characteristics of courses on spirituality and/or religion being offered by accredited M.S.W. programs in the United States. There were two stages to

this research project. Initially, a brief questionnaire was sent to all directors of the 118 M.S.W. programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. This instrument solicited demographic information about the school and about whether it offers a course on spirituality and/or religion as part of their graduate curriculum. If the school had such a course, directors were asked for the name, address and phone number of the faculty member teaching the course and for a copy of the course syllabus. If the school did not currently have such a course, directors were asked about whether such a course was being considered at their school. When only 47 programs responded to the mailed survey, the researchers contacted the remaining schools and administered the survey

(continued on page 2)

Spirituality Courses

(continued from page 1)

over the telephone. Completed surveys were obtained for 114 of the programs, a response rate of 96%.

Sixteen programs were identified as recently or currently offering graduate social work courses on spirituality and/or religion. A letter was mailed to each faculty member identified as teaching these courses, explaining the purpose of the research and informing them that they would be contacted by telephone to be interviewed about their course. The questionnaire used for the telephone interviews of faculty included both closed-ended and open-ended questions about the history of the development of the course, student and peer reactions to the course, and their experiences teaching the course. Interviews were completed with 17 faculty members (one school had a course that was being team taught by two faculty members).

Course syllabi were obtained for 15 of the courses. A content analysis was performed on these syllabi, with particular attention to reading materials, topics covered, and class assignments.

Responses to the initial survey revealed that 16 programs had separate courses on social work and spirituality and/or religion. Nine out of the 16 programs that offer separate courses are located in the Midwest. Eight out of the 16 programs are at public schools, five are at private-sectarian institutions and three are at private-nonsectarian schools. Seven out of the 16 programs offering courses are located at Midwestern state universities.

The schools offering courses on social work and spirituality and/or religion are: Brigham Young University, Catholic University of America, College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas, Grand Valley State University, Our Lady of the Lake University of San Antonio, Smith College, St. Louis University, University of Cincinnati, University of Denver, University of Iowa, University of Kansas, University of Nebraska at Omaha, University of North Dakota, University of Utah, University

of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Walla Walla College. One additional program, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, offers an M.S.W. in Church Social Work and requires students to take courses in theology, as well as infusing religious/spiritual content throughout their curriculum. The University of Michigan offers a certificate in Jewish Communal Service and Judaic Studies.

Separate courses on spirituality and/or religion are a relatively recent phenomenon. All but three of these courses were first developed within the last five years. Half of the courses (eight) were first developed within the last two years. The oldest course identified was developed 20 years ago at the Catholic University of America. Fourteen of the programs that do not currently offer courses on this topic, reported that there have been recent discussions at faculty or committee meetings at their schools about developing such a course.

Responses to the initial survey revealed that 16 programs had separate courses on social work and spirituality and/or religion. Nine of the programs are located in the Midwest.

A content analysis of the course syllabi revealed that a lot of diversity exists in these courses in the areas of topics covered, texts utilized, assignments and teaching modalities. The topics covered in the classes ranged from the historical religious/spiritual roots of the social work profession to paranormal phenomena. Topics presented in numerous courses included: cultural diversity and religious practices; feminist vs. patriarchal spirituality; meditation; creative visualization; religious and spiritual abuse and addiction; 12 Step programs; creation and use of rituals; shamanism; angels; drumming and dancing; stages of spiritual development; transpersonal therapies; alternative forms of healing; and, assessing spirituality in clients.

Information received in the interviews with the faculty teaching the courses revealed that in most instances

the courses originated with the personal efforts of a faculty member who had a strong interest in the area and/or saw developing the course as part of their own spiritual path. When asked about their personal goals for teaching these courses, the two most common responses were: to help students develop an awareness of the impact of spirituality on people's lives; and, to help students in their own spiritual growth.

The faculty reported that the biggest challenges they faced in developing the course were: overcoming their faculty colleagues' resistance and skepticism; narrowing the scope of material covered; and, finding appropriate textbooks. They reported that the biggest challenges they faced in teaching the class included: defining spirituality and distinguishing it from religion; not allowing their personal beliefs and experiences to interfere with maintaining a neutral classroom environment that is respectful of spiritual and religious diversity; and, dealing with students who were either prejudiced, closed minded or disrespectful of others' religious or spiritual beliefs and practices.

Faculty indicated that student evaluations of the courses were extremely positive. Often student support and advocacy were instrumental in the decisions to initially develop and continue to offer these courses.

Most of the faculty reported that this was their favorite course to teach. The faculty were asked to identify what was most personally rewarding about teaching this course. The most common responses were: the high degree of student interest and their positive response; seeing students better integrate their personal and professional lives; experiencing student creativity; having students share with each other their personal growth and learning from each others' experiences; the sense of community that often developed in these classes; and, the personal learning of the professor.

Faculty interested in developing a course on social work and spirituality and/or religion can obtain sample syllabi from other schools by writing to the Society.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hold The Dates: July 13-16, 1996

Second National Society Conference Planned

Plans are being made for the second national meeting of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work to be held July 13-16, 1996 at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska. Dana College is located in a lovely rural midwestern setting, not far from Omaha, Nebraska. The conference will include a blend of didactic and experiential workshops, and many opportunities to network around issues related to spirituality and social work practice, research, and education.

Low cost housing and meals will be available on campus. Every effort is being made to keep the cost of this conference very low. Special rates will be available for students. Conference flyers will be available in March of 1996. For further information, write: The Society for Spirituality and Social Work, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE. 68182-0293.

Society Meetings Scheduled For C.S.W.E. A.P.M.

The Society has once again scheduled two programs for the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting to be held in Washington, D.C., February 15-18, 1996. The Society will sponsor an all-day workshop on Thursday, February 15, 1996 entitled Spirituality and Social Work: New Developments in Practice, Research and Education. Saturday evening, February 17, 1996, we will host a Celebration of Spiritual Diversity Through Dance and Drumming. Both of our programs at last year's A.P.M. were very well attended. The Society programs are free and open to all members, regardless of whether they are attending the C.S.W.E. meeting.

To receive further information about these meetings, please write the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE. 68182-0293.

New Column Planned: Research Update

Submissions are being requested for a new column, "Research Update." This column will keep Society members informed about who is doing what type of research on spirituality in social work.

The following submissions are requested:

1. Information on funding sources.
2. Abstracts of research completed or in progress, or just a description of research area.
3. Instruments for measuring spiritual variables.
4. Ideas for the column.
5. Requests for information.
6. Calls for papers or presentations.

Researches should include their addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. Students are also encouraged to submit information about their research.

Information regarding who is doing research in what area will be kept in a database for members to access. Submissions to the column, information for the database and requests for information from the database should be directed to Dona Ita, by e-mail or mail (phone calls may be too expensive to return):

Dona J. Ita, Ph.D.
School of Social Work
University of Illinois
1207 W. Oregon Street
Urbana, IL. 61801
dona-ita@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu

Reflections Publishes Special Issue With Spiritual Focus

Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping has published a special Fall 1995 issue titled *The Spirituality Of Helping*. *Reflections* is a unique scholarly journal, focusing on personal accounts of professional action designed to aid and support human and social development. This special issue explores the links between the spiritual perspectives of scholars and practitioners and their engagement in social service. Authors convey their own spiritual views on helping and how the authors themselves grow spiritually through the process of helping. Authors reflect varying religious and spiritual perspectives, but all share a commitment to respect and support the diverse ways people strive for meaning, morality, purpose and justice. Ed Canda served as the guest editor of this issue.

In order to obtain a copy of this issue, order a 1995 annual subscription to the quarterly journal, *Reflections*. Annual subscription rates within the U.S.: individual \$25, libraries/institutions \$35. A single copy can be obtained for \$10. Send check or money order to Reflections: CSULB, CSULB Long Beach, CA. 90840-0902. Phone: 310-985-4626.

Research Subjects Needed For Study On Spiritually Oriented Social Work Practice

M.S.W. student at the Catholic University of America is interested in interviewing D.C. area social work practitioners, academics, administrators, and policy workers for a school research project. For further information, please call Linda Haake, (703)750-0022 or send E-Mail to 77haake@cue.edu.

Healing Words

Nancy Ging, MSW, ACSW
Hinsdale, IL, 60521

Every so often a book comes along that is both a bridge and a blessing. Perhaps bridging is always a blessed act. Rarely, however, are we presented with a book that so beautifully bridges realms that desperately need to become partners. In the best-selling *Healing Words; The Power of Prayer and the Practice of Medicine*, author Larry Dossey, M.D. (1993) weaves a wonderful partnership between the mysterious, soft realm of Spirit with the concrete world of hard science. What a useful tapestry this work is for social workers.

This is not a “how to” book on prayer, writes Dossey: “Rather this book is the result of my attempt to set aside everything I previously believed about prayer—to suspend, as much as possible, all judgements and assumptions, both positive and negative, about the subject—and simply to see what the record shows when focused through the lens of science and guided by thoughtful reason” (pp. 9-10). Dossey presents a prayerful practice of medicine “that works better and feels better,” citing compelling scientific research and case histories which show the positive and complementary effects of prayer with medicine. And why not with social work? Social workers in the Chicago suburbs who gather in groups to meditate and pray for guidance in their work are finding that they receive it. Praying for their clients is powerfully supportive to all concerned. Social workers are in a good position to share Dossey’s findings with people in the healing professions. *Healing Words* expands the mind and heart of the reader as the author describes the life process at work, readably integrating the new sciences with ancient wisdom. Dossey also provides specific and practical input on what to pray for, moving the reader into an attitude of gratitude.

Dossey had previously proven his ability to articulate his experience of the paradigm shift which is going on all

(continued on page 9)

A Tribute To Alan Keith-Lucas, Ph.D.

Lawrence E. Ressler, Ph.D.

President

North American Association of Christians in Social Work

Professor of Social Work, Roberts Wesleyan College

It is with great sadness that I share the news that Dr. Alan Keith-Lucas died on August 5, 1995, at the age of 85, only several weeks after discovering he had inoperable cancer. Like a host of other social work practitioners, educators, and especially thousands of children associated with children’s homes, I will miss Keith.

Keith was born in Cambridge, England in 1910 where he spent the first several decades of his life including getting a master’s degree in English literature. He never lost his love of words, of reading and writing. He then worked for a time as a principal at a private elementary school for children. He never lost his love of children or education. Rather impulsively, he came to the U.S. in 1937 for a visit which became a permanent move beginning with Western Reserve University (now Case Western Reserve) in Cleveland, Ohio. While there, he met his wife Jill (who preceded him in death) and received his master’s degree in social work. He never lost his love of helping. After working in the welfare system for 11 years, he began to teach in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill where he remained until his retirement in 1975. During that time, he also received his Ph.D. in political science from Duke University.

Keith did not use retirement as an opportunity to rest. The 20 years since retirement was among the most productive periods of his life. Nearly 50% of his writing (over 200 articles and 30 books/chapters) were written during this time. He was in constant demand as a speaker, a tireless contributor to the North American Association of Christian Social Workers, an active consultant to children’s homes, and a devoted father and grandfather until the very end. (For a brief bibliography of some of his more important works, see the article in *Spirituality and Social Work*

Journal entitled “Theologically Enriched Social Work: Alan Keith-Lucas’ approach to Social Work and Religion”, Volume 3, No. 2, 1992, 14-20).

What drew me to Keith was the way in which he so easily and naturally integrated his Christian faith and his social work. It was a practical, down-to-earth theology centered on love which he not only wrote about but, even more importantly, that he lived. Keith was the kind of person which Jesus speaks about in Matthew 25: 34-40 who had so integrated the essence of love that he was not fully aware of it. He told me that he did not feel like a caring person inside and was amazed that people saw him as such. The face of God was evident, however, as he told stories to children and tried to care for the poor as a caseworker and bureaucrat. A reflection of God was evident through the simple life he lived in which he strived to give more away than he spent on himself. He made me feel proud to be known as a Christian social worker. He will be missed.

Thank You!

Thanks to Jean McKechnie and Sabrina Prince for help with the mailing of the last newsletter... and to David Derezotes, Dona Ita and Ed Canda for their help in reviewing manuscripts submitted for this issue of the newsletter.

Retrieving The Soul Of Social Work

Opening Address For The First National Conference Of The Society For Spirituality And Social Work, July 7, 1995

*Edward R. Canda, Ph.D.
University of Kansas School of Social Welfare*

Introduction

When Robin asked me to suggest a theme for this conference, the phrase “retrieving the soul of social work” came to mind. In these opening remarks, I would like to address this theme which alludes to the shamanic concept of soul loss. I would like to use this metaphor for considering the condition of the social work profession and the need for its spiritual renewal. Of course, many religious traditions address maladies of the soul, and so insights to address our professional malaise will be drawn from a wide range of perspectives.

Many shamanic spiritual ways identify “soul loss” as one of the major causes of physical and mental illness. Soul loss involves feelings of identity confusion and disorientation. One feels as though a crucial part of one’s self has been lost. The soul has become detached, due to disharmony within oneself and between oneself and the universe. The soul wanders off, confused and lost. The remaining body and psyche lose their spiritual clarity, orientation, and balance. The person becomes half-dead psychologically if not also physically. Though alive, the person is nearly inanimate. Literally, from the Latin, to be animated means to be enlivened by soul.

Most often, soul loss occurs because of some trauma that shocks the soul out of the body. For example, Cambodian (Khmer) and Hmong shamans in the United States have sometimes diagnosed severely distressed and hopeless refugee patients as suffering from soul loss or soul sickness, caused by the experience of mass destruction, rupture from homeland and ancestors, and break from sacred traditions. Sometimes soul loss may occur because of one’s own failure to keep in proper relation with one’s sacred ways, the spirits of ancestors, and the spiritual powers of earth and sky. In

either case, soul loss involves a fragmenting and dissociation within the self and a feeling of alienation from spiritual sources of support and meaning.

Given such a diagnosis, the requisite cure is for the shaman to go on a soul journey to find the person’s lost soul, to enlist the help of spiritual supports, and to bring the soul back to the person.

I would like to propose that the profession of social work is in a process of recovering from collective soul loss and that a mission of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work is to help retrieve this soul. To this end, I will recount some of the historical reasons for this loss of soul, the movement to retrieve the soul, and I will suggest some principles to guide our continuing work.

Spirituality, Compassion, and Service

All cultures have systematic ways of compassion, justice and helping. Traditionally, these were based explicitly on spiritual ways of living. Most cultures do not have a separate word for religion or spirituality; spirituality is just the way of life—it is the way people find meaning, moral guidance, and proper relationship between themselves, all our fellow beings, and the great mystery that infuses all. One might say that spirituality is soul-full living. Soulful awareness and living naturally yield a sense of compassion, the underlying motive for social work service.

The Navajo (Dine) people pray that we may walk in beauty, beauty within us and all around us. Walking in beauty means that the inherent beauty and sacredness of every being is recognized, enjoyed, and respected. Further, like the strands in a spider web, all things are woven together in a net of beauty. During traditional sings, or healing ceremonies, the distressed person is placed on a painting made of sand which depicts the

deities relevant to the situation. By setting the person on this sand painting and invoking the deities into it, the sacred powers become one with this person and the other participants, restoring the balance and beauty that were lost.

Buddhism teaches about the interconnectedness of all by using the image of the god Indra’s net. In this cosmic net, every strand is interconnected, with resplendent jewels at each connection point. The jewels reflect between themselves the glory of every other jewel. Every being is a jewel in this wondrous net. Compassionate concern for all these beings naturally arises from such a soulful awareness of beautiful, sacred interconnectedness. One’s own self and all others are inseparable; the benefit of one is the benefit of all. The harm of one is the harm of all. With similar intuition, the Confucian sage, Chou Tun-I, said that the sage should regard all beings as brothers and sisters and should reach out lovingly to help those in need.

Jesus said, feed the hungry; relieve the poor; visit the imprisoned; hunger for peace and righteousness. Someone asked Mother Teresa how she could tolerate working with lepers, the destitute, and the dying in seemingly insufferable conditions without complaint. She said that this was no problem as she saw Christ in each one’s eyes. Mahayana Buddhism applies this ideal to all beings through the image of the Wisdom Being of Compassion, known in Chinese as Kwan Yin. Sometimes Kwan Yin is depicted as having a thousand eyes in order to see the suffering of all beings, a thousand hands in order to reach out to help all beings, and eleven heads depicting the myriad responses of compassion.

I mention these examples just to give a brief glimpse into the fact that compassionate help is our natural way of life. Ways of compassion existed long before professional helping. Spiritually inspired compassion is the source of all genuine helping, whether informal or professional. Social work, medicine, the ministries, and other helping professions do not have a monopoly on helping, though often they try to legislate it, control it, license it, package it, and sell it.

Director's Notes

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
Director
Society for Spirituality and
Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE. 68182
(402)554-2941
E-Mail: russelr@unomaha.edu

The Society seems to be growing at such a rapid pace that it often takes my breath away. Our activities and networking are expanding. Our membership is growing. Members are beginning to organize chapters in various locations so that they can be better connected with colleagues who share their interest in spirituality. I would welcome calls from members who would like to try to organize a group in their region.

The first national Society conference in Salt Lake City this past summer was heartening. The conference had much more of the feel of a retreat than an academic or professional meeting. Members tell me they left feeling deeply touched...refreshed. Strong ties were forged between those present. Being part of that meeting was a real gift for me. It often felt like we were all part of birthing something wonderful within our profession.

Plans are well under way for a second national conference to be held in Nebraska next July and for meetings in Washington, D.C. in February as part of the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education (see Announcement for further details).

I look forward to meeting and hearing from more of you in the months ahead.

Retrieving the Soul

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But natural compassion is our human birthright. Mencius said that if any person with humanity sees a baby dangerously close to falling into a well, that person will automatically go to save that child. That natural response, arising from our sense of fundamental connectedness and commiseration with all else, is the heart and soul of social work.

Social Work's Loss of Soul

Social work as a profession, is an attempt to formalize, systematize and apply this natural compassion on a large scale through social institutions. This is a worthwhile but dangerous undertaking. Although compassion is the soul of social work, the very attempt to legislate, control, license, package, and sell it runs the risk of violating the soul. Lao Tze, the Chinese founder of Taoism, paradoxically said that immortality and cruelty came into being when codes of conduct and social control were invented. That is because we become dependent on social constructs of morality and lose our true nature. As we become role-bound, rule-bound, categorized, and socially controlled, natural compassion is reduced to artificial, bureaucratized, technocratic "intervention." Think for a moment about the metaphor of intervention, used so commonly to describe social work practice: an outsider enters a client's life and manipulates it. This is a militaristic metaphor, like paratroopers dropping out of the sky into a combat zone.

Yet professional social work in the United States clearly originated out of a soulful response of Jewish and Christian people to help the poor, the homeless, and the distressed immigrants. Principles of charity, compassion, and community preservation informed the Charity Organization Society, the Settlement House Movement, and the Jewish communal services movement. The spiritual aspect of human need and helping was acknowledged in our curriculum policy statement as late as the 1960s.

However, during the 20th century, the urge to professionalize and compete

with other helping professions led the field away from its spiritual foundation. One reason was an understandably negative reaction to the tendency of some religiously based helpers to impose their own agendas on vulnerable people, through proselytization and moralistic judgementalism. Another reason was a hope that supposedly scientific bases for helping, such as Freudianism, behaviorism, and socialism, would lead to social and behavioral remedies that had eluded the theological approaches. Further, the strong link forged between social work, government social welfare programs, and insurance companies pressured toward greater separation between anything that seemed to compromise "church/state separation." These trends have continued. So, despite good intentions, we have unwittingly allowed ourselves to throw out the baby of spirituality with the bath water of sectarian rivalry.

We have cut ourselves off from our ancestors, the healers and helpers of all cultures who understood helping as a natural response and a sacred imperative. We have often denied or split off the spiritual aspects of ourselves and our clients. Now many social workers, like it or not, are forced to find neat categories of pathology to label clients—and to be sure that these are insurance reimbursable! In response to legitimate concerns with accountability, we are adopting capitalist, consumerist, fast food approaches to helping—the helping roles must be clearly and narrowly defined, the objectives clearly stated, the outcomes empirically measured, and all this within ten sessions. To complete the capitalist paradigm for helping, now the client is often called a "consumer."

Given this move toward technocracy as well as the common professional allergy to spirituality, in some states, this divorce from natural helping has gone so far that licensing boards try to restrict traditional healers within religious and cultural groups who don't have the board-required academic degrees and licenses. Some state licensing boards have attempted to prohibit explicitly spiritually oriented social work. Some students have reported being ostracized by teachers and prac-

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ticum instructors for trying to address spirituality with clients. Some academic colleagues have been forbidden to do research in this area.

My parents taught me as a child that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The social work profession has surely had good intentions in all these changes, but by cutting ourselves off from our spiritual roots and purpose, we have dehumanized ourselves and our clients. When we cut ourselves off from our souls and we deny the souls of our clients, we create a living hell.

The Jewish existentialist theologian, Martin Buber, said that the way of love between people, mirroring the love between the divine and the human, is one of unconditional love, a way of regarding each other as full and complete persons, with inherent worthiness of respect. Clients are not diagnostic categories or bundles of problems or dysfunctions. Each client, like each of us, is divine, soul-full.

So I believe we came to this condition of loss and confusion of soul largely because of an unwitting drift into self-denial, self-estrangement, and dispiritedness. Partly this was due to legitimate concerns with past mistakes and abuses of religiosity. But frankly, some of this was due to a greedy impulse to compete for professional prestige, turf in the consumer market, and access to third party reimbursement.

But maybe this assessment is like “blaming the victim”. We are all victims of an industrial and post-industrial way of life that has driven us toward commodifying not only each other, but also the planet we live on. Urban anonymous living, mass production and consumption patterns, breakdown of extended family and communities of support, the craving for quick fixes, cheap highs, and personal gratification are social trends familiar to all of us. To a great extent, I believe we have been traumatized by this planet-wide mass movement of spiritual alienation. An ecopsychologist named Chellis Glendinning titles her recent book, “My name is

Chellis and I’m in Recovery from Western Civilization.” I believe that our profession, and each one of us, need to go through a process of recovery from the destructive aspects of Western Civilization.

Now let me depart from this negative tone. I’ve suggested that spiritual self-neglect and societal trauma have led to our profession’s soul loss. But the purpose of assessing soul loss is to opt for healing, not to dwell on the disease.

Retrieving the Soul of Social Work

There are many positive signs that suggest a recovery of soul is under way in social work, this conference being one of them. Many people are already recognizing the need to retrieve the soul of social work and our being here shows our common commitment to do this.

In the mid-1980’s, a trend in social work grew, similar to what Marilyn Ferguson called the “Aquarian Conspiracy” that was happening in the general culture. The Aquarian Conspiracy refers to a trend in many disciplines and sectors of society to shift toward holistic and spiritually-attuned perspectives. During that time, social work scholars such as Max Siporin and Sister Vincenzia Joseph said that we need to consider not only the bio-psycho-social but also the spiritual aspects of human needs and development. There were increasing calls for a return to spirituality in social work together with a recognition that we need to avoid the mistakes of partisan religiosity from the past. In support of this trend, in 1989, I began organizing the Society for Spirituality and Social Work and in 1990 it began activities. Now, under the leadership of Robin Russel, the Society is expanding its activities. Now, articles on spirituality and social work are appearing much more rapidly than ever before in both specialized and mainstream journals. Presentations at national and regional meetings of the Council on Social Work Education and the National Association of Social Workers are becoming commonplace. The new CSWE curriculum policy guidelines recognize religious and spiritual diversity as legitimate topics

for social work education. More social work departments are offering courses on this topic. Many state licensing boards are supporting spiritually-sensitive approaches to continuing education and practice. And agencies around the country are requesting workshops on spirituality and practice. This is an exciting time for our field. All of us here share a commitment to support the healing of social work, and for that I am grateful to all of you.

We can work with the momentum of these developments to continue this spiritual healing of our profession of social work. At this conference, we have the opportunity to learn from each other, support each other’s work, enjoy each other’s company, and envision new directions for the Society.

Principles for Continuing Work of the Society

I would like to suggest some guiding principles for our continued advocacy for spiritually sensitive social work.

First, in all our discourse, we need to keep clear about our meanings of key terms that might be ambiguous or tend to arouse discomfort in colleagues and clients. For example, we need to clarify our meanings of the terms spirituality and religion. Myself and others have offered definitions in writing and these are commonly accepted now. But still many who are newcomers to this field, or have personal antipathy to the topic of religion, are not familiar with current use of the terms. Lacking common understanding, dialogue quickly degenerates into argument.

Second, in our use of the term spirituality and in our approach to spiritually sensitive practice, we must strive to be inclusive of all spiritual perspectives. This includes being inclusive of exclusive perspectives. Often, people who are spiritually rather liberal minded cannot tolerate fundamentalists or political conservatives; ironically, the liberal minded critics close their minds against the close-mindedness of fundamentalists, thus becoming the same as what they reject. Genuine spiritual dialogue and cooperation requires mutual respect, willingness to respectfully disagree, and

Retrieving the Soul

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a courageous perseverance to work things through.

Third, we need to expand our networking among the growing number of scholars and practitioners who share this concern. Still many people who share these interests are unaware of what is happening in social work and have become estranged from it. Some colleagues feel isolated within intolerant work environments and need our support. Also, scholars and practitioners can learn from what's already being done so there is no need to reinvent the wheel.

Fourth, we need to continue to re-examine the insights of ancient ways of helping from shamanism, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, indigenous spiritual ways, and all other particular religious traditions. This is our common human heritage of soulful helping. For the first time in human history virtually all spiritual traditions can be in contact with each other, to learn from the wisdom of each others' healing ways and to forge practical cooperation in response to the overwhelming problems of human and planetary suffering. But we must be careful that such cross-tradition contact is not a one sided exploration of superficial borrowing. It is all too easy to fall into the colonialist pattern of taking what we want from others. We also have to be honest in sorting out the ways that religious traditions help but also harm people.

Fifth, we need to explore recently emerged theories and practice approaches that explicitly address the transpersonal and spiritual aspects of human experience. The field of transpersonal theory and research has exploded in the past ten years. Likewise, transpersonal helping approaches ranging from meditation to holotropic breath work and neo-shamanic counseling have become popular in both professional therapy and so-called "new age" contexts. There is much of great value we can cull from these developments. But we also need to use social work values and scholarly critical reflection to distin-

guish carefully between what is valuable and what is just commercial hype or spiritual consumerism. I am a fervent advocate of open-mindedness—but that doesn't mean we should be so open-minded that our brains fall out!

Finally, social work education in the classroom and the field needs to engage the whole student and teacher. We need to relate to each other in a spiritually-sensitive manner, just as we advocate for clients. The rational, intuitive, analytic, feeling, and sensory modes of relating all need to be engaged. And education itself needs to be understood as a spiritual pursuit of wisdom toward the end of compassionate service.

I'd like to finish with a poem from Theodore Roethke, who struggled through bipolar disorder into many spiritual insights. This poem, called "The Restored", describes the fracturing of the soul through being isolated and stuck in thinking, like social work has often been. But it also describes the joy of the restored soul.

The Restored

*In a hand like a bowl
Danced my own soul,
Small as an elf, All by itself.*

*When she thought I thought
She dropped as if shot.
"I've only one wing," she said,
"The other's gone dead,"
"I'm maimed; I can't fly;
I'm like to die,"
Cried the soul
From my hand like a owl.*

*When I raged, when I wailed,
And my reason failed,
That delicate thing
Grew back a new wing,*

*And danced, at high noon,
On a hot, dusty stone,
In the still point of light
Of my last midnight.*

New Society Chapter In Salt Lake City

*Karen Nielsen, M.S.W.
Salt Lake City, Utah*

On Monday, September 18, the first gathering of the Utah Chapter of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work took place at dusk in the Graduate School of Social Work, University of Utah campus in Salt Lake City. The organizing committee of David Derzotes, Karen Nielsen and Ed Huntsman managed to drum up enthusiasm from the community to the tune of 20 spiritually-minded practitioners, artists and family members in attendance. The meeting began with food, music and the lighting of a candle. Tibetan bells were passed as folks literally "chimed in" and shared their names, their work and their dreams for the Utah Chapter.

One therapist shared a touching story of his realization of the fragility of the human spirit after viewing photos of a client badly bruised from a beating. Another participant shared that she

prayed with her client during a session after the client shared a need for spiritual intervention.

As the sun set, the candle was passed to illuminate faces. This created a magical setting and atmosphere of quiet safety. Many religious backgrounds were represented in the group, including: Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Mormons, Wiccans, Pagans and general spiritualists. Au-Deane Cowley summed it up articulately when she said: "We all have our own holocaust to survive, if we can learn to 'interpret up' and reframe our pain into a larger spiritual context, we become more able vessels for spiritual healing and intervention." The meeting ended with some members of the group joining hands, transferring energy, and visualizing sending a peace-bubble to Bosnia. An October meeting was planned.

Under The Utah Sky

Elizabeth D. Smith, DSW, Assistant Professor,
National Catholic School of Social Service
Catholic University of America

Something sacred happened under the Utah sky as the Society for Spirituality and Social work gathered for the first time this last July. With the majesty of the mountains cradling the campus and overlooking the Salt Lake City valley, the conference setting alone was destined to move the collective spirit of the participants. From the opening keynote address by Dr. Ed Canda to the last ritual circle of good-bye, "communion" was everywhere apparent. For me, it was the opportunity to move beyond the profane. As Emile Durkheim (1995) would say, beyond the "daily personal preoccupations," "private existence" and "egoistic passions". And, as Durkheim distinguishes the sacred from the profane, I felt that I had the experience of the sacred - "... the fusing of individual consciences 'into communion,' imposing respect and love, transferring 'society into us' and connecting 'us with something surpassing us'." (Preus, 1987, p.167) It provided me with a wonderful respite from the cares and concerns of my personal existence and my egoistic academic passions. In reflection, I have tried to understand what happened there that left such an indelible imprint on my psychospiritual being.

As social workers know, all is content and process. This bifurcation of our world into two domains makes us ever conscious of both. From the moment I began to receive the conference content, I began to process the spiritual impact that lay somewhere beyond the cognitive intake of new knowledge. I experienced the beginnings of spiritual movement from "the imposition of respect and love" in the inclusiveness of the keynote address. With each workshop I felt the further "fusing of individual consciences into communion." Through the rituals we both borrowed and collectively created, I experienced the "transferring of the Society into us." Ultimately, at conference end, I knew that we all had connected "with some-

thing surpassing us." This was my process.

My interpretation of the content lies within my own constructed reality. The meaning I chose to assign to my experience is analogous to the *bardo state* which comes from Tibetan Buddhism. According to Sogyal Rinpoche (1994) in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, "the word 'bardo' is commonly used to denote the intermediate state between death and rebirth, but in reality bardos are occurring continuously throughout life and death, and are junctures when the possibility of liberation, or enlightenment, is heightened." (p.11). He goes on to say that bardos are powerful opportunities for liberation because certain moments are much more powerful than others and charged with more potential for far-reaching effect. The first national conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work presented me with a liberating opportunity. And as I shared my process and content with others, I found that many were experiencing their own personal transitional realities, or bardos. Each individual experience seems to be an introduction to what Tibetan teachings would call "the essential nature of mind." Without necessarily ever setting out to accomplish such an explicit goal, the conference program and setting provided the right mix to not only impart knowledge about spirituality and social work practice, to nurture individual and collective spiritual growth, but to allow for the realization of the nature of mind, which is our innermost essence, that truth which we all search for.

I returned to my private world and academic life renewed and invigorated. I assured the Dean of our school that it was the best investment he has made thus far in the professional development of this faculty member. Now, when the trials of this semester weigh heavy, I remember the broad expanse of the bluest sky I have ever seen, and I reso-

nate with these words: "The essential nature of mind is the background to the whole of life and death, like the sky, which folds the whole universe in its embrace." (Rinpoche, 1994, p. 12.)

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See announcement for Second Annual Conference on page 3.

Healing

(continued from page 4)

around us at a seemingly accelerated pace. His four earlier books, *Space, Time & Medicine*, *Beyond Illness, Recovering the Soul*, and *Meaning and Medicine* are also well worth reading.

Dossey is currently co-chair of the National Institutes of Health's Panel on Mind/Body Interventions, Office of Alternative Medicine, and co-editor of the new journal, "Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine." He has earned a position of leadership in the new field of "energy medicine," which studies spiritual healing with scientific understanding of human behavior and the new sciences. We will be hearing much more about this field.

Many of us who have grown up in the Western Hemisphere aren't comfortable for long to simply WONDER without wanting data to support that which we wonder about. *Healing Words*, by Dr. Dossey and the new field of energy medicine will help us bridge the realm of logic in which we have a desire TO KNOW, with the realm of mystery where we are content to NOT KNOW. Wonderfully so.

ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS



Dear Professor Cosmos:

I understand that you have come out with some new suggestions for the editorial board of the DSM Committee.

“Hungry for New Knowledge”

Dear Hungry:

Yes it is true. Amazingly, nobody from that committee actually asked me for my opinion, so I decided that I should go ahead and submit it anyway. These are new categories I would propose for the next DSM edition, which I have suggested should go in a new section, called the Cos-codes:

Personality Disorders

- 555.01: has poor insurance coverage
- 555.02: was abducted by aliens and returned against her/his will
- 556.05: has scorpio rising but moon is in Santa Cruz
- 567.03: is far out dude/dudette
- 583.04: was mental health malpractice attorney in past life

Adjustment disorders

- 699.02: MSW program director in recovery from recent CSWE site visit
- 667.01: has had plain dumb luck
- 683.04: was sued for mental health malpractice in present life

Anxiety Disorders

- 772.05: academic up for tenure but scholarship record is all in field of spirituality
- 779.08: straight white male looking for first academic position on West Coast
- 783.08: social work Ph.D. candidate wanting to do her/his dissertation on “the relationship between love, energy, and plant growth”

Perhaps readers have their own suggestions you can send to me..

P.C.

Dear Professor Cosmos:

A good friend of mine is graduating from a local MSW program and I would like to get her a gift. Any suggestions?

“Nice Guy”

Dear Nice Guy:

I am glad you asked. It turns out that I just happen to have developed two new products:

The COS-BOARD.

You have heard of the ouija board, you have heard of the CSWE board, and you have frequently been bored. Now you can get your own COS-BOARD. The Cos-board contains 100% recycled ideas, borrowed and stolen from other games and spiritual disciplines. The board features a full-size replica of Professor Cosmos, in his hat and gown and a variety of diagnoses. What you do is sit with your client on the other side of the COS-BOARD, hold the stylus together, and the stylus is guaranteed to always move to long-term mental health diagnoses. You can purchase different “regional” COS-BOARDS that fit the arbitrary and capricious third party payor rules unique to your particular region. Prices vary, depending on the average practice income of the region you are in.

The “COS-CARDS”

As if there aren't already too many tarot decks and other assorted cards, we have now produced COS-CARDS. These cards each have a beautiful full color photo of the Professor himself on one side, and a meaningful, postmodernist symbol on the other. Examples of the symbols include, (a) a photo of the Encyclopedia of Social Work rising over the New York skyline, (b) a computer generated representation of an ant's view of the top of a bald man's head, and (3) the auras of a large slice of Double Chocolate Cheese Cake before and after digestion. The social worker sits down with the cards and has the client ask a question and pull out a card from the deck. The worker then interprets the card, using Professor Cosmos's *Cos-card Manual/Womanual*.

Enjoy!

The Cos..

Courageous readers and all others are encouraged to write Professor Cosmos, in loving care of Dr. Russel and the Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$15 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$7 per year. Make checks payable to:

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE. 68182-0001

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Call For Manuscripts

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Social Thought: Journal of Religion and Social Services

The journal, *Social Thought*, is being re-introduced by Haworth Press, under the editorship of Joseph Shields, Ph.D. of the Catholic University of America. The first issue will be published in fall of 1995. In this new format, the journal will focus on the connection between spirituality and social service, in both religious and nonreligious contexts. In order to emphasize this focus, **a special issue will be produced in 1996 to present a comprehensive overview of current innovations that link spirituality and social services.**

This special issue will be guest edited by Ed Canda. Ed is now soliciting manuscripts for this issue. The intention is to collect articles that reflect the current scholarly state-of-the-art in social service education, research, direct practice, human behavior theory, macro practice, and social policy.

Manuscript submission deadline: January 1, 1996.

Format requirements: APA style (1994 edition) should be used. The entire text must be double-spaced, 10 pitch type, 1 inch margins, not to exceed 20 pages except in unusual circumstances. Text should also include an abstract. No identifying information in the abstract or manuscript may be included. A separate cover page with author information must be included. Manuscripts will be reviewed any-

ously. Manuscript submissions and inquiries for this special issue should be directed to Edward Canda, Ph.D., School of Social Welfare, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 66045. Tel:913-864-4720. Fax: 913-864-5277. E-Mail:EDC@SW1.SOCWEL.UKANS.EDU.

For other information about the journal or to make submissions for any other issue of *Social Thought*, contact Joseph Shields, Ph.D. Social Thought, National Catholic School of Social Service, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. 20064. Tel: 202-319-5458. Fax: 202-319-5093.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter.

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Two hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on 3.5 disk in Word Perfect should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE. 68182-0293.



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Edward R. Canda
The University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare
Lawrence, KS. 66045

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**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Newsletter**

**Volume 3, Number 1
Spring 1996**



Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Spring 1996

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Cross-Tradition Borrowing Of Spiritual Practices In Social Work Settings

*Edward R. Canda, Ph.D. and Michael J. Yellow Bird, Ph.D.
School of Social Welfare , University of Kansas*

Last year, the First National Conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work was a wonderful event. It brought together practitioners and scholars from all over the country, representing many different spiritual perspectives. Our sharing across these different spiritual perspectives was a great example of the purpose of this society—to create a mutually supportive network of people who can promote the development of social work practice that respects spiritual diversity. Naturally, whenever people of different viewpoints come together, there will be occasions of disagreement. This is healthy. It challenges us to work through our differences in a respectful way, to help us grow in realistic mutual understanding and cooperation. This society is an opportunity for us to acknowledge our differences and commonalities, to find bases for agreement, and to agree to disagree whenever necessary.

One issue that raised this challenge last year was the use of spiritual activities borrowed from First Nations peoples by some Euro-American participants. It was clear that the presenters were very sincere and intended to be respectful. We don't question that. Some people obviously felt very comfortable

with this while others were seriously offended.

In the opening keynote last summer, I (Ed) cautioned that as social workers, we can learn a great deal from cross-tradition sharing, but we must be very careful not to engage in superficial or exploitive borrowing or misuse of spiritual activities. In my (Mike's) panel presentation, I (Mike) explained why many Native people feel that the use of spiritual practices of First Nations peoples by others can be considered a continuation of more than 500 years of cultural genocide. We thought it would be helpful to make some more remarks about this here in order to stimulate more dialogue and soul-searching discernment on this issue in the Society.

In general, in any cross-cultural borrowing of spiritual practices, use of spiritually-based practices in social work contexts should be considered very carefully. Explicit permission of participants should be obtained. The practitioner should have authorization to engage in this practice according to the tradition from an authorized spiritual teacher. Even so, there may be problems concerning whether permission can be given by an individual or whether all concerned parties in the relevant cultural or relig-

ious group should give permission. Respect for both the tradition and the participants must always be evident. Further, spiritual practices designed to facilitate a strong transformative experience in participants are inherently dangerous—otherwise they wouldn't be so powerful. If we play with fire, we must remember that it is not only marshmallows that may be roasting.

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Director's Notes

*Robin Russel, Ph.D.
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha*

The Society has grown a lot in the last year. Membership has tripled. And, registrations for our Second National Meeting are rolling in. The Society meetings and activities at this year's Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting were well attended. New Society chapters are springing up across the country. A year ago I wrote in this column, that I was excited about receiving a call a week from a social worker looking for information about the Society. Now the inquiries are streaming in on a daily basis. There have been many days in the last few months when I've received over a dozen calls or e-mail messages. There have been days, as a full-time teacher and volunteer director, when I've thought that all this growth is both a blessing and a curse.

Clearly the organization is in a time of exciting transition. Interest in the Society continues to grow as our activities reach out to increasing numbers of practitioners, students, and educators. And, I need help. I am hopeful that the summer conference will produce enough funds to enable the hiring of a graduate assistant next year to help with the work of the Society. I also think that it may be time to discuss adding some organizational structure that will enable broader sharing of leadership and responsibilities, raising additional revenues to support Society activities at the national and chapter levels, and expansion of Society activities. (We are currently unincorporated and operate under the institutional sponsorship of the School of Social Work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.) I am hoping that many of you will stay for the business meeting at the close of the conference, where we will be discussing these issues. It's our opportunity to co-create the Society.

Depression And Lack Of Faith

*Ray Roitman, LCSW
Social Worker, Psychoanalyst, Chicago, Illinois*

It seems like everyone is depressed these days. Clients who would never consider taking medication are waiving blank prescriptions for Prozac and its clones at their therapists. Some have fantasies of relief which rival those of the second coming. There seems to be a correlation between the development of deep self awareness and the desire to skip certain steps in the therapeutic/healing process. This occurs about the time they consciously or unconsciously re-experience what Jaques Lacan calls the "lack" in their lives. The "lack" is the experience of the absence of gratification by the love object. To some it appears that this empty place cannot be looked at or tolerated. There are many attempts to fill it, all of which degenerate one's spirituality. The just noticeable difference between the loss of the true self and the requisite putting away of any hope occurs simultaneously. This loss of innocence, or premature foreclosure of options, is a necessary defense devised to survive this loss of self. Along with it comes a loss of faith and a deep sense of disconnectedness. It contributes to many of the social ills we are now facing.

Children are always looking forward to things. Their sense of time is joyfully distorted if it exists at all. Their delight with fairy tales, in part, is that all things work out in the end. All unhappiness, all trauma gets resolved through the love of the right prince or princess. The emergence of the reality that they will not ever get what they need in real life in many cases leads to hopelessness and despair. The fact that their sample size of 1 or 2 primary caretakers doesn't meet the criteria for statistical correlation is lost on these soft psyches. So the awareness of the emptiness is diminished along with creativity in many cases through the process of denial or self absorption. Slowly they slip into the low energy crevasse of waiting out their lives. Sometimes in later life drugs, sex or power hold out some hope in terms of giving their lives meaning. But it never really works. There are wishes aplenty,

but the most common complaint is of not knowing what they want or how to get it if they did.

Repetition compulsion can be viewed as a condition where, in the absence of a reflecting, mirroring, empathic caretaker who would validate a child's inner experiences, a psychic structure is installed which functions as a prosthetic self validating, soothing device. It is as if the lonely inner voice is reiterating, I am right! (i.e. All men/women are . . . ! Or, to be safe I have to be alone). They live their lives getting into work, social or intimate situations which reinforce their beliefs and experiences. How do you offer hope and faith to individuals (or groups) who have become divorced from their natural awe and joy of life? What has to happen internally to enable them to consider their experiential hypothesis that there is "nothing out there for me," so that they can stop reinforcing the voracity of their hopeless, subjective experiences? And, as a corollary, what happens to the faith of the practitioner as they listen to these laments year in and year out?

How is faith renewed along with the true self? I think that this happens concurrently in the restoration process. The process of the therapist's discovery of her lost faith as she dragged herself out of her own depression is invaluable-given that we are guides. The introduction of concepts of a spiritual nature into treatment, when the timing is right, is beneficial. This might include such things as looking at problems as "life lessons," encouraging grieving and helping to understand loss and then letting go. Guided imagery, reframing scenarios and asking questions about what feeds their souls helps clients embrace their fears (Kornfield, Lockert). It is often productive to help clients see that their journey is at least as important as the destination. This enables clients to examine the social and cultural injunctions which function to erode self-esteem and faith.

(continued on page 3)

Second National Conference To Be Held In July

The Second National Meeting of the Society will be held this July 13-17 at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska. This year's conference theme is "Expressing the Soul of Social Work", and will feature a rich variety of experiential workshops and individual and panel presentations. The conference is being co-sponsored by the Schools of Social Work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of Kansas, the University of Utah, the Catholic University of America, and the Dana College Social Work Department.

Conference keynote addresses will be given by Au-Dean Cowley, from the University of Utah and Vincentia Joseph, from the Catholic University of America. There will be a plenary panel titled "When Religious Beliefs Conflict With Social Work Values", presented by Ed Canda, Rivka Ausubel Danzig, and Lawrence Ressler. The conference will once again also include a day long retreat, an evening percussion performance/meditation, and an opening celebration. The last day of the conference will include informal networking sessions and a Society business meeting.

Depression and Lack of Faith

(continued from page 2)

Recently I have begun to ask about client's spiritual life in the initial interview just as I would ask about their medical history. I ask what have they done for their soul lately? This question is received much differently than in the past. There is some surprise and sometimes hesitancy, but everyone "knows" what I mean. I visualize psychological "problems" as unwanted feelings put into orbit around the individual with an inordinate amount of psychic energy being expended to keep them there. This results in fragmentation of the self and predisposes one to being disconnected from the spiritual realm. If the person is to become integrated he needs to gradually reduce the expenditure of energy spent warding off these old feelings and to begin the process of re-owning them, of pulling them back inside. This is also a huge challenge to one's faith. It is very risky to open one's heart to receive this

Dozens of presenters from across the country will be participating in this year's meeting. Participants will choose from workshops and presentations on the following topics: Core Shamanism and Healing; Spirituality and Countertransference; Energy Medicine; A Psychospiritual Approach to Working with Childhood Trauma; Past Life Regression Therapy; Suffering in the Face of Death; Mediation; Creating Sacred Space with Clients; The Battle Between Sin and Love in Social Work; Spiritually Sensitive Practice with Hispanic Populations; Depression and Lack of Faith; The Path of Social Justice; Taoism and the Strengths Perspective; Meditation; Men's Spirituality; A Spiritual Approach to Diversity Training; Feminist Spirituality; Mapping the Spiritual Journey; Intuition; Working with Spiritual Issues in Clinical Practice; Ethical and Professional Issues; An Indigenous Perspective of the Use of Native spirituality in Social Work Practice; and, Social Work with Religious Institutions.

The conference registration fee will be relatively inexpensive this year and will offer students the opportunity to

renewal as it is in the same spot where the pain of emptiness originated. This is the point at which the spirit and the psyche can begin to be reunited through the reality of their new experience. This challenges the very core of the individual who has come to believe that there is no hope. Then healing can continue; healing of the psyche, soma and soul, and the cellular memories which are as much a part of the unconscious as cerebral recollections. Spiritual healing energy profoundly effects the body, allowing it to release the collective tensions and, in many cases, preventing debilitating or fatal diseases.

Faith is the awareness of a connection to all things and all times. It contributes to a sense of well being even when the present is very painful. Experientially it is similar to a child feeling loved, wanted, happy, cared for and understood. The difference is that the latter is driven by an awareness of self and the former is an experience which transcends the ego.

attend for a very reduced rate. Low cost housing and meals will also be available on the Dana College campus. For further information contact:

Laura Van Steenwyk
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182
(402)554-2925
FAX (402)554-3788
e-mail: lsteenwyk@cwis.unomaha.edu

1996 Membership Dues

It is time for many of our members to renew their membership dues. If there is an asterisk (*) following your name on your Newsletter address label, your dues haven't been paid in over a year. We do not yet have a more sophisticated mechanism for sending out membership renewal notices. Current annual practitioner/educator dues are \$15. Dues for retired persons and full-time students are \$7 per year. At the present time, your dues are the only source of financial support that the organization has.

The implications for healing are profound and exciting. It requires rethinking psychotherapeutic models to include concepts which address the process of the restoration of the soul, that part of us which feels connected to all others and to the universe. It requires a willingness and trust to be mindful of one's self in the present; to focus on one's injuries without aid of defenses; to observe without judging; to be with what "is" even if it means learning to live with a lack. Psychological problems often prohibit the attention to spiritual issues. It is a proper and relevant question to consider how they are related and how to incorporate each into a comprehensive healing plan.

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Spiritual Materialism And Social Work

David Derezotes, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Graduate School of Social Work
University of Utah

Although spiritual development is often described as a life long process of “letting go” of ego, we often gain new ego attachments during the process. This seemingly paradoxical tendency, which may be called “spiritual materialism” (Trungpa, 1997), is a form of “egoitis” in which a person becomes especially affixed for a time to a particular way of thinking or acting. For example, a social work professor may believe that she now has found the solution to everyone’s psychosocial problems, or an experienced LCSW may start to believe that he can make no more clinical errors.

The danger of spiritual materialism is not only that the person may become stuck somewhere in their spiritual development, but that the egoitis may also add to the suffering of others as well. For example, that over-inflated professor may become intolerant of other opinions in the classroom, and the experienced LCSW may become unwilling to see when he is making errors with his clients.

In social work education, spiritual materialism may take the form of attachment to a specific way of knowing, theoretical model, or psychosocial problem. We may, for example, observe a professor who is just as “fundamentalist” about how positive empiricism is the only legitimate way of knowing as any “born again” church member ever was about a particular religion. Spiritual materialism is not the same thing as enthusiasm, which literally means “inspired by God”. The problem is not in the level of inspiration a worker may have, but in the inability of the worker to accept the diversity of other beliefs and behaviors that are always found in any environment.

Spiritual materialism in social work is especially dangerous, since ultimately the welfare of already vulnerable populations may become even more at risk. For example, when a practitioner is only

willing to do short-term interventions with clients, those clients who need other interventions will suffer. Or, a social work school that refuses to promote or tenure faculty who study such areas as intuition or consciousness will seriously narrow the educational opportunities that students will need to be effective practitioners.

Social workers are especially prone to that form of spiritual materialism in which we decide who are the “good guys” or “bad guys”. For example, “Liberal” social workers who criticize the close-mindedness of more “Conservative” colleagues are of course at least as materialistic as those they criticize. Often the most difficult people for “open-minded” social workers to accept are those who seem close-minded and non-accepting. For example, a social work professor, because of her anger towards a particular religion, might covertly imply to students that individuals who hold that religion are all “unhealthy”.

However, there are times when a social worker can take a strong stand on an issue, such as when there are populations at risk who are being oppressed or abused. Buber’s concept of “confirmation of otherness” (Friedman, 1974) suggests that the worker can both affirm the right of the other person to have their position and affirm one’s own position when necessary. For example, when a social worker is concerned that a father is abusing his son, the worker can both affirm the parent’s humanness and take the response-ability to take a stand in the defense of that child (e.g., by calling Child Protective Services and by stating his own values about child maltreatment).

The renewed interest in spirituality in social work today may also create increased risk of spiritual materialism in the coming years. As new models of spiritually-based practice are developed, care must be taken to avoid rigidly applying these models to all populations and settings. As individual workers find their own spiritual paths, they may need to resist the temptation to impose their

beliefs and rituals upon their colleagues, students, and/or clients. As curricula are revised to include spiritual content, social work educators must be sensitive to the diversity of student needs and backgrounds.

A few strategies may help social work students, practitioners, and faculty refrain from the tendency to become spiritually materialistic. First, we may begin with ourselves and continue to do our own “spiritual homework” in which we cultivate an ongoing mindfulness about what we may be attached to in the moment. In doing this, we do not need to be unnecessarily critical about those attachments we may have, since they are inevitable and human. What is usually most helpful is simply to become more aware and accepting of the process.

Second, we may want to learn more about how to use forgiveness in social work practice. Forgiveness may be social work’s most powerful “tool”, since it can often help “elevate” the spirituality of others around us. In forgiving ourselves and others, we accept the diversity of human thought, belief, and behavior. Often the clients and colleagues we dislike the most are the very ones who most need our love and forgiveness. For example, one social worker had been angry for years at a female colleague who had repeatedly hurt his feelings. One day, he started praying for the welfare of that colleague. The woman started changing her behavior towards him, and eventually told him that she wanted to be his friend.

All spiritual seekers will sooner or later experience tendencies towards spiritual materialism. Instead of denying or hiding this human tendency, social workers might strive to own and eventually learn to let go of each new attachment that surfaces. In doing so, we model a way of being that is not only good for ourselves, our clients, and colleagues, but for the universe we all share.

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Friedman, M. (1974). *The confirmation of otherness in family community, and society*. New York: Pilgrim Press.

CHAPTER NEWS

Portland, Oregon

On March 19th the Oregon Chapter of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work held its second meeting at the World Healing Institute in Lake Oswego, Oregon. Significant interest was generated from a local conference a week and a half earlier that addressed spiritual issues in the helping professions. The members represented diverse spiritual and professional backgrounds including social workers, counselors, educators, pastoral counselors and marriage and family therapists. The group shared their hopes and expectations for the Oregon Chapter. There was consensus to begin each meeting with a short meditation. Participants also agreed that each member will facilitate one of the monthly meetings focusing on a topic of interest to them. Next month Rev. Eddy Brame, LCSW will address how therapists can, in an initial interview, invite clients to share spiritual needs and beliefs. Future topics may include: 1) guidelines for competent and ethical standards in addressing spirituality with clients, 2) peace and justice, and 3) work with the dying.

*Connie Kvarfordt CSW
Katrina Gould MSW*

(For further information about the Oregon Chapter, contact Connie Kvarfordt at 3508 N.E. 109th Ave. #K9, Vancouver, WA. 98682)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

A new Society chapter began meeting monthly at the University of Pennsylvania in February. At the first meeting Dr. Rivka Ausubel Danzig facilitated the group discussion and introduced the goals of the Society. She asserted that the Society, as well as the chapter, can provide social workers with the opportunity to create a dialogue with others who share similar interests in integrating their own sense of spirituality with their profession.

The 17 highly experienced participants included professionals from hospitals and human service agencies, as well as Penn social work students. Each person shared their own career experiences and interests. The major themes that arose were that people wanted to more fully integrate spirituality into their practice and help their clients pursue more meaning in their lives through spirituality. Several participants mentioned an interest in exploring meditation, prayer and other holistic healing methods. Robin Heller, an advanced practitioner from a public children's hospital, presented a practice dilemma for group dialogue.

A second meeting was held on March 27th, at which all participants shared in a very genuine and intimate dialogue about their personal journeys and their interest in incorporating spirituality into their lives as well as their profession. The group discussed their goals for the chapter which included having members read selected articles for future discussion and for them to bring in case examples from their practices.

At the April meeting the group discussed a comparison of theories and psychosocial stages with Fowler's stages of faith. Universalistic and particularistic concerns were addressed along with the need to strive for balance in our busy and complicated lives. A poignant statement was made

by a highly influential social work administrator who is currently redesigning an intake form that will effect thousands of clients, regarding inclusion of questions around their sense of spirituality and religious background. In addition, the group conferred on a focus for next fall which is to develop strategies, questions, and language with which to address these issues with clients, agencies, and schools.

*Stephanie Newberg
MSW Student
University of Pennsylvania*

(For further information about the Philadelphia Chapter, contact Stephanie at (610)668-9225, or Rivka Danzig at (215)573-7940.)

Salt Lake City, Utah

The Salt Lake City Chapter of the Society continues to meet on a monthly basis at the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Utah. For further information contact Karen Neilsen at 716 S. Glendale Street, Salt Lake City, Utah, (801)534-7610.

Illinois

The first meeting of the Illinois Chapter of the Society is planned for May 29th, in Champaign. For further details, contact Dona Ita at (217)244-5238.

Call For Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of

innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Two hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk with files saved in ASCII format or WordPerfect 5.1 should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

Spirituality In Hospice Social Work

Dona J. Ita, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

School of Social Work

University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana

Hospice is a holistic approach to treatment of the dying. The patient is viewed not merely as a physical entity with symptoms, but as a whole person with biopsychosocial and spiritual needs. Hospice care addresses all these dimensions through its multidisciplinary team, with each team member addressing all areas.

A review of charts of the 35 most recently admitted patients to a home hospice in Illinois documented spiritual issues addressed by social workers during home visits. The charts were examined for discussion of major spiritual issues gleaned from an analysis of the literature by Ita (1995) and/or included in the Spiritual Perspective Scale by Reed (1986). The spiritual issues examined included death anxiety, forgiveness of oneself or others, seeking spiritual guidance in making decisions, meaning of life, meaning of suffering, relationship with God, and unfinished business. The definition of spirituality used in this study is that spirituality is a two-dimensional construct, including transcendence in terms of purpose in life, and transcendence in terms of awareness of a non-physical plane of existence (Ita, 1995-96). Spirituality is distinguished as a concept from religion, and need not necessarily include belief in a deity.

The results indicated that social workers addressed spirituality significantly more frequently than nurses, but not as frequently as clergy. The issue most frequently discussed by social workers was death anxiety. Social workers addressed death anxiety more than any other profession on the multidisciplinary team. Death anxiety is a spiritual issue because it frequently has to do with questions about an afterlife.

Social workers also frequently discussed unfinished business, 10 times out of 35 home visits. Unfinished business refers to helping the patient to resolve remaining conflicts with others, arranging for last experiences or achievements, or

taking care of business arrangements necessary before the patient dies. Taking care of unfinished business helps a dying patient accept his/her life as it is, lending a sense of meaning and purpose to the patient's life, and allowing the patient to die in peace.

Several other spiritual issues were addressed by social workers, but not as frequently. Social workers discussed the meaning of life twice, and the meaning of suffering twice with patients. One social work session addressed the patient's desire to seek spiritual guidance in making decisions. Finally, one social work session addressed the patient's relationship with God. Relationship with God was the most frequently discussed issue addressed by the team as a whole with patients. A spiritual issue which was not addressed by social workers, but may be considered an important spiritual issue (DiBlasio & Benda, 1991; Reed, 1986; Weinberg, 1995) is forgiveness of oneself or others.

In summary, social workers played an important role in this hospice in addressing spiritual issues with patients. They addressed every spiritual issue examined in the study, with the exception of forgiveness. Social work training in this area could enhance social work intervention with spiritual issues, and increase the focus on issues which were not as frequently addressed.

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RESEARCH UPDATE

Dona J. Ita, Ph.D.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work is fortunate to have a number of fine researchers among its members. We have entered information about research we have become aware of so far into a Spirituality in Social Work Research Database. Research has been conducted in the areas of AIDS, Aging, Assessment and Intervention, Bereavement, Social Work Curriculum, Diversity, Forgiveness, Hospice, Macro Perspectives, Military Personnel, Multidisciplinary Roles, Oncology, Religion and Social Work, Spirituality Scales, Spirituality of Practitioners, Sexual Abuse, Substance Abuse, Spirituality Theory, and Value Conflicts.

A recent submission to the database came in from Richard J. Csarny, LCSW-C, from Takoma Park, Maryland. He is doing a meta-analysis of several well-known instruments used to measure spirituality/religiosity, and their relative effectiveness in specifying religious variance apart from variance due to factors of personality.

A number of studies of social work practitioners have been conducted in an effort to document models of practice which address spirituality. A survey of practitioners was conducted by Michael Sheridan along with Bullis, Adcock, Berlin, and Miller, which found that social workers held a middle position in comparison with Licensed Professional Counselors (who had the most evidence of a spiritual or religious orientation to practice) and psychologists (who had the least evidence of a spiritual orientation). Respondents as a whole valued spirituality or religion in their own lives, and addressed it to some extent in practice, but reported very little training in this area. Studies of techniques used by social work practitioners to address spirituality have also been conducted by Edward Canda, David Derezotes, James Dudley, Linda Haake, M. Vincenzia Joseph, Martin Millison, and Robin Russel.

Note: Please send requests for information from the Spirituality in Social Work Research Database and summaries of your own research to Dona Ita, University of Illinois School of Social Work, 1207 W. Oregon St., Urbana, IL 61801.

Borrowing of Spiritual Practices

(continued from page 1)

In regard to Euro-Americans using rituals or other spiritual practices from First Nations peoples, there are further considerations. The historical and current political context of genocide, colonialism, racism, and structural oppression must be dealt with. Spirituality cannot be divorced from politics and justice concerns, especially in regard to First Nations peoples, without causing abuse, intentionally or unintentionally. Even when Euro-Americans have been given permission by some Native teachers to engage in these practices, this is a volatile issue for many Native people. The practitioner should exercise utmost caution, like treading on thin ice.

If a person has been authorized and trained in a traditional manner, and feels called to share this in social work contexts, this of course is a matter of individual conscience. But if someone decides to do so, he or she must be ready to deal with the pain and anger

that may generate in many Native people. In fact, it may be a given that, at times, the spiritual leader will come under close scrutiny and criticism. From a First Nations' perspective, the spiritual leader, in his or her understanding of the human condition, would accept this and strive to do better. Being a spiritual leader is not about glamour and power, it is about sincerity and being humble. The practitioner who draws on Native traditions should also be willing to work actively toward socio-political justice on behalf of Native people, as an integral aspect of one's spiritual path. She or he should also explicitly address these concerns with participants before beginning a spiritual practice. Since we as social workers claim to be justice-oriented, these standards are consistent with our professional purpose and values.

Likewise, competence must be clear. Beyond knowing how to perform certain actions, the person should embody and enact the spiritual values, wisdom, and moral imperatives that are inherent in the particular Native tradition. He or

she must be able to interact with sacred powers in a manner of respect, humility, and skill. Sacred rituals are potent and dangerous. There are traditional ways of safeguarding the process which must be followed and these are not learned overnight or opened to just anyone. Sincerity and good intentions are not sufficient.

Finally, the practitioner needs to remember that some Native people do not consider it to be legitimate for any non-Native person to perform Native-derived rituals or even to participate in them. In many instances, Native people are very scrupulous with even their own respected elders. For many First Nations' people, spiritual practices are very serious matters. The person needs to be prepared to deal with such objections in an honest, respectful, and non-defensive manner.

We thank you for the opportunity to express our thoughts and feelings about this important issue. We believe that the dialogue that comes from this issue will enhance the strength and maturity of the Society.

• • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • •

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$15 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$7 per year.

Make checks payable to:

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE. 68182-0001

Please provide the following information:

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ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS



Dear Professor Cosmos:

I understand that you were at the CSWE Annual Program Meeting in Washington D.C. this year and that you participated in a drumming and circle dancing ceremony in the hotel on Saturday night. I have always looked up to you as a role model, but is this really

appropriate behavior for a senior social work professor at such a professional gathering?

Concerned Junior Faculty

Dear Concerned:

I'm glad you asked that question. Actually my behavior is rarely appropriate anywhere, and I'm proud to "profess" that. My goal is to spend as many nights as I can with my friends, loving them and being loved by them. It may not advance the knowledge base, but we end up feeling more connected with each other, and isn't that what life is all about anyway? Besides, let's face it, most of the other events were pretty boring.

Dear Professor Cosmos:

I wonder whether your narcissistic personality structure reflects some early infantile self-object disruptions that became cemented in the overinflated regressive Axis II structure substitutions that you now use to compensate for a lack of scholarship depth? In other words, I can't believe that any school could have given you tenure.

More Traditionally Focused

Dear More Traditionally Focused:

Thanks for the complements, whatever they meant. Actually I know that your higher-self likes me, even though your lower-self seems a little weird. Actually, I was tenured after my Retention, Promotion, and Tenure Committee was suddenly visited by spiritual guides. The RPT Committee Chair is currently co-authoring an article with me which we are submitting to a major journal, entitled "Channeling good vibes in the RPT Committee: Implications for Social Work Education".

The Cos



University of
Nebraska at
Omaha

Omaha, NE 68182-0293

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**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Newsletter**

**Volume 3, Number 2
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Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Fall 1996

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Expressing the Soul of Social Work

From the Opening Keynote Address of the Second National Meeting of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, July 1996

Au-Deane S. Cowley, Ph.D.

Associate Dean, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Utah

For too long many of us have felt as though being “professional” meant that we had to stifle our own souls—while being expected to *ignore* the souls of the people with whom we work. This year, my message to you will present my personal views about the important work we need to do as individual practitioners, and as social work professionals, in exploring just what “expressing the soul of social work,” really entails. Guiding me in the task of beginning exploration of this topic will be the premise that “soul” can be defined as: the immaterial essence, animating principle, and activating cause for the service that we provide others through the vehicle of the social work profession. In other words, I’m making the claim that the soul of social work is the prime motivating energy for all of the work we do with self, others, and the social context. I’m reminded of an experience I had this spring in a class where students were struggling to define the word “spirituality,” and one student finally exclaimed with great exasperation: “Social Work is spirituality!”

Search Your Premises

One of my key mentors, intellectually, was Ayn Rand. And, whenever I try to shift through “meaning and definitions”—I remember her admonition to “check your premises.” This injunction

usually takes me to the dictionary or a thesaurus in my search for more specific definitions of the words and concepts with which I am grappling. Three of the meanings attributed to the word “express” by Webster struck me as being significant to consider as we explore our quest to express the soul of social work. They are: (1) to be explicitly stated; (2) designed or adapted to its purpose; and, (3) delivered without delay.

To Be Explicitly Stated

As we are all aware, the power of the spoken or written word can be awesome in terms of shaping a given reality. Therefore, if spirituality is to become a viable part of social work practice, all of our concepts and terms related to the spiritual dimension will have to be explicitly stated.

This quest for specificity will not be an easy endeavor since we all come from, and are influenced by, many different spiritual and religious traditions. It would be a grave error if we were to assume that concepts like soul, spiritual dimension, spirituality, transpersonal work, moral development, higher states of consciousness, etc., would be understood in the same way by our students, fellow educators, or client-systems. Nothing is more idiosyncratic than the unique meanings we all create within

the same language. We risk a modern Tower of Babel when our claim to be working with an essence as ineffable as spirit tempts us to believe that specificity is impossible, and “anything goes”—no matter how “far out” or right brained it is—as long as it feels good to us.

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“Expressing the Soul of Social Work”— The Second Annual Conference

Linda Haake, M.S.W.,
Falls Church, Virginia

Gathering in the chapel; meeting in classrooms; arriving by the van-full from the airport or one by one in cars; circle dancing under the broad bright sky; sharing meals in cheerful companionship and in heated debate; being transported by a percussion performance; solitary walking and meditations—members of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work came together for dozens of different, individual, and common experiences at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska this summer.

Writing about the first conference, Elizabeth Smith (1995) evokes the sense of communion felt by conferees: the connection with that which transcends the individual. Examining communion, Sanders (1995) says:

The words *community*, *communion*, and *communicate* all derive from *common*, and the two syllables of *common* grow from separate roots, the first meaning “together” or “next to,” the second having to do with barter or exchange. Embodied in that word is a sense of our shared life as one of giving and receiving ... on every scale there is giving and receiving, calling and answering. (p. 70)

The events of the second conference brought continuity to our shared practices of being, living, and working in spiritual relationship in some very specific ways. The importance of spirituality to social work across time and generations was highlighted. Many activities raised our political awareness and reminded us of our responsibility for knowledge and action at the macro level.

Our keynote speakers, Au-Deane Cowley and Sister Vincentia Joseph, are women who have integrated spirituality into social work. They have developed our vision, teaching and building within the academic, social services, and larger communities. Knowing what they have accomplished, and hearing their contemporary message gives us a firm ground for our work, and reminds us that we are building the foundations for the future. The sustaining time dimension in our community was visible at the conference

through the participation of the people who created the Society: the speakers, Ed Canda, the founder, and others who have helped build the Society. The commitment of this year’s participants to local chapter development, to research, and to action promise to carry us forward.

A plenary panel and informal discussions on the CSWE accreditation issue,¹ experiences in several workshops, and an ethics panel on the use of spiritually based interventions reminded us of the importance of the macro level of spirituality in social work. Discussion about our role as a body in providing a place to struggle with conflicts in values in a respectful, committed, and honest manner took place. The importance of respecting and learning about varying spiritual traditions was marked both by our speakers and in our interactions.

Listening, watching, reacting, and engaging in the dialogue on the accreditation issue was a personally powerful experience of individuals’ thoughtful and deeply held commitment to our common values of respect for differing beliefs and of social justice. The willingness to engage and stay in connected process with divisive content was a precious example for my own impatience with being a beginner on the path of social work.

In Nebraska this summer, we experienced our connections across time, our sense of ourselves as a community of values, and the reality of a home community in which to struggle and grow. The second annual conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work continued the intent of the first conference and strengthened our purpose for the future: to “impart knowledge about spirituality and social work practice, to nurture indi-

¹The Council on Social Work Education is currently attempting to address the question of whether to provide an exempt status to some social work schools. An exemption would allow a school to gain or retain accreditation without having to comply with the CSWE statement on non-discrimination for political and sexual orientation. Some religious schools have requested the exemption because their codes or beliefs do not consider some political or sexual orientations to be acceptable. Further information about this issue is available through CSWE and its publications.

Director’s Notes

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha

The growth and development of this organization has been an exciting process to be part of. This summer’s conference was almost three times the size of last year’s meeting and yet, amazingly, we were able to replicate the deep sense of community and sacredness that characterized last year’s conference. Participants’ authenticity, open-heartedness, willingness to dialogue on difficult and controversial issues, and profound respect for diversity left me with a pervading sense of awe. I, personally, was touched and encouraged, by the support and offers of help I received from members attending the conference.

This is a time of transition for the Society. Transitions are usually fraught with both peril and possibility. As we grow, we’ll need more form and structure to support the stability of the organization. I keep reminding myself that structure does not have to bring rigidity or fossilization...that an organization that stays aligned with its intent, that stays aligned with Spirit, will not lose its soul.

During the month of October, I had the wonderful opportunity of meeting with Society chapters in Chicago and Portland. Later this month, I will also be meeting with the Philadelphia chapter. It has been exciting to hear how members are integrating spirituality into their practice. I look forward to meeting more of you in the months ahead.

vidual and collective spiritual growth, [and] to allow for the realization of the nature of mind, ...that truth which we all search for.” (Smith, 1995).

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Social Work and Past Life Regression Therapy

Joyce Ferranti, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., Baltimore, Maryland

I had the wonderful opportunity to present at the Society for Spirituality and Social Work conference in Nebraska this past July. It was thrilling to see social workers, students, and educators struggling with the issues of spirituality and the applications for all of us today. As a social worker in the Baltimore/Washington D.C. area, I have become more and more aware of the need for social workers to have an open attitude and be available to address issues of spirituality with our clients and co-workers. Traditionally social workers have felt a particular call to help humanity and end human suffering through working with the whole person. Therefore, as a profession, we are in an excellent position to address the psychological and spiritual needs of our clients.

As a clinical social worker committed to psychological growth, I have studied and experienced many alternative therapies and practices. I consider it important that the teacher or therapist always be learning. My personal spiritual path has led me to Ecuador to study with shamans in the tribes of the Amazon and the Andes Mountains, and with many alternative healers in the United States. On this human development path, I have discovered past life regression therapy to be a very effective clinical tool for myself, as well as a certain population within my social work practice.

Past life therapy uses relaxation, guided imagery, and traditional regression techniques to aid people in accessing what appears to be past life memories. It is not critical that clients believe in the concept of reincarnation or past lives, but they must be open to the possibilities and use of this clinical tool. What is important is the personal value that clients receive from this type of therapy. Participants are able to resolve issues and life long patterns that traditional therapy has not been able to successfully address. As stated in her book, *Regression Therapy, A Handbook for Professionals*, Winifred Lucas, Ph.D., makes the distinction that this therapy

honors the long held belief beginning with Freud, that making the unconscious conscious would restore choice and bring healing (Lucas). Past life therapists are expanding the concept of the unconscious to include consciousness from other lifetimes as well as our historical past in this lifetime. Many regression therapists have unknowingly begun this form of therapy simply by offering the suggestion for their client to go back to the time when this problem first occurred. Expecting childhood trauma or other issues, we find ourselves with clients visualizing scenes and feeling experiences which appear to be of other lifetimes. In essence, what past life therapists are doing is traditional therapy and are broadening the context to include other lifetimes. The difference appears to be in the rapid healing which is available for people when they access these images and traumas from other times. A person with a history of unhealthy relationships may unlock the pattern by visiting a lifetime where the issue originated.

Past life therapy assumes the soul lives on, and we make decisions about ourselves and life which can carry from one lifetime to another. A core assumption for trauma work, is the belief that when the emotion is released the symptoms often disappear. Brian Weiss, M.D., author of *Many Lives, Many Masters*, *Through Time Into Healing*, and *Only Love is Real*, explains that in his experience and in the experience of others, often an original trauma lies in a past life, and that is the reason other therapies had been only partially successful. All of the trauma needs to be brought to awareness for significant healing to occur. Re-occurring cycles of harmful, maladaptive behaviors can be addressed in past life therapy (Weiss). Phobias, destructive relationships, compulsions, depression and anxiety are all areas in which past life therapy has been successfully used to reduce symptoms.

In addition to therapeutic value, past life therapy has an important component of spirituality. People have an innate

drive or instinct toward integration, healing and wholeness as human beings. This therapy is designed to allow persons to access the inner healer available to each of us. Thus, it is critical that persons committed to psychology and spirituality be open to exploring this modality. Generally, people receive great healing from this therapy, but for many the spiritual growth and development as a human being becomes the most important aspect of this treatment.

This article is not designed to convert nonbelievers into believers in reincarnation or past lives, but has the purpose of introducing a conversation within our community about this theory. It is present in our culture. According to a USA Today/Gallup Poll conducted in 1994, 27 percent of adults believe in reincarnation, up from 21 percent in 1990 (Weiss). When the opportunity arises, social workers can encourage spiritual development within our clients, and past life therapy is an effective avenue. I find it is important to maintain a more traditionally oriented practice in conjunction with alternative healing methods. Many clients benefit greatly from the more traditional approaches, and as with any technique, the therapist must use their clinical training and ability to assess the situation. As always, the social worker must meet the client at his level and do what is in their best interest, and not promote a certain set of beliefs or ideals. Traditional therapists are in an ideal situation to bridge the gap for people between traditional and nontraditional therapies. We can be therapists and be involved in these nontraditional healing modalities, and yet can provide the security for people in our training and credentials as certified social workers. Often emotions and psychological issues surface in the past life therapy and they must be integrated through more traditional therapy. Thus professionally trained social workers can integrate the traditional and spiritual for people.

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Toward a Definition of Spiritually-Sensitive Social Work Practice

Jim Raines, M.S.W., M. Div., School of Social Work, Aurora University

Having just returned from the 2nd Annual Conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, I was elated and enthusiastic about the spirit of unity amidst diversity. Given the plurality of social work practitioners and clients, I have been asking myself, "What is spiritually-sensitive social work?" I have often found it helpful to conceptualize "spirituality" in terms similar to culture. While the social work profession may not be prolific about spiritual issues, it has done some significant work on cultural issues that may be applicable.

Offer and Sabshin (1984) have described four views of normality: average, healthy, utopian, and transactional. As average, the range of behavior is understood as a bell-shaped curve, with normality comprising the center within one or two standard deviations. Abnormality is defined as the two extremes, as deviant from the norm. As healthy, normality is based on epidemiological studies, which indicate the incidence of disease in the general population. Abnormality is described as *sickness* or mental illness. As utopian, normality can be viewed as creative competency (White, 1959) or self-actualization, fully reaching one's potential (Maslow, 1954). Abnormality is seen as dehumanizing *conformity* (Fromm, 1976). As transactional, normality is defined by the individual's family, peer group, and culture - a socially constructed "goodness of fit." Abnormality is a *lack of fit* between the individual and the environment. While psychology has usually adopted the first view and psychiatry the second, social work has usually preferred the last view. Florence Kluckhohn (1953) stated that all human cultures have attempted to define: the dominant modality of relationships (familial, collateral, or individualistic), the most significant time dimension (past, present, or future), the most valued personality type (being, becoming, or doing), humanity's relationship to nature (subjugated, equal, or dominating), and innate predispositions (evil, amoral, or good). Thus, McGoldrick (1982) posits that people

differ in their experience of pain, what they label as a symptom, how they communicate these concerns, their beliefs about the cause of the problem, their attitudes toward help, and what help they expect to receive. Even the *DSM-IV* has added a new section (Appendix I) for culture-bound syndromes (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

A spiritual perspective attempts to bridge the utopian and transactional points of view. It embraces utopian ideals as efforts to transcend the status quo to create the best possible world through both individual change and social reform (Saleeby, 1976), but admits that these are culturally defined. Thus, it rejects the N.A.S.W. definition of clinical social work: "the treatment and prevention of psychosocial dysfunction, disability, or impairment, including emotional and mental disorders" (Clinical Social Work Council, 1984), as too negative, since it either assumes or anticipates pathology. Clinical social workers do and should work with people for reasons of personal growth and the development of potential. More appropriate are the goals of clinical social work advanced by Saari (1986), "the improvement of social functioning through the enhancement of meaningfulness of life experiences and an expansion of the range of choices for individual behavior in an environment capable of supporting a variety of adaptive patterns" (pp.11-12).

Work with persons who have spiritual issues requires spiritual competence. This does not mean that we have to be familiar with every spiritual tradition, but we have to be respectful of each tradition and open to working within it rather than against it. In many ways, it parallels cross-cultural counseling. Elaine Pinderhughes (1994) states that the primary objective of culturally sensitive social work is "assisting ethnic minorities of color to remain positively connected with their cultural group and at the same time to live in both their cultural environment and the mainstream" (p.265). Translating this to the spiritual

realm, one could state that the primary objective of spiritually sensitive social work is to assist persons of diverse faiths to remain positively connected to their spiritual traditions and at the same time to live in both their religious environment and secular society. It implies the ability to learn about the specific beliefs and practices of clients, to appreciate those which are different from one's own, to become comfortable with such differences, to change false stereotypes, to think flexibly about others' beliefs, and to behave flexibly about others' practices. All of these require the investment of extra time, effort, and energy.

Just as there are culturally-specific categories of mental illness (APA, 1994), there may also be religiously-specific categories. Kleinman (1988) poses an alternative to the traditional psychiatric position that there are discrete mental illnesses which have their own psychobiology, cause, course, and treatment response. He argues that mental disorders may be nonspecific "syndromes of distress," in which "cultural norms reciprocally interact with biological processes to pattern these body/self experiences so that different archetypes of distress are predominant in different social groups" (p.60). Applying this to the spiritual realm, one could suggest that there may be spiritual syndromes of distress in which religious norms reciprocally interact with maturational processes and developmental experiences so that different categories of distress are evident in different spiritual traditions. The only way to assess this is by an exploration of clients' belief systems. This implies a thorough investigation of the person's biopsychosocial situation as well as an understanding of how their spirituality has evolved over time.

A common example of a spiritual syndrome is pathological guilt. Religious mores combine with biological processes and developmental experiences to create a level of distress which may not be initially understandable to someone outside the faith. The solution is often

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Chapter News

Portland, Oregon

The Portland Society Chapter has continued to meet monthly under the leadership of Katrina Gould and Connie Kvarfordt. The last meeting on October 24, 1996, included a visit from out-of-town members Lee Furman (from North Dakota), Jim Dudley (from North Carolina), and Robin Russel (from Nebraska) who were in town for the meeting of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors. Robin spoke to the group about the history of the Society and plans for future activities. For dates, times, and places of future meetings of the chapter, call Connie Kvarfordt at (360)896-2606.

Champaign/Urbana, Illinois

Since reporting in the spring newsletter that our first meeting would be May 29, we have been meeting at least monthly, and though still small, we are enthusiastic. Members have expressed a hunger for support for and encouragement in thinking more deeply and applying spirituality to our practice. Thus far, programs have included an introduction to the Society and review of the literature by Dona Reese, a session on yoga and meditation led by Brad Uebinger, and a personal sharing of art therapy used with abused women by Judy Giambotti. Our September meeting centered on a guided discussion on spiritual emergency by Judy Campbell. We are encouraged by the sense of growth we feel locally, and the presence of the Society nationally. Though our backgrounds and interests are varied, we continue to learn from each other, and benefit from the sense that we are part of a growing force in social work.

(For further information contact Dr. Dona Reese, 1401 W. Healey St., Champaign, IL 61821 (217) 351-7385.

Chicago, Illinois

The Chicago Chapter of the Society met for the first time at Aurora Univer-

sity on October 18, 1996. Over two dozen practitioners, educators, and students attended. Society Director, Robin Russel, spoke to the group about the organization's history and future plans. Monthly meetings are being planned. For further information contact Jim Raines at (630)416-0553, or Nancy Ging at (708)323-5402.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Philadelphia chapter has met on a monthly basis at the University of Pennsylvania. The October meeting was chaired by Curtis Engram and involved a presentation on "Spirituality Principles and Practice Related to Religion and Traditions".

Robin Russel will be visiting the chapter at its next meeting on November 14, 1996, and speaking on the topic of "Feminist Spirituality and Social Work Practice". For further information about upcoming chapter meetings, call Rivka Ausubel Danzig at (215)573-7940.

Salt Lake City, Utah

The Utah Society for Spirituality and Social Work continues to meet monthly at the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Utah. For information about upcoming meetings, contact Karen Nielsen at (801)539-1483.

Definition of Spiritually-Sensitive Social Work

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not to recommend a departure from their religious faith, but to find a more flexible attitude within it.

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Call For Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innova-

tive efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Two hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk with files saved in format or WordPerfect 5.1 should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

Expressing the Soul of Social Work

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We may even be able to convince ourselves that the “spiritual” (because it is life-force energy, and because, ultimately, all spirituality must be practiced or experienced to become a part of us) ought only to be approached experientially through “right brain exercises.” I’m going to claim that as we articulate everything we do related to spirituality, in practice and in academic settings, we must have as a foundation, a sound, theoretical, left-brained rationale.

David Derezotes and I have taught a course at the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Utah entitled “Practice with Issues Related to the Spiritual Dimension,” for two consecutive years. In teaching that course, I have experienced the reality that some of our students believe that spirituality is not something one can think about or study, or something that requires the tedious work of learning about theory. They often get so enamored with the experiential component of our course that they resist hearing about the discipline and theoretical knowledge that is required if one is going to offer sound interventions in the spiritual dimension.

All of us are at risk of getting stuck on a “psychic detour” as we explore various modalities and channels for opening up to spirit. Sometimes the psychic fun and games does open one up to higher states. To paraphrase an old saying: “It’s a nice place to visit—but we ought not to try to live there.” I personally doubt that any lasting transcendence occurs from reading the Tarot or cleansing one’s aura—however insightful or fun that is to do. As Assagioli observed, “...the steep path leading to the heights must be climbed step by step (Assagioli, 1996, p.159):

Such an exalted state lasts for varying periods, but it is bound to cease. The personal self was only temporarily overpowered but not permanently transformed (Assagioli, 1996, p.157).

According to Wilber, the psychic level is meant to be a lure to higher levels of transpersonal consciousness to be experienced at the subtle and casual levels (Wilber, Engler, & Brown, 1986).

So, if we start believing that doing something “transpersonal” requires only tuning into our intuition and allowing ourselves to be led wherever the spirit listeth, then I believe we are at risk personally and academically. If our society moves in that direction only, we may end up individually isolated in our own personal experiences, as well as professionally separated from the mainstream of academe.

Not to be mistaken for a dichotomous thinker, let me quickly assure you that I don’t take the position that we must choose between either cognition/theory or intuition/experience. I take a both/and position that recognizes that both aspects are crucially important in realizing the “whole.”

I believe we need to have a justifiable cognitive set for everything we teach in the classroom, and everything we do in our practice. Actually, my position in terms of the sequencing of theory and intuition was best expressed by Jung. To paraphrase:

“First, learn your theories and learn them well. Then put them all aside when you dare to touch the wonder of the human spirit.”

Like building a strong personal identity or ego is required before one is developmentally ready to go “beyond ego”, in order to express the soul of social work we must first become as theoretically clear and concise as possible about: (1) What the transpersonal approach is; and, (2) When to utilize it, before we can rely on intuition.

What the Transpersonal Approach Is:

You need to know that for me, Transpersonal or 4th Force Theory is the only theory that really takes into account how to assess and intervene in the spiritual dimension. This does not mean that dynamic insights, cognitive awareness, or experiential happenings can not evoke spirit—just that the first three forces of psychology don’t theoretically intend to do so. Transpersonal theory is about spiritual and moral development, so I see the use of transpersonal interventions as being primarily legitimized for practice challenges focusing on

issues related to spirituality, i.e., one suffering from “dispiritation” or “spiritual malaise,” “spiritual abuse,” “spiritual emergence or emergencies, and the like (Bugental & Bugental, 1984; Grof & Grof, 1989).

Pioneered by many, and articulated most specifically by Ken Wilber (1986, 1996), transpersonal psychology integrates Western theories about human growth and development with Eastern contemplative practices. According to Wilber and others, Western psychologies were all conceptualized and designed to help people develop and maintain a healthy, well-structured—and sometimes even self-actualized—ego. Eastern psychologies, on the other hand, are intended to support the evolution and transformation of the actualized self to a higher level of Being—one that is developmentally capable of transcending personal concerns—to go “beyond ego.” A body of literature is developing around the kinds of virtues and qualities one needs to develop to be a spiritually healthy person (Walsh & Vaughn, 1993; Anthony, Ecker, & Wilber, 1987), and they all call us to maturity and intersubjectivity (Crossley, 1996).

Since it is an integrative approach, transpersonal theory includes all known theories, East and West, including: First Force Dynamic approaches like psychoanalysis, object relations, ego and self psychology, etc.; Second Force behavioral/cognitive behavioral approaches; and Third Force Humanistic, Experiential, and Existential approaches (Cowley, 1993; Cowley, 1996). What has become more clear as Fourth Force theory has evolved is that none of the first three major theories of Western Psychology deal specifically with the spiritual dimension. As various Third Force theorists began to explore the “upper levels” of what it meant to be “fully human,” many began to drift into transpersonal levels—to take the spiritual dimension into account—but it took Ken Wilber’s three chapters in *Transformations of Consciousness* by Wilber, Engler, & Brown (1986), to clearly begin the work of articulating what levels of development beyond ego might look like in the process of human becoming.

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Expressing the Soul of Social Work

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If you haven't read these chapters, I would highly recommend them to you.

When to Use the Transpersonal Approach

This question relates to Webster's second meaning attributed to the verb "to express" which is: Designed or adapted for a purpose. I love the idea that each of the four force theories are designed for, and can be adapted to, different purposes. For example it has been written that the main distinguishing factor between those practitioners who use a transpersonal approach and those that don't is their attitude. When a worker seeks to express the soul of social work, they do it by expressing their own spirituality. So, in a general sense, if I approach everything I do and everyone with whom I work with an attitude of reverence for life, it can be said that my perspective is transpersonal. However, I see having a spiritual perspective, and utilizing transpersonal theory as two very different issues. Within a transpersonal perspective, I may utilize any of the four force theories but, to my mind, I only use transpersonal theory and interventions when I am working on issues related to the spiritual dimension.

Transpersonal theorists agree:

A person responds to and perceives her environment according to her inner structure and level of organization, and a therapist's

primary responsibility is to obtain as clear an idea of her client's inner structure as possible (Nelson, A., 1996, p. 136).

With a clear understanding of the client's developmental level, the practitioner can be more accurate in designing and adapting interventions that best "fit" a specific client's needs. Being able to distinguish between a person who is psychotic and one who is having a transrational experience is vital if one is to avoid making a pre/trans fallacy by treating a pre-egoic issue as a spiritual one, or vice-versa (Wilber, 1986).

Three General Levels of Development

In Wilber's 1986 "Full Spectrum of Consciousness Model" he brought together all the work he had done in the previous decade to posit hierarchical levels of development across the spectrum of consciousness: 3 pre-personal levels; 3 personal or egoic levels; and 3 transpersonal levels that clearly go "beyond ego." In addition, he began to describe the pathologies that may occur at each level of development, as well as the specific interventions that could be utilized by the practitioner to intervene with a client system at each level.

I believe that part of the work that remains to be done by those of us who want to take the spiritual dimension into

account in our practice is to get a more explicit understanding about what level of ego structure or development our client systems are presenting. Let's look at three general levels of development that require different levels of interventions:

1. Pre-personal level: If the ego structure of our client is manifesting (not as "id" but) as chaotic "it" (Bettelheim, 1983), usually he/she will have a DSM IV diagnosis like psychotic, narcissistic, borderline or psychoneurotic. Interventions suggested at this level include medication and pacification as well as structure-building and uncovering techniques from 1st Force theories. Understanding how theory of intervention and level of development go together may prevent a treatment error. For instance, to invite a client who is vulnerably structured at a pre-personal level to go with you on a "Mind Journey" may be risky. He or she may not come back!

2. Personal level: If the salient issues with a given individual seem to relate more to issues of ego, power and control, personal identity, interpersonal conflict, object relations, behavioral/cognitive deficits, anxiety, role confusions, or existential suffering, etc., it's safe to assume that you are dealing with issues lodged at the personal level, or what Freud called (not Ego but) "I" (Bettelheim, 1983). Practice challenges centered here can benefit from interventions from any or all of the first three

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Save the Dates: Third Annual Conference To be Held in St. Paul

The Third Annual national meeting of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 28 to July 1, 1997. The conference will be held on the campus of the College of St. Catherine. Low cost housing and meals will be available on campus. Once again the overall cost of the conference will be kept at very affordable rates.

The theme for the 1997 conference will be "Nurturing the Soul of Social Work". Pat Leahan, from the Social Work Program at the University of St. Thomas/College of St. Catherine will be co-chairing the conference planning committee with Robin Russel, and will be handling local arrangements. Conference flyers should be available in the early spring. Be watching for further conference news.

1996 Membership Dues

It is time for many of our members to renew their membership dues. If there is an asterisk (*) following your name on your Newsletter address label, your dues haven't been paid in over a year. We do not yet have a more sophisticated mechanism for sending out membership renewal notices. Current annual practitioner/educator dues are \$30. Dues for retired persons and full-time students are \$15 per year. At the present time, your dues are the only source of financial support that the organization has.

Expressing the Soul of Social Work

(continued from page 7)

forces. For instance, behavioral, cognitive, and existential interventions like rational emotive therapy and logotherapy would offer a good fit between developmental level and intervention.

3. Transpersonal level: Transpersonal or spiritual interventions are most effectively employed when one is dealing with an ego-structure that is well integrated or self-actualized. This person would reflect a level of growth and development referred to by Freud (not as superego, but) as "Above I" (Bettelheim, 1983). Walsh & Vaughn (1980) have described this level of consciousness as developmentally capable of going "beyond ego." Here transpersonal interventions like mediation, breathing techniques, "I Am" affirmations, intuition or inner vision, detached observer, active imagination, etc., are especially useful. I especially like Sylvia Boorstein's (1986) ideas about "interpreting up" when a person is viewing transformative issues as "just" personal problems, and "interpreting down" when one defends ego by viewing work that needs to be done at the personal level as having cosmic proportions.

In describing multimodal practice, Lazarus has written about the importance of being theoretically pure, while, at the same time, being technically eclectic (Lazarus, 1987). It took me a while to figure out what he meant by that statement, and to realize that what he was saying was extremely important. Techniques and interventions are eclectic and can be utilized across several major theories. However, it is important for the practitioner to be clear about the fundamental difference in assumptions that each theory offers.

The numerous psychotherapeutic systems often reflect fundamental differences in ideology and epistemology. These differences are not merely terminological or semantic. A close examination usually reveals basic paradigmatic incompatibilities (Lazarus, 1997, 166).

For example, analysis of dreams (as conceived by dynamic theorists) has a very different focus and purpose than does gestalt of dreams with Third

force frameworks. The theoretical underpinnings for doing dream work at the transpersonal level are, again, very different from First and Third force theoretical frameworks.

Or, put another way: when working with a depressed person, it is helpful, if not crucial, in determining which theories and interventions to use that the worker understand the level of ego structure or development of the client who is expressing depression. At the prepersonal level depression may manifest as psychotic terror: "I'm not ok, and you're not ok." It will usually require medication and pacification as interventions. Depression at the personal level usually has a more egoic flavor: "Everything happens to me," "I'm not getting what I want," etc. Here cognitive interventions (sometimes accompanied by medication) are treatments of choice. Depression at the transpersonal level is of an entirely different sort: "I'm devastated by the bombing in Saudi Arabia;" "I've just learned about the killing of six endangered gorillas;" or "I can't handle the pain of knowing that many children are killed by domestic abuse each day in this country," etc. Such "beyond ego" dispiritation requires a different level of intervention, and is often responsive to interpreting up, visualization, and imagery exercises, etc.

Delivered Without Delay

In conclusion, to relate to the third meaning attributed to the verb "to express" by Webster, we must be willing to deliver interventions in the spiritual dimension, despite the fact that we recognize our own human limitations and woundedness. When daring to express the soul of social work, it can be especially comforting to remember that, as Carl Rogers so sagely observed "Imperfect people can help other imperfect people."

As we seek to integrate spirituality into social work practice and education (Cowley & Derezotes, 1994), we will need to both honor and challenge each other's genius and imperfections. As we

continue our work together I hope we can begin to distill our collective wisdom and diverse approaches into a truly ecumenical spirituality. We must dare to integrate all that is holy, and therefore embrace all that may help us to become more whole. It's a great challenge and worthy quest. Let us begin!

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Bettelheim, B. (1983). *Freud and man's soul*. New York: Alfred A. Knoff.

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Bugental, J., & Bugental, I. (1994/Winter). Dispirituality: A new perspective on a familiar state. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 24 (1), 49-67.

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Wilber, K. (1996). *A brief history of everything*. Boston: Shambhala.

Society Gets Organized: First National Board of Directors Elected

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work elected its first national Board of Directors at the business meeting that followed the annual conference in July. Officers and Board members are: Robin Russel, Ph.D., Omaha, NE. (President/Director); Elizabeth Smith, D.S.W., Omaha, Nebraska (Vice President/Associate Director); Jay Palmer, M.S.W., Huntington Beach, CA. (Secretary); Joleen Benedict, M.S.W., Trenton, N.J.; Ed Canda, Ph.D., Lawrence, KS.; Rivka Ausubel Danzig, D.S.W., Philadelphia, PA.; David Derezotes, Ph.D., Salt Lake City, Utah; Nancy Ging, M.S.W., Chicago, IL.; Mari Ann Graham, M.S.W., St. Paul, MN.; Ann Lichliter, B.A., Omaha, NE.; Miko Nakashima, M.S.W., Lawrence, KS.; Karen Nielsen, M.S.W., Salt Lake City, Utah; Dona

Reese, Ph.D., Champaign, IL.; and, Michael Sheridan, Ph.D., Richmond, VA.

A national advisory board will be formed during the next year. The advisory board will be chaired by Ed Canda.

The Board of Directors met for the first time October 12 and 13, 1996 in Omaha, NE. Board roles and structure were delineated. Beginning plans were made for the third national conference to be held in St. Paul, MN. next summer.

There was a lengthy discussion of how to meet the staffing needs of the organization during this period of rapid growth. There is more work to be done than can reasonably be handled by a volunteer director who has another full time job. Fund raising options were discussed. The Board voted to raise mem-

bership dues to \$30 a year for practitioners and educators, and \$15 a year for full-time students and retired persons. It is hoped that the combination of an increase in membership and dues will allow the organization to, in the near future, be able to hire a part-time staff person or graduate assistant to help with organizational tasks.

Society publications were also discussed. At present, the newsletter is published twice a year. With increased revenue and staff support it is hoped that the newsletter would be able to be published more frequently. The development of a formal editorial board was proposed.

The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for March 9, 1997 in Chicago.

Research Update

Dona Reese, Ph.D.

The excellent attendance at our research meeting during the National Meeting in July indicates the interest of the Society in research. In fact, Society members are leading the field in cutting edge research on spirituality in social work. At the meeting, we looked at the body of knowledge we have thus far in our field, and many suggestions were made for further research. Some of these topics included the following: spiritually sensitive practice across cultures; evaluation of models of practice; testing of transpersonal theory; spiritual assessment; client preferences regarding addressing issues in practice; spirituality in specific populations-i.e., spouse abuse, sexual abuse, substance abuse; spirituality in international social work, cross-cultural comparisons; spiritually based community action; further curriculum studies; definition, distinguishing between spirituality and religion; prayer styles and personality; energy medicine and social work practice; scales that measure spirituality; impact of fundamentalist religion; use of fuzzy statistics; and, spiritual emergency distinguished from psychiatric diagnosis.

The Nathan Cummings Foundation has recently funded research in the area of spirituality and death. The foundation's current guidelines set forth their interest in issues related to beginning of life and end of life. Recently they have extended their interests to spirituality as it relates to death. Accordingly, they have funded a study: "Dying and the Inner: Death Caregiving Effectiveness" in the amount of \$275,000.000 over three years. This study looks at the inner life of the death caregivers, both professionals and family, in relation to their effectiveness as a caregiver to the dying individual. It is being conducted at the Johns Hopkins Oncology Center in Baltimore, Maryland, and Dr. Elizabeth Smith is the principal investigator. If you have any questions about this study itself, you may contact her at the University of Nebraska at Omaha School of Social Work, (402)554-2843.

Note: Dona Ita has returned to her maiden name of Reese. Please send requests for information from the Spirituality in Social Work Research Database and summaries of your own research to Dona Reese, University of Illinois School of Social Work, 1207 W. Oregon Street, Urbana, IL 61801.

Society Meetings Scheduled for C.S.W.E. A.P.M.

The Society will once again be sponsoring two programs at the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting to be held in Chicago, March 6 - 9, 1997. There will be a half day workshop on Thursday, March 6, 1997, entitled Spirituality and Social Work: Developments in Practice and Education. Saturday evening, March 8, 1997, we will host a Celebration of Spiritual Diversity Through Dance and Drumming. Similar programs sponsored at previous C.S.W.E. meetings have been very well attended. These Society programs are free and open to all members, regardless of whether they are attending the C.S.W.E. meeting.

ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS



Dear Professor Cosmos:

I love all of this spirituality in social work jazz, but I don't feel ready to work on anyone else's spirituality until I am less screwed up. When I look at you, you seem so together and, well, so cosmic, whereas I am just a beginning social worker, fresh out of graduate school.

Young Soul

Dear Young Soul:

Yes, it is true, I am pretty darn cosmic. However, I think it is a mistake for you or anyone to wait until you are "perfect" before you think about spirituality in practice. If everyone waited until they were perfect, then the only one in the world practicing spirituality in social work would be yours truly! And, don't forget, if you are comfortable being imperfect, your clients will usually feel it's o.k. for them to be imperfect too.

P.C.

Dear Professor Cosmos:

I am a MSW student who is in a practicum site that is not friendly to spirituality. In fact my supervisor would kill me if she found out that I was working in the spiritual dimension with clients. What should I do?

In the Closet

Dear "closet dweller":

I have two recommendations, dear child. First, you should try telling people that you are bringing out your "inner" spirit healer. (Have you noticed that these days, anything becomes o.k. if you add the prefix "inner" to it?) If they don't go for that, tell them you are going to bring out your "inner jerk" and sue the hell out of them for discrimination. But seriously, please don't let other people tell you that what you know in your heart to be true is wrong.

P.C.

Courageous readers and all others are encouraged to write Professor Cosmos, in loving care of Dr. Russel and the Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter.

Social Work and Past Life Regression Therapy

(continued from page 3)

Social workers can be available for discussions with clients regarding past lives and reincarnation. There is a professional organization, the Association for Past Life Research and Therapies, which provides training and extensive reading materials for those interested. Also available, are training manuals, tapes, and professional handbooks. In addition, there are study groups which meet in various parts of the country, often organized by professionals who have been using this therapy for many years. The National Institute of Health Division of Alternative Medicine has added past life therapy onto its lengthy list of therapies to research. Professionals within the field are committed to research which will provide a balanced, double-blind design to explore the effectiveness of past life therapy. When a

therapist uses this unproven technique, one relies upon the anecdotal evidence and the clinical results seen on a regular basis. The results are often miraculous and mystical in nature.

Though unconventional, this form of therapy is gaining in popularity in the United States, and is a rapid, effective mode of healing for many people. Of course, one must acknowledge the mainstream psychological and psychiatric communities which protest the legitimacy, given there is a lack of solid evidence. Yet as social workers, we have an obligation to our clients to embrace and include new forms of therapy and ways of looking at human development. Professionals speak of the new field of psycho-spiritual development. People are hungry to feel their souls as well as their psychological development. We must

investigate these alternative healing techniques and, where appropriate, incorporate them into the more traditional forms of social work practice.

Lucas, W. B. (1993). *Regression therapy a handbook for professionals*. Crest Park, CA: Deep Forest Press.

Weiss, B. (1992). *Through time into healing*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Weiss, B. (1996). *Only love is real*. New York: Warner Books.

For further information contact the author at 410-653-5496, E-Mail Address: joyhp@aol.com. Or 17 Warren Road, Suite 1-B, Baltimore, Maryland 21208. For research and training information contact The Association for Past Life Research and Therapies, Inc. P.O. Box 220151, Riverside, Ca. 92516.

• • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • •

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year.

Make checks payable to: **The Society for Spirituality and Social Work**
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE. 68182-0001

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**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Newsletter**

**Volume 4, Number 1
Spring 1997**



Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Spring 1997

Vol. 4, No. 1

Toward The Future: Call, Covenant, Mission

Closing Address, Second National Meeting of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, July 16, 1996

M. Vincentia Joseph, DSW, LCSW-C

*National Catholic School of Social Service, The Catholic University of America
Washington, DC*

I think that this conference, along with the development of a serious literature, reflect, in a striking way, that there is a widespread affirmation, or perhaps movement, within the profession, that affirms that spirituality and religious beliefs are integral to the nature of the person and have a vital influence on human behavior. Increasingly, it is recognized that these spiritual and religious dimensions are important features of the social work practice and hold tremendous potential for effective interventions at all phases of the social work process and in all phases of practice.

This significant development and, indeed, the sessions in this conference, reflect a truth known by the ancients and epitomized poetically in this expression of the Buddhist view of the world.

The final Buddhist view of the world ... is symbolized as a vast network of jewels, like drops of dew upon a multi-dimensional spider web. Looking closely at any single jewel, one beholds in it the reflections of all the others.

Allan Watts

This view of the world, as seen in this image, vividly expresses our understanding of the dynamic nature of the spiritual dimension of the person as revealed in all of our experiences. It reflects the interaction of the religious and spiritual dimensions with all aspects of the human condition, in the total of one's personality and in all of one's life. The explicit collective recognition of the need for the inclusion of this content in our practice models is clearly developing into a serious trend in the profession that has grown from the networking of a few during the past two decades.

We are coming to realize, within the various disciplines and professions, that the world of science is returning to the age old understanding—that there are two spheres of truth. One was thought to be internal and subjective, and the

other empirical and objective. Both are complementary. The inner-subjective is known through inner processes and experience as well as in its referents in behavior which can be empirically verified. As Harman (1987) states:

It is now becoming clear ... there is no necessary conflict at all between the esoteric "perennial wisdom" of the world's spiritual traditions and a science which has relaxed its positivistic and reductionistic assumption that characterize much of its history.

This, he holds, is a more revolutionary development than may be apparent at first thought. Our role in developing knowledge in this area holds a unique challenge to us. It is important for our own professional and personal development.

My focus in this presentation is to consider social work as a profession and a calling. The call to the profession is in itself, at least for some, a spiritual experience. And, the acceptance of that call, the covenant, and the implicit commitment to the values embedded in the vision and mission of the profession clearly transcend the self and are of a spiritual nature. I will consider the covenant and the responsibility inherent in the commitment to the profession's

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Toward the Future

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mission in terms of social work's traditional view of the nature of the person. This perspective embraces a holistic conception of the person, one in which the person is seen as purposeful and goal oriented, and seeking self-actualization in a social and relational context. More recently this view has been further elaborated as the bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective. This model of human functioning would make spiritual issues a legitimate practice focus and provide a more complete understanding of clients' strengths, weaknesses, and problems (Cornett, 1992). For our purposes, we will look at the implications of this commitment to social work's mission in terms of the spiritual and religious component of this holistic perspective. I will consider briefly, the historical experience of the profession in this domain of practice and future directions, especially in terms of building social work knowledge. This presentation is based clearly on the assumption that the religious/spiritual domain is a constituent element of social work practice and one that is intrinsically related to technical, ethical, and culturally competent practice.

It is important at the outset, to *define and differentiate the terms faith, religion, and spirituality*. These have been used interchangeably in the literature in the past, but more recently are being defined and used more precisely. For our purposes here, *faith* is defined as an inner system of beliefs which relate one to the transcendent or ultimate reality, for the theistic believer, God. Faith orients one's life and behavior accordingly. *Religion*, on the other hand, is the external expression of one's faith. It comprises beliefs, ethical codes, and worship, all of which unite one to a moral community. In sociological terms, religion is a social institution with a cohesive system of creed, code, and cult which binds together those who profess and worship from a compatible world view. It is the organized expression of faith in the lives and practices of individuals and communities. *Spirituality*, on the other hand, is often referred to as a drive, need, power, or capacity. It has its roots in words like "breath" or

"wind"—an invisible force which is experienced as presence. It is dynamic potential. Thus, it is that non-material, mysterious aspect of the person, the ground of one's being that strives for meaning, union with the universe, and all things. Spirituality extends to the experience of the transcendent or a power beyond us. It seeks to transcend the self, to discover meaning and purpose in the world. It is expressed in form—in the connectedness with nature, in personality, in culture—in the experience of the aesthetic, and in religion or in any form that seeks relatedness to the infinite. For theistic believers, it includes one's relationship with and experience of God (Joseph, 1987; 1988). Religion is the form and spirituality its dynamic. Ideally, organized religion should support the spiritual dimension by helping to free it and give direction to its expression. However, as we know too well, many religious beliefs are presented in ways that block spiritual development, instilling excessive guilt and righteousness and encouraging rigid defenses (May, 1977, p. 89).

The Nature of a Profession

Despite the increasing interest among the professions in religious and spiritual issues, there is a growing concern, particularly among the ethicists, that the professions are in crisis. This has been accompanied by a renewed interest in virtue ethics—moral agent or character ethics. This renaissance in virtue ethics represents a concern about a growing self-interest among some professionals and a gradual weakening of a commitment to the altruistic ideals (Pellegrino, 1989). Since the professions are moral communities with moral power as well as moral responsibility, we may need to reflect collectively on the nature of the professions and the meaning of being a professional (Joseph, 1989). Ethicists at the Hastings Center on Ethics (Jennings, Callahan, and Wolf, 1987, p. 5), in expressing concern that the moral meaning of professionalism is eroding, hold that, in ethical terms, to be a professional is to lead a certain kind of life defined by special virtues and norms of character. It is to enter into a subcommunity with a characteristic moral ethos and outlook.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha

The theme for this summer's upcoming national conference is "nurturing the soul of social work". When the board of directors suggested that theme, it really struck a chord with me. Sometimes it seems that social workers do a good job of nurturing everyone but themselves. As a profession we often give and give and give with relatively little recognition, appreciation, or remuneration. A perfect set up for burn-out.

When asked in survey research, most social work students and practitioners report that they selected social work as a career out of a sense of spiritual calling. That sense of calling needs to be nurtured and supported. Yet many social workers also report that they work in settings where they don't feel comfortable even talking about spirituality.

Nurturing our souls takes time and commitment. People need the time and space to cultivate their spiritual roots.

The Society's summer conference can offer just such a place. Participants in our prior two conferences report returning home refreshed and refueled. I have also witnessed the incredible sense of community and "sacred space" that have characterized these conferences. Come join us in St. Paul this summer. Come feed your soul.

In the classical sense, the term "profession" has roots in the public profession of a commitment to service, as in the profession of vows in the clerical profession and the Hippocratic Oath in medicine. It represented a public declaration of service to others, an ethic grounded in altruistic values. It is reflected in the fiduciary relation-

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Toward the Future

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ship—that bond of trust in which the best interest of the client takes precedence over personal self-interest.

This altruistic value orientation is a defining characteristic of a profession. It has important implications for social work, a profession that has a long history of altruistic values and actions. Considerable scholarly work is being done at this time on the meaning of altruism and its relevance for social work. As Wakefield (1993) says, altruism is at the roots of social work's professional mandate and is the unifying theme that transcends our various fields of practice and interventive methods. He refers to social work as the altruistic conscience of society, a theme which is cogently stated by others (Jennings, Calahan, & Wolf, 1977) outside of our profession.

They [social workers] have a unique insight into the reasons families break down, why individuals have difficulty functioning, and how people are harmed or injured by society's structures and institutions.... The public duty of social work as a profession is to make the invisible visible to show the underside of a system that otherwise seems to be functioning adequately.... There is no doubt that the profession of social work combines a tradition of altruism, mutual aid, and social justice. Social work can help make our community life richer by serving as the voice of these values in our social conscience.

The term, "altruism," derives from the Greek word "agape," and in English "charity," an unconditional love that is not self-serving. According to Wuthnow (1983), it is a higher state of existence and, in a religious tradition, operates through divine grace. Of special importance to us here, altruism is associated with an absolute, transcendent, or cosmic sense of moral order. It is imbedded in a higher conception of value and transforming possibilities. True altruism transcends the self and leads to truth in thought, justice in action, and universal love in feeling.

Call, Covenant, Mission

Social Work as Calling

At this time there is a renewed interest in viewing a profession as a call. This view of a profession involves an attraction to be of service to others, and a response to values which of their nature are spiritual. As many have written, social work historically has had a strong sense of calling and mission (Reamer, 1987; Wakefield, 1993). It is interesting to note, that in its early years, social work was most often compared to the ministry,

Implicit in call is the notion that it is within the essence of the person to seek purpose and meaning in life. This teleological, or guiding force, is spiritual in nature. It is the understanding that a higher force has a purpose for each one in the universe and a role in the evolutionary drama. By searching deep within the self, the meaning of life for the person can be discovered. For many of us, social work represents a response to a call and a context for fulfilling one's purpose. For those attracted to the profession's time-honored values, this sense of call is compelling.

Reamer (1987) brings out that, in contrast, many today associate a profession more with a career or occupation than a calling and expresses concern that this cultural influence has in some ways affected social work. He suggests that for social work to reclaim its sense of mission, it must recapture the notion of call. In keeping with virtue or moral agent ethics which focuses on the integrity of the professional, he sees motive as the defining factor in elevating mission above self-interest.

Covenant Response

The notion of covenant may be said to involve a response to a call. The response envisioned has a transcendent quality. In the Judaic-Christian tradition, the covenant concept is rooted in Old Testament history: God establishing a covenant with a people who are chosen. Its biblical meaning entails faithfulness or loyalty. It provides a model that is not based on the moral behavior of the other but is the result of the moral principle of covenant alone (May, 1977). It is internal and directed to

building the relationship. It has ontological implications for social work in that it suggests transformation, transformation of the professional, through internalizing the values, mission, and culture of the profession. It should bring about change that affects the total life of the professional.

Fidelity and promise are inherent in all covenant relationships and are represented by commitment—either explicit (oaths, pledges) or implicit. Covenant fidelity requires professional competence and accountability. By assuming the identity of a professional, the practitioner covenants or professes to live by an ethic of service and to fulfill certain responsibilities (Miller, 1990). Thus, covenant is the most inclusive conceptual model for framing our professional obligations and giving direction to our professional commitment. It moves beyond minimalistic obligation to a disposition on a spiritual plane that transcends the merely required.

Covenant relationships may be considered at various levels, the relationship of the professional to the profession as well as the relationship with the client. A key element in the covenant image is the professional's promise to be faithful to the gift that has been given and in keeping faith with the client and the community (Miller, 1990). In this context, it is gaining attention in medicine (Veach, 1981) and some in social work suggest that it replace the contract (Miller, 1990). In contrast to contract, which is minimalistic and legalistic, covenant is not based on exchange but requires that our services may exceed what is required by contract.

Mission

The idea of mission and mission identity are central to the health of any profession or organization. It is interesting that business is emphasizing this today but for pragmatic reasons. The entrepreneurial world recognizes that productivity and effectiveness are enhanced when workers become identified with the mission and purpose of the organization and are engaging in various strategies to strengthen this identity.

I would suggest that in social work, mission is the soul and spirituality is its

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dynamism, the energy that vitalizes it. Mission is the form the energy takes and through which it is expressed. The spiritual dynamism of social work is reflected in our values and permeates our meaning and our purpose in all that we do. Spirituality, then inheres in our mission. Our mission is the form that the spirit of social work takes.

Despite tensions between our macro and micro emphases, both levels have historically been the central focus of the mission of the profession, in keeping with the holistic view of person and environment. However, at various periods of social work's history, the dominant models of practice, designed to implement this mission, drew largely from secular and naturalistic constructs. The spiritual and religious were systematically excluded from the configuration of these approaches. Despite some sporadic and serious attempts to address this critical dimension, there were no collaborative efforts at the level of the profession in this direction (McCormick, 1954; Spencer, 1956; Keith-Lucas, 1972). We now have the opportunity to revise our concept of mission to include a fuller understanding of the person-situation construct and to include the religious and spiritual sphere as well. I propose that the mission should include and implicitly has included this sphere. The exclusion of this area and the secularist theoretical models for practice that were prevalent in various periods of the profession's history are interesting in terms of the deep religious roots of its early leaders. This revisionist paradigm presents a challenge, both an opportunity and an obligation to build a sound knowledge base in this area.

Historical Perspective

To contextualize the relationship of spirituality and religion and social work practice, it is useful to briefly consider some of the historical forces that influenced it. Some social commentators now contend that a significant factor in the rise of logical positivism and the rejection of knowledge that is not derived through empiricism was a reaction against the authority of the time,

including church authorities and philosophies that emphasized spirituality as superior to the material. It was seen as a more useful explanation of phenomena than the medieval concepts of spiritual forces and the rigid beliefs that allowed no questioning. The emphasis on objective data was considered as necessary to accelerate scientific progress and also to avoid a clash with religious institutions which considered soul and spirit as their special domain (Harman, 1987). By the mid- 20's, however, many scientists felt that something was missing and that there are other experiences of reality, ex. our conscious awareness.

The spiritual dynamism of social work is reflected in our values and permeates our meaning and our purpose in all that we do.

In earlier periods of the profession, the relationship between religion and social work was generally strained, influenced by these cultural forces as well as by forces within the profession. Social workers used religion largely as a resource, for referrals for material and tangible assistance. Referrals were also made for help around religious issues. However, the more esoteric realm of counseling was confined to the expertise of the professional social worker—the caseworker, or later, psychiatric social worker. In some instances clergy persons might be included in the team and they often appreciated the educational aspect of the involvement. At this time however, there were many lost opportunities for a wider spread of collaboration and education.

Some early tensions resulted from a condescending attitude of some practitioners which alienated clergy and other religious types. On the other hand, attitudes of clergy often contributed to this as some felt that psychiatry and social work were moving into their sphere of practice. Often heard was, “any one can do social work and engage in charitable works” (Joseph, 1974).

Into the 60's, as social work gained more credibility, many religious persons saw similarities in the roles but recognized the need for specialized training. The boundaries between the roles at times were blurred and some religiously committed persons attempted to impose their values and beliefs on clients. They often found conflict between client autonomy and religious authority. This often created suspicion around the involvement of religion and spirituality in practice on the part of some social work educators. On the other hand, some agencies and educators pathologized any interest of the worker in the client's religious concerns. For example, a student was questioned about her own needs when discussing religion with a depressed person in a mental health setting.

In looking at some of the deeper causes for the split, a revisionist analysis suggests that the influence of psychiatry was a prominent factor in excluding religion and spiritual content from social work practice frameworks. Even today, research shows that social work is less hostile to religion than either psychology or psychiatry (Joseph, 1988). One study found a sizeable personal investment in religion by mental health professionals (Bergin & Jensen, 1990). Family therapists and social workers manifested the highest personal religiosity followed by psychologists and psychiatrists, in that order.

Future Directions

In view of the groundswell of interest in religion and spirituality in the professions and in social work, I think that this trend is not likely to reverse. It holds promise for mature development. Perhaps the central challenge is to continue the scholarly task of building practice paradigms that are more inclusive and give greater attention to the realities of religion and spirituality in the lives of our clients. My research (1988), similar to findings in later studies (Derezotes & Evans, 1995), has shown that although most social workers (90%) saw religious and spiritual issues as important parameters in practice and important in their lives as well as in the lives of their clients, about half would wait for the client

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to bring up the subject (57% in the Deretzotes and Evans study). The largest proportion of the sample said that it should be given more emphasis in their professional education. One may interpret the hesitation to initiate discussion of religious and spiritual issues from a lack of knowledge and skill in this area as well as a cultural bias against intrusion in a private sphere.

The apparent shift to a greater sensitivity to the religious client among social workers and other helping professionals is, no doubt, strengthened by post-modern and feminist trends. It provides ample room for the inclusion of this content in both practice and education. The secular and naturalistic constructs that influenced our practice technologies have the potential to open up to comprehensive and inclusive formulations. Our role clearly is to build these elements into our practice frameworks and create new theoretical constructs as appropriate. Research in this area in social work needs to be intensified. Studies have shown that spiritual and religious variables can be operationalized and measured in behavior.

We need to differentiate the various levels of discourse required to build a coherent body of knowledge for inclusion in the knowledge base of social work and clarify its structure in our educational programs. There are five broad levels that need to be addressed and these encompass (1) the technologies needed for practice—the development of theory for use in our interventive models and for effective work with the spiritual and religious issues that emerge in practice situations; (2) the level of the practitioner—the personal spirituality and value awareness and both positive and negative countertransference. From a post-modern and feminist perspective, a spirituality for the social worker that I feel was very evident here, is one of contemplative holiness—a spirituality in action. One that moves from inner to outer and returns deep within the self for refreshment and light, and moves again into action. It is emersion in the world and a deeper consciousness or meeting with the sacred; (3) the level of the profession—the profession's responsibility

to assure that practitioners have the competencies to work in this area in an effective and ethical way; (4) the policy level—continued efforts to support an environment that reflects respect for the dignity and autonomy of the person. Those at the policy level are concerned with what is needed for a good society and in designing social institutions that assure not only that people have opportunities to meet basic needs but also their higher emotional and spiritual needs; (5) the level of ethics—includes ethical issues such as dual relationships, self-awareness, cultural diversity, and ethical issues related to practice modalities as well as policies of the profession itself.

At this time, practitioners are beginning to seriously identify and clarify the spiritual elements in their practice and this effort needs to be increased. Social work has long been considered a science and an art. Skilled practice contains aesthetic elements that raise our practice beyond technique. The artistic dimension, in itself of a spiritual nature, is a thread that runs through our literature and our practice wisdom (Reamer, 1993). Similarly, the dynamic interactional element in the client-worker relationship has a spiritual quality that often transcends the existential moment and leads to meaningful breakthroughs that, at times, are the source of significant transformations in the lives of our clients. This process may be experienced as the action of the Holy Spirit, or a higher force, the source of insights and creative interventions not previously formulated. It provides a dynamism in the relationship which is gift for both client and practitioner. Each experiences a transcendent element, although not spoken, in the relationship. In community organization, it can be experienced with marginal groups as they begin to realize their inner power to bring about change in their lives.

Frameworks need to be developed that include assessment tools as well as interventive models. Models are also needed to assist both the experienced practitioner and the student in integrating the personal, spiritual and religious self with the professional self. Importantly, as we continue to engage in model building and developing new and innovative interventions, they will have

to be examined to assure that they are suited to the needs of the client rather than our own needs.

Some serious ethical issues are imbedded in dual relationships, an area that poses some profound ethical dilemmas in dealing with the religiously committed client. There are delicate boundaries between the role of the social worker and the role of spiritual director, pastoral minister, or chaplain. Each of these roles has a distinct set of competencies and credentials and when practiced simultaneously have the potential for conflict and risk to the client. Guidelines will be needed to assist the practitioner in assessing the appropriateness of engaging in such dual relationships and their potential for conflict and risk.

Conclusion

Higher standards of moral responsibility can and should continue to be applied to the professions. The crisis in the professions may signal another breakthrough in the professionalization of social work and strengthen both the mission of the profession and the professional identity of its members. Discourse on the concept of call and commitment has a critical role to play as we move into the future. Clearly such a discourse can only contribute to the integrity of the profession. It requires a greater self-understanding as a profession of our vision of social work and the spiritual dynamism that energizes and renews it. Moreover, it requires greater self-understanding on the part of its practitioners on the meaning and implications of professional commitment. With the wider movement within the profession to embrace a bio-psychosocial-spiritual focus in practice and a social and professional environment that is more supportive of religious and spiritually sensitive frameworks, we have a unique opportunity to enrich our practice. We need to engage in a systematic dialogue on how these constituent elements are to be expressed in both assessment and intervention. We are now, perhaps, on the brink of a new paradigm that will allow us to more fully realize our mission to the whole person.

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CHAPTER NEWS

Champaign/Urbana, Illinois

The Champaign/Urbana Chapter of the Society has been reviewing literature for the past several months. They spent a couple sessions discussing the new book by Ronald Bullis, "Spirituality in Social Work Practice," and practiced some of the assessment and intervention techniques he recommends. The group spent a couple sessions on, "Spiritual Emergency" by Grof and Grof. The Chapter has found these meetings to be quite helpful in promoting understanding of the relationship of spirituality to practice. A combination of students, practitioners and local practitioners have attended.

(For further information contact Dr. Dona Reese, 1401 W. Healey St., Champagne, Il. 61821 (217) 351-7385.)

Chicago, Illinois

The Chicago Chapter of the Society has scheduled the topic, "Spirituality and Helping" at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Joliet, IL on March 14. CEU's were given. "Fowler's Stages of Faith" were the discussion topic at the following Chapter meeting on Friday, April 18 at Naperville Unitarian Church.

(For further information contact Jim Raines at (630) 416-0553, or Nancy Ging at (708) 323-5402.)

Portland, Oregon

The Portland Society Chapter has continued to meet the third Tuesday of every month from 7-8:30 pm. After a break in December, the group met in January, enjoying an informal potluck. In February, the Chapter discussed the topic, "Working with Death and Dying Issues". The Chapter has found a permanent meeting place in one member's SE Portland home. The Portland Chapter has been

looking for new ways to increase membership, word-of-mouth seems to have been the most successful - bringing in an enthusiastic new member every month.

(For date, time and place of future meeting of the Chapter, call Connie Kvarfordt at (360) 896-2606.)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Philadelphia Chapter continues to meet bimonthly at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. In February, Peggy MacGregor, LSW and Kevin Damitz, LSW facilitated a discussion based on their presentation entitled, "Exploring the Impact of Traditional Spirituality on Two Social Workers' Journeys."

Peggy reviewed her spiritual development as a Christian, sharing various insights regarding the personal relationship she shares with God. She described how her life has been influenced by Scripture and noted examples from the Book of Psalms. Finally, in disclosing a transformational experience regarding her son's neurological disorder accompanied by mental illness (as expressed in the following poem), Peggy guided the group to reflect on the "wounded healer approach" as a social work intervention.

Kevin highlighted the need for dialogue regarding all types of spirituality and religious traditions, stressing the importance of mutual respect. He identified similarities and conflicts between the social work profession and his Roman Catholic beliefs. In discussing his faith, Kevin shared his perspective that spirituality appears to transcend religious labels.

The dialogue concluded with some thoughts on social workers disclosing their spiritual/religious beliefs to their clients. The meeting was a successful forum to discuss spirituality and social work among a diverse group of social work professionals.

I Did Not Find Them Humble

*They said our son was broken,
and thus so were we
A shattered world for each,
a future not to be
Or so it seemed.
The world had changed.
We could not find the way
To bear the burden of our pain,
the anger of each day—
A grief not ever dreamed.*

*A child whose self seemed lost,
and I so silently accused
Both by myself and those
we asked to help. We were
refused
The consolation of a sorrow
shared.
I did not find them humble
at the measure of our loss—
A wound too deep to heal,
a gulf too wide to cross
Without a hand to show that
others cared.*

*Why did I make them gods,
these ones who did not know
The depth of pain and fear
and sorrow that would not
grow.
We were alone.
To think I trusted that they knew
the meaning of my need,
My heart too stunned to fathom
what their theories had
decreed.
They offered me a stone.*

*How did we come to find
a road we could not see?
A God already scorned
was not too proud for me.
He fed my soul
And led me gently as a shepherd
toward the light
To those who, suffering too,
would help me find my sight
And make me whole.*

— Peggy MacGregor
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CHAPTER NEWS — continued

(For further information about upcoming chapter meetings, call Rivka Ausubel Danzig at (215) 573-7940.)

Salt Lake City, Utah

Throughout the year, the Utah chapter of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work has attempted to create a forum where religious leaders, spiritual guides, and transformational facilitators can dialogue with social workers, psychologists, and counselors about the myriad of paths to clients and congregants toward healing.

On May 8, Vaughn Lovejoy, spiritual leader, will present and lead a meditation. Vaughn leads a Sangra (Tibetan word for community) meditation group once a week and is familiar with the teachings of Thich Nat Hanh and the Five Principles of Non-violent living. He is currently employed at Tree-Utah, a non-profit organization which replenishes the earth through the planting of trees.

On June 12, Rabbi Fred Wenger will present on the healing aspects of Judaism and connection through community. He will also address working with clients who are members of the Jewish religion.

The Salt Lake City Chapter continues to gather at the Graduate School of Social Work, Room # 328, at the University of Utah, one Thursday night each month at 7:00 pm.

(For information about upcoming meetings, contact Karen Nielsen at (801) 539-1483.)

Washington, DC

Society members in the mid-Atlantic area (DC, MD, VA, WV) are forming a chapter to encourage local networking, research, and spiritual development. Common themes that have emerged include connection and

community, personal and professional development, experiential and intellectual pursuits, and having fun.

The first formal event on March 21 was a panel discussion on aspects of spirituality in social work. It was held at Catholic University in Washington, DC. All interested social workers were invited to attend.

(Please call Linda Haake, (703) 750-0022, for more information.)

Omaha, Nebraska

The Omaha Area Chapter of the Society met for the first time in February at the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus. The meeting was attended by approximately thirty social work students, faculty and practitioners. Dr. Elizabeth Smith presented, "Dying and the Inner Life: A Clinical Model of Care", followed by an open discussion to plan future Chapter meetings.

May 16, 3:00 p.m. will be the next Chapter meeting at UNO Milo Bail Student Center. Richard and Jan Potter will be presenting an experiential workshop entitled, "The Spiritual Journey: A Pathless Path".

(For additional information on future chapter meetings, contact Laura Adams at (402) 554-2898 or adamsl@cwis.unomaha.edu)



Call For Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Two hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM— compatible 3.5 disk with files saved in format or Word-Perfect 5.1 should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

SPIRITUAL ASSESSMENT — An Initial Framework

Jim Raines, M.Div. M.S.W., Aurora University, Aurora, IL

Early social workers were more advanced in consideration of spirituality than we give them credit for. Lucille Corbett (1925) was one of the first to recognize that “all true case work is spiritual” and to define spirit as “the principle of life and vital energy” (p. 225). Cabot (1927) defined spiritual diagnosis as “the glimpse of the central purpose of the person, unique and related to the total parts of the world,” (p. 216) and to define spiritual treatment as the attempt “to open, maintain, and to improve the channels of understanding both within each person and between persons, and through these channels to favor the entrance of God’s powers for the benefit of the individuals” (p. 215). Winchester (1927) thus argued that “the social worker needs to realize that spiritual attitudes and backgrounds need to be included in the diagnosis and case history” (p. 281).

Despite this auspicious beginning, our profession still has scant ideas about how to complete a spiritual assessment. We have settled for superficial categories such as “denominational affiliation” and “church attendance” when such information tells us almost nothing about the client’s spiritual life. One of the first researchers to explore religion in a deeper manner was Gordon Allport (1950). He and Ross (1967) noticed that there was a curvilinear relationship between church attendance and prejudice against Blacks and Jews. In other words, while non-attenders were less prejudiced than attenders, the more someone attended, the less prejudice they became. They developed a scale (the Religious Orientation Scale) that measured whether a person was religious for extrinsic reasons or intrinsic reasons. The extrinsically motivated used religion as a *means* to their own ends - security, sociability, status, or self-justification. The intrinsically religious found their “master motive” in their faith, “having embraced a creed, the individual endeavors to internalize it and follow it fully” (p. 434). Thus, religion was an *end* in itself.

Later, Batson & Ventis (1982) felt that simply focusing on one’s motivation for being religious omitted a crucial dimension of spiritual maturity: an increased tolerance for ambiguity. Thus, they added a third dimension: the *quest* orientation. Religious questors saw religion as “an open-ended, responsive dialogue with existential questions raised by the contradictions and tragedies of life” (p. 154). The faith of those involved in a quest was marked by complexity, doubt, and tentativeness. While Batson & Ventis thought the motives of the extrinsically religious were ignoble, they also felt that the intrinsically religious often sacrificed their intellect to remain committed. Their original scale has been revised in Batson & Schoenrade (1991).

Recent social work authors (Brower, 1984; Canda, 1989; Joseph, 1988) have made an important distinction between religion and spirituality. *Spirituality* can be defined as an inner sense of connectedness and meaningfulness in life and *religion* can refer to the organized, outward expression of that connection and meaning. These definitions allow us to create a new typology which enables us to place the above research into a new perspective.

		SPIRITUALITY	
RELIGIOUSNESS	Religious Not Spiritual	Religious And Spiritual	
	MEANS ORIENTATION	END ORIENTATION	
	SEDULAR ORIENTATION	QUEST ORIENTATION	
	Not Spiritual Nor Religious	Spiritual Not Religious	

The above typology has no boxes because it exists along lines which are continuums. Thus, clients may be placed in several different places within any one quadrant. Some clients may attend religious services regularly for both social and spiritual reasons. They would be placed in the top half as religious, but near the center vertical line indicating

that they have combined motives. Other clients may have a deep spiritual life and engage in religious activities occasionally. They would be placed on the right side, but near the center horizontal line. Some clients may never attend religious events, but have a growing spiritual awareness. They would be placed in the lower half as non-religious, but near the center vertical line indicating that they have a growing spirituality. Other clients may have very little spiritual awareness, but attend services on religious holidays as a matter of habit. They would be placed on the left side, but near the center horizontal line. It may also be helpful to think of archetypes for each quadrant. Cult leader, David Koresh, may represent the “Means” orientation. Mother Theresa may represent the “End” orientation. New Age author, Ken Wilbur, may represent the “Quest” orientation. The famous skeptic, B. F. Skinner, may represent the “Secular” orientation.¹

Wherever our clients find themselves, it may be helpful to remember Loewald’s (1957) advice to clinicians: “a mature object-relationship is maintained with a given patient if the analyst relates to the patient in tune with the shifting levels of development manifested by the patient at different times, but always from the viewpoint of growth” (p. 230). Part of being a spiritually sensitive therapist is to be spiritually self-aware (Abramson, 1996). It is only when we have placed ourselves on the above typology that we can begin to work within Vygotsky’s (1962) “zone of proximal development” with our clients. In other words, we must be close enough to gain empathy, but far enough to offer growth. There is the constant danger of spiritual alienation when our own enthusiasm frightens our clients into silence or solitude about spiritual issues.

¹ These four categories roughly correspond to Glock & Wuthnow’s (1979): nominally religious, conventionally religious, alternatively religious, and non-religious.

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Sister/Brother Can You Paradigm?

Nancy Ging, L.C.S.W., Hinsdale, IL

Shift happens. Indeed. We are living in the midst of a monumental paradigm shift. Never before have so many people been so aware, or so informed about the way scientific revolutions happen, as to be able to recognize such a shift in process. During the Renaissance people were not aware that a shift was happening around them. The man who masterminded the 1993 Parliament of World Religions, Jim Kenney, likes to say, "Two hundred years ago nobody got up in the morning, threw open the window and thought, I WONDER HOW THE RENAISSANCE IS DOING TODAY."

We, as members of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, have the opportunity to become Shift Watchers. We don't have to WONDER much; we can actually SEE the movement. What a thrilling spectator sport this proves to be. We have the chance to begin to understand the new paradigm by learning something about The New Sciences (Quantum Physics and Chaos Theory) and Energy Medicine. Scientists are teaching us that REALITY ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE. Nearly every aspect of our Western culture is being affected by the paradigm shift — medicine, education, business management, the arts. We can observe the new paradigm finding its way into popular culture in many ways — even in recent feature films such as "Powder" and two films starring spiritually awake actor John Travolta, "Phenomenon" and "Michael," films showing the interconnectedness of all, and the way of Energy and Consciousness, which is much of the essence of the new paradigm.

Within our own Social Work profession we, as members of SSSW, are not only watching but are co-creating this paradigm shift and putting into practice Holistic Social Work as it emerges out of the new paradigm. We are to be midwives, helping to give birth to new paradigm therapies in the human services and new paradigm theories in our professional education.

Since it's beginnings, Social Work has been systemic. What profession is better suited, then, to wholesomely inte-

grate the the largest, all-embracing system — the perspective of spirituality/energy/consciousness — into health-care, clinical work and professional education?

Modalities that we might think of as New Paradigm Therapies are showing up faster than we can get trained in them. EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) and TFT (Thought Field Therapy) are two new ways of working that can help clients make quantum leaps in their healing or growth. (More will be written about these tremendously helpful modalities in future newsletters). Colored Light Therapy is another new holistic therapy worthy of note — one of the forms which Vibrational Medicine takes. Energy work of all kinds has been touching social workers and affecting the way we work for the past two decades, albeit in an underground way. Some holistic therapies are so fascinating, so titillating, so compelling that they can seduce us away from rationality and our roots in social work.

We, as SSSW members, have a responsibility to our clients, our profession and to related professions to wisely use these New Paradigm Therapies without abandoning the sound body of knowledge — child and adult developmental psychology, and the process of individuation — that has accumulated in the past century out of the old paradigm. Bridging these paradigms is our responsibility. It has, in the past 20 years of clinical practice, been my passion.

The SSSW provides us with a community of colleagues who enjoy Paradigm Shift Watching, New Paradigm Therapy Mid-Wifery, and Old and New Paradigm Bridge building. We are going to be busy!

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ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS



Dear Professor Cosmos:

As a macro-focused social worker, I find it extremely unjust that most of your advice column is spent addressing clinical issues. I am currently lobbying certain politicians to support a bill that would provide affordable health insurance to all children. Given the current political climate, this bill could use all the 'natural' and 'supernatural' help it can get. Any advice?

Down and Out on Capital Hill

Dear Down and Out,

Indeed, I have been remiss in not addressing the awesome potential of spirituality-infused macro-social work practice! Being the "big-picture" person that you are, I have no doubt you have been able to apply my clinically-oriented teachings on a larger sphere. Just in case your "big-picture" tube has blown out, I'll describe to you a celestial intervention that may be very useful in enlightening our legislators. On the next new moon, gather your fellow lobbyists around and work together to design a "specter" (and I'm not talking about Arlin) that will visit key politicians in their sleep. This specter will provide them with new insight regarding the urgent need for affordable health care. Naturally, the goal here is not to manipulate the simple-minded, only to educate them.

Cos

Dear Professor Cosmos,

I read an article about you, in which the writer states that you are hopelessly "stuck in the 60's". Isn't it better to really be here in the 90's, preparing for the next Millennium?

Much Younger than You

Dear Youthful Person,

O.K., it's true, I'm a 60's dude. And yeah, there was free sex, drugs, rock and roll. (hmmmm, actually some of that don't sound so bad....) But it's also true that we believed in the possibility that people could learn more loving ways to relate to one another. Maybe I'm "old-fashioned" but I still think the surest indication of spiritual growth is the spontaneous eruption of joy. That's my way of preparing for the next Millennium.

PC.

Dear Professor Cosmos,

What do you think about family values?

Concerned about our Slipping Values

Dear Concerned:

The only thing I'm worried about slipping is my memory. Why is it that some of those who talk about family values assume that they know better than everyone else what those values ought to be? Or that nobody else ever had any values? I know it is hard to believe, but even Professor Cosmos has values. I believe, for example, in unbridled narcissism. I also believe in the power of the human spirit.

P.C.

Toward the Future

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However, there remains within the profession a sincere concern among some about these newer developments. This is not totally unjustified. Looking backward, the process of the professionalization of social work may have required some distance from its religious roots. We need to critically examine the issues related to the religious and spiritual aspects of our practice. Moreover, we need to learn from past issues and seriously dialogue about any potential threats to the integrity of the profession. As Karl Rahner (1973, p. 358) has so

well stated, our contemporary helping professions are newer models of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Our task is to continue our scholarly work to integrate the religious and spiritual dimensions in our practice and assure that our theoretical foundations are sound, conceptually and ethically. Perhaps, the greatest task is to develop models of self-awareness to assure that our values of justice and respect for a socially responsible self-determination and cultural diversity are protected—an area in which, as a profession, social work has been in the forefront.

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The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continuing activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year.

Make checks payable to: **The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
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Third National Conference To Be Held This Summer In St. Paul

The Third National Meeting of the Society will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota from June 28 to July 1. This year's conference theme is "Nurturing the Soul of Social Work", and will feature a plenary address by theologian and author Matthew Fox. The conference will again include a rich variety of experiential workshops and individual and panel presentations.

This year's conference will be co-sponsored by the Schools of Social Work at the Catholic University of America, College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas, University of Kansas, University of Nebraska at Omaha, the University of North Dakota, University of Utah, and the Social Work Department at Dana College.

The conference will include also feature a plenary dialogue on the topic of cross-tradition borrowing of spiritual practices in social work settings. The conference will once again include a day long retreat, an evening percussion performance/meditation, and an opening celebration.

Dozens of presenters from across the country will be participating in this year's meeting. Participants will choose from an extensive array of workshops, including: The healing power of ritual; Exploring the boundary between spiritual companionship and clinical social work; "Nonlocal" connections and social work practice; A spiritual approach to

administration in the human services; Embracing the spirit and power of artistic process in relational therapy; Effective death caregiving and the professional's inner life; Moral dimensions of clinical practice; Social work practice with conflicted communities of faith; The application of intuition in social work practice; Working with spiritual issues in clinical practice; Meditation as a tool that links the professional and the personal; Creating sacred space with clients; Core shamanism and healing; and, Social work and past life regression therapy.

The conference registration fee will be relatively inexpensive this year and will offer students the opportunity to attend for a very reduced rate. Low cost housing and meals will also be available on the St. Catherine's College campus. For further information contact:

Laura Adams
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182
(402)554-2898
FAX (402)554-3788
e-mail: adamsl@cwis.unomaha.edu



University of
Nebraska at
Omaha

School of Social Work
Omaha, NE 68182-0293

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**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Newsletter**

**Volume 4, Number 2
Fall 1997**



Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Fall 1997

Vol. 4, No. 2

Nurturing the Soul of Social Work (Remarks from Opening Panel at the 3rd National Conference)

*Lawrence Ressler, Ph.D., Professor of Social Work, Associate MSW Director
Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, N.Y.*

HAROLD KURSHNER, in his book *When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough: The Search for a Life that Matters* says, "Our souls are not hungry for fame, comfort, wealth, or power. Those rewards create almost as many problems as they solve. Our souls are hungry for meaning, for the sense that we have figured out how to live so that our lives matter, so that the world will be at least a little bit different for our having passed through it" (Kushner, 1987, p. 18). Carl Jung, (Jung, 1955) makes this comment, "About a third of my cases are suffering from no clinical definable neurosis, but from the senselessness and emptiness of their lives. This can be described as the general neurosis of our time" (p. 70).

We do well to ask ourselves how we nurture the soul of social work. The 20th century has seen the arrogance of the Age of the Enlightenment with its humanist positivist utopian mindset, to use Alan Keith-Lucas' term (1972), come to a crashing and crushing point of bankruptcy. Trust in the scientific method as a solution to human problems has influenced the social work profession as much as the other social sciences. The materialistic and deterministic attitudes of Freud, Marx, and Skinner about human nature and epistemology have dominated social workers and the profession turning what was originally a religiously affiliated spiritual endeavor into scientific charity and social diagnosis. The search for meaning has been replaced with the search for technique.

Nurturing the soul of social work requires, first and foremost, that we nurture the souls of social workers. In part this requires

embracing the empowering aspects of spirituality and religion. For the past two years I have been involved in developing a new MSW program. We had a blank slate, no history, no traditions, no courses. All we had was a mandate to develop a high quality program and one that would meet CSWE standards. As a private institution with a 100 year religious affiliation and without First Amendment barriers, we decided to place spirituality and religion as centerpieces of the program rather than as incidentals.

Toward this end, one of the twenty program objectives we developed is to have students who can demonstrate "an awareness of and the ability to incorporate knowledge about the functional and dysfunctional role of

spirituality and religion with working with individual, families, groups, organizations, and communities." We have a course entitled Social Work Practice and Religion, but more importantly we attempt to infuse spirituality and religion throughout the curriculum and address the implications for practice, policy, human behavior, and research as well. To accomplish this we modified the ecological systems framework by adding the spiritual dimension so that our unifying philosophical framework is called the Spiritually Enriched Ecological Systems Framework.

Over the last two years, I have become concerned about the experience students have had in the profession concerning spirituality
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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Robin Russel, Ph.D., Omaha, Nebraska

This summer at our annual conference I was fortunate to be able to attend a retreat session on creativity led by Michael Sheridan. Michael referred a lot to a book by Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way*. A large part of the retreat focused on our taking plain white boxes and decorating them. On the outside we were supposed to illustrate the part of ourselves and our creativity that was visible to the world. On the inside of the box we were to put a representation of the inner creative part of ourselves that was not visible to others. Michael brought all sorts of wonderful art supplies (colored markers, crayons, paper, beads, ribbons, glitter, stickers, streamers, feathers, etc.) for us to decorate our boxes.

I had actually heard of *The Artist's Way* before. In March I started a 2 1/2 year training program in spiritual healing and it was one of the books on our reading list. Being such a good academic "do-bee", I bought it along with all the other books. But, it sat at the bottom of the pile. I wasn't quite sure why it was on the list, what it had to do with healing, anyway. I dug into the more scientific books and the psychotherapeutic type books, but a book on creativity...that could wait until I had lots of extra time (which may not be in this life time). My healing training program requires that we do twenty home work healing sessions after each training module we attend. In August I was catching up on these sessions, with just about every friend I could drag in to be a guinea pig for my novice healing skills. One of my clients/friends had issues around a writing block and I remembered Cameron's book and got it out for her to take a look at. Being a strong left-brained person like myself, she also didn't feel like she had the time for this type of book and left it out sitting on my coffee table.

Two days later when I was running off to a haircut appointment, and wanted some light reading for the inevitable wait at the salon (can't waste time just sitting and relaxing), I grabbed *The Artist's Way* and dragged it along. Within two pages I was hooked. This book really spoke to me.

The book outlines a 12 week process for creative recovery. It involves some regular practices like the daily morning pages (3 pages of stream of consciousness writing) and a weekly artist's date (something fun you do by yourself with your inner creative child), as well as a series of exercises geared to each week's readings. I started the process, initially very skeptical that it would have much of an impact on me. As a young person I loved to draw and write poetry. But, as an

adult, drawing (other than doodling during faculty meetings) seemed frivolous, something I didn't have time for. And, the writing of poetry seemed to be something I couldn't really do any more...it felt like my creative flow was all dammed up...as if poems were channelled by a muse who I had little influence or control over. It had been over three years since I'd written a poem.

Three weeks into the process I was sitting at a bagel shop catching lunch between an off-campus meeting and going to my office, writing my morning pages (o.k., sometimes I don't always get them done in the morning, but the goddess of creativity hasn't struck me dead yet). And, as my pen flew across the pages the lines of a poem began to pour out:

*who
writes through my hand
speaks through my voice
sees through my eyes
is me
but not me
and, yet, so tied
to my core*

*guiding spirit
soul
daimon
angel*

*whoever or
whatever
you are*

*lean closer
blow stronger
let me perceive
more clearly*

*you are
welcome*

As I looked at the words as they came out I began to cry and kept mouthing the words "thank you". I'm now in week 12 of my creative recovery. There have been more poems, drawings, and recently paintings...and, yes, it is healing...and, oh yes, it's very spiritual.

The Creation Spirituality tradition teaches that we can experience God in our creativity. Matt Fox, our summer conference featured speaker, has written: "The imago dei or image of God in all persons is necessarily the image of the Creator" (Fox, 1991, p. 22). "In our generativity we co-create with God; in our imaginative output, we trust our images enough to birth them and ride them into existence" (18).

I teach a Spirituality & Social Work class in the summer and have a creative assignment

in which students are encouraged to share a creative reflection of their spirituality. Students have brought in sculpture, paintings, wood carvings, quilts, stories, poems, music, dances, mobiles, banners, and rituals. Students share themselves and these creative ventures with each other in a class setting that breeds a strong sense of community. This past summer one of my students wrote this poem for the class:

The Beauty of Us

*The beauty of us is us
We lie within our souls
Some keep it close
never to let anyone in
Some let it out to be
free and grow*

*The spirit of us is us
We may never know the us
Or we may let it out to be
free and grow around us
To be free, to feel, to breathe*

*Let our spirit go
To grow, nurture and be free
So we can be whole
To love and grow
To know the beauty of us*

Mary Kay Healy
Yankton, S.D.

Another student, described his process in the class as follows:

*Someone told me
the devil is in the details
but I found only a god of
a thousand names there*

*Someone said
you are as a man lost
in the wilderness
but what he called wilderness
was the only place
I could find myself,
my god*

*Sun settling
light green flashing
sky's quiet
mens' quiet*

*Sober small hand
seeks hardened warm pocket
old spice memories strolling
past leaves glinting
small eyes squinting*

*Delicate I am
sensitive I am
exquisite I am
light touches
feather's breath
smiling wispy haired
Yes!*

(continued on page 3)

Director's Notes

(continued from page 2)

*I've seen the spirit
baby soft
and mountain strong
bright eyes glistening
rising
and fire warm beaming
moving through us all
drawing out our colors
our presence (presents)
our arms wide embracing*

Phil Herring, MSW
Lincoln, NE.

I have this fantasy that we could use this newsletter to let our creative inner children out to play. I envision others of you sending me poems, opening your creative boxes and letting some of the "insides" trickle out onto these pages. My thought was if I shared a poem or two about my spiritual journey, some of you might do the same. But, I must admit, for a research professor, this does feel a little edgy. What follows is a poem I wrote over eight years ago, as I was just beginning to enter a new segment of my spiritual path. For the first time, I was seriously exploring feminist spirituality and rediscovering mystical experiences of my youth.

*ruled
by the gods
of reason
for too many
years
i am beginning
to listen to
other voices
which beckon*

*dream talk
and dance like
flights of the soul*

*visions and voices
that speak to
issues
i have heretofore
only considered
with half my being*

*i have been
too good a daughter
to leave
the halls of logic
the walls
built first by ancestors
and then as eagerly
by myself*

*now a new queen
stands outside
the barricades*

*and offers to
share
her power*

*a presence
i can no longer
will away*

*Lady
wrapped in light
throwing stars
for me to follow
through uncharted lands*

*enveloping me
in whisper soft embrace*

*when i look down
in terror mid-flight
still not trusting
the wings that carry me*

I guess you might say I'm beginning to trust those wings. I kept that box I made in the summer conference retreat session. And, Michael, I'm leaving the top open more often these days.

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If We Nurtured the Soul of Social Work...

(Remarks for Opening Panel at the 3rd National Conference)

Michael J. Sheridan, Ph.D.

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our students would feel stimulated and supported, instead of stressed-out, pushed-through, used, and abused.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our faculty members would act like colleagues and friends, instead of like competitors and adversaries.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our administrators would spend their time being creative leaders, instead of finding themselves being harried arbitrators of warring factions.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our educational programs would be more committed to creative and transformative learning, instead of to being in the top 20 list of U.S. News and World Report.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our scholarship would focus on pressing human needs, instead of counts of faculty productivity and debates about competing paradigms.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our agencies and organizations would be concerned with improving the human condition and eradicating oppression, instead of maintaining the status quo and defending their "turf".

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our practitioners would rejoice in the life paths they've taken, instead of becoming burnt-out cynical and marking time until retirement.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our clients would experience themselves as respected partners in the journey, instead of faceless, nameless "others" on some census of agency effort.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our society would benefit from our passion and commitment to social justice, instead of suffering from our actions as hand-servants of harmful, outdated policies or as misguided meddlers in human affairs.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

our earth would know us as dedicated, stewards of her wonders, instead of just another group of indifferent consumers of her bounty and spoilers of her beauty.

If we nurtured the soul of social work,

the spiritual would be recognized as an essential part of what we're about and would be reflected in all that we do—and the mystery would smile and be glad.

Reflections on a First Vipassana Retreat: A Jew Finds the Buddha while Walking with Jesus

Deborah Lisansky Beck, LICSW Wheelock College, Boston, MA

I have been a social worker for almost 30 years. During my career I have worked in a variety of clinical settings and have also taught at the Masters and Baccalaureate levels. Only in the past 5 years have I developed a sense of spirituality that has influenced my practice and my teaching in an overt and dynamic fashion. Prior to this time, my stance towards spirituality in the context of my work was neutral, at best. Now, I find that I am much more open to this vital dimension of human nature and to its powerful role in the processes of maturation and healing. This shift in my attitude is attributable to my adoption of mindfulness meditation as a vehicle for stress reduction for clients and students and my integration of this practice into my daily life. Not surprisingly, the incorporation of mindfulness into my personal and professional functioning has had a developmental course of its own, starting with a sense of self-consciousness and formality and becoming an increasingly comforting, internalized, syntonic presence. The following anecdote, written after my first 9 day silent retreat at the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA, reflects one moment in this ongoing process.

Prior to becoming a vipassana retreat center, the facility that is now IMS was apparently a monastery for Catholic monks. The only remnant of this former identity that I came upon was in the ante-room to the meditation hall, a place that provided a transitional space to the hall itself. When walking through, people naturally seemed to slow down their pace and their body movements in anticipation of the sitting that was to follow. In contrast to the darkened, cavernous hall, the ante-chamber was bright and airy, its two side walls lined with large paned windows and well nurtured plants.

In addition to its function as a passageway into and out of the meditation hall, this room was a popular location for walking meditation. During any walking period, there were always 6 - 8 people slowly crossing back and forth along the width of the room in the same direction as the floor boards, which seemed to provide a visual guide for their movement.

Although I often walked outside, at least twice a day I was drawn to this spot. Its smallness seemed to offer a sense of structure, containment, and holding that I needed at times. The closeness of the other people, walking parallel to one another in this small

area, also seemed to provide a sense of connection and closeness that balanced the experience I was having of being with myself and on my own.

After about three days, I realized that I often gravitated to the same part of the room if it was vacant. This was a lane that crossed between the two windows closest to the meditation hall. Although at first I had no conscious awareness of anything pulling me to this spot, I soon realized that the windows themselves were exerting a strong force. Unlike the others in the room, these were stained glass windows which contained two religious scenes. One was of Jesus sitting on a rock looking upward, perhaps to God; and the other was of Jesus at a table, next to another person who was seated with his head on Jesus' shoulder. The colors of the glass-blues, golds, reds, and purples that changed constantly as the sun shifted throughout the day stood in contrast to the white walls and other windows made of clear glass.

There was something about these scenes that connected with me as I walked back and forth. As a Jewish woman who had very little knowledge of New Testament iconography, I had no idea of the nature of the specific stories being presented; but there was a flow of energy coming from them that frequently moved me to tears and that elicited feelings of warmth, tenderness, and compassion. Particularly during moments when I was experiencing mind and body storms of one sort or another, walking there would help me regain a sense of centeredness and calm. Rather than feeling that they were the unknown images of a religion that was foreign to me, they felt familiar and safe and as meaningful as did the stained glass windows in my own synagogue at home.

What I also noticed as the week went on was the dissolution of an awkward sense of tension and friction that I had been feeling for some time. A relative newcomer to meditation, I had spent the first 3 years of my practice pushing away any idea that seemed to suggest that I adopt a new spiritual tradition or way of thinking. I initially wanted to learn how to meditate as part of an expanded repertoire of self care but I had not wanted to change my basic belief system in any significant way. During this retreat, that aversion and the struggle and fear accompanying it seemed to melt as I found myself feeling

open, curious, and able to embrace Buddhist teachings for the first time.

At the end of the retreat, when talking was resumed, a rabbi shared that this was her third nine day retreat and that she had found her meditation practice and her study of Buddhism to provide an ongoing affirmation for her of the Torah and of her Judaism. As I wept at her words, I knew why the windows had meant so much to me. Their deep spiritual roots transcended any specific identity, tradition, and way of life and their openness and timelessness had touched me on a level that I knew would remain long after the conclusion of this first meditation retreat. Although there is no simple or logical link between this experience and my practice as a social worker today, I know, without a doubt, that the connection is there.

Call For Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Two hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk with files saved in WordPerfect 5.1 or 6.1 should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

Spirituality in the Context of Strengths Assessment

Carolyn Tice, Ph.D. Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

Assessment based on a strengths model of social work practice, uses engagement, continuous collaboration, advocacy and supportive disengagement to generate a holistic profile of an individual from a strengths perspective (Saleebey, 1992; Tice and Perkins, 1996). Unlike Perlman's (1957) casework model, Schwartz and Zalba's (1971) interactional approach, Pincus and Minahan's (1973) problem-solving method and the life model of German and Gitterman (1980), the strengths model considers strength assessment as a preeminent component of the helping process.

Initiating a strengths assessment requires social workers to actively engage in a relationship that positions the client as expert of his or her life situation. As a result of the emphasis on strengths and resources, rather than symptomatology and problems, the pressing question is not what kind of life one had but rather what kind of life one wants. It is often at this juncture that spirituality emerges as a life force.

Spirituality and Strengths Assessment

Life strengths and supports are not fixed, nor can they be evaluated once and then used as an ongoing standard. Life strengths shift and sway as part of an overall picture. In the context of strengths assessment, spirituality often emerges as an anchor that helps to maintain a person's sense of balance in the wake of change, difficulty, and doubt. Spirituality connects people to a religious environment and the secular society through a system of beliefs and values. Understanding how spirituality is experienced and practiced can lead to holistic assessments and interventions that build upon the unique characteristics of a person.

A challenge for social workers is to open up the spiritual aspects of peoples' lives that remain, far too often, closed off from family, friends and professionals in human services. Once these aspects are open, another challenge for social workers is to understand spirituality in the context of the individual's overall psychosocial profile, and to consider spirituality as a possible vehicle to facilitate growth and change in the individual.

How do we attend to spirituality in the assessment process? How do we identify and use spirituality in a practical way? Social workers do this by asking questions that provide definition to thematic life strengths and values that constitute a person's sense of self in the world. A holistic understanding is

critical to designing interventions that include activities and services, informal and formal, emotional and behavioral, to maximize potential, along with meeting functional needs.

Assessing Spirituality

Social workers need to design questions to help people begin to consider, quite specifically, about issues of spirituality that may be taken for granted or have never been clarified. This form of self-reflection is central to the strengths assessment. Discussing these issues can help to establish a relationship between people that promotes mutuality and a frame work of understanding. Examples of questions that illicit comments on spirituality during a strengths assessment set forth by Tice and Perkins (1996) and Kevnick (1993) are:

When you think about your life, what gives you hope?

What is it in your life that provides you with a sense of security?

Where do you gain your confidence?

What are some of the most meaningful aspects of your life thus far?

What part of your life is most important that you stay in charge of?

What is your religious affiliation?

What aspects of religion are most important to you?

How do you demonstrate your religious beliefs?

Is religion something you practice in private?

Is religious group activity important to you?

When faced with life's difficulties, what gives you comfort?

The questions are considered tools to explore with people who they are, what is important to them, and how spirituality interfaces with aspects of their past, present, and

future. More important than the answers to a particular question, are the personal strengths that emerge. Building on strengths helps to minimize environmental deficits and personal weaknesses. Recognizing an individual's strengths also helps develop new ones.

Conclusion

Interest in the spirituality of people has not been a prevailing force in social work practice. Rather, attention to problems, deficits, and weaknesses has often eclipsed people's unique strengths and core features, including spirituality. Assessment based on a strengths model of social work practice highlights spirituality as an aspect of life that can be strong and resilient enough to withstand life's challenges. Understanding the dynamics of spirituality from a strengths perspective is necessary to maximize the resources that constitute the vitality of human spirit.

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1998 National Conference To Be Held In St. Louis

The 1998 national conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work will be held in St. Louis, Missouri from June 27, 1998 to June 30, 1998. The conference will be hosted by St. Louis University School of Social Service. This year's conference theme will be Spirituality and Hu-

man Diversity: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Work. Once again the overall cost of the conference will be kept at very affordable rates. Low cost housing and meals will be available on campus. Conference flyers should be available in the early spring.

Spirituality: Another Tool in Social Work

W.L. Dietrich Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT

Dr. Irene Brower's recent death touched many of her students and colleagues at Southern Connecticut State University. She was a favorite writer and instructor of 'spiritually-sensitive social work' in a world of traditional social work education (see Brower, 1984). Dr. Brower taught that there is a spiritual component, a soul, to human suffering. Understanding the fourth realm of clients in this modern, biopsychosocial world, gives a social worker another tool to empower clients.

As a social worker practicing in the late 1990's, I expect to deal with the social and mental health problems found in an age of suffering due to nuclear weapons, AIDS, poverty, homelessness, holes in the ozone, ecological pollution, family and gang violence, addiction to chemicals and love, anomie, anxiety, and dissipation (Cowley, 1993, p.533). These are the post-modern maladies of psychopathology; psychopathology in the original Greek meaning—"pathology of the psyche or suffering of the soul" (Levin, 1987, p.2).

Suffering has found its explanation in many guises through different times, places, systems, cultures, and religions. In the larger sustaining culture of the United States, capitalism and Judeo-Christianity define appropriate boundaries and levels of adaptation, integration, and degrees of congruence and incongruence individuals, families, and communities have with the suprasystem. Those people within the United States suprasystem that do not fit or attain the ideals of the dominant mythology/ideology, suffer maladaptive behaviors, anxieties, dissipation, neuroses, and psychopathologies.

The Judeo-Christian ideology within the U.S. suprasystem, dictates that individuals, families, and communities choose good over evil (see Isaiah, 7:15-7:16, American Standard Bible). The mythology promoted by the dominant capitalist system is to achieve what is good—individualism (Erikson, 1950, p.295), meritocracy (Smith, 1986, p.96) and hard work (Weber, 1958, p. 133), private property (Marx, 1978, p.207), and competition (Marx, 1978, p.474). To participate in, believe, and support these myths allows individuals, families, and communities to avoid suffering, even if they do not obtain success. Minority groups and "other groups that must negotiate in a hostile environment" such as immigrants, and poor and working class white individuals, families, and communities which cannot maintain these cultural and economic myths as part of the integrative

and pattern maintenance functions, suffer greatly (Chestang, 1972, p.50).

Facilitating adaptive functions to this sustaining suprasystem, while understanding and respecting "the client's immediate family and community system" is a large part of the social worker's occupation (Norton, 1978, p.3). Social work practice also includes understanding and dealing with the post-modern maladies of psychopathology. To develop the abilities to work in this human reality, the Department of Social Work at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) emphasizes two frameworks; the ecological perspective and the biopsychosocial model.

What the literature and publications of many schools of social work, including the Master of Social Work Program at Southern Connecticut State University omits is psychopathology in its original, Greek meaning; the suffering of the soul. The suffering soul is social work. The soul of social work is the prime motivating energy for all the work [social workers] do with self, others, and the social context...social work is spirituality (Cowley, 1996, p. 1). This omission raises interesting questions about the meaning and place of spirituality in a secular curriculum.

Human beings understand the "meaning of suffering through spirituality" (Ita, 1996, p.6). Whether "an individual begins to see the meaning of suffering" as an individual (Kubler-Ross, 1975, p. 119); or "in the experience of sharing one's own suffering with the suffering of all" (Fromm, 1989, p.260), spirituality is the key to this understanding. This is the aspect of the individual in his or her social environment that deserves a meaningful examination within the social work curriculum at all schools—spirituality.

To better understand the role of spirituality in social work education at my school, I conducted a needs assessment of the community of faculty in the Department of Social Work. Specifically, I administered a survey to determine if there was a need for a course on spirituality in the department.

The survey results indicate that there is a perceived need within the Department of Social Work for a course that focuses on the relationship between spirituality and social work practice by a margin of five to two. The results from the survey for the mode of teaching or design for the class suggest that there is an even split between a team approach with several instructors or having a spiritual component integrated into each course- For the final and most provocative

area examined, there was a close split of four to three agreeing that a spiritual component in social work practice has a better chance of empowering a client.

The larger issue of the low response rate from the target population (n9) could relate to many issues, problems, or barriers: lack of knowledge about spirituality and its relationship to social work practice; no perceived need to include spirituality in the social work curriculum; overwhelming structural and functional barriers to introducing a new course[s] into the core requirements or electives of the curriculum; lack of willingness to include a spiritual component into each course; and perceived conflicts by faculty members with: social work's mission, NASW code of ethics, the constitutional principle of separation of church and state, or personal beliefs of faculty members.

It is this writer's position that the low response rate is due to a lack of knowledge of the importance of spirituality and its relationship to social work practice and the structural and functional barriers to introducing a new course into the requirements or as an elective. These types of changes or transformations would require "consciousness-raising and structural and functional alterations" within the community (Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia, 1995, p.259). According to Marti-Costa and Serrano-Garcia these are radical or second order changes.

A faculty member gave this definition for the difference between spirituality and religion on the survey; "Religion is for people who are afraid of going to hell. Spirituality is for people who have been there." A large part of social work is learning to empower individuals, families, and communities "who have been there."

I believe social workers must move beyond the economic, biological, psychological, and social realms to truly understand and empower an individual, family, or community that has and is suffering. To do this, they must understand the relationship and functioning of individuals, families, and communities in the fourth realm, spirituality.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV has included Appendix I, to show how different cultural maladies in the suprasystem of the United States are associated with spiritual disease (DSM IV, 1994, p.843). The majority of practitioners in the American Academy of Family Physicians also recognize the importance of

(continued on page 7)

Spirituality: Another Tool in Social Work

(continued from page 6)

the spiritual aspect in their medical practice (Yankelovich Partners, Inc., 1996, p.31). Are social workers, again going to be followers of ideas, theories, or practice models of other professions as we have for the past fifty years?

This does not mean that social workers have to be experts, exert their personal beliefs, or believe what our clients believe. It means that social workers have to know how and where in the community to refer someone for help and how the client's belief system affects their suffering.

Social workers should know the difference between a Seder and a Wake, Masamba Esaie and Hong Xiuquan, the Upanisads and the Lotus Sutra, and an Iman and a Yogi. These are cultural differences social workers face in our changing America—a Jewish feast and an Anglican feast, a leader of a Christian sect from Africa and a leader of a Christian sect from China, Hindu texts and a Buddhist text, and a Muslim teacher and a Hindu teacher. If we do not understand these differences, we will not be able to fully help a person in their social environment.

Spirituality, as Dr. Brower taught, should be viewed as a cultural and personal strength that a social worker can use to help understand and empower an individual, family, or community system. This is not a return to social work's beginnings of viewing clients as "pawns in a divinely destined universe... an opportunity for men to do good—to serve society and their Creator" (Trattner, 1994, p. 17). It is a chance to meet the client where they are in their diverse realities. Social workers need an education not only in empowering individuals, families, and communities in the biological, psychological, social, and economic systems, but also in the spiritual system.

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Society Meetings Scheduled For C.S.W.E. A.P.M.

The Society will again be sponsoring two meetings at the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting to be held in Orlando, Florida, March 5, 1998 - March 8, 1998. There will be a half day workshop on Thursday, March 5, 1998, entitled: Spirituality and Social Work: New Developments in Practice and Education. And, there will be a research exchange meeting on Friday, March 6, 1998. These Society programs are free and open to all members, regardless of whether they are attending the C.S.W.E. meeting.

Research Update

Dona J. Reese, Ph.D., M.S.W.

It is quite exciting to watch a number of new researchers rise through the ranks and develop research agendas in the area of spirituality in social work. Some information that has been sent to me about new projects by new and experienced researchers, is the following:

Diana Batten, Assistant Professor of Social Work at the Richard Stockton State College of New Jersey, has completed her dissertation on "Conceptualizing the Elements of Spiritual Care Provided to Hospice Patients and Families", in which she documents practice approaches to addressing spirituality.

Virginia Burgess, of Walden University, has also completed her dissertation, "Spiritual Social Work Intervention: An Integrated Study of a Women's Spiritual Counseling Group." This is one of the few studies which evaluates intervention addressing spirituality.

Janice Staral, Assistant Professor at Marquette University, has completed her dissertation, "Signs of Hope and Struggle: Action Research in a Racially-Mixed Central City Church." "Action research" was used to examine 1) the methods a central city church used to survive and relate to the people in the community, 2) the life of the peer ministers and the social ills faced in their community, and 3) how social work can be used in a church context to help meet the needs of central city people.

John Graham, Assistant Professor at Lakehead University in Ontario, Canada, has a continuing program of research on spirituality which has focused on diverse international spiritual traditions and their role in mental health treatment. For example, he has conducted a study of a therapeutic community for drug addicts in a Muslim context, and the integration of modern and traditional mental health care systems in the treatment of a Bedouin patient.

Ednita Wright, of Syracuse University School of Social Work, is studying spirituality in African American women living with AIDS.

Finally, **Lee Furman** of the University of North Dakota Department of Social Work is conducting a national survey of NASW members regarding spirituality in social work practice.

Note: Please send requests for information from the Spirituality and Social Work Research Database, and summaries of your own research to Dona Reese, University of North Dakota Department of Social Work, P.O. Box 7135, Grand Forks, ND 58202-7135.

Email: dona_reese@mail.und.nodak.edu

Chapter News

Denver, Colorado

Two first year Master's students from the University of Denver attended the Third National Conference of the Society at the College of St. Catherine's this summer. These students were encouraged by the National Society to organize a chapter, and began by networking with fellow students. Three to five students met throughout the summer to think, share, plan and network around chapter activities based at D.U. A summer field trip provided further inspiration as well as introduction to Lakota culture and ritual. The students were introduced to efforts to bring back coming-of-age rituals.

Networking with community professionals, D.U. faculty, staff, other student organizations and incoming first year students resulted in the expressed interest of over thirty people in forming a Chapter in the Denver area. The Chapter scheduled its first meeting for September and agreed to meet monthly thereafter. Additionally, the chapter will host various smaller group activities.

(For information call Becky Niemeyer at (303) 830-8045).

Omaha, Nebraska

After a summer hiatus, the Omaha Area Chapter of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work returned to monthly meetings August 29, with a presentation by Flosie Shelso, L.C.S.W., "From Aging to Saging: A New Model for Aging". Flosie shared with the group concepts of Spiritual Eldering and provided them with guidance in mapping and visualizing their own aging process.

September 19, the topic was, "Christian Spirituality" with spiritual director Diane Schuette, M.A., L.C.S.W. Diane provided clinical wisdom in diagnosing a client who is experiencing the 'dark night of the soul', and one who needs to be treated for depression.

Just in time for Halloween, Mary Catherine Burgess, M.A., M.H.R., presented, "The Shamanic Journey: Core Shamanism and Healing" October 31. In addition to being introduced to the basic elements of core shamanism, participants were invited to experience the classic shamanic journey process.

On Friday, December 5, Susan Ascoli, C.M.S.W., L.M.H.P., director of Wellspring, will present, "Bringing Spirituality Into the

Lives of the Lost". This workshop will describe a four week spirituality group for women who are in the process of leaving prostitution. The meeting will be at 3 pm at the University of Nebraska at Omaha's Student Center Gallery Room. The presentation will include videotaped excerpts from the group as well as samples of art work created by the women. Participants will be given the opportunity to share their own journey through an art-as-meditation experience.

(For additional information on future chapter meetings, contact Laura Adams at (402) 553-4361).

Portland, Oregon

As many Society members know, the Oregon Chapter of SSSW is going through many changes. Connie Kvarfordt, the Chapter's mover and shaker, has gone to Richmond, VA to start her Ph.D. program. The Chapter members will miss her energy, imagination, commitment, and consistency. Luckily, there are others to help fill her shoes. Katrina Gould will continue to provide support and, on occasion, a meeting place for the Chapter. Carol Maker, a social worker who has attended a national conference of SSSW, moved to Oregon in July from Delaware. Carol has a lot of energy and ideas for the Chapter which will point it in new and interesting directions.

Carol is in the midst of doing a telephone survey of all the people on the Oregon chapter's mailing list. Her idea is to discover what professionals and students want from the Chapter to see how it can better serve the needs of the folks in the area. The group also decided to meet less frequently (previously the chapter met once a month). In October the Chapter held a potluck meeting to discuss the results of the survey to better chart the course of the coming year.

(For date, time and place of future meetings of the Chapter, call Katrina Gould at (360) 233-8848).

Salt Lake City, UT

David Derezotes, Ph.D., LCSW, presented "Gender, Sexuality and Spirituality" for the November 11 Chapter meeting. The group explored the relationship between gender, sexuality and it's importance in clinical work. Karen Nielsen and David Anson provided cause for celebration by

announcing their engagement. Congratulations to the couple!

"Rituals of Healing Through Life's Transitions," by Sherry Griffith will be presented December 9. She will underline the importance of creating ritual through the use of metaphor and symbol in order to affect healing, to mark transitions in life, and to honor humanities's deep connectedness to all of life.

Vaughn Lovejoy, BA, will discuss, "Healing through the use of Meditation" on January 13. Vaughn will lead the group in both a sitting and walking meditation, and will describe the Five Mindfulness Training Precepts of Non-Violent Living.

The Salt Lake City Chapter gathers at the Graduate School of Social Work, Room # 328, at the University of Utah on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm.

(For more information, contact Karen Nielsen, (801) 539-1483).

Philadelphia, PA

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work's Philadelphia Chapter hosted Dr. Louise Shoemaker's presentation, "Spirituality, Identity Development and Social Work" on November 12.

The New Year brings Dr. Robin Russel, Director of the National Society, to Philadelphia to present, "Spirituality and Healing", on January 29. This workshop will help participants gain an understanding of energy healing through experiential exercises and general information.

(For further information regarding upcoming Chapter meetings, call Rivka Ausubel Danzig at (215) 573-7940.)

Washington, DC

October 2, the Washington, DC area Chapter hosted a discussion on the function of forgiveness in healing, delineating the conceptual differences of forgiveness in various religious traditions. Frederick DiBlasio's research on forgiveness was also reviewed.

Topics for Chapter meetings in November and December included energy healing and psychodrama on holidays past, present, and future.

Meetings are held at Catholic University of America, usually on the first Thursday of each month, during the academic year.

(For further information, please call Linda Haake (703) 750-0022.)

Nurturing the Soul of Social Work

(continued from page 1)

and religion. This spring I sent a survey to our nearly 100 students. The first question I asked was how important their religious tradition was to them and how it gave them meaning and connectedness. Following are some of the responses.

It's a way of life. I wake, work, play, and sleep with the knowledge of God's presence in my life.

Christ is very important to me. He is what I live for. Without Him Life would be bleak and uncertain. With Him I feel connected to Brothers and Sisters in Christ. The meaning I gain from Christianity is the knowledge that I have eternal life and nothing is without purpose or promise.

The complexity and simplicity of religious conceptualizations mirror my cognitive and intuitive conceptualizations of God and the nature of our universe. I like the fact that Hinduism is both a practice and a belief system. I like the fact that Vedas, religious texts, are extremely old and plentiful. The practice of transcendental meditation, twice daily, gives me direct knowledge. Hinduism and the I also have fellowship with other meditators.

My faith experiences is the core of my personal existence, it guides everything I am involved with. A Born-Again experience, as well as personal faith in Jesus Christ and the Bible (Word of God) has given my life meaning and purpose.

Christianity is very important to me because it is based upon Old and New Testament Scriptures, which form the basis of my personal belief system along with an ongoing Walk/Relationship with God. It is God and my faith that sustains me. I receive forgiveness and hope. His strength and guidance. It is my belief and faith that a loving, caring and wise God is ever present. Even when life doesn't seem to make sense, I know it does! There is meaning and purpose that cannot be seen or understood by human minds, eyes and hearts. "For now I see through a glass darkly."

My religious/spiritual faith is extremely important to me. Although I feel very connected to Presbyterian traditions, I lean toward ecumenicism. I believe that our entire life course is a search for meaning and connectedness to our creator, and thus everything I do is somehow related to that search. God is a constant presence in my life.

The second question I asked was if they have ever felt that the social work profession or social workers have discriminated against them or expressed prejudice towards them

because of their religious affiliation. If so, I asked them to give an example. Sixty-seven percent of the persons responded to this question. (12/18) said they had experienced prejudice or discrimination because of their religious affiliation. Here are some of the responses.

They act like you are a fanatic if your religion permeates your life.

In a board meeting I heard someone talking about 'those born-again' folks in a derogatory manner. There have been times that born-again are accused of extreme behaviors and portrayed as lunatics, when in fact, the person may have had difficulty without born-again affiliation.

I am very careful who I tell about my T.M. affiliation because of the general public attitude about spiritual practices and the general misunderstanding and bias against non-American spiritual systems.

A vivid memory occurred in under graduate when a professor jumped on me in the classroom for including Scripture in a paper. A peer was ridiculed in the classroom for her faith by another instructor.

There seems to be a subtle belief that Christian values are somehow different than those of others and should never be expressed.

A professor asked if anyone in the class considered themselves "religious." When I raised my hand to affirm I was, he began to belittle me and my faith in front of the class. He stated the Bible was simply a bunch of stories no one could prove, etc., and finally gave up when he realized I wasn't going to waiver. I have had social workers tell me religion has no place in the profession because of its views on things such as abortion and homosexuality.

I believe that the profession as a whole is paranoid about overt religious faith, viewing it as something of a weakness rather than a strength. The paranoia seems to stem from an ignorant belief that all Christians are fundamentalists. On an individual level, I have known a number of religious social workers, so I don't quite understand the contradiction. As a preacher's kid, I have lived with religious paranoia and stigmatism all my life. The older I get, the less it bothers me.

We nurture the soul of social work when we nurture the souls of individual social workers. This will involve providing an environment which encourages people to explore the spiritual dimension of life including those who choose to connect with a religious tradition. To be sure, embracing religion and

spirituality raises a set of difficult issues. Some are concerned that including religion and spirituality is a slippery slope, as Clark (Amato-von Hemert & Clark, 1994) warned in a point/counterpoint article on religion in the *Journal of Social Work Education* a few years ago. The way to avoid a slippery slope, it seems to me, is to build steps and handrails.

Secondly, we nurture the soul of social work when we nurture the soul of the profession as an organization. This, it seems to me, may be the greater challenge. I find students and clients far more eager to explore spiritual issues whereas many of our colleagues seem to be threatened by the topics. This will involve convincing our colleagues that biopsychosocial model is inadequate. Spirituality and religion need to be included in the equation.

Furthermore, our challenge is to help the profession adopt and implement a more inclusive definition of diversity. I am concerned about the stories of prejudice and discrimination I hear from students when it comes to religion. Without a firm commitment to a broader approach to diversity within the profession, gatekeeping is little more than tool of inappropriate discrimination and zeal for justice is little more than justification for oppression. To be spiritually alive as a profession, we must find ways to acknowledge that we are different but connected. Sometimes our differences are complimentary and sometimes they create tension. This is a fundamental principle of life. But let us remember that tension can either lead us to destroy, as we saw take place at Tiananmen Square, or greater connectedness, as occurred when the Berlin Wall was taken down.

The most significant challenge the profession faces is the same challenge our world faces—how can we find meaning and connectedness in the midst of diversity. This is no small challenge but a worthy one.

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SOCIAL THOUGHT

Journal of Religion in the Social Services

CALL FOR PAPERS

The journal **Social Thought** is now reintroduced as **Social Thought: Journal of Religion in the Social Services**. Elizabeth Smith, DSW, Associate Professor in the National Catholic School of Social Service, will serve as Editor of the journal, now published by The Haworth Pastoral Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.

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- The role of religion in the development and implementation of social services. We are especially interested in manuscripts that explore the topic from various religious and denominational perspectives (e.g. Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Muslim, etc.)
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- Other ideas welcome!

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Call For Papers

Spirituality Symposium CSWE Annual Program Meeting, 1999

Proposals are needed for our effort to establish a Spirituality Symposium for the 1999 Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting. To establish a symposium, we need to have at least 10 proposals submitted and 5 accepted. The more proposals submitted, the more chance we have of getting 5 accepted. Most symposia that make it usually have 30 to 40 abstracts submitted. If we establish a Spirituality Symposium, we have helped to establish spirituality as an official and more permanent area of concern for the social work profession. After establishing a symposium, papers submitted to it are reviewed by symposium members, which may increase the chance of acceptance.

To help with this effort, please submit a proposal for a presentation on spirituality and social work when the preliminary APM program comes out around Thanksgiving, 1997. Practitioners, students, or faculty may present at the APM. The Preliminary Program will have a "Call for Papers" for the 1999 APM. On the form provided in the program, indicate that your paper is a "Paper for Symposia", and write "Spirituality Symposium" in the blank. Send the APM proposal materials to the address listed on the form, as usual. The deadline for submitting abstracts is expected to be April 1, 1998.

If you submit a paper for the Spirituality Symposium but we fail to achieve symposium status, your paper will still be considered for the general APM. Primary authors may submit only one proposal. If you

are primary author on the paper for the Spirituality Symposium, you may not be primary author on another paper. But, you can be second author on another paper.

All authors must be current members of CSWE (this membership requirement is waived for practitioners who are not faculty, administrators, or full-time students of a social work program). If you are submitting a proposal for a research presentation, you must indicate what the results are, rather than saying "findings will be discussed." Please pay strict attention to the other APM criteria for proposals; proposals not complying with CSWE guidelines are rejected.

Help us establish a spirituality symposium!! Submit an abstract for the 1999 APM!!

For further information, or for a copy of the APM proposal application, contact:

Dona J. Reese, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Department of Social Work
University of North Dakota
P.O. Box 7135
Grand Forks, ND 58202-7135
(701) 777-4939
email: dona_reese@mail.und.nodak.edu

• • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • •

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year.

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ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS



Dear Professor Cosmos:

I don't know how you feel about receiving personal letters, but I wanted to send you this one. The truth is, I really dig guys in robes, and I was wondering whether you would consider going out with me.

Devoted Admirer

Dear Devoted:

I fully understand how you might have easily gotten swept away with passion, many do.

But, I must add that I want to be admired for my spiritual luminescence, not just for how brutally masculine a figure I might present. I am, however, sending you a free, full-sized color photo wall poster of me philosophizing at the lectern at graduation.

P.C.

Dear P.C.:

I would have thought with all the great powers that you have, that you would have been able to correct your balding problem. Haven't you paid attention to all those commercials about how to get hair to grow back on your head? I felt I owed it to my own clients to improve my appearance. Get with it, Cos!

Concerned

Dear Concerned:

I am afraid you are another victim of one of the great social problems of our era, that being the issue of "baldism." First of all, we all know that many of the prominent people of history, past, present, and future, were themselves scalp-dominant. To name a few, there was Mahatma Gandhi, Michael Jordan, and Commander Picard. Few people stop to think that balding happens when the roots of the hair are killed by the expansion of a great mind under the scalp! Scientific studies have shown repeatedly that women are driven quite mad over men who are scalp dominant, but does anyone pay attention to that? Why else would our national bird be the bald eagle? I hope you can hear the bald truth!

P.C.

Dear Professor Cosmos:

I am a social work student doing a research paper on "the scientific basis of spiritual interventions." I wonder whether you have conducted research on your own methods. In fact, what exactly are your own methods, anyway?

Student

Dear Student:

I am glad you are trying to find the connection between science and spirit. However, as Einstein said, not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted. It turns out that some of my own methods neither count nor can be counted, but Albert didn't say much about that.

Cos



University of
Nebraska at
Omaha

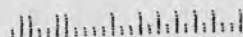
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Edward Canda
University of Kansas, School of Social
Welfare
Lawrence, KS 66045



**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
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Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

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ABIDE WITH THEE: Spiritual Assets in Sexual Assault Counseling

*William E. Powell, Ph.D., CICSW, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Department of Social Work, Whitewater, WI*

Linking spirituality to sexual assault counseling may seem a tenuous association, but having worked with hundreds of people immediately after they had been assaulted, my conviction is that social workers' knowledge and appreciation of spiritual practices supports the healing process for victims. Before beginning my teaching career, I was a social worker at an inner city hospital in Milwaukee. My work included crisis counseling in the hospital's Sexual Assault Treatment Center.

Though assaults are all different, there are commonalities as well as distinctions. Most victims of assault are women, though I learned that all types and ages of people get assaulted. The people I worked with were assaulted at different points in their unfolding life narratives—though the assault itself was always traumatic and painful, it sometimes occurred at particularly difficult times in their lives. The meanings and timing made coping especially difficult for some people.

Assaults are not experienced by the victims in the same ways; life circumstances and variations in the assailant's viciousness compound the injury. An example of the latter are those victims who had their hair chopped off or who had been mutilated, people who had been assaulted on more than one occasion, or

people whose relationship with a family member or friend had been betrayed.

One experience that many victims had in common was the moment they realized that they had no ability to stop what was happening and that no one, including God, could or would come to their rescue. Such realizations evoke emotions of fear, a sense of isolation, anger, and hurt that cannot be readily reduced to words. People's sense of connectedness with others is challenged during the assault and in the aftermath. Many victims described feelings of being terribly alone and vulnerable and worried about the reactions of others.

As a social worker, my responsibilities were to counsel, contact others as needed, arrange follow up visits, etc. My time with clients usually ranged from two to three hours. As a male, I always

factored in my gender to either make it an asset or at least secondary to my efforts to provide needed care. As a human being and a social worker I also had to be present (in the fullest sense of the term) with the victim. Gently and nonthreateningly, we often began the healing process in silence. Often, it is in silence that one can best begin to be fully present with another person.

Many of the stories, feelings of fear and rage, and the essential humanity of the victims remain with me after all these years: the struggling single working mother who was assaulted by someone who bragged that he'd been stalking her for weeks so that he knew the exact points in her day that she was vulnerable; the young female hitchhiker assaulted by two businessmen who also cut off her

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Fourth National Conference To Be Held This Summer In St. Louis

The Fourth National Meeting of the Society will be held in St. Louis, on the St. Louis University campus, from June 27 to June 30. This year's conference theme is "Spirituality and Human Diversity: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Work". The conference will again include a rich variety of experiential workshops and individual and panel presentations.

This year's conference is being co-sponsored by the schools of social work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, St. Louis University, University of Kansas, University of North Dakota, University of Utah, Catholic University of America, College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas, Smith College, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Roberts Wesleyan College.

The closing address will be delivered by Dr. Rivka Ausebel Danzig, from the University of Pennsylvania. Her talk is titled "Linking Spirituality and Diversity: Towards a Fluid Fountain of Unity, Respect, and Pluralism".

Once again there will be dozens of presenters from all across the country. This year's workshop topics include: Alternative religions and clinical assessment; Spiritual care in hospice; A spiritual approach to ethics in social work; An introduction to psychosynthesis; Spirituality, burnout and the work place; Shamanic healing through song and movement; Social work and past life regression therapy; Circles of life; Self-care for social workers; Spiritually sensitive social work with gay and lesbian clients; Structured intensive journaling; Prophetic spirituality

for social work; Reclaiming creativity; Assessment and the spiritual dimension; Putting spirituality into play therapy; and, Sexuality and spirituality in social work practice.

Conference fees are extremely reasonable and students may attend at a very reduced rate. Low cost housing and meals will also be available on the St. Louis University campus. For further information contact:

Bonnie Sarton
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska 68182
(402)554-4915
FAX (402)554-2898
e-mail: swork@cwis.unomaha.edu

Abide With Thee

(continued from page 1)

long hair and drove her a hundred miles from home before leaving her naked along a busy interstate highway; the elderly woman who kept secret an assault by her husband's best friend more than fifty years before. There were so many emotions and issues to work through with victims—the sequelae of crimes that happened minutes before or years past. Each person had a life interrupted and a life to recover. The people I worked with did begin to recover physically and emotionally from assaults; many found new strengths as a result, but all remembered and wove the assault into the meaning and narrative of their lives.

Working with victims of assault required dealing with raw emotions and the personal meanings of the assault, as well as helping them deal with its effects on their lives and their relationships. It also required knowledge of crisis counseling skills, the ability to productively work with people in crisis, a substantial knowledge of issues important to recovering from an assault, and knowledge of

human relating. In the literature on spirituality, there is an emphasis on the need for a sense of connectedness with others. Parker Palmer's (1998) observations about teaching seem apropos in that regard: connecting and reconnecting with caring people helps reduce fear and a sense of overwhelming aloneness. I found it helpful to gently assist victims to connect with family and friends who were caring, supportive, and compassionate. It helped to be truly present with, and support, them as they struggled to cope and to regain their connectedness to others.

I helped victims regain a sense of ownership of their lives, step by step, as they began to make decisions. We explored what the assault meant to their self concept, relationships, sense of safety and trust, and their emotions. Examining such meanings, or helping others to do so, is a major expression of spirituality. I also learned that, in working with assault victims, social workers listen with their eyes and ears and hearts to the painful accounts of assaults and interrupted lives. The effective counselor knows when to be silent, when to talk, how to connect, and how to help others

regain a sense of control and safety. They can start by listening with their whole being in the manner that the Quaker writer Douglas Steere termed "holy listening" (Brussat 1996). Truly and deeply caring about the person, being present in the painful silences, helping them feel safe, and encouraging them to put their story into words if and when they wish, and truly hearing it, is of great value to the person who has been assaulted.

Nothing can undo the crime itself, nor readily change the circumstances that lead people to commit such crimes. Accessing the spiritual can, however, help foster healing. It can bring out the best of one's humanity in service to another. These aspects of spirituality are, as my wife succinctly observed when I described the subject of this paper, simply parts of good social work practice. Good social work practice in the service of healing and caring is, at least in some measure, spiritual.

References

- Brussat, F. & Brussat, M. (1996). *Spiritual Literacy*. New York: Scribner.
- Palmer, P. (1998). *The Courage To Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The Practice Of Spiritual Care In Hospice

*Diana S. Batten, DSW, LCSW, Richard Stockton State College,
Pomona, New Jersey*

Hospice, which provides holistic health care to terminally ill patients and their families, presents a setting where "spiritual care" is integrated into professional practice. However, there is no agreement in hospice about what spiritual care is or who should render it. Lacking a consensual frame of reference, its implementation has been left largely to each hospice.

In order to describe and conceptualize spiritual care, in-depth interviews were conducted with 54 staff (social workers, physicians, nurses, aides, clergy) and volunteers in three diverse hospices: one serving clients who were primarily Roman Catholic; the second, Protestant; and the third, Jewish. The participants identified themselves as "spiritual care providers" and/or were formally identified as such by their agencies. They were willing and able to describe their spiritual care experiences in rich detail. The interviews produced clear descriptions, grounded in human terms and experiences, of spiritual care practices and a three-phase spiritual care process.

The practice of spiritual care involved multifaceted activities: non-verbal communication; verbal communication; creative therapies; specialized techniques; and intermediary role enactment. Through compassionate presence, active listening, and gentle touch, the care provider made connections with the client's spirit and discerned her pain. Through intense verbal dialogue, the worker discussed fears of dying and death, at times drawing from her own beliefs. The use of individual and corporate creative therapies such as ritual, music, prayer, and readings affirmed the client and provided comfort. Specialized techniques such as life review therapy, guided imagery, and therapeutic touch assisted the dying person in his spiritual work and rendered healing. Finally, in accompanying the patient on her spiritual journey, the care provider enacted intermediary roles as "an instrument of God", "a spiritual linkage" or "a mid-

wife" to allow the dying person to disconnect from this world and to connect to the "spiritual realm."

Analysis of these spiritual care practices, using Grey's (1996) psychospiritual care matrix, yielded a spiritual care process with a particular focus of activity in each of three identifiable phases of the spiritual care relationship. In the first two phases, spiritual care interacted with and complemented physical and psychosocial care. During the third phase when the patient was "actively dying", spirituality assumed dominance over other types of care as the provider accompanied the patient on her journey.

Interviews were also conducted with agency administrators in order to understand each organization's spiritual care program structure and culture. The organizational differences and practice commonalities which emerged from a cross-agency data analysis are equally compelling.

The organizations showed considerable variation in the level of diversity of their workers' and clients' religious, spiritual orientations. One agency was quite uniform (75% Roman Catholic), while the other two were much more diverse (40% Protestant and 49% Jewish). Each agency also evidenced a distinctive spiritual care culture and program structure. The identification of responsibility for spiritual care varied from full integration ("everyone does it") to strict compartmentalization within a separate department.

Despite these organizational differences, respondents in all three hospices emphasized the use, by their clients and themselves, of religion and/or spirituality as a powerful coping resource. A strong belief system sustained the patient/family in the face of death, and the worker as she experienced the repeated loss of relationships. Furthermore, it was the worker's ability to make affirmative use of her own spirituality in a non-impositional manner which facilitated the "spirit-to-spirit connection" so

necessary for effective spiritual care. The changing foci of activity which elucidated the spiritual care process also emerged consistently from the data. At the time of the patient's death, spirituality became ascendant in the minds and activities of all of the care providers.

In summary, the study described varied structures but a singular essence of spiritual care. The "spirit-to-spirit connection" between worker and client - the essence of spiritual care - encompassed and integrated all of the dimensions of the spiritual care relationship.

Grey, R. (1996). The psychospiritual care matrix: A new paradigm for hospice caregiving. *The American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care*, 13(4), 19-25.

Call For Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Two hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk with files saved in WordPerfect 5.1 or 6.1 should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

CHAPTER UPDATES

Salt Lake City, Utah

The Salt Lake City chapter meets on the second Tuesday of each month at the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Utah. They have a pretty regular group of about 15 folks who show up for a variety of presenters on topics ranging from Yoga to Meditation, Enneagram to Feminist Spirituality, and sweat lodge ceremony to drumming circle. They offer CEUs through participation and charge a 15 dollar membership fee. There are about 80 members.

(For more information contact Karen Nielsen (801) 539-1483).

Philadelphia, PA

The University of Pennsylvania student chapter of the National Society for Spirituality and Social Work presented Mr. Joe Weldon, MS, who is a certified therapist in the Rubenfeld Synergy Method. Participants were introduced to this very dynamic system for the integration of body, mind, emotions and spirit and responded very enthusiastically.

Mr. Weldon did a live demonstration of his methodology. Bodymind exercises and hands on practice were shared by the group. Experientially overall the integration of bodywork and social work together was felt to be an eye opening experience, and a wonderful tool to be utilized in the social work practice.

(For more information contact Rivka Ausubel Danzig at (215) 573-7940).

Portland, Oregon

This has been a time of transition for this chapter. One of the co-founders, Connie Kvarfordt, left for Richmond, Virginia to being work on her Ph.D. in Social Work in August of 1997. Carol Maker, one of the members, conducted a telephone survey to find out how to make this chapter more pertinent to the needs of those who want to be a part of the group. At the October potluck dinner, the results of the survey were reviewed. It indicated a need for more focus and a working mission statement.

In an effort to strengthen the leadership and gain clarity and direction, Eddy Brame suggested the Rings of Empow-

erment Core group process developed by Barbara Marx Hubbard. "Each of us has within us a passion to create. When two or more who share a similar passion join and connect heart to heart, there is formed at the center of the circle, a nucleus which holds within it the genius of each member. This nucleus is greater than the sum of our parts. It holds us together with a magnetic force called resonance. The environment of resonance is love. In a field of love, inspired insights emerge." These words of Barbara Marx Hubbard describe what the core group has been doing in monthly meetings since November. The process consists of a closed group that meets for ten sessions. The content of the sessions are outlined in a manual.

The core group began with eight members and after four meetings, there now have six. Katrina Gould, co-founder with Connie, has other priorities that are taking her time and energy. The group felt sad to say good-bye to Katrina as one of our founding mothers; however, we are hopeful that the children are ready to grow up and make it on our own.

(For more information contact Eddy Brame at 503-682-4256).

Washington, DC

The local chapter has been enjoying lively discussions this spring on prayer in clinical practice and on issues of healing touch. Robin Russel, national president, spoke with members and guests in April on social work and spiritual healing. Spirituality and healing are being explored by the medical, nursing, pastoral counseling and energy work fields. Dr. Russel reminds us that social workers have a unique, integrative perspective that can bridge different disciplines. Social workers can help at micro and macro levels by educating themselves, doing research, and writing about social work and spiritual healing. The chapter will take a break this summer, to attend the national conference and to incubate ideas for next fall's activities.

(For information, please contact Linda Haake at (703) 750-0022).

Research Update

Dona J. Reese, Ph.D., M.S.W.

Several researchers attended the Society's Research Exchange at the APM in March. Topics discussed included areas for further research, funding resources, diversity in social work practice, and our campaign to establish a Spirituality Symposium.

We hope you submitted a proposal for the Spirituality Symposium. If you did not make the deadline this year, please plan to submit a proposal for the year 2000 APM. If we do not achieve the symposium status this year, we will try again next year. Even if we do achieve symposium status, we want to make a strong showing each year by submitting a number of proposals.

Exciting research on spirituality in social work is being conducted all the time now. John Robison at California State University at Long Beach has investigated how internalized images of God, parents, and self interact in the 12 Step program, among persons in substance abuse recovery. Results showed that those with child abuse histories had more difficulty developing positive God, parent, and self images. Robin Russel is conducting a survey of medical social workers and NASW members on specific practice techniques used to address spirituality in practice. Ednita Wright of Syracuse University is exploring spirituality in African American women living with AIDS. Janice Stal's dissertation, from Marquette University, combined a case study of a racially-mixed central city church with an examination of the practice of social work. Action research was used as the methodology and was implemented through conducting a social work training project directed at promoting personal and neighborhood empowerment. Last but not least, I have conducted a study of African American access to hospice, and found that many differences in spiritual beliefs have made hospice culturally irrelevant to many African Americans. Implications for practice and policy include a number of recommendations for spiritually sensitive practice and policy which accepts and respects African American belief systems rather than imposing the hospice philosophy.

We are looking forward now to our summer conference at St. Louis University in June. Look for our Research Mentoring Workshop - leading spirituality researchers will give pointers and answer questions from new researchers in the field.

Please don't forget to submit abstracts of your work to this column, in care of:

Dona J. Reese
University of North Dakota
Department of Social Work
PO Box 7135
Grand Forks, ND 58202
dona_reese@mail.und.nodak.edu

Holding Children

Janie Pfeifer Watson, LCSW, Grand Island, Nebraska

There was a vision the old medicine man saw. In this vision he saw workers and many children. It was nighttime and the workers were gathering the children. There were thousands of children, all colors, from all places. The head worker held the hands of two children on either side as they began the walk up the golden path. Behind the worker and these two children, lined up many children of all races, all sizes, with all types of sufferings. They began the walk up the golden path this twilight evening. They were headed to a special place in the stars. As they followed the path into the stars, they arrived at a soul place. These starwalkers entered this sacred place full of light workers. Each worker took a child and held the child unto their laps. Some of these children were held by their mothers, some by nurturing souls unknown to the children, but all were held, all were nurtured. In looking around the room, the children were being rocked, sung to, fed, cuddled, and loved. The glow of their souls brightened as this process went on and soon overtook the room spreading out unto the starlight. The children laughed, and they wept as they lay contently in the arms of these workers. They were so grateful that their souls, hungry for touch and love, were being taken care of this warm evening. As the evening progressed into the early morning dawn, the children began their preparation back down to earth following the golden path. They struggled with wanting to stay where they felt the love and joy touching their souls. But they knew their work was on earth. The worker led them back home in the red dawn to their beds where they rested before arising for another day of struggles.

The first time that I experienced the need to hold a child was because I was desperate. This four year old child was so sad, angry and extremely enraged. She was a very wounded child. I felt desperation for this child. There was nothing that I had learned in my training to deal with this kind of situation. As the

child was out of control, I picked her up and held her close to my breasts and began to sing to her and rock her. I was concerned about her and somewhat nervous about this, however, I did this instinctively. The child needed to cry and to rage as she had so much inside herself and what safer way to unload this pain but with someone that truly sees your divinity and truly loves you because you are of the Spirit, of the Universe, of God? I just held little Lori that day and she eventually held a calm in her body as it relaxed into my body. I remember wondering what to do next as she was truly without anyone to pass her off to be held and nurtured. I hoped the Starwalkers gathered her at night to heal her because she was alone. I wondered what made me hold this child. It was years later that I realized where my training came from that guided me to hold wounded children.

I look back fondly to the time when my therapist, my healer was in my life on a daily basis. I was in the hospital for four months. I was suicidal, depressed, hopeless, yet desiring to be well. I had three children, a husband and everything in life that one considers the riches of life (family, health, love, friends, and a good job). Yet I was an extremely sad, unhappy person. I checked myself into the hospital because all those around me were afraid to do it, afraid to let me go, and I knew that if I didn't go, I would die. I was dying inside myself. Even while at the hospital, I really felt I was at a crossroads. Part of me believed that if I really thought about it enough, I could die...part of me was afraid, part of me (a very small part of me) wanted to be healthy.

Mona, my therapist, use to say to me that there was inside of me a core of healthiness, a core that knew joy, knew how to live, wanted to live, loved others and loved myself. I could only believe her because I was in the forest and did not see it, feel it, hear it. It was only dark. Mona was my only light. She was holding the light, allowing me glimpses

when I could turn inward enough, giving me hope, and most importantly, loving me.

I remember one day, after I had been at the hospital for six weeks already, walking with Mona to her office and saying that if I had the choice today, I would just die. I was still so sad, lonely and in the dark. I cried all the time, it seemed, the entire four months, I cried tears of lifetimes of pain. I do not know why, nor did I know there that there was so much pain inside of myself. I remember during one of the crying spells in Mona's office when she asked me if I would like her to hold me. I looked up at Mona, into her eyes, and knew that I needed her to hold me more than I needed anything else. Mona moved over to the couch and put her arms around me. I laid my head on her shoulder and I cried and cried for that hour. After that, whenever I was in the depths of my sadness and pain, Mona would hold me. I knew that she was sending me much love and light during that holding time. I knew that she was working on helping me heal through the tremendous love she had for the part of myself that I did not love (my own divinity). As I write this, ten years later, I realize that even now, when I think about someone holding me and loving me like this, loving me unconditionally and teaching me that I was lovable and could love myself, makes me cry and weep. I wonder what the sadness is, or is it joy? I think it is sadness, once again, for the human condition. Sadness for that part of the universe that does not know how to do the simple parts in life, like hold someone and love them unconditionally. Mona continued to hold me, shine the light, love me, and pray for my own acceptance of myself and my own goodness. There were many hours of holding. Many hours of crying. Many hours of me wondering if I would ever get done crying, ever find some joy within myself. Many hours of missing my children, but knowing that without knowing

(continued on page 6)

The Breath of the Spirit

Bonnie Jean Sarton, MSW student,
University of Nebraska at Omaha

Through childhood's eyes
I worshiped the god of Hallmark,
Papa Noel: rosy cheeks and laughing
eyes.

He granted my wishes:
roller skates and snow days.
and I thanked Him.

My vision clouded with hurt and
Anger.
The achy eyes of believers turned their
heads—
didn't want to notice.
They forgot me.
Santa God forgot me.
and I cursed Him.

My wounds festered and
would not heal—
the breath of the Spirit whispered in my
ear:
She told of love and forgiveness &
sadness changing to joy.
and I ignored Her.

She moved around and about me.
Sometimes she came with flaming hair
and Colorado blue eyes to laugh and cry
with me.
And sometimes in the persistent
chatter of the trees and the birds.
and I raised my eyes to Her.

Inana engaged me in battle,
putting the truth in front of me.
Father/Mother God
Immanent and Intimate—Kind and
Severe
separating human error from divine
plans.
Harshly loving me until
I could love again.
And I worship Her.

Holding Children

(continued from page 5)

how to love myself and my own divinity
I could not love them and their own
divinity. Many deep, dark, sad hours.

I remember the comfort of the hold-
ing time, the feelings that someone loves
me so much they want to hold me and
touch me and allow me to cry on their
good clothes and that was okay, it was
more important that I be held. I remem-
ber and still feel the warmth in my heart.
It was so deep inside myself. I do
believe it is when that core deep inside
myself started to grow and become more
visual and more able to be seen by
myself. Ah yes, there was some light,
there was some core, there was some joy
deep, deep inside of myself. Mona is a
very powerful woman. Her power came
from loving others and helping them to
love themselves, seeing the divinity
inside themselves and holding it up, put-
ting the light on it and saying, "see this
is you." Touching me, and letting me
know that I am touchable did this.

Mona taught me about holding, she
held me. She taught me about loving
someone in the depths of their emotions,
whether it was sadness, anger, or deep
joy. She entered my space, my pain, and
sat with me in the dark of the night. She
said nothing, she held me. There is no
greater gift than to have someone hold
you as if you are a dear one, worthy of
such love. And yes, now I weep. This
unconditional love, this touch, cannot
ever be understood through words. It is
done through the touch. It is how to
penetrate through the muck, the pain, to
the essence of the soul. Mona is a wise
woman. She understood because she lis-
tens through her heart.

And holding the children, came to me
through my heart. I did not know how to
do "holding therapy" when I held little
Lori. I was only operating on what my
heart was saying to me, just as Mona
had gifted me by holding me. It is inter-
esting to me that ten years later, while I
write about this, the profound feelings of
being held still touch me on a deep, deep
core level. They still bring me a deep
joy of having experienced truly uncondi-
tional love. It also makes me sad

because it is such an extraordinary expe-
rience, not a ordinary experience, to
encounter being held. It makes me sad
that "holding someone" is so controver-
sial, such an issue, so misunderstood, so
questioned. It makes me sad for the chil-
dren, the child in us, and the human
condition—we all need to experience
someone "holding us" and loving us
unconditionally, just for who we are.

I was trained for this work through
my own experience of being held. It
worked for me, it touched me, it healed
me...and it only makes sense that this is
very profound work. As I hold children,
I love them. I see their beauty. I sit with
them in the midst of their rage, their
anger and love them. It is a profound
experience for both me and the child.
The child's face actually changes as
their skin softens, and becomes very
"baby-like." The child's eyes can actu-
ally look at me whereas before we start,
the child cannot look into someone's
eyes. It is a sacred moment...a moment
of awe...the child stops crying, looks
into your eyes and is "stilled." The face
begins to glow, and they are comforted
by something, deep inside themselves
growing and coming alive again,
reminding them that they can be loved,
they are lovable, they are good, the
essence of themselves. It must be the
core of themselves that still remembers
about the essence.

I have to say that there have been
many moments in this work that I really
wonder why I hold children because of
the macro systems and the immense fear
around this issue. I do wary of it, and
tire of this part of the process. Holding
children is easy work for me and is often
energizing as I find that loving children
comes as a natural part of our soul if we
just let it happen. However, the other
systems—the macro systems do get in
the way and I certainly find this to be
the heavy part. It seems so obvious to
me that children need to be held, and
working with children that traditional
therapy doesn't work for means that we
exhausted many possibilities. To me,
holding therapy is about holding chil-
dren, telling children by your actions
and your words that you are there with
them in the heat and heart of it all.

**NACSW is pleased to announce a new book entitled
*Christianity and Social Work: Readings on the Integration of
Christian Faith and Social Work Practice.***

Christianity and Social Work is comprised of 16 chapters each written by a Christian social work educator or practitioner. Intended as a text for social work students at Christian colleges, all Christians in social work should find the book useful in helping to integrate their faith and social work practice. Chapter topics are organized around three themes: The Changing Context for Practice; Worldviews and Plumbines; and Spiritual Aspects in the Helping Process.

Christianity and Social Work will be available for a cost of \$20.70 (\$29.14 Canadian) to members, and \$23 (\$32.38 Canadian) to non-members or institutions. Please contact the NACSW office (NACSW@aol.com or 203-270-8780 or 121 Botsford, CT 06404) if you would like to order a copy and/or receive information about NACSW.

• • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • •

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year.

Make checks payable to:

**The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE. 68182-0001**

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ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS



Dear Professor Cosmos:

We are all excited about the new millennium coming! I understand you are, among other things, a psychic. What can you tell us about the next thousand years?

One of your faithful

Dear Faithful:

One moment please, let me look deep inside... I'm looking... looking... looking... wait, I'm picking up an image:

I see thousands of people, millions of people, all over the planet, they are all wearing Professor Cosmos meditation wear, they are all writing big fat checks (or using their credit cards) to attend Professor Cosmos seminars....

I see my bank account growing, growing, I see my stock portfolio expanding, expanding....

I see myself in swimming trunks and sandals, laying underneath a palm tree by the beach, listening to the gentle swell of the turquoise water as it glides up on the sand, eating chocolate candy, sipping my coco loco....

P.C.

Dear Prof. Cosmos:

I'm so upset! Please help! I don't know what to do! My boyfriend is going off the deep end with this spirituality stuff. When we met, we were both social work students. He was so sweet, so nurturing, so sensitive. Then he found one of your books, I think it was *My Autobiography, volume 12*. Since then, he was gone every weekend to spirituality retreats. He seems preoccupied all the time and has started mumbling to himself.

Young and troubled

Dear Young and troubled:

Obviously, my dear, you haven't read *Professor Cosmos on the Progression of Cosmic Consciousness* by yours truly. I estimate your boyfriend is at stage 5.3 in his spiritual development on the "Cosmic Consciousness Scale." You see, your friend is exactly where he is supposed to be on his path, so let's just forget about him. However, I am a bit worried about you. You seem troubled and off-center. Perhaps you need someone else to comfort you. Why don't you send me a recent photo of yourself and maybe we can get together soon.

Your loving guru, P.C.



School of Social Work
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, NE 68182-0293

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

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Edward Canda
University of Kansas, School of Social Welfare
Lawrence, KS 66045



**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Newsletter**

**Volume 5, Number 2
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Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Fall 1998 Vol. 5, No. 2

Linking Spirituality and Diversity: Towards a Fluid Fountain of Unity, Respect, and Pluralism

From the Closing Keynote Address at the Fourth National Meeting of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, June, 1998

*Rivka Ausubel Danzig, DSW
School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania*

Iyanla Vanzant (1998) urges social workers to keep at the forefront of their consciousness the notion that "For this purpose, you were born." My students at the University of Pennsylvania shared with me a tape from her powerful lecture at the National Association of Black Social Workers meeting this year in New Orleans. I would like to adopt her notion

in relation to the subject of linking spirituality and diversity. We all need to keep in sharp focus "for this purpose I was born" in each and every one of our lives. By that I mean what is the purpose of our existence, why are we here today, and why are we doing the work we are doing, and, perhaps most importantly, how are we doing the social work we are engaged in, all the

while keeping in mind - "for this purpose I was born"?

The term "culture shock" is understood by anthropologists and sociologists as shocking experiences that illuminate new and unsuspected facets of human existence (Berger, 1963). "Spirituality and diversity shock," entail a true re-examination and upheaval in the realm of one's taken-for-granted structures. The methods and conclusions of a culture, spirituality, or tradition, that are different from what we are accustomed to, would undoubtedly invade many cherished beliefs about things spiritual that we hold most dear. (Ausubel Danzig, 1981). The resulting clash may constitute a genuine spiritual shock or crisis.

I would like to foray into possible antidotes to spiritual stuckness, spiritual shock or crisis, and a look at how at the highest levels of universal faith development stages wherein we can become increasingly committed to our own particularistic traditions, and in so doing, move towards the deeper ability to honor diversity. We will begin with the process of soul-searching, move towards the notion of world-reckoning on individual and group levels, and strive to grasp "being in con-

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Director's Notes

*Robin Russel, Ph.D., Director
Society for Spirituality and Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha*

Institutionalization, formalization...haven't always been words that have held positive connotations for me. They conjure up images of rigidity, loss of freedom, and stuffiness. I think this has often been true in the case of spiritual movements. This organization, to date, has been relatively loose and informal... and for many members that has been a large part of its charm. This fall the Society is taking two big steps in the direction of institutionalizing this spiritual movement within our profession.

All members, by now, should have received the call for presentations for next summer's annual conference in St. Louis. Moving to a refereed conference will hopefully broaden the base from which conference speakers are chosen and set in place a fair system for the selection of presenters. It will also take the burden off one or two people to recruit all presenters and broaden involvement in conference planning. Dona Reese is chairing the review process. If you have any questions about this process you can contact Dona at (701) 777-4939.

The acceptance of a first symposium on spirituality and education at the 1999 Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education is a huge accomplishment. Dona Reese deserves lots of credit and appreciation for organizing the effort to have enough papers submitted and accepted this year to earn symposium status. Thanks also to all members who submitted abstracts for the symposium. The Society will be hosting a celebration of spiritual diversity and the founding of this symposium at the C.S.W.E. A.P.M. in San Francisco in March. This celebration will include Ed Canda's inspiring drumming and group circle dancing. Institutional does not have to mean stuffy.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work is growing and in the process becoming a little more formal and institutional. This, in part, reflects the growing acceptance of the importance and relevance of spirituality within our profession. Movements often need to become more formal in order for their mission to spread and to survive over time. Our challenge will be to maintain the connectedness, aliveness and "juiciness" that have characterized our organization. I think we're up to the challenge.

Research Update

Dona J. Reese, PhD, MSW

Both new and experienced researchers met together at our Research Mentoring Workshop, as part of the annual meeting of the Society in June. As usual, the meeting was exciting and informative and will help us to coordinate efforts to further our work within the profession. One topic discussed was the Call for Proposals for the Society's next national conference. Another important effort is our work to establish a Spirituality Symposium for the Annual Program Meeting (APM) of the Council on Social Work Education. A number of members of the Society have submitted presentation proposals for the years' APM.

One researcher submitting a proposal for this year's Spirituality Symposium was Amy Ai for the University of Michigan. She used structural equation modeling to document a significant inverse relationship between prayer and current psychological distress in 151 older adults one year after a major medical procedure.

Katherine Amato-von Hermert of the University of Kentucky is working on a study for which she has received funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The study will analyze archival materials, sermons, and interview transcripts at a variety of demographically different churches, to answer the question, "What do religious congregations think about serving the poor?" One hypothesis being investigated is that churches which differ along sociological categories show significant similarities along the core issues of poverty, which are informed by their theological commitments.

Frances Datz completed a doctoral dissertation in 1994 that focused on the psychological and spiritual effects on women of the

absence of a feminine image of God. Her phenomenological study of eight Roman Catholic women examined women's reflection of an exclusively male God-image, the effects of no female God-image, and the impact of this on the relationships to self, others and the institutional church. The study explicates the effects, in both internal and external forms, on identity, adaptation, and spirituality. This process, involving loss, resulted in changes in self-valuation and in inner self-object representations, reflected in women's search for and then the emergence of female God-images for them.

A final abstract submitted to us recently was by Gail Westpheling of Rutgers University, who studied how single mothers infected by HIV/AIDS made plans for their young children as they faced death by a stigmatizing and terminal illness. The qualitative and quantitative study used interviews with 30 HIV-positive and 15 HIV-negative women to show that for HIV-positive women, spirituality hastened planning activities and reduced the emotional effects of death and dying. The HIV-negative mothers had fewer spiritual characteristics and were much less likely to make plans than the HIV-positive women were.

Please submit abstracts of your research to this column, in care of:

Dona J. Reese
University of North Dakota
Department of Social Work
PO Box 7135
Grand Forks, ND 58202
dona_reese@mail.und.nodak.edu

Spirituality in Silence

Carolyn J. Tice, DSW, Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Social Work, Ohio University

Social work education highlights the development of strong communication skills, both written and verbal. Such skills are used to solicit information, assess needs, discuss interventions, and evaluate services. Further, communication skills are considered essential to convey the roles of social work to the general public and the value of the profession to the broader society.

In my professional and private life, I have added silence to my repertoire of communication skills. In this context, silence not is the absence of conversation but the active listening of an inner voice or spirit and a time for expressing the wonder, power, tenderness, and mysteries of life. Silence is a form of spiritual communication with a client that holds the possibility of adding depth and breath to the client/social worker relationship. The social worker is no longer viewed as the "expert" and the client as a person "in need." Rather, the experience of silence is utterly equal, without hierarchy of age, gender, wisdom, education, or economic status. Ideally, the result of silence, over a period of time, is a dynamic and synergetic relationship that builds on the strengths of participants. Trust, sensitivity, and commonality emerge as the rush of trying to "do good" is replaced with the calmness of taking time to be with one another.

How can silence be introduced in social work practice? Prior to a period of silence, I have found it helpful to discuss a format that is not meant to be a rigid outline of expectations but rather a guide for silence. Much of what I include in the format was adapted from the work of Newell (1997) but the format changes with different needs, people, and experiences.

Centering: This is a time to "let go" all of the cares, concerns, and distractions of life. Some people do this by first thinking through, for a moment, problematic situations such as debts, illness, or disagreements and then shifting to a space of relaxed attentiveness. The prac-

tice of centering takes time and discipline to develop. It is not unusual for people to experience discomfort with silence but with simple, regular practice I have found that people learn to appreciate the connectedness silence brings to people and their environment.

Experiencing: With a sense of uncluttered presence, people have the opportunity to be spiritually close to one another in an atmosphere of trust and understanding. At times, I have found people are moved to speak from the personal to the universal. For example, one woman spoke of her growth and healing in the context of spring and the blossoming of flowers. She likened the sprouting of new growth to her revitalization. The flow of the message was spontaneous, heart-warming, and balanced between introspection and social application. Thus, from experiencing comes a sense of community and recognition of commonality.

Listening: Closely associated with experiencing is listening. Listening includes hearing not only spoken words or sounds but also the voice within one's self. If someone offers comment during the silence, listening involves integrating the comment in a personal context. When there is no comment one tech-

nique to accomplish listening is by visualizing a place, such as the ocean, and being filled with the joy, peace, and courage associated with that image.

Celebration: Conclude the time of silence by acknowledging and experiencing the goodness of life. A time of celebration provides a basis for going forward into daily life with a renewed sense of personal strength and community.

The spirituality of silence supports the idea that social workers and clients need to be renewed in their understanding of inner strength and potential of environments in relation to self and others. Silence that is full and vital fosters both spiritual growth and relationships.

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Call For Manuscripts The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Two hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk with files saved in WordPerfect 5.1 or 6.1 should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

Society to Host Celebration at C.S.W.E. A.P.M.

The Society will be sponsoring a Celebration of spiritual diversity at the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting in San Francisco on Friday evening at 7:30 P.M., March 12, 1999. This celebration will feature a percussion meditation led by Ed Canda and circle dancing. The celebration is free and open to all members regardless of whether they are attending the C.S.W.E. meeting.

A World View On Spirituality And Social Work

Edward R. Canda, Ph.D., School of Social Welfare, University of Kansas

Welcome and Invitation

Welcome to this new feature of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter. Since the beginning of the Society, in 1990, members have been expanding networking and cooperation within the United States and beyond. In the past several years, the pace and variety of innovative activities on social work and spirituality has been increasing quickly. As we build these links around the world, the insights of many different spiritual, cultural, and national perspectives can come together for cooperation and creativity. This column will occasionally appear in order to present some of these international developments and also to alert Society members about opportunities for connecting with scholars and practitioners around the world.

I invite members to send me information about recent and expected publications, conferences, networking opportunities, and innovations in spiritually sensitive social work that occur outside the United States or those that link activities within the USA to people in other countries. I can be reached at the School of Social Welfare, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 66045 USA; telephone: 785-864-4720; email: edc@swl.socwel.ukans.edu

Recent International Activities

A Nexus for Peace-Promoting International Dialogue on Spirituality and Social Work in Croatia

For the past two years I have been invited to present papers for a symposium style summer course on spirituality and social work at the Inter-University Centre (IUC) School of Social Work Theory and Practice in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Numerous universities around the world sponsor the IUC. It conducts intensive summer programs on various topics, via the English language, bringing together scholars and activists from many countries. The IUC is dedicated to promoting peace and mutual understanding.

The symposium on spirituality and social work has existed for several years, but it could not meet in Dubrovnik during the war in Yugoslavia. After Croatia achieved independence and the war ceased, the symposium was reinstated there. The symposium consists of five days of presentations, lively discussions, and social gatherings usually with 20-30 participants from many countries. Dubrovnik is a wonderful setting for this symposium. The IUC is near the old part of the city which is surrounded by towering stone walls and lined with shining marble streets. Dubrovnik is located on the spectacularly beautiful turquoise blue Adriatic coast just across the sea from Italy. So the symposium happens in a place that brings great cultural and natural beauty together with the resiliency of people emerging from a war which has often been couched in terms of interreligious conflict. This setting makes the interactions at the symposium all the more poignant and powerful. For example, last year when Mr. Arun Gandhi (grandson of Mahatma Gandhi), of the Gandhi Institute on Nonviolence in Memphis, presented on the ideal of non-violence and conflict resolution, it was very inspiring to process this with participants from the region.

This summer we had presenters from the United States, Croatia, Israel, and South Africa. We reflected spiritual perspectives related to religious and secular Jewish traditions, Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity, Buddhism, and African world views. This symposium is more than an intellectual conference. It is a sincere meeting of minds and hearts in a process of working out an approach to spirituality and social action that truly embraces our differences and similarities.

The next IUC course on spirituality and social work will occur May 31-June 4, 1999. I will be one of the course directors. Please contact me if you would like more information about attending.

Slovak Lutheran Social Ethics and Social Welfare

Slovakia recently became an independent nation in transition away from a centralized communist form of government. During this time of transition, the social welfare system is undergoing revision and change. Such a time presents a good opportunity for people within the country to reflect on the history and ideals of social welfare prior to communism and up to the present time, in order to learn from the past and to consider how to move in new directions. The experience of the Slovak people also provides a good opportunity for people in other countries to compare our histories of the relationship between religion and social welfare and to consider new possibilities given insights from the Slovak situation.

A recent book provides a rare glimpse for English speakers into this experience of the Slovak people. The book is called *Slovak Lutheran Social Ethics*, by Vasil Gluchman, published by the Edwin Mellon Press in 1997. The Lutheran church has a long history of social concern in Europe, from its beginnings in religious reformation through recent political and economic turmoil as capitalist and communist movements shaped modern nations. In Europe, it is common to discuss issues of ethics, morality, and spirituality in relation to social welfare under the term social ethics. Gluchman's book traces the history of Slovak Lutheran social ethics with special focus on the dilemmas arising from challenges posed by socialism, including the call for social justice concerned Christian theology on the one hand and pressures from centralized state control of social action on the other hand. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in Christian social activist theology and comparative cross-cultural study of spirituality and social work.

Spirituality and Clinical Social Work: Some Thoughts

Martha Bramhall, LICSW, Washington, DC

Trained as a clinical social worker, about five years ago I began calling myself a spiritually oriented psychotherapist. My new title often caused people to ask me how my work was different from the work of a more traditionally oriented therapist. Mostly people would be satisfied with my well prepared short answer, which is that during our work together I help my clients to explore their spiritual, as well as, psychological lives. But when people asked me to be more specific, it caused me to think through and develop a more clearly cognitive understanding of how my work differs from what it used to be when I saw myself as a primarily psychologically oriented psychotherapist.

I decided that it would be helpful to myself and others if I tried to write about some of the techniques that I use to incorporate an exploration of my client's spiritual, as well as, psychological beliefs into the practice of psychotherapy and why I think that it is essential to do so. Basically, I have come to believe that we each sit on the three-legged stool of body, mind, and spirit and if we are to heal our wounds of the past or become more developed or integrated or complete, it is necessary to strengthen each leg of the stool. It is within the realm of psychotherapy to work with each facet.

Throughout my adult life, I have been influenced by eastern philosophical thought and to a lesser, but very important degree, the teachings of the New Age. The eastern notion that we are primarily an energy system (rather than a system of distinct parts like organs) had a profound impact on my work. The thought that we and everything within our realm are all made up of energy or "chi" helped me to connect to that which is unseen, the questions logic cannot answer, or beliefs built on faith, in a very new way. It also gave me new tools to help clients who were feeling isolated, alone and disconnected from both the unseen and the seen aspects of life.

The New Age body-oriented therapies allowed me to teach my clients how to be aware of their own energy, how to connect to others in a way beyond words, and how to connect with the environment and feel supported by it. A poem that I wrote on a

two-week silent retreat that expresses my feelings of connection reads,

*Trees of the northern forest
Breathing my breath
How could I believe
That I was ever alone.*

In order to normalize talking about spiritual issues within a psychotherapy context, I believe that it is essential to include in the general intake process questions about both religion and spirituality. Some typical questions that I might ask are:

1. What was your childhood religious training and practice?
2. How have your religious beliefs and practices changed over the years?
3. How do you express or experience your spirituality in your everyday life?
4. How do you experience or interact with the mystery, the unknowable aspects of life?
5. When and where do you feel most in tune, connected, or have a sense of a quiet heart?
6. Would you describe those times as spiritually rich moments or in some other way?
7. Who or what is God to you?

Early on in the therapy process, I often will ask the client to write a spiritual autobiography keeping the instructions vague so the clients can shape their own definition of the task. Some of the biographies are factual and linear. Others are poetic and metaphorical but both are useful to the healing process. During this early phase of the work, I pay especially careful attention to the clients' religious and spiritual language so I can begin to develop a way to talk about these issues with them that is **their** way and not mine.

I often call on the client's sense of the Holy — be it a traditional Christian God, the power of the Good in the world, the Higher Power, or the Wisdom of the group of the 12 Step tradition, the spiritual teacher of most New Age traditions, the Universe — as my co-therapist. For example, I might say to clients with a traditional Christian belief system who are struggling

with an issue that they see as grossly unfair, "I am going to ask you to consider a question that in no way is meant to discount your pain around this issue, it is just another way to look at your life experience. You and I have talked about your firm belief that God is an all loving God. Well, let's consider what loving lessons, if any, that God might be attempting to teach you through this difficult experience." Through asking this question, the client and I often find a new framework to explore the meaning of her difficult experience.

I also may help clients to express their anger towards God for allowing bad things to happen. Sitting with clients in that deep place of anger and abandonment while accepting and normalizing their strong feelings can be cathartic and can also help create a state of deeper openness and connectedness to the spirit. Slowly and very respectfully, I have, through this intervention, helped people to move from a "why me" victim-like posture to a more existential place of "why not me" — Why should I be excused from life's difficulties? And then to the place of what can I do in the now to honor my struggle? How can I draw strength from this experience? What can I learn from this difficult time? How has God been with me through this troubled time?

At some time in the work, my clients and I almost always talk about spiritual calling or the questions of what does my God want me to do? How can I be more congruent with the forces of the Universe? How can I immerse myself more deeply in the ever present and mysterious flow of Goodness? When does giving and receiving feel like the same process for me and how can I make that process happen more deeply and constantly? Spiritual call is not only about giving back but it is a form of giving back practiced through trying "softer" rather than trying "harder," flowing from a sense of fullness of spirit and a feeling of deep and abiding gratitude. A typical outcome of these talks is that clients will begin to define their sense of mission, who or what values that they want to serve, and then to become involved in some sort of volunteer work

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nection” — the greatest antidote of all to stuckness and disconnection.

Although the term soul-searching is relatively new, as its use dates back only to the Middle Ages, the concept of spiritual reckoning is a very old one. The forms this reckoning has taken and issues it encompasses have changed from generation to generation, but has remained a principle element in religious life and in variegated spiritual traditions throughout many periods of time (Steinsaltz 1988).

The spiritual and existential background of the seeker determines the forms of soul-searching, whether this applies to an individual or to the whole community. Furthermore, there are certain criteria that are fundamental to the essence of such an introspective view, and that must be present in order for the process to take place. I will draw examples from my tradition. Jewish sages have called soul-searching “world-reckoning,” in accordance with the concept that it is really a reckoning, of broad generalities and of major principles, an audit, which encompasses the whole world. True soul-searching is basically all embracing, penetrating every aspect of one’s world. Even when it begins or ends with small things, it always arises out of the feeling of the importance of those small things. When this feeling of importance, of significance, is absent, we do not have a true searching of the soul, even when the objects of review are very great. True soul-searching must always be subjective, substantive, thorough, and fundamental.

Obviously, no soul-searching or world reckoning can be carried out without some basic assumptions regarding its viability. In the absence of basic criteria that define its parameters, there is no substance to evaluation and reckoning. The criteria need not necessarily be religious or moral (in the usual sense of the word) but they must be acceptable to the seeker as a yardstick against which she or he can measure their spiritual state. In fact, every reckoning, of whatever kind, can only be carried out on the basis of established criteria and standards. When these are absent, there is no reckoning and no account. For this reason, soul-searching can only be carried out against a specific cultural or spiritual background that recognizes certain given values and rules as fundamental and essen-

tial. Their absence, or “relativization,” denies a society (and individuals making up that society) the basis from which such a reckoning might be made and has people therefore in search of a spiritual or faith structure that would feel like it could provide the framework for their personal soul-searching and growth. More than this, in order for introspection to be a true exploration of the soul — a reckoning in which the individual and the community judges and weighs deeds, acts, and thoughts — that culture must possess a tradition of introspection. “For this to happen, the criteria and question must be consciously integrated and not remain merely external or superficial. A society whose laws and regulations are all social - behavioral may stand or fall on whatever merits it possesses, but it will never have the opportunity for true spiritual introspection because it has no criteria against which to measure itself, nothing to serve as a standard of comparison between what is and what should be.” (Steinsaltz, 1988)

In fact, in biblical tradition the first example of true soul-searching (in the Scriptures) is one made on the universal scale and apparently, by God Himself, or Himself, “The Lord saw that wickedness of men was great on the Earth and that every imagination of his heart was only at evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made men on the Earth, and it grieved Him to His heart. So the Lord said, “I will blot out men whom I have created from the face of the ground... For I am sorry that I have made them,” (Genesis 6:5-7).

In spite of theological problems inherent in this passage which is not our domain today, it is a classic example of soul-searching, a general reckoning and with deeds which are assessed and a decision taken in accordance with a conclusion reached during that assessment. Like any significant accounting, soul-searching must draw some conclusion, whether negative or positive. The fact that this particular reckoning is being made by God not only does not detract from its fundamental significance but also can serve as a model. This great principle of *imitatio dei*, the imitation of God, is an explicit motif throughout the Bible, “You shall be holy, for I, the Lord, God, am holy” (Leviticus, 19:2). Thus, this first instance of soul-

searching and its aftermath, the flood, contains all the elements essential to the process review, recognition of offense, regret (or in case of people, behavior change), and remedy.

I have waxed very Biblical here, and I hope not overly so, because I believe that our work as social workers involves many similar elements of soul-searching and world-reckoning on the micro and macro levels, and depending on our own development and skills, and ability to connect with our clients, they too, will look to us as models — and oh what a great responsibility that is! “For this we were born!” So all this, which relates to soul-searching and developmental maturity at the individual level, is even truer at the communal level. It takes infinitely more effort for a whole community, or a nation, to carry out soul-searching than it does for the lone woman or man. First, in the context of the community, although an individual’s path may sway, the errors or shortcomings common to the society as a whole are usually reinforced. Second, the conscious effort of will required to put a halt to the ongoing process of daily life — to counter the inertia, is hard enough for an individual, but for a large group, sect, community or nation — a very great shock or upheaval would probably be necessary.

It is stated in a famous exegetical comment that Adam was created extremely tall, in fact that he reached from Earth to Heaven. Later, he was shrunk to a smaller size. We do believe that human beings are multi-leveled beings, beings that are made up of several stories, one above the other. The highest one is really identical with the most spiritual or transcendental state of being. The column of stories, if you can picture it, goes from Earth to the highest heaven. Each one of us lines up with our own story at a particular floor of self-consciousness and of self on this column. Very small children may be almost entirely on the physical level of the column. Later on, perhaps individuals may move slightly higher into something that is less corporeal or not entirely corporeal. The column itself can become higher and higher still, which means that the self can reach to higher and higher levels, however we choose to define them.

When the self reaches a particular level, the person knows, speaks the language of, and perhaps gets stuck on only that one level which feels familiar, even if not fully

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comfortable. This stuckness again makes it remarkably difficult to come up with metaphors that will stretch humanity as a whole. By definition, leaders and spiritual social workers would need to aspire to, and stretch towards higher levels. (Ausubel Danzig, 1986).

Every human being lives in more than one world; we live in the world of emotion, world of thought and so on. Usually for most people existence is just the “amphibian” state between the purely material and the mental /emotional/spiritual. There are people who can achieve a more perfect state beyond this, but this occurs only seldomly in a given generation. It implies, however, *that each of us has inherited a skyscraper and yet many of us live only on the first floor.* Some of us may even live in the basement. And yet each of us has inherited the whole building and we know that even climbing a mountain in the quite ordinary way requires a great deal of hard work. Climbing requires a huge amount of aptitude but also ideally needs to be supported with training, and teaching, and leadership.

So how can one grow as tall as he/she wishes to, how does one jump from one level to another? It has been said that growth is not uni-directional, as per Newton’s law of reaction. The higher the person aspires, the stronger the forces below draw him or her. For every move in the direction of good, there is a natural balancing power that reacts and distracts towards other directions in one form or another.

A sage of the last century encapsulated this beautifully. He pointed to a diamond which is made up of both the diamond part as well as plain stone, which is the carrier of the diamond. Therefore, a huge diamond embodies a large diamond part, but in fact the plain stone segment is that much larger. A parallel exists in literature wherein simple, uneducated and innocent folk ascend to higher levels whereas supposedly great souls could not overcome their own problems, the problems that come perhaps from the size of their own personalities. Then how do we move towards this jump? We see it as a process, and the mystery is still in how we would approach it; to be whole we must begin with a kind of unity in ourselves and if part of us, our mind is going in one direction and our body is going in another, and

our emotions in a third, we must bring them together into a united spiritual multi-dimensional whole, all the while, respecting the differences and diversity of each. I believe that unity (like charity) begins at home — with each and every one of us striving to use and integrate the totality of our self in all of our multiple dimensions. It certainly is strenuous work. A useful conceptual framework may be found in what Edward Wilson has called “Consilience” in his brand new book so entitled. He defines consilience literally as “a jumping together of knowledge by the linking together of fact and fact-based theory across the disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation.” (Wilson, 1998). Wilson’s thrust is towards a unity of knowledge of natural sciences and humanities. The Nobel theoretical physicist Murray Gell Mann’s work *The Quark and the Jaguar* (1994), also may provide us with some conceptual help. He speaks to finding simplicity in a world of chaos, and finding the connections between the basic laws of physics and the complexity and diversity of the natural world. He speaks of the tension between unity and diversity and makes an impassioned plea for the preservation of cultural diversity. He wrote, “Just as it is crazy to squander in a few decades much of the rich biological diversity that has evolved over billions of years, so it is equally crazy to permit the disappearance of much of human cultural diversity, which has evolved in a somewhat analogous way over many tens of thousands of years.” I am struck by the simultaneous convergence of theories of unity and diversity in a “both/and” way, emerging from the fields of natural sciences, biology and physics and in parallel ways in the social sciences.

Although there exists rich diversity in religious and spiritual traditions, there are very many similarities in spiritual paths. Many are interested in the growth of people and enlightenment of humans. One basic difference however represents a kind of anthropocentric spirituality. In Judaism, for instance, some of the great masters put far more stress on basic man - God relationship than on what man is. It has been a debate whether a systematic form and method of spiritual growth will end in something more than just the growth of

the human being. Some say that this is sufficient. Many of us wish for the achievement of something well beyond.

Our generation has been inclined to approach spirituality and/or religion through psychology, to see religion or spirituality as a problem with the human soul, essentially unrelated to the concrete world of reality. In this modern, even post-modern, approach, a significant split is posited. One stand perceives spirituality or religion as an insubstantial dream, something the intellect and the emotions consider other worldly. People who have such an attitude may admire a particular spiritual or religious tradition and even adhere to it as one admires a work of art from a distance. And this is the way they would like to understand it or feel about it. In this instance, spiritual tradition or religion is deemed something pallid and indistinctly imaginative.

On the other hand, there are people who seek a certain reality in spiritual or religious traditions and in doing so reach different sorts of supernatural experiences — inner experiences that give one a grounded feeling of reality even if they perceived unnatural phenomena which science cannot or does not necessarily know how to explain. In short, we seek a kind of metapsychology, which has become a modern psychological substitute for metaphysics. The mystical experience or the supersensual experiences have become matters of keen interest among broad circles of intellectuals who hope to find in such revelations of the soul something new and firm to cling to. They look for something beyond the known and hackneyed which will provide them with the chance to contact the higher — the beyond, the spiritual, the God. They want to experience spirituality and/or religiosity directly without a particular spiritual tradition or religion.

In either stance, this contact with the subconscious or if one prefers with the super conscious, make modern people feel that they are in touch with the untouchable beyond or with God. This religious or spiritual quest requires a thrust towards unity of mind and body, of body and soul, of individuals connected with others, and of interconnected souls.

Mind and body working together, not as enemies but rather as a unified whole or a unit, is exemplified by the good horseman who becomes a unit with his horse when the soul and the body become a unit and

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Linking Spirituality and Diversity

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they in fact help each other. The rider will never achieve the same thing without a horse. The soul needs the body because the body has tremendous powers that reinforce it. If we take the parable of the building once again, the body is the foundation and is very powerful because it has to support the entire structure. So what is our most critical role? First of all, it is to listen. The Baal Shem, the great master of the names in Chassidic Jewish tradition said, "the voice inside me never stops speaking. The voice does not stop; we just stop hearing it. It is not a phenomenon in time but a phenomenon in eternity. It is our work to be ready to do the listening." There are moments when a person is giving a gift. Sometimes it lasts for a moment, sometimes for days or months. Usually it is not a permanent change just given, so to speak, as a loan. The real question is what can we do to utilize that loan.

We need to try to be open to serve as a vessel or a conduit. "For this purpose you were born." We need to be violins that can be played upon and tuned. In a practical and spiritual way the less we are motivated by our egos, the more we are able to become receptacles, or vessels for receiving what is there. We have a soul; we all have it in us. Most of the time, we just make too much noise. If we only listen to ourselves, our spirits could move through us. "For this purpose I was born"... That is part of it, the other part of which is the relationship of the individual to others. Moreover, sometimes we may be doing things that are good but that is not necessarily that which matches the gifts and talents of the particular individual. Sometimes we try hard to do something that is not necessary for us to do, while neglecting to do something that is necessary. Speaking of instruments, one person you see is a violin, another a cello, yet another a flute and one a harp, another a piano. Each must be played and make music in similar but very unique ways. The notion of a faith-mature or spiritually highly developed individual, is one who moves on his or her particular ladder in his or her lifetime from the physical plane to the highest heaven, in order to understand multiple levels with his or her unique constellation of ideas and merits. This person would move from one heaven to another

or from earth to heaven and he or she is at home in all of them. This person attains a consciousness that in theory includes the whole universe not just the horizontal. To be a perfectionist is not just attaining a certain level, say the level of an angel, it is the ability to have a double, treble, five or tenfold mode existence for understanding. It is an extremely multi-layered existence. There is a great diversity of levels and great complexity in people searching and yearning. Reaching towards maturity or perfection is the ability to operate on many different levels and we are now living in the time in which there are souls scattered in every level one can imagine. These souls are interconnected not only socially but also spiritually because each era comprises not just the random mingling of people who happened to be together, who were born together by some mischance. These souls are interconnected, and in complicated times like these the need for leadership by teachers and social workers is very great. The first step of knowing ourselves is acknowledging our yearning towards something. Others can point you in helpful directions and then you, the individual, have to walk on. You walk on, and then you get to something else. Those who believe that people were made in the image of a higher being believe in the image of wholeness, in the image of perfection. This definition connotes a harmonious relationship between the different parts, a wholeness that is proportioned and unblemished. This perfection is hard to come by.

But, the greatest achievable antidote to perceived imperfection, which often comes from our sense of "difference" in the world, is engaging with difference in relationships. Healing connections (Baker & Miller, 1997) can be a source of enlargement and growth. However, when differences are organized hierarchically by dominant groups viewing some characteristics as "normal" or "desirable" and others as deviant or undesirable, diversity can be a source of disempowerment and pain.

Both white people and people of color are affected by "white privilege," as well as sexist, classist, and heterosexist privilege. It is critical that those who enjoy the privilege of being part of the dominant group know and acknowledge that privilege and take responsibility for the impact

of that privilege on themselves and on those who do not enjoy it. Similarly, we must recognize and take responsibility for the biases and assumptions which result from that privilege because it is these biases that contribute to major disconnections at a societal and personal level.

The Stone Center relational model embodied in the book *Women's Growth and Diversity* (ed. Jordan 1997) emphasizes the centrality of connection in women's lives and in all our lives. Disconnection is viewed as the source of most human suffering. This model suggests that women, in particular, grow through growth fostering relationships. Because of our culture's poor handling of difference, via a system of hierarchy and dismissal "major, chronic, and painful disconnections occur around diversity; racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and ageism which all become forces in creating disconnection rather than connection." Judith Jordan and her colleagues maintain that often these forces or "isms" interact in complicated ways creating even deeper and more confusing sources of isolation. Differences that could be sources of great growth and expansion instead lead to closing down and withdrawal, fear, shame, and chronic disconnection. "Blaming the victim," or projecting one's own unwanted vulnerability or anxiety onto others also leads to destructive perception and behavior towards marginalized groups.

The antidote, however, "empathy across difference" can be one of the most compelling paths to personal and relational growth, as well as communal growth. "While some mutual empathy involves an acknowledgement of sameness in the other, an appreciation of the differentness of the other's experience is also vital. The movement towards the other's differentness is actually central to growth in relationship and also can provide a powerful sense of validation for both people. **Growth occurs because as I stretch to match or understand your experience, something new is acknowledged or grows in me.**" (Jordan 1986)

The great teachers and sages of the world have achieved harmony, have moved towards perfection, and have striven for connection and "empathy across difference." Some of us who spend our lives trying to develop more and more spiritually actually have a problem in caring for others in the context of teaching or

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Spirituality and Clinical Social Work: Some Thoughts

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with an organization that carries out that mission.

One of my imprecise but useful guideposts for discriminating between psychotherapy and spiritual direction is that in therapy I start where the client is and attempt to move him/her forward in some way. In spiritual direction I try never to attempt to encourage anyone to move in a linear fashion. My model is more to help the client to deepen or round out her experience, to heighten his awareness of the numinous. I am not implying that all therapy work is linear because clearly it is not. I simply find this differentiation a useful concept for monitoring my interventions.

For people with no religious traditions or spiritual practice, I will sometimes encourage them to visit different religious meetings, to be in the experience with an open yet discerning mind and heart, and to see if it brings them any sense of connectedness, faith in a higher Good, or a felt sense of the presence of the Mystery. I may offer to teach someone a tradition based on another religious path such as a meditation based on the Hindu concept of

the chakras or energy points in the body that open and allow flow of spiritual, as well as other, energies throughout our being, connecting to and exchanging energy with all that is seen and unseen.

I have often introduced clients to icons from different religions to help them to feel closer to a particular aspect of the spiritual. I work with a lot of young adults who are still searching, yearning for the good mother. Spiritual direction along with psychotherapy is often very helpful to these young people. For example, the Christian divine mother, Mary, and the Hindu goddess, Durga who is the divine symbol of powerful yet gentle feminine energy, and the spiritual notion of many American Indian tribes of the earth as divine nurturer, all lead us to a felt sense of the same mysterious, womb-like, creative, nurturing, profoundly protective forces — forces that to many are aspects of the higher good that offer a unique opportunity to deepen one's faith by resting into the perfect love of the divine mother archetype.

Towards the end of my work with a client, I always include a summing up of the spiritual work, as well as the psychological work, that we have done together. I often use the vehicle of the resolution of fear to discuss spiritual deepening and psychological growth. One can look at the development or strengthening of faith as having a direct impact on the resolution of fear. Indeed it may be that psychological growth always contains at the root some resolution of fear. Because I am a strong believer that we store our traumas in the tissues of our body, I also point to changes in energy level, posture, and a lessening of illness as signs of resolution of trauma and especially fear. So during termination the clients and I will sit and look at our work together in relation to what has changed for them in their bodies, in their minds, and in their spirits.

Thank you for reading this article, I would love to hear how other psychotherapists are integrating the work and also how they came to do so. You can reach me at 3041 Sedgwick St. NW, WDC 20008 or by fax (202) 966-9860.

Linking Spirituality and Diversity

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social working because that caring and connection shifts, if not shocks, our individual sense of balance. Because as you make a connection with someone else, you become, at least for the time being, a unit with that person. But this new unit is not a balanced one. Trying to balance this unit requires a different effort on the part of the person who is generally a balanced person (that is why so many of the prophets did not want to be teachers). Wholeness requires harmony and other people entering disturb it constantly. The deeper one's connections with others, the more the balance is disturbed and needs to be a kind of moving fluid balance. If one succeeds with these connections, of course one gains and one is able to incorporate all the others into a greater wholeness and then one grows enormously. This is true of all of us, as individuals and as social workers who

become powerful lenses in which forces are focused, and creatively transformed. The glory of the Society for Spirituality in Social Work is the embodiment of fluidity in moving from our individual stories and anthologies and trying to spiritually uplift and perfect ourselves, which moves us to greater heights of invoking the courage of embracing diversity, creating a welcoming hospitality for pluralism, and meeting at the fountain of unity and true respect for all the people with whom we share and whom we care for. This is the ultimate embracing of spirituality and diversity to achieve unity and wholeness. "For this we were born!"

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A Spiritual Journey to St. Louis

Bonnie J. Collins, EdM, CSW-R, Hamburg, NY

The meaning of spirituality in the practice of social work for me involves knowing that my work gives meaning to my life. As I have traveled on my spiritual journey, I have always wished to connect with other social workers and share with them how we are making a difference by being helping professionals in a world that desperately needs us. I got to do this at St. Louis University on June 27-30, 1998 at the Fourth National Meeting (my first) of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work.

At this meeting were social work clinicians, professors and students who came together from wonderfully diverse backgrounds to weave connections more beautiful than even the setting of the conference itself, and what a setting it was! We stayed on a campus of breath taking sculptures, lighted fountains and blooming flowers. This truly made for a sacred place for all of us to honor the divine.

During the panels and workshops, connections were made through discovering commonalities in the midst of our diversity. Connections also evolved as we gathered together at meals (where conversation was flowing so well many of us forgot to eat or talked with our mouths full!) and through dialogues that went late into the night in brand new (and cheap!) dorm suites (of course other activities were going on late into the night also — like bathing in the fountains (a sensuous spiritual ritual of soul cleansing for some), and

getting the local bar to stay open long enough to serve us a glass of wine. (This helped some of us to honor the nectar of the Gods and Goddesses some of us worship!).

To add to the opportunity for reflection and connection, we were honored by a group of women who had been incarcerated and who spoke and sang their stories of hope. These women belong to "Let's Start," an organization devoted to healing lives of women scarred by prison. They offered us hope for the kind of work that we do as social workers. It was the most spiritual experience I've had on a Sunday morning in a long time!

Speaking of spiritual experiences, we were also given the gift of honoring our own "divine within" as we took part in a two-hour percussion meditation performed by social workers. When was the last time any of us as social workers (always so busy) have honored ourselves enough to lay on the floor for two hours and let the drumming induce a trance for spiritual contemplation and meditation? Thank you to the drummers: Ed Canda, Mitsuko Nakashima, and Hwi-Ja Canda!

And there was *more* music! — a nine-piece Latin band that Gary Behrman got us. This certainly helped us make the connections between body and spirit as we danced (some more wildly than others!!!) to the rhythm of our souls!

In the midst of all this reflecting and connecting there were even workshops — plenty of them and all full of soul with

such titles as: The Hero's Journey; Forgiveness: Spiritual Path and an Approach to Therapy; A Spiritual Approach to Ethics in Social Work; and Self-Care for Social Workers: A Soul-Full Approach.

I was impressed with the hands-on approach of all the workshops. They made practical, useful suggestions that I could take home and use the first day back to work. I was also impressed with the presenters' willingness to share their ideas and materials. The spirit of giving was alive and well throughout the conference! (Did anyone else feel empowered by the fire alarm being set off by the lighting of a candle to start a workshop?)

If spiritual searching is to include making symbols that show our discoveries on our spiritual journeys, then this conference accomplished that with the magnificent piece of weaving that Gale Hartman, the artist, helped us "group create." It is a symbol that has now become part of this group's story. Hopefully, it will be preserved at the Department of Social Work at St. Louis University for all who see it to honor.

The experience really created a sense of community and honored diversity. We were truly in tune with the divine within each of us, and we became a spiritual family. Such a family must have an annual reunion, and it will next June. Please join us. We'll be glad to welcome you to a peak experience!

Society to Hold Fifth Annual Conference in St. Louis

St. Louis University will once again be the site for the Society's annual national conference. The conference will begin on Saturday, June 26, 1999 and end on Tuesday, June 29th. This year's conference theme is: Bridging tradition and innovation in spiritually sensitive social work into the 21st century.

A call for presentation proposals was mailed to all Society members in October. Proposals are due December 1, 1998. For further information contact Dona

Reese at the University of North Dakota, (701) 777-4939.

One of this year's keynote speakers will be David Larson, M.D. Dr. Larson is the director of the National Institute for Healthcare Research. A second keynote address will be delivered by Don Krill, Ph.D.

This year's conference will also feature an arts festival. Artists and musicians who would like to display and/or share their work/talent should contact Ann Lichliter who will be chairing the event.

Ann can be reached at 1112 N. 49th Ave., Omaha, NE 68132, (402) 898-4760.

Low cost housing and meals will be available on the St. Louis University campus. Once again registration fees will be very reasonable, and unreasonable low for students. Members will receive their conference flyers in the mail in the early spring. Others can request conference brochures by writing the Society for Spirituality and Social Work at the School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182.

Spirituality and Social Work Education Symposium Established

Dona J. Reese, PhD, MSW, School of Social Work, University of North Dakota

The Society has been successful in its efforts to establish a symposium within the Annual Program Meeting (APM) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Seventeen presentation proposals were submitted to CSWE, of which six were selected. These presentations will be part of the first Spirituality and Social Work Education Symposium, to be held at the APM in San Francisco in March. This institutionalization of our efforts is an indication that our profession officially recognizes spirituality as a legitimate aspect of social work practice. We have made much progress since the days when a few people were writing about a subject that was still considered very controversial. This symposium provides an opportunity for broad influence within the field, increasing the awareness of faculty, which filters down to social workers and finally to clients. A primary concern of many in the Society is our clients' need to address spirituality with well-informed social workers, and this inspires the goal of advocacy within our profession to recognize this

need. Another purpose of many in the society has been creating an alternative organization without the bureaucratic trappings found in the rest of academia. But we can have multiple purposes – just as we honor diversity of belief among ourselves, we can honor both approaches – to create a supportive sacred space for our members, and to make inroads into our profession to promote academic work in spirituality and social work. We need to continue to support this effort — to continue our symposium status, 10 proposals must be submitted each year and 5 must be accepted. An advantage is that now we will review our own proposals – eight individuals will be invited to serve as reviews for the Year 2000 APM. A meeting of the Spirituality and Social Work Education Symposium will be held at the APM this March; please check your APM Final Program for the time and place. Please join us to show your support for the Symposium and to make plans for next year.

• • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • • JOIN THE SOCIETY • •

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year.

Make checks payable to:

**The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE. 68182-0001**

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Honoring Religious and Spiritual Diversity: A Personal Reflection

Michael Sheridan, Ph.D., Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

The focus of the Fourth National Meeting of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work was on spirituality and human diversity — a theme that was apparent throughout the four-day gathering. This connection between honoring both the universal and the particular reached a high point for me on our last morning in St. Louis through an interpersonal transaction that was as simple as it was wondrous. My roommate at the Conference is a devout Orthodox Jew and has been all of her life. I am a seeker who has explored several faith traditions and now walks a spiritual path perhaps best described as earth-based and social justice-oriented. Some would say we represent opposite ends of the “religious and spiritual diversity” continuum.

And yet, throughout our time together, we shared our beliefs and practices as easily as we shared other aspects

of our life and the bathroom. We did have our moments of surprise and adjustment. For example, I now know that keeping Kosher means that you have to be very particular about the type of knife you use to cut the cantaloupe (“Sorry, Rivka!” says Michael). And Rivka learned that I routinely talk to animals, trees, and other creatures of the earth (“Hmmm,” says Rivka). And yet, the defining moment for me of our willingness to accept and support each other’s journey came at a point that we really didn’t talk about at all.

That last morning I told Rivka I was going out to a grassy plot by the fountain to do my morning meditation. This is a daily practice that I have created from many sources that involves honoring the 4 elements (air, water, fire, and earth), as well as the Spirit, with also invoking the 4 Archangels (Uriel, Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel). When I

returned, Rivka indicated that she was going to do her morning prayers. She went out onto the balcony facing the same direction and the same fountain where I had been just moments before. I paused and watched her briefly — singing beautiful prayers in Hebrew while gently swaying — and then moved on to give her privacy.

Later I thought how different the world would be if this simple act of acceptance and support of diversity could be played out on a global scale — and I lamented about how this seems impossible given humanity’s long-standing divisions and intolerance of difference. But at least for now I know that it *is* possible, if only for two souls at a time. When hearts and minds are open and respectful, diversity is not only possible — it is honored and celebrated.



School of Social Work
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, NE 68182-0293



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Hwi-Ja Canda
University of Kansas, School of Social
Welfare
Lawrence, KS 66045

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WELCOMING THE SPIRIT

BY

Steve Sunderland, Ph.D., University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio

Where is the spirit of hope, joy and compassion hiding during the first sessions with the client and/ or in the opening sessions of each class? Why does the beginning of a session feel so tense for the participants, so without the feeling of a guiding force that is both natural and secure?

The first sessions for my clients and for my classes are highly anxious experiences. The spirit of joy in learning, or the desire to share some problem is often blocked by fear. I, too, come with heightened worries about what I will share and learn from this most important session. Very often the first session sets a tone for future meetings. These common anxieties often bury parts of the spirit of each of us, especially the spirit of happiness, playfulness, joy or affection. Roles, as the method of coping get played by habit: The competent therapist/ expert teacher and the eager and sometimes distracted client/ student are predictably displayed. These roles hide

more of the deeper spirit of the person or of the group. And these roles get in the way of welcoming the spirit of possibility and pleasure into the beginning of a session or a class. Strangely, the opening of the sessions emphasizes an impersonality, a distance, and an anonymity that is the reverse of what is needed to prepare each other.

Over the past year social work students and I have been exploring the concept of "welcoming the spirit" as a way of beginning classes and as a model for meeting with clients. Both students, clients and I recognize and acknowledge that we come to the sessions with lots of mixed feelings including anxiety about preparation, stresses from previous experiences and sometimes deeper feelings of depression, conflict and confusion. It is "normal" to hide these feelings by placing them on hold, or by minimizing them and being "low key" during a session. These feelings, we

have been taught, are "unwelcome."

Turning these feelings into a spiritual force for caring with the student and/or client involves a dramatic change in our thinking about the acceptance of our anxieties. Caring for the "troubled" self emerges by explicitly inviting and "welcoming" the frightened and difficult feelings. We asked: "What would happen if the beginning of class was set up for the "welcoming of all the spirits?"

As a professor of social work and as a therapist, I have experimented with starting sessions with meditation, a poem, a song, breathing exercises, and/or walks in parks next to my classroom and office. This alternative start has seemed appropriate when I sense that the entering class/ client is too stressed to just sit and talk and some alternative seems to be needed, if for a few minutes. And, more often than not, the class/ client and I seem relieved. This year I encouraged student/client involvement in the planning and experimenting with the beginning of class sessions. Here is what happened.

1. *Being and becoming a co-teacher of welcoming:* I introduced the concept of being a co-teacher at the opening of the first class. I asked students to form a team of six students and plan the first 15 minutes of class. I would take responsibility for the first two classes' introductory sessions. Student teams took over the remainder

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Director's Notes

Robin Russel, Ph. D.

Director

Society for Spirituality and Social Work

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Usually, in the Spring issue of the newsletter I write about our upcoming annual summer conference and try to persuade readers to come and experience the Society "live and in person." And, here I go again...

This week I was the guest speaker for a regional NASW luncheon. And, in a talk on the topic of spirituality as a source for resilience, I put in a plug for our summer conference. A social worker sitting near the podium, who had attended our conference three years ago, leaned over to a colleague and said "that's the best conference that I've ever been to." I had been talking about how I felt that resilience is related to connectedness; that humans are most resilient when they are connected to others, to their true natures, and to the Divine. I talked about ways we can cultivate greater connectedness in these three realms.

Maybe that's what I really value about our annual conference; that it presents participants with a wonderful opportunity to connect with their deeper, true selves, with the Divine (however they experience or perceive it), and to foster meaningful connections with colleagues in their profession.

But, don't take my word for it. Come to St. Louis this summer and see for yourself.

Spirituality, Scientific Secular Humanism & Social Work

by

Paul G. Shane, Sc.D., Rutgers University, Newark, NJ

What does "spiritual" mean? What does it have to do with social work or scientific secular humanism (secularism)? The first is a very difficult question to answer. The others are less difficult.

Spirituality, by its nature, is immaterial and subject to many differing and maybe opposing ideas. For many it pertains to religion or God. As originally understood, it is often defined as being involved with what some religions have called the spirit or soul, which is believed to live on independent of the body after physical death. Others define it as that element of our beings and of life which is transcendent, which partakes of the "eternal." Many others in our era have rejected the concept as being not relevant in a scientific, technological world. Many have rejected the concept of spirituality because it was so preempted by the traditional religious and non-rational approach to life.

This article proposes a generalized approach to the concept of spirituality. It is an attempt to broaden the definition to include a philosophical system and approach to life which does not include the concept of the supernatural. In fact, the paper has been written to suggest that the major "spiritual" perspective which has supported social work as a profession in its practice and development is from the scientific, secular, humanist philosophical tradition.

This is of interest to social work because social workers need to understand what it is that enables people to transcend the material and ordinary elements of life. In social work there has been a move to understand beyond the scientific and rational underpinning of our profession. For clients, how can they

be motivated to transcend the difficulties and problems with which they are struggling? As professionals, how can we and why do we gain satisfaction from helping people in these struggles? How do we avoid burnout? It is suggested that spirituality is of utmost importance for both clients and professionals in work with the multiple, seemingly intractable, problems of life. And this spirituality can and does come from secularism.

Modern life is a product of relatively new and "revolutionary" philosophical concepts. Our civilization is essentially scientific, secular and humanist. For many this is a problem which robs life and dedication of essential meaning. It is also hard to be completely rational and scientific in the face of the utter mystery of life itself, love, heroism, beauty, the expanse of the universe and its beauty, the dedication of some humans to others' welfare and freedom even at the risk of their own, the strength of individuals and groups to overcome difficulties and even horror in their lives and maybe just to lead "meaningful lives." Many people need commitment to abstract ideals such as religion and/or social justice which are difficult to explain scientifically. They are products of the attempt to transcend the limits of biology and life into the unknown and probably unknowable.

All of these are spiritual elements of what propels and fuels social work among other professions and our civilization in general. I suggest that they can and do come from the secularist philosophy. Before expanding on these elements I would like to present a context in which to

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Co-Constructing the Spiritual Tree

*Jim Raines, ACSW, Aurora
University, Aurora, IL*

*"the leaves of the tree are for the
healing of the nations" - Revelation
22:2 (NRSV)*

The term "spirituality" suffers from a vagueness, which extends back to its etymology. Both the Greek *pneuma* (πνευμα) and the Hebrew *ruach* (רוח), for example, have multiple meanings of breath, wind, and divine power. One way to reconcile these differences is to identify three dimensions of spirituality. The intrapersonal dimension (breath) helps people to integrate their past, present, and future and infuse their lives with meaning. The interpersonal dimension (wind) inspires people to recognize and respect other human beings due to a common origin (e.g., creation) or a common destiny (e.g., heaven). The transpersonal dimension (divine power) helps people to define and direct their relationship with God or with the universe itself. In my clinical work with clients, I have created an exercise to help others describe their spiritual journeys (Barret, 1996) in a way that brings these three dimensions together in one place.

I was first inspired toward the metaphor of the tree by Bullis' (1996) use of it to portray the influence of religion on public policy issues in social welfare (p. 71). Trees are a natural symbol of continuity-in-growth since they are among the longest living life forms on the planet, often surviving for multiple human generations. There are sacred trees in both the Western theological religions (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam) and the Eastern cosmological religions (e.g., shamanism, Buddhism, and Taoism) (Frese & Gray, 1987).

Chapter Updates

Washington, DC

This chapter has taken the past few months to re-organize the current chapter meetings. The members have expressed an interest to meet in smaller groups. The small group discussions will include addressing spirituality and social work issues at a more personal level. The focus will look much like peer supervision but will have a focus on personal spiritual growth and related professional issues. This chapter feels that this will be more beneficial to the members and have seen success in other chapters that have created this type of model for their meetings.

(For information, please contact Linda Haake at (703) 750-0022).

Portland, Oregon

This chapter has continued to hold meetings with the small core group of members to develop a mission statement and create more focus for the larger chapter meetings. The group has agreed to take action to help social service agencies instill values of spiritual co-creation into their infrastructure. The chapter will continue using spiritual practices to encourage creativity and inner wisdom within the chapter meetings. This core group of members is committed to meeting every other month to plan and develop ongoing chapter meetings for the members at large.

(For information, please contact Eddy Brame at (503) 682-4256).

Buffalo, NY

Bonnie Collins has recently started the Buffalo Chapter and invites anyone in the Western New York area (or anywhere else) to attend the meetings. The chapter members met on April 19th and shared desert while exploring spring rituals of various cultures. The chapter is creating a group ritual honoring "rebirthing" that they are involved in as spiritual beings and within their practices as Social Workers.

(For information, please contact Bonnie Collins at (716) 648-4455).

Illinois

The Illinois chapter has been busy during the past few months. They have received front page coverage from the statewide NASW newsletter. This newsletter included quotes from Ed Canda, Jim Raines, and Elizabeth Smith as well as information about the society and the national conference that will be held this summer in St. Louis, MO. This chapter continues to be active and the membership continues to grow.

(For information, please contact Jim Raines at (630) 844-4891).

Utah

The Utah chapter continues to enjoy good attendance at our monthly SSSW meetings. Each month, a different social worker from the community presents her or his own spiritual tradition and related interventions and we learn from each other. Our chapter director and coordinator, Karen Neilsen, is resigning this Spring after two years of incredible service and leadership and we are currently looking for help with a new direction in our chapter. SSSW members also participated in several recent events. This month, MSW students from the Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW) at the U of U in Salt Lake City sponsored a Spiritual Diversity Conference, which was attended by 300 people and which received local and regional press coverage. The GSSW DCE also recently sponsored a clergy-social worker mini conference and invited Howard Clinebell to speak on pastoral counseling, social work, and the natural environment.

(For information, please contact David Derezotes at (801) 585-3546).

Co-constructing the spiritual tree requires few materials. Use of crayons and an oversize piece of paper (11x17) can convey the idea that therapy is a playful space to explore new ways of being-in-relationship (Saari, 1994). With students, I jokingly refer to this as "spiritual regression in the service of the soul." Addressing spirituality

directly implies that therapy involves the exploration of every aspect of life (Rizzuto, 1993).

1. We begin with the root system to inquire, "Who were your primary spiritual influences as you were growing up?" These influences typically include parents,

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of the quarter (8 weeks). Initially, students were suspicious of the reasons for emphasizing the beginning of the class as a focus of the “welcoming.” The suspicion turned to interest and then to commitment as the teams began to experiment with different forms of “welcoming.” Preparing to “teach” as a team the “content” of “welcoming” raised our consciousness to the many factors at work during the opening of a class/ session. We learned that ignoring the initial emotional factors often limited the ability to understand and appreciate the spirit of learning. Being a teacher/ social worker now meant creating a plan for involvement that slowly, caringly, and appropriately invited the spirit of the class/ client to participate.

2. *What does it mean to be “welcomed” by a co-teacher/ therapist?* The following common elements were developed by the different teams.

A. *Preparing a sacred space:* The team prepared the room for the welcoming by rearranging the chairs into a circle, placing flowers on each chair, playing some form of music in the background, closing the blinds so that the sun was shaded and preparing a “welcoming line.”

B. *The welcoming line:* Students stood at the door of the class in two lines and “welcomed” each student as they came through the door with a hearty handshake, a hug, a flower, and/ or a little saying on a piece of paper. Students were ushered to their seats and invited to relax, to mix with other students, and to take some time for themselves.

C. *Sharing of food:* Students were invited to share bagels, some juice, or some cake and to mix with their classmates. Sometimes the students were “served” by the welcoming team.

D. *Sharing the welcoming:* Students gave an update during each class on their state of relaxation and harmony and whether or not the opening experience had helped relieve some anxiety. As the weeks went on, students became increasingly

forthright about how this experience worked and what could be done differently. This information became part of the planning for the next team.

E. *Co-teaching a “learning:”* Some teams prepared a group experience that highlighted some part of the class’s interests in going deeper into improving the welcoming. Art work was used; poems were read and written; interviews in pairs around a specific question were initiated; and music was used in various ways, i.e., chanting, creating a special song, playing music that had a unique meaning.

F. *Transition to the prepared content:* Following the opening (15-20 minutes), the class took a break before the prepared lesson. I felt that the welcoming established a deeper contact with the student, a more serious connection to written materials, papers and oral presentations. Initially, planning to schedule less time for a traditional class and more time for a more personal, experimental, and deeper experience produced a common and new anxiety. Neither the students or I were sure what we meant by a “welcoming of the spirit.” Nor were we confident just how we should feel after we welcomed the spirits of the whole person. And it was also unclear how the spirit of the person might be connected to the prepared topic of the class. I wanted there to be a neat fit but I didn’t know what this meant either. One student wrote in her journal of the bond between the elements: “Yes I believe that the opening of each class set the tone for a deeper learning.” Later in the quarter, with lots of discussion of our efforts, the integration of the welcoming and the content of the class proved easy for many. The joy of being welcomed became a wanted and accepted feeling.

G. *Connections to the social work role:* The students and I began to understand the dramatic impact of the welcoming on the class attitudes towards self and group learning. The focus on welcoming gave permission for many in the class to disclose their misgivings about being in class due to

the crisis they were in at that moment. Many students took the time to share some conflict they had with a family member, a spouse, or with some class. For many of these students, there was clear sense of relief in the sharing and a deep appreciation to have their spirit welcomed even if it meant seeing an unpleasant side of themselves. With release of the anxiety, and with a supportive environment created, the students began to “teach” a form of caring that was uplifting. Often I witnessed a creative and joyous mood, a dropping of the artificial boundaries that blocked the deeper spirit.

The welcoming of the troubled self through a planned beginning was applied to social work practice. Students wrote of these connections in their journals. One student/ co-teacher wrote: “We share this journey bound by a common thread—and to go deep inside our hearts and minds to express warmth and affection for one another, we enter yet another dimension far from the traditional classroom. It can be a “happy place” if we allow ourselves the luxury to partake in what is being offered without fear or reservation. Yet it frightens most to “let go” and really feel what is being placed before us; thus we lose the ability to fully comprehend what gifts are before us. It takes only the spirit associated with giving to offer weary souls shelter from the storm of life; even a smile and a few kind words now and then can work miracles. Another co-teacher wrote this insight: “Some people do not assume that they are welcomed. Many of our clients do not know that they are welcomed in our presence. We must let them know.”

3. *What is being welcomed?* Underneath the coming together of learners, be they clients, students and/ or social workers, may be an energy that can be turned from intense anxiety to profound caring. Tapping into this change may require a formal invitation to the inner spirits to emerge through the anxiety and take a place in the opening process. Coming prepared to be open to anxious moments, for all of

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the learners, means that we are inviting another dimension of the true self to sit with us. Or perhaps it also means the making of a place for the higher self of joy, the part of ourselves that opens up when we are recognized and accepted without qualification. Welcoming our troubles allows them to be shared, if so desired, and to make a space for them within our consciousness and within the context of our learning.

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place them.

Background

Social Work developed during the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. It was, in part, a response to the terrible social conditions that arose as a result of urbanization and the industrial revolution. It also became a very distinct and sharp break from prior notions of charity and compassion.

Yet notions of charity and compassion, historically, were always present and remain. Some people always looked for ways to relieve the suffering of their fellows. All efforts of charity and compassion in the past were predicated on the proposition that suffering and human need would always be there. Therefore, they were designed to ameliorate difficult situations rather than change them. For many this continues to be true. Each culture found ways of dealing with the issues of human suffering. Within the Christian world these functions developed largely within the church. This is where hospices, hospitals, food kitchens, and shelter were found. Within the Muslim world they were the province of the mosque. Within the Jewish culture it was a religious commandment, a mitzvah, to help one's fellows, either members of the group or strangers. The responsibility resided with the community. Certainly, similar institutional responses to misfortune and suffering developed within other cultural and religious

contexts.

Suffering was ubiquitous up to and including the end of the nineteenth century and continues for many to this day. Poverty, disease, insecurity and war were the normal life experience of the vast majority of the world's population and had been so since at least the agricultural revolution or the beginning of society as we know it. Children, women and the elderly were particularly vulnerable. Exploitation of the masses by the few was the norm everywhere. Slavery or semi-slavery, short lives, and susceptibility to whatever came along seemed inevitable and pre-ordained. It was considered the natural order of things.

The religious establishments and their dogmas of the times supported, if not perpetuated, this view of life. This is entirely understandable given the nature of human knowledge when religion developed. However, many, if not all, religions enshrined these conditions as necessary to belief. According to many the major focus of life was the afterlife or some similar non-worldly conclusion. Suffering on earth was inconsequential in this philosophy. Change and questioning of the established way of life was considered anti-religious and anti-God. Things were as they were because they were preordained in one way or another. The only surcease was to pray for a better deal in the next go-around and to hope for the charity of someone in more fortunate circumstances in this life. This is not to say that religion has necessarily retained this attitude and approach. However, one sees many remnants of the previously discussed approach to life in many religious groups even today. It is also certain that the vast majority of religious leaders and organizations fought very long and vehement battles against the introduction of new ways of viewing life, humanity and of approaching knowledge. Witness the reception Galileo received. There are too many other examples to even begin to enumerate.

In the seventeenth century the Encyclopedists and philosophers began

examining how to harness the growth of knowledge so it would make a difference in the lives of ordinary people. In the late eighteenth century these ideas began to bear fruit through the revolutions for political freedom which swept central and western Europe and North America. The American revolution was the first successful one, followed by the French revolution and others, less immediately successful. For most people they did not end the suffering in their lives, but just removed one cause of it, autocratic rulers. In the early nineteenth century thinkers, primarily those called socialists, began postulating new ways to organize society so that the lives of the common person would not be one of exploitation, drudgery, poverty and starvation. All of these movements were products of the scientific, secular, humanist philosophy.

Scientific, secular, humanism (secularism)

The scientific, secular, humanist (secularist) philosophy includes three main concepts. One is that humans have the power through rational observation to learn about and understand life and its various processes. That is the foundation of modern science. Another, which we call secularism, is that what happens in the life of people, in this world, is the focus of interest and what is important. It is not necessary to deny the existence of a creative force, or mysterious elements in life to be secularist. Some do, some don't. The major concern of secularists, however, is the world of people and the observable.

The next concept, humanism, holds that people have the ability and responsibility to change and control what happens to them in this life and world. It postulates that humans control and are responsible for society, war, prejudice, famine, poverty, abuse, and much of what is involved with human life. (Some would like to also believe that humans can control other forces such as nature.) One does not have to put all three together, and many do not. Nevertheless, these

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approaches to life grew out of the increase in human knowledge and exploration of life over the past several centuries. Together they form a specific modern philosophy which guides much of our lives in the modern, industrial, scientific and technological civilization. It is essentially an optimistic view of life which imbues each person's life with meaning and value in the here and now. It is a view that sees negative aspects of life not as ordained but as changeable. It sees suffering as preventable or healable.

Not all the products of the secular revolution in thinking have been positive and one need not accept them all, just as one does not need to accept the long history of religious abuse and power seeking as being the essence of religion. All three elements, however, have made the world in which we live today. They were the major ingredient that caused social work to be different from charity and the other compassionate responses to human suffering which preceded the development of the social work profession.

Social work and secularism

Social work is a product of this new way of thinking. It arose at a time when there were enormous changes in the way the world was seen. It came at a time when the revolutions in thinking and perceiving life which were fueled by the Renaissance and the Enlightenment began to bear rich fruits. Humans were learning about the world around them and, in some beginning ways, how to control and understand it in non-mystical and non-supernatural ways. The biological and physical sciences were beginning to make the great strides which have continued to this day. Electricity, the telephone, the combustion and then internal combustion engines enabled humans to produce more and move faster than ever dreamed possible. We were learning to understand and control disease and extend life. We learned about hygiene and medicine. We learned that children had special developmental needs and that people had psyches. We learned about the

organization and function of society.

Along with the material changes came the desire to learn to mitigate people's suffering. Was social work a product of these changes or was it a participant in these changes? That question may be redundant. Social work arose when things were beginning to seem not so preordained, inevitable. Change was seen as a possibility with humans being the prime, maybe only, agents who could effect this change. It was a time in which humans started to feel a power to effect life and life's conditions. It was part of the secular revolution. This was in direct contradiction to the established way of thinking reflected in society and religion of that time and earlier.

Social work arose when some people were beginning to feel that what was did not have to remain forever. It is my contention that social work could not have developed as it did without the basic secular revolution in thinking that was taking place in the civilization and culture of which it was a part. It is also my contention that this change in approach to life is ultimately a spiritual revolution as well as a revolution in knowledge and attitude. This spiritual revolution was based on three key ideas: science, secularism, and humanism.

Science

Social work has incorporated science into its very marrow. Social work depends on scientific exploration and analysis of facts. In practice this is called assessment and evaluation. It is the bedrock of the social work professional process. Social work depends on scientific research to provide it with knowledge. It uses scientific methodology to better understand social conditions and functions. In all social work education programs in North America scientific methodology is an integral part of the curricula. Social workers are encouraged to engage in such research, either through assessment or through other explorations designed to improve their work and make them more effective.

Secularism

That social workers are engaged with the secular life and world is beyond question. They deal with the everyday issues of life, food, shelter, family relations, education, health, mental health, substance abuse and so forth. They deal with them in the "here and now." Theory deals with the person in environment. Social workers are engaged in bureaucratic processes and institutions, often as bureaucrats, other times as intermediaries. They advocate, mediate, counsel, organize, etc, all around everyday life problems and adjustments. They work with individuals, families, groups and communities to effect change in both client systems and environmental systems. All this is about the centrality of life as we experience it on this planet and in this realm.

Humanism

Social workers are humanists in that we expect and believe that people will effect change, that people can be responsible and autonomous. People can determine the direction of their lives. The focus in social work is on what can be done about issues and problems. It is on how people can change the conditions of their lives. What actions and thinking are necessary to effect changes which will improve the conditions of life for those with whom they work. All this is the definition of humanism

Reconsidering Spirituality

But where does spirituality come in? How does it relate to social work? In our generation many people are trying to articulate the connection of the spiritual to social work theory and practice. Spiritual means having a connection to or belief in forces which inform our lives and inspire us. Spirituality is the awe inspired by the mysteries of life. For secularists it is a non-material and at the same time non-supernatural force in human life, a force of knowledge, compassion and wisdom. It is a force that overcomes the immediate drives of an individual and integrates one with other humans. It is a force that urges one to care for

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Fifth National Conference to be Held This Summer in St. Louis

The Fifth National Meeting of the Society will be held in St. Louis, on the St. Louis University campus, from June 26 to June 29, 1999. This year's conference theme is "Bridging Tradition and Innovation in Spiritually Sensitive Social Work into the Twenty-first Century". The conference will include a variety of experiential workshops and individual and panel presentations.

This year's conference is being co-sponsored by the schools of social work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, St. Louis University, College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas, Dana College, Roberts Wesleyan College, Smith College, The Catholic University of America, University of Kansas, University of North Dakota, University of Utah, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Washburn University.

The keynote speakers will include: Dr. David B. Larson, M.D., M.S.P.H., the president of the National Institute for Healthcare Research; and Dr. Donald Krill, Professor Emeritus, University of Denver School of Social Work.

Once again this year there will be dozens of presenters from all across the country. This year's workshop topics include: Spiritual Needs of Bereaved Children; Social Work Education and Religious Values;

Growth and Healing Through Shamanism; Meditation: A Spiritual Practice; The Song of the Spirit Within: A Spiritual Context for the Strengths Perspective; Faith-based Organizing: Is There a Role for Social Work?; Faith and Spirituality in clinical Social Work; Spiritually Sensitive Social Work Practice with Gay, Lesbian Bisexual, and Transgendered Clients; Exploring Institutional Evil and Spirituality in Social Work; and Touching the Sacred with Women Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Encouraging "Souls out of Hiding".

Conference fees are extremely reasonable and students may attend at a very reduced rate. Low cost housing and meals will also be available on the St. Louis University campus. For further information contact:

Mark Kemling
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, Nebraska 68182
(402) 554- 4915
Fax (402) 554 - 2898
E-mail: swork@cwis.unomaha.edu

and help, to seek love and understanding. It is that which helps us to be wise, caring and tolerant. It is the ability to see long term consequences for life and the planet and to act to preserve and enhance both. It is that which connects us with the past and the future. For some this may come with their understanding and belief in the godhead, for others it is independent of that.

The probability is that most social workers are not involved in our profession for primarily material rewards. After all there is much more to be made from many other pursuits and endeavors often with less stress. There is much frustration both with the resistance of people to change and the obstructions which imperfect institutions and societies impose. We are involved in this profession because we care about what happens to people

and are dedicated to helping them change the conditions of their lives and the environmental and internal factors which lead them to suffer. This is profoundly spiritual. We may not always describe it in this terminology but it is based on those beliefs which have been previously set out related to secularism.

I believe that this kind of spirituality is exactly what drove many of the early social workers, those who began our profession. And it continues to drive many of us today. We have a transcendent belief in the power of people to effect their own lives and society. We believe in the importance of the here and now. We believe that all people are of equal worth. We believe in change and its effectiveness. We believe in the ability of people to rationally learn about, understand and effect their physical and social

environment. We believe in the power of love and compassion to transform life and improve it. All of these things are matters of belief, all are integral to secularism, albeit maybe some might also be due to rational observation. For one, I see that these are true, at least sometimes.

When a social worker spends many hours working with a family and child to save that family and child from disaster, i.e., abuse, separation, and the nasty things that happen to families and children, that provides the social worker with a sense of meaning and purpose in life. That is why we are social workers. When social workers push for social justice, alone and in concert with others, that is spiritual and is based on our transcendent beliefs. When we work with the dying, people with developmental and

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grandparents, older friends, and sometimes clergy. Usually, I have found the roots are not equal in size - some are taproots. Most frequently, these taproots confirm research that parents are the human face of God for most children (Hood, Spilka, Hunsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996). We conclude by asking, "Which of these roots were a positive vs. negative influence?"

2. Next, we do the trunk, which represents the current self. "How would you characterize your present spirituality—solid as an oak, multifaceted like a birch, sad like a willow?" This usually leads to a discussion of a core "woundedness" marked by a tear-shaped hole in which the client felt some aspect of their core self was either abused or neglected by a lack of affirmation. Both Fowler's (1981) stages of faith and Erikson's (1982) revised psychosocial stages posit that each developmental step contains a potential good as well as potential evil. This implies that for many people, spiritual abuse is a common occurrence (Blue, 1993). Often these wounds are the results of such sins as racism, sexism, and heterosexism (Cornett, 1998).

3. From the trunk, we move out to the branch system to explore the various directions their spiritual life has taken or may take. Sometimes these branches lead to a dead-end, characterized by an absence of leaves, such as when the client joins a cult-like religious movement whose authoritarian leader only replicates the harm done by parents. With some, the branch may veer only slightly from the trunk's direction, such as when a woman leaves a sexist denomination for a similar one that is more affirming. With others, the branch may head off in a completely new direction, such as when a client converts to a new religion (e.g., from Christianity to Islam). It is important for social workers to be non-judgmental about the directions chosen and non-directive about what future directions the client may try. This does

not mean that the therapist cannot explore various options, such as asking a gay Catholic if they have considered joining Dignity or switching to an Episcopal church.

4. In keeping with a strengths perspective, I explore their fruitfulness. "What contribution do you feel you can make to others?" I inquire. Sometimes these will take traditional forms: charitable giving, teaching Sunday school, or caring for the aged. Other times, these will be less traditional: volunteering time with the homeless, becoming a foster parent, or helping at an AIDS hospice. Whatever the option, it should reaffirm their own unique set of interests, gifts, and abilities. Some will have just begun to think of how they can contribute to society (the "blossom" stage) while others will have been contributing for years ("full-grown" fruit). Some will settle for only one type of fruit, while others will bring forth a veritable cornucopia. Some will choose to express this as their vocational choice (e.g., social work) or as an avocation (e.g., tutoring at a jail).

5. Next, we explore their relationship to the saplings around them - their biological or spiritual offspring. I ask, "What is the spiritual legacy you would like to leave behind for future generations?" It is a common occurrence for adults to become reinvolved in religious congregations when their children begin to ask spiritual questions (Worthington, 1989). For many clients, this brings up their own experience of woundedness again. They want to insure that their own children do not have to endure the same pain they experienced growing up. They may even indicate that they want their tear-shaped hole to be a refuge for others - a safe nesting place. This gives us the opportunity to discuss some means of preventing spiritual abuse in the future.

6. Finally, we explore their transpersonal relationship to the cosmos. This may be represented by the sun, moon, and/or stars. Women, in particular, may include a daytime

moon as a symbol of the "goddess." How do they currently depict their relationship with God or the universe? (E.g., do they see their higher power as directly observable overhead, partially obscured by clouds, or only implied by shadows cast on the ground?) How is that relationship changing? (E.g., does it mark a new dawn? Is it emerging from an eclipse? Is it approaching high noon?) The possibilities are endless!

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physical disabilities, substance abusers, abusers of children, spouse/partner, parents, self and other people, we do that because of our transcendent beliefs in the inherent value of each life and the ability to change.

Without scientific secular humanism these would be primarily acts of charity, a mitzvah (one of the Jewish religious commandments), points for our entrance to afterlife. Through the philosophy of scientific, secular humanism they are statements of our transcendent, optimistic view of the ability of humans to enhance and change life. That is spiritual. That is the base of social work as a profession.

Call for Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Newsletter

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Four hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk, with files saved in either WordPerfect or MS Word format, should be sent to: Robin Russel, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

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The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year.

Make checks payable to:

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
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University of Nebraska at Omaha
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Check all that apply ____ **Practitioner** Field of practice _____

____ **Educator** School/University _____

AREAS OF INTEREST: _____

ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS



Dear Professor Cosmos:

How should spiritually astute social workers prepare for the new millennium?

MSW

Dear Child:

The Professor once again must enlighten all of you. Instead of the new millennium, we must start thinking about the NEW BILLENNIUM! As any astrophysicist knows, the Earth is fast approaching it's 5 billionth birthday (marked from the time my spiritual retreat center and the rest of the planet formed from Cosmic Dust). Sadly, few people (except for Yours Truly) are working to prepare humanity to look at three critical issues:

First of all, there is the Y5K Bug, which is reported to be a REAL big, nasty bug that could eat the YK2 bug in one gulp. The scariest thing is that nobody knows all the things that the Big Bug will do, although one rumor has it that most dysfunctional families will suddenly start functioning again as the clock strikes midnight. I am now assembling a special Cos SWAT Team to deal with the bugs.

Second, 5th billennium social workers will lead the way to a new universal consciousness, which I like to call enlightened narcissism. Feeling a responsibility to the planet, I have decided to "walk the talk" and offer to the public for a special New Billennium price my newest videotape, "Bringing in the New Billennium by Bringing out the Beautiful Inner Narcissist, with Professor Cosmos". Watch for my Infomercial on most evening cable channels.

Finally, I have uncovered a government New Billennium conspiracy to gradually replace all retiring social work professors with alien life forms. Apparently these aliens look just like professors and have learned how to publish quantitative research in refereed journal articles, but the government has not yet figured out how to get any of them to teach very well. Please let me know if you are suspicious of any professors that may meet this description, and perhaps we can co-author an article on ways to stop them. As always, more research is needed in this important area!

Wishing you Intergalactic Multi-disciplinary, Eclectic Collaboration in the new Billennium,

Professor Cosmos



**University of
Nebraska at
Omaha**

School of Social Work
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

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(402)554-2941
E-mail: swork@unomaha.edu



Edward Canda
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare
Lawrence KS 66045

The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Volume 6, Number 2

Fall 1999



The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Official forum of The Society for Spirituality and Social Work

Fall 1999

Vol. 6, No. 2

THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

A presentation by Donald Krill at the
Conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work
at St. Louis University June 28, 1999

There are two basic axioms of Social Work that I want to take issue with in my discussion of the creative imagination within our direct practice arena.

First is the notion that theory is the basis of practice. This notion has long driven the overemphasis on theory in academia. While this may be profitable for schools that seem to require more and more coursework for students, it remains a questionable assumption. Research studies, one after another, on the effects of casework and psychotherapy reveal a consistent finding: Looking across practice issues, it seems that relationship quality is crucial to therapeutic success and theory choice is secondary. (Gross, 1979: 31, 54; Krill, D, 1986:31-48; Fischer, J. 1978: 189-217).

The second axiom, accepted as basic truth since set forth by Helen Harris Perlman, is that Social Work is a problem-solving profession. Problem solving suggests techniques and we have become increasingly enamored by prescriptive techniques for specific targeted problems. Yet techniques designed to solve problems could also be said to encourage client resistances. When you agree with a client that s/he has a problem that needs fixing you are conveying an important message: You are not OK the way you are, and I'll try to help change you. The very concept of ambivalence suggests that while the client may ask for help to change, his or her sense of autonomy is at stake as well. Soon s/he is resisting helping ef-

forts in order to preserve some sense of identity-integrity. Instead of problem solving we will be considering person-problem understanding as the purpose of our work. We will see that the normalizing of problems undercuts the issue of resistance.

I would like to suggest that while both theory and techniques may have their useful place in our practice, that the key factor to be understood and taught is the use of self in the therapeutic relationship. This idea is consistent with the Humanistic Psychologies and brings us to appreciate the creative process in a most personal way. I believe that it is not what you know that is of primary importance, but who you are as a person.

Practice wisdom, that somewhat elusive idea, is what I would propose as the key ingredient for therapeutic change. Practice wisdom is a natural result of integrating some preferred theory, or theories, with one's spiritual, religious, or philosophical beliefs and then further integrating these two areas with one's personal or subjective knowledge of oneself. Such integration may come and go as we are exposed to continuing growth as a result of new knowledge, new clients and new personal life experiences. We have it, then lose it, and if we are aware and care we discover it anew. Here we find the creative imagination at work within ourselves.

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WE'VE GOT A NEW NAME.

No, we're still the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. The name of the Society's official publication has changed. It's now *The Spirituality and Social Work Forum*. At the last annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work in St. Louis on June 30, the decision was made to change the name.

There are a number of reasons for the name change. First of all, there is simply something unglamorous about a "newsletter." Moreover, this publication has long been more than just a newsletter. We do offer news about what is happening in various parts of the country in the area of spirituality and social work, including local chapters and research. However, the bulk of our articles have been scholarly in nature. Last year we instituted a review process, which means we are a refereed publication. (See the Call for Manuscripts on page 11 for details about submitting an article.) All of this suggests that this publication is more than a mere newsletter.

The Board of Directors was also looking to the future. We are a growing international organization. Every week we receive new members into our Society. Furthermore, the profession of social work as a whole is beginning to recognize the importance of integrating spirituality into social work practice. For the first time at last year's Annual Program Meeting (APM) of the Council of Social Work Educators, there was an official Spirituality Symposium. Many of the people who advocated for inclusion of a Spirituality Symposium in the APM are members of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. The September 1999 edition of the *NASW News* featured an article about the interface between Social Work and spirituality. The article mentioned the Society for Spirituality and Social Work and most of the people interviewed for the article are members of the Society.

With the Society's continuing growth and the growing recognition of the importance of spirituality within the profession of social work, the Board anticipates that the future holds great things for the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. Changing the name of our official publication paves the way for its recognition as a scholarly periodical.

We are also hoping to increase the frequency with which *The Spirituality and Social Work Forum* is published. In order to do that, we need to receive more submissions of articles from our membership. If you are using spiritual interventions in your social work practice, or routinely include your clients' spirituality as part of your assessment process, we are particularly interested in hearing from you. So sit down at your computer, and let us know what you do. You'll be sharing your knowledge with social workers across the country and around the world.

THE AZTEC: A FAMILY PLACE

BONNIE F. HATCHETT Ph.D., ACSW

Social work and spirituality form a comfortable union in decreasing the suffering of human beings by recognizing the spiritual component of self in every person and by utilizing social work skills to effect change. Aspects of this union are illustrated in a definition of spirituality crafted by Hartman (1996). He notes that spirituality is an aspect of human existence experienced by all persons transcending time and culture. It involves relationships with oneself, relationships between people, nature and the environment as well as absolute reality. This concept of spirituality consciously expressed or unconsciously experienced finds meaning in crisis. Social work by its very definition attempts to understand, define and act upon the complex and oppressive barriers, which inhibit the ability of individuals and groups to improve their quality of life. This type of relationship is illustrated by the work of two people, who are making a difference in the lives of many who live at the Aztec, a twenty-unit motel, in Albuquerque New Mexico, the oldest motel located on what was formerly known as Route 66.

Those two people are a retired Michigan State social work professor, Phyllis Evans and Mr. Natha, an East Indian former Muslim priest from Zanzibar. Their commitment to the ideals of human value, and belief in the innate spirituality of every person has resulted in advocacy for change. Their efforts have resulted in bringing a sense of family and belonging to many residents continuing to battle with the ramifications of the problems of drug addiction, prostitution and domestic violence.

The Aztec is a study in contrasts and dichotomies, a community in and of itself, a microcosm of the real world. It serves as a meeting place for the joining of two cultures and belief systems fostering self-determination and empowerment. This collection of structures is located between two busy thoroughfares only minutes away from the University of New Mexico Campus. The Aztec sits between "yuppieville" the homes of the Nob Hill Historic District and "the war zone," an area known for high crime rates that accompany prostitution and drug dealings.

At first glance the two long rows of buff colored stucco structures give the appearance of an artist colony. Brightly colored flags are hung from the rafters, outdoor pottery rest on tree stumps and flowers are stuck in wine bottles. Hand painted canvases and woodcarvings hang above each doorway. Old discarded tires brightly painted in American Indian motifs and filled with tulips and irises border the front of the property. The appearance and location of the buildings belie the rich history and current humanitarian efforts that continue to thrive at the Aztec.

The Aztec holds a prominent place in a period of Ameri-

(Continued on page 3)

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can history that is equated with the excitement and adventure that accompanied road building and westward travel. The motel industry provided service to that clientele. Today the owners of the Aztec are carving out a place for themselves in a different historical period, providing service to a different population that is a reflection of the structure of modern society. Many of their residents are people who are considered to be at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, the homeless, the transient, the under employed, the abused as well as the abusers.

The Aztec is one of three motels that has an agreement with the Department of Social Services to accept clients from St. Vincent De Paul, the Salvation Army, and the overflow from Joy Junction, a homeless shelter for temporary housing. Although the agreement with those facilities indicate that the allotted length of stay is only one week, many have stayed far longer if such a need is apparent, and some without charge because of the generosity of the owners. Some stay for short periods due to temporary employment, while others consider this their home. One man, Doc, an auto shop owner, has been at the Aztec for over 2 years.

Ms. Evans and Mr. Natha have joined forces and formed a humanitarian partnership based on recognition of human values and human worth and are continuing to transform the Aztec into a unique place. Not only have buildings been rejuvenated but a reclaiming of the human spirit is also taking place. Many people who have never felt a sense of belonging are encouraged to feel that they are a part of the "family" at the Aztec.

Each member of the Aztec "family" is encouraged to become actively involved by performing tasks and functions that benefit everyone, but that also create positive self-esteem in the person performing those tasks. One example is Ms. Evan's relationship with an elderly alcoholic. She paid him a quarter for each wine bottle that he

brought to her. She stated that this exercise served three purposes: It helped to clear the streets of rubbish, it gave the person a sense of purpose, and it created a job that allowed him to be a part of creating something beautiful. Others have also benefited from such a philosophy. A wishing well filled with rocks and pennies was recently cleaned by one of the residents, a man who suffers from posttraumatic stress disorder. This wishing well is adjacent to the Aztec Galleria, a vintage clothing shop established two years ago by Ms Evans to defray the cost of providing services to residents needing care. Restoring and painting of furniture is the work of one resident who has lived at the Aztec

for the last year, while receiving treatment for drug addiction. This same young man is being encouraged to continue woodworking. This is giving him a great sense of self-satisfaction and helping in his recovery process.

One young woman who had lived at the Aztec for four months set up permanent residence at the Aztec and is employed there as the housekeeper. When she chose to be married, the wedding and reception took place on the grounds of the hotel. Just as any good father would have done, Mr. Natha paid for the reception. People from the streets were invited to come and join in the celebration. When ques-

(Continued on page 10)

Spirituality is...

Human longing for relationship, to transcend oneself.

Yearning for meaningful relationships.

A person, creating/nurturing my being.

Sensual. Senses/smells/sounds/waves/breathing.

Something deep. A flame dancing/roaring...

Tiny, barely going—it's life/it's alive.

Connectedness. With nature/snow/water.

A feeling. Faith—something greater.

Connections and interactions.

Struggle and hurt.

A circle, joining and pulling.

A creative restlessness.

Ongoing. A process, a journey.

To see beyond. Vision.

Beyond the present.

A moment.

This poem was created during Edna Lezotte's workshop on "Spirituality and Selfcare" at the annual meeting in St. Louis. She asked us to form small groups and share our personal definitions of spirituality. My group included Bill and Jeanne from St. Louis and Irene and Leo from Omaha. As group members gave their definitions, I remembered past workshops that I had attended regarding using poetry as a tool for therapy, empowerment, and group cohesion. As I was recording the comments from our group, I realized our group was also in the process of writing a poem, one that I wanted to share.

The use of poetry in social work has many exciting possibilities and is also another method to express and explore our spirituality. For more information, contact: National Association of Poetry Therapists, phone (202) 966-2536.

Submitted by Janice Stal, Assistant Professor at Marquette University.

A World View on Spirituality and Social Work

World View: A Focus on East Asia

by Edward R. Canda, Ph.D., Professor,
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare

In this second feature about international perspectives on spirituality in social work, we focus on East Asia. Both myself and Dona Reese had enjoyable experiences there recently that we would like to share with you. I would like to update you on some developments in Korea and Japan and then turn to Dr. Reese's essay.

It is very exciting to see the worldwide connections among people who are interested in spiritually sensitive social work. We can all be encouraged by this as we move into the new millennium. In fact, the next conference of the Society for Spirituality (in June 2000, see announcement in this newsletter) will be the tenth anniversary of our organization. We will be celebrating our accomplishments and promise for the future by sharing approaches to social work that draw on spirituality to



support the whole person in connection with the whole world. We hope to increase our international presentations and participants for this event.

During my sabbatical, I spent two and one-half months in South Korea with a one week visit to Japan. My main project was to extend my study of Confucian classical wisdom especially pertaining to social welfare. My mentor and colleague, Professor Yi Dong-Jun, Dean of the College of Confucianism and East Asian Studies at Sung Kyun Kwan University in Seoul, facilitated my study, university presentations, and dialogue with philosophy and social work scholars. We are hoping to establish an international institute for East/West Study on Spirituality, Philosophy, and Social Welfare. I will keep you posted.

Also, Dr. Lee Hesook, who has participated in previous Society conferences, inaugurated a new Institute on Spirituality and Social Work in Seoul, and asked me to give the opening address. Dr. Lee hopes this organization will parallel and connect with efforts of our organization. The opening included participants from various Buddhist and Christian denominations as well as peo-

ple with nonsectarian orientations. There is also activity among Buddhist and Christian social work scholars to increase connections between these religious perspectives and social work education and practice.

I was able to visit social work colleagues in Japan and give two presentations on spirituality, cultural diversity, and social work with my wife, Hwi-Ja Canda. In Japan, it appeared that the movement for linking spirituality to social work is just beginning, outside of some sectarian Christian and Buddhist social service agencies. But my colleague and friend, Dr. Kano Keiko, at Baika Women's University in Osaka, is beginning to explore this.

If anyone knows more about similar developments in South Korea, Japan, and elsewhere in East Asia, please be in touch. I want to increase networking. Email address: edc@ukans.edu

Now here is the essay by Dona Reese.

Edward R. Canda, Ph.D.
School of Social Welfare
University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045
785-864-4720

Psychosocial and Spiritual Issues in Death and Dying: A View from Hong Kong

by Dona J. Reese, Ph.D., M.S.W.

In June, 1999, I had the wonderful opportunity to present a workshop at the University of Hong Kong, and a paper at the Asia Pacific Hospice Conference, also held in Hong Kong. I had traveled there to plan a comparative policy study which I am conducting with Dean Cecilia Lai-Wan Chan of the University of Hong Kong, along with a colleague in Israel. The study will examine the effects of cultural beliefs on end of life care decisions in our three countries.

During this trip, as I listened to hospice social workers and other health

care professionals describe issues for patients and families in terminal illness, I was moved to realize the similarity of experience regardless of cultural background -- evidence of the oneness of humankind. Differences were also fascinating, such as the common use of traditional Chinese medicine by clients.

Spirituality was naturally woven in to the conference presentations by a variety of health care professionals from all over the world. For example, conference presentations included the effects of *qi gong* (Chinese) on the immune system of cancer patients. *Qi*

gong is a form of traditional Chinese medicine which involves exercise and imagery about the flow of "qi" within the body. *Qi* is a substance that some people believe exists within and around all things in the universe. Practicing *qi gong* is believed to be effective in preventing and treating illness, and these conference presentations presented evidence that it enhances the immune system.

On the other hand, I did note the influence of the Western point of view, orienting academics and professionals

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towards the scientific method and rejection of traditional spiritual practices. In my view, western medicine (including the field of medical social work) could benefit from opening itself to the wisdom of the East.

The definition of spirituality provided by my interdisciplinary audience of Hong Kong health care professionals included the same two dimensions I use: transcendence in terms of purpose in life, and transcendence in terms of a sense of connection to others, nature, or the ultimate, however defined by the individual. From the viewpoint of my audience, spiritual issues in Hong Kong appeared to be similar to those I have identified in the U.S. (Search for Meaning, Death, Anxiety, Unfinished Business, Isolation, and Transpersonal Experiences), with the exception of Relationship with God, which represents a particular belief system and depends upon culture.

In addition, transpersonal experiences were related as being more negative and fearful than those in the United States, where research has found these experiences to be a comfort to clients. The reason for this difference seems to lie again in contrasting religious beliefs. The most frequent transpersonal experiences reported by terminally ill patients in the United States are seeing a dead spouse, family member, or religious figure (Gibbs & Achterberg-Lawlis, 1978; Reese, 1999). Fifty percent of patients or bereaved spouses report such experiences (Gibbs & Achterberg-Lawlis; Reese; Simon-Buller, Christopherson, & Jones, 1988-89), and these experiences are reported to be comforting rather than disturbing to patients (Gibbs & Achterberg-Lawlis; Pflaum & Kelley, 1986). An explanation for the comforting nature of these experiences in the U.S. may lie in the cultural belief that these spirits have come from heaven, perhaps to provide an escort back there for the patient.

According to participants of my workshop, their patients also report experiences of seeing "ghosts," but this is very fearful for them rather than comforting. An explanation may lie in the cultural belief that ghosts can influence the world of the living, and indeed must seek revenge upon their enemies before they

CHAPTER UPDATES

Buffalo Chapter: Buffalo chapter is going strong. We are meeting one evening every other month. Members bring comfort foods to pass and we're averaging about 12 people. In October we had a drumming circle which was very successful. In December we will be sharing holiday traditions from our family of origins.

The goal of the group is to weave our own spirituality into our work with clients so that the exercises we do are designed to be useful with clients. It has become a self renewal group as well as a place for spirituality, clinical supervision, great fun and is rewarding for all of us.

For information, please contact Bonnie Collins at (716) 648-4455.

Washington, DC: Due to health problems among some of the more energetic members of the group, little has been happening in the DC chapter. Efforts are under way to restart our small spiritual exploration groups in the new year. The chapter is looking for new members with interest and energy.

For information, please contact Linda Haake at (703) 750-0022.

Utah: The Utah SSSW Chapter is currently undergoing a transition to new leadership as Karen Neilson resigned after several years in the role of Chapter Director. A special thanks to Karen for being a special person, full of humor, wit, energy, and caring for others. We will be continuing our tradition of meeting monthly at the School of Social Work, University of Utah. In these meetings, a featured speaker typically shares her or his own spiritual tradition with the group and leads the group in experiential exercises related to the night's theme. Since the School of Social Work is also going through tremendous change this year with the Dean and three senior faculty leaving, there are also opportunities to hire new faculty who may provide additional support and new energy to the fast-growing interest in spirituality that we are seeing in Utah today.

For information, please contact David Derezotes at (801)585-3546

Oregon: The Oregon Chapter will be meeting at Portland State University for the January meeting. This meeting will be open to all helping professionals and will feature guest presenter Risa Kiam, Director of Field Instruction and Assistant Professor at PSU. Risa has practice experience with individual, group and family counseling, school social work, corrections, child welfare, gerontology and inpatient psychiatric services. She has taught in many areas including ethnic/cultural variables, women's issues and addictions. Risa will be addressing educational trends in Spirituality and Social Work.

For information, please contact Eddy Crouch at (503) 282-2483)

can reincarnate. Ghosts, then, may have a negative purpose in appearing to a living relative. Thus, it seems that interpretation of the experience according to religious belief helps to determine whether the experience will be comforting or fearful.

I was not aware of a deliberate professional effort to include spirituality in social work practice in Hong Kong. Conference presenters on spirituality mainly represented professions other than social work. But academic work is

being conducted, notably that of Cecilia Lai-Wan Chan, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Chair of the Department of Social Work, at the University of Hong Kong. One fascinating presentation by her (in 1998) was entitled, "Skills in Mind-Body-Spirit Intervention: Application of Qi-Gong Exercises and Acupressure in Group Counseling." Dean Chan has trained her students over a number of years to address spirituality in their work with cli-

(Continued on page 9)

Meet Me in St. Louis, Louie

Personal reflections on the 5th annual meeting of the Society
by Verna Fischer, MSW, Cerritos, CA

Meet me in St. Louis, Louie, meet me at the fair...

For those of you not familiar with the above line, it comes from a popular song highlighting the 1904 World's Fair held in St. Louis, MO. It seems everyone who was anyone wanted to be a part of that momentous occasion back then. Well, after my wonderful whirlwind visitation of St. Louis in June at the annual conference on Spirituality and Social Work, I was just as excited to be a part of the equally momentous occasion of the 5th annual event for the Society for Spirituality and Social Work.

Living out in California, far away from all the mid-west excitement, I was very curious to meet the personalities attached to the various names displayed in the newsletters I received twice a year. I was also curious to meet other like-minded social workers from so many different parts of the country. I confess I had absolutely no clue what the experience would be like.

As Spirit would have it, the trip was fantastic from start to finish. (Of course, that's not including walking all over with tons of luggage or waiting in airports for connecting flights.) The conference site was beautiful, in spite of the long trek from the dorms to the keynotes. The workshops I attended provided experiences of soul and a sharing of self that does not usually happen when attending continuing education workshops. The attendees I met, and I met quite a few, were friendly with a willingness to connect with others.

I had the unique privilege of traveling with my mother, a first for both of us. I was so thrilled to see everyone greet her with joy and interest. By the end of the conference, we were both referring to her many years of volunteerism with neighbors and family as "social work." I am grateful for having the opportunity to share my new profession with my mom on such an intimate level.

Lastly, I am also grateful to those individuals who began this wonderful Society for Spirituality and Social Work and to those who continue to keep it going. Although I am uncertain if I will attend the 6th annual conference in Kansas, my heart will most definitely be there. I encourage those who have yet to make the journey to make it a point to do so.

(Continued from page 1)

What is imagination? We commonly associate it with freedom, spirituality and artistic activities. Consider your own experience with artistic forms, whether as a creator or an appreciator. There is a process of "letting go" of the known in order to "open" oneself to some emerging, spontaneous happening that is new, or perhaps "selfless." In Zen, there are numerous descriptions of allowing "It" to move us, whether this be flower arranging, archery, brush painting, poetry, music, swordsmanship, dance, or judo.

Most of us can recall our active imaginations of childhood. Sometimes

we used it to practice "adulthood" playing dress-up, dolls, or guns, depending on the cultural emphasis of our family and social exposures. We may have used it also as a protection from adults who tried to persuade us that we really could not fly, or become invisible or be impregnable to harm. Yet as children we knew these warnings were not in line with truths we sensed deeply. Later, in years of wizened adulthood we realized through our spiritual queries that we had been right from the very start! Some of us had imaginative playmates to quiet our inner loneliness, and some of us had particular "places of power" where we could retreat from

the adult world and pursue our imaginative fantasies. Later, as adults we realized that we must be cautious about expressing this inner life and courting negative judgments. Yet we find our special ways to "magicalize" the world, knowing that enchantment embraces life while skepticism distances us.

As children we heard stories, especially fairy tales, and we also knew relatives and friends of the family who excited our imaginations. In my own family I had known a couple ministers, a couple of psychics, and a magician (from whom I inherited a magic wand). As an adult I became a practicing magician, and like many magicians, my satisfaction from performing lay not in fooling others, but rather in generating a sense of wonder, both in audiences and within myself. I was fortunate to find an adult role that expressed my child-based imagination without condemnation. Others, in mental hospitals or fighting addictions, were not so fortunate.

Many therapy methods have stressed imagination. Consider play therapies with children, Gestalt therapy, psychodrama, music and dance therapies, work with dreams, guided imagery, and free association. Storytelling became a therapeutic art as a part of the hypnotic emphasis of Milton Erickson. Spontaneity and humor, as emphasized by Carl Whittaker, Harold Greenwald, and Frank Farrelly resulted in vitalized forms of "play therapy with adults."

Unfortunately there are beliefs, attitudes, and forces that preclude the use of imagination. We have tended to accept the value of orientation of modern society that prizes reason and pragmatic efficiency. Managed health care programs combine with budgetary watchdogs of government and private administrators to stress short-term methods of data gathering, categorization, narrowed goals, and prescriptive techniques. Schools of Social Work have followed suit.

Intuition and imagination are twin aspects of the creative process. The use of intuition in interpersonal ways seems more natural with women than with

(Continued on page 7)

men, probably because of gender identities in cultures. Social Work has many more women than men compared to other helping professions, with the exception of nursing. Yet how many Schools of Social Work provide courses aimed at the use and development of intuition for purposes of enhancing the helping process?

Over the years, as a teacher of Social Work, I have attempted to teach students both the use of intuition and imagination as key factors in the use of self. I would like to describe three areas that have proved useful with students in this regard: intuitive knowing, engaging vitality, and reversible thinking.

Intuitive Knowing

A simple assignment I use is to ask students to allow themselves to be with a client without thinking analytically about the client and without worrying about their own performance with the client. I conduct a simple experiment in having them all meditate on sounds and their breathing, while being less interested in their thought process. They may try this same activity with a client, or friend, giving their total attention to the person in front of them. Another preparatory exercise is to have student dyads interview each other for ten minutes using a non-directive approach, minimizing questions as much as possible. In the assignment with a client students are told to "simply be with" the person for as long as they are comfortable doing so.

Responses to the assignment vary and in the discussion following their efforts I attempt to bring out three possible experiences associated with "intuitive knowing." First, students often find their sense of client understanding is greatly enhanced. Second, many students will discover a natural knowing of what to do in response to the client's issues that day. Third, most students will feel less caught in the "melodrama" of troubled feelings from the client. There are invariably examples of each of these experiences among the group.

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CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

TENTH ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY FOR SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL WORK WHOLE PERSON * WHOLE WORLD

June 24-27, 2000

**University of Kansas School of Social Welfare
Lawrence, Kansas**

Proposals are invited from practitioners, faculty, and students for the sixth conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work in celebration of our tenth anniversary and passage into the new millennium. We seek ways that spiritually sensitive social work can join people of different cultures, nations, religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives, sexual orientations, genders, abilities, and other forms of diversity—as whole persons connected with the whole world. All topics are welcome that address spirituality in relation to social work practice, policy, education, research, and theory. The following topics are especially encouraged:

- Direct practice approaches that integrate attention to the body, mind, spirit, social relations, and relations with the natural world
- Agency administrative approaches that attend to the spiritual growth and strengths of staff, clients, and community
- Macro practice and policy approaches that promote peace, justice, and spiritual development for all people and well-being for the planetary ecology
- Innovations in social work education that address spirituality and religious diversity, especially via collaborations with disciplines of religious studies and pastoral counseling
- Theory development that applies insights from religious studies, transpersonal psychology, ecopsychology, and other cross-cultural and international disciplines
- International and inter-religious collaborations and new developments in all regions of the world on spirituality, religion, and social work

If you are interested in being a presenter at the annual meeting, and have not received an application, please write, call, e-mail, or fax and we will get an application to you.

Society for Spirituality and Social Work, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha NE 68182, USA.

Phone: (402) 554-2941

e-mail: kemlingm@unomaha.edu

Fax: (402) 554-3788

Engaging Vitality

Students are told they have needs, too, during interviews. They need to stay awake, alive, and feel that something useful is occurring. They have the opportunity, using their own vitality, of generating a "contact high," as Ram Dass used to say, instead of being dragged toward a "contact low" by the client. They are encouraged to use humor, playfulness, and spontaneity with clients as expressions of their own feelings in response to the client's productions. At times even provocation may be called for. After doing some role play demonstrations for the group, I have them do dyad role-plays. One portrays an ambivalent or resistive client, and the other allows him/herself to experiment with "outrageous interviewing." In this exercise the "therapist" is encouraged to exaggerate one's responses while at the same time interacting quickly and spontaneously. They are told that it is perfectly fine to do "bad therapy" in this experimental format.

Students have fun with this "freeing" exercise as they allow both their imaginations and intuitive hunches to lead them. In the subsequent discussion we evaluate both the risks and the positive advantages to such efforts and contrast the experiences with their usual cautious, cognitive approaches.

Reversible Thinking

The use of paradox, especially as set forth by Jay Haley and Frank Farrelly, has become an accepted and useful part of practice during the past twenty years. Reversible thinking extends the use of paradox into new dimensions.

One form of such thinking helps students counter their temptations to "rescue" clients. They are told to let themselves experience a time of pain, emotional or physical, during the coming week from a different vantage point than usual. They are to "try on" this idea: "Right now I'm in the perfect place for me to be." They don't have to

be able to explain this to themselves, but simply accept the experience in this manner. Subsequent discussions bring out both positive and negative responses. To the negatives I usually ask, "Where should you be instead? How do you know this?" This exercise is followed by another in which students are told to attempt to experience a client's pain in the same way, without saying as much to the client directly.

A second form of reversible thinking allows the worker to escape the pitfalls of provoking resistance by wanting to help solve a problem. It is called "normalizing the problem." By examining a problem area of their own, students are taught to identify value positions of their own that may be maintaining the problem itself. Value positions are not difficult to determine. One simply becomes aware of the "shoulds and shouldn'ts" of one's "inner chatter" (self talking), especially at a time of pain. The normalizing process occurs when one is able to see that a problem is the result of one's own value position. As students learn to do this with themselves (in contrast to typical self pity or blame of others) they learn to do it in role plays of clients. An example would be the depressed person who relates how they had been stung by a bad marriage and will not allow themselves intimacy ever again. Normalization might be: "It is no wonder you are depressed, since it would be natural for you to be lonely. You came by your caution with closeness quite honestly and you may not be willing to risk relationships at this point in your life. You may prefer to endure loneliness." The worker need not side with change or non-change, but simply heightens awareness and self-understanding.

A third form of reversible thinking is shifting from the past to the future, especially meanings awaiting realization. This approach has been emphasized by both Victor Frankl and James Hillman. Hillman speaks of one's *dasein*, or destiny that is with one from the time of one's birth. As environmental, social, and personal factors interfere with the direction one is "meant" to go, symptoms or problems

Adonai, Adonai

Adonai, Adonai
You call to me

Adonai, Adonai
You touch my soul

Adonai, Adonai
You show me the way

In the moaning of the wind
In the whispers of the night
In the thunder of the waves
In the fury of my storms
You kindle my heart's flame

Adonai, Adonai
Still my fears, dry my tears

Adonai, Adonai
Watch over me, keep me close

Adonai, Adonai
Light my way, help me not stray

Adonai, Adonai
Always lead me home to You

Submitted by Debra Smith, Ph.D.,
LCSW
Rutgers University, New Brunswick,
NJ

emerge. Instead of looking to the past to explain one's troubles, one looks at one's potentials and future opportunities to realize these. Students are given exercises to help them identify potential archetypal images within themselves, which can imply personal models for their own development. They may look at heroes or heroines important to them at different times in their lives, and especially at the present time. They may also consider forces in nature, creatures, or symbols with which they resonate.

Another form of reversible thinking is learning how to appreciate what is unique and special in people who have been labeled with the most pessimistic diagnostic categories, i.e. the psychoses, addictions, post traumatic stress disorders, sociopaths, and multiple personalities. The imagination may be really challenged in this effort. Pa-

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(Continued from page 8)

thology is seen as "spirit in drag!" For example, a "schizophrenic" is typically seen as lacking a solid sense of personal identity, and is therefore mistrustful of others. This very lack may open the person up to an awareness of stimuli in one's environment that more secure people may fail to perceive. Or, an addict who has reached the end of his or her rope may be open to profound existential crisis about his or her own illusions and self-deceptions, as is suggested in the first of the Twelve Steps of AA. In contrast, the person with simply a symptom of depression or phobia is less inclined to examine deeply his or her organizing life style values. While these positive assessments of seriously troubled people may not be either proven or totally accurate, since they are basically imagined meanings created by the worker, they may be far more beneficial to the process of therapy than the pessimistic conclusions usually assumed.

Conclusion

Martin Buber's adage, "healing is revealing," affirms the primacy of the therapeutic relationship. The "transparency" of the worker in the presence of the client will include the

worker's values, imagination, and intuitive expressions, all of which promote the creative process of psychotherapy. While there is a place for familiarization with theory and techniques, these should not supercede the expression of the personal. We live in a society that encourages people to be pigs (greedy and more), sheep (conformity at the sake of integrity), ostriches (burying one's head to avoid awareness) and predators in general (dominating and using others for one's own satisfaction), all of which encourage and maintain alienation from oneself, others, and the Divine. We need not add to this zoo of human misery.

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(Continued from page 5)
ents.

Perhaps it is not necessary to make such a deliberate effort to include spirituality in social work practice, in a culture so steeped in spirituality. I remember a discussion once with a social worker from Puerto Rico, in which she expressed surprise about the advocacy efforts of our Society for Spirituality and Social Work. She said that in Puerto Rico it is not necessary to argue the importance of spirituality -- it is just naturally woven into social work practice without question.

I carried an invitation with me on my trip, for Hong Kong health care professionals to become honorary members of the Social Work Section of the U.S. National Hospice Organization, and asked them to send back with

me any messages for U.S. hospice social workers. Lau Pui Ling, Teresa, a hospital nurse, sends this message: "Dear Partners in Hospice Care: It is the extra that you put into the ordinary dying process that makes dying an *extra-ordinary* pleasant experience for our clients. Let's keep going to add color to the life of our clients and ourselves. Fond regards and admiration, Teresa Lau."

It is wonderful to know that on the opposite side of the earth from us (a LONG plane ride!), compassionate and highly insightful work is being provided to clients in their hour of greatest need. Patients and families are experiencing the same human issues, and social workers are developing interventions to address these issues. A body of knowledge exists in cultures that ad-

dress spirituality so naturally; how fascinating it would be to access this information! Perhaps this column can be a source for leads on such literature.

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(Continued on page 10)

ASK PROFESSOR COSMOS



Dear Professor:

I was at last summer's SSSW conference in St. Louis when you made your now-historic appearance. Many of us were astonished at your clarity of mind, soulful wit, and general intergalactic style. We had many questions for you, such as "Who does your hair?" However, what most of us, quite frankly, really wanted to know was, are you available? I mean, is there a Mrs. Cosmos?
a fan

Dear "fan":

How nice of you to give the Professor such warm and obviously honest feedback. The Professor uses a combination of ancient herbs and spices collected from inner Asia and outer Nebraska for his shampoo but he goes with generic brands of conditioner from the local grocery store. Actually, given the interest, maybe I should run an infomercial on my shampoo hair product. And, no ladies, there is no Ms. Cosmos...
PC

Dear Professor Cosmos:

I am a doctoral student in social work at a high-ranked "Research 1" university in the East. I have been thinking about doing my dissertation on spirituality and hopefully teach some day in a social work school. You are of course a model to me of what a social work professor should be like. I do have a few questions that I have always wanted to ask you. First, are you a "full" professor? Where did you get your education? And, where do you teach now?
Student admirer

Dear student:

First, my child, although it is wonderful that you want to be like the Professor, do not be dismayed if you fall short of his many qualities. Think of me a goal that you work towards, rather than an end point that you can achieve. Second, I actually got my education at a school that was even higher than "Research 1". It was at a "Research 1\2" institution. Third, although I am beyond a "full" professor rank. In higher realities, there are no ranks, instead we have what we call "deity levels". I am at what is called a "full-figure deity" level. You can only achieve this rank by building a pile of publications twice your height in front of your RPT Committee. Finally, you have probably heard of universities "without walls". Well I teach at the first accredited university "off the wall", located (of course) in the great American West.

Take care and happy new billenium to you all!

The Cos

(Continued from page 9)

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(Continued from page 3)

tioned about their relationship to the Aztec and to Ms. Evans and Mr. Natha, the same theme was always apparent, "I feel that I belong here, this is my family."

What is the message here? It speaks to continued productivity in later years, a joining of cultures, spirituality and advocacy aimed at addressing social ills. Above all, there is recognition of the inherent human worth of all people, that sense of the spiritual in all of us that yearns to belong, and to be a part of something larger than ourselves, something that can validate our sense of personal worth. Wishes can come true.

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Introducing a new staff member

Cris Lydon has joined the staff of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. Cris is a graduate student in the University of Nebraska at Omaha's School of Social Work. She will be taking the place of Mark Kemling as Administrative Assistant. We wish Mark good luck as he moves on to other endeavors.

Call for Manuscripts

The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Short articles are invited for the next issue of *The Spirituality and Social Work Forum*. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy, and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Three hard copies of the manuscript without name or identifying information, one copy including identifying information, and one copy, with identifying information, on IBM-compatible 3.5" disk, with files saved in either WordPerfect or MS Word format, should be sent to:

Robin Russel, Associate Professor
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha NE 68182

JOIN THE SOCIETY

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The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the *The Spirituality and Social Work Forum* and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization. Additional contributions are welcome.

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Omaha, NE 68182

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Make plans to attend!!!

ANNUAL GATHERING AT CSWE-APM

The annual Christians in Social Work Discussion at the CSWE APM will be held Feb. 26, 2000 from 5:30 - 6:30 PM. The topic will be "Exploring the Need for a Commission on Religion and Spirituality." An interfaith panel will lead the discussion. More details will be available in the CSWE Program distributed at the meeting. For more information, contact Lawrence Ressler at ressler@roberts.edu or call (716) 594-6469.

DISCUSSION LIST SERVE

Join the genesis (sic) e-mail discussion group.

One of the results of the 5th Annual Meeting in St. Louis has been the creation of a list serve discussion group called genisisgroup. It was originally conceived as a forum for continuing discussion of a particular workshop, but any and all members have been invited to join. To enlist send an e-mail to: majordomo@s-cwis.unomaha.edu With the following message in the body of the e-mail: subscribe_genisisgroup



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Omaha

School of Social Work
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

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E-mail: kemlingm@unomaha.edu

Hwi-Ja Canda
University of Kansas School of Social
Welfare
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Spring 2000

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Volume 7 ■ Number 1

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work

Religions of the Drum

Dona Reese, Ph.D., University of North Dakota

"The tree birthed the drum so that we and spirit could speak with common tongue."
- E. Bonnie Devlin, Huntogi drum master, Unitarian Universalist minister

Drumming has been used since time immemorial, developing independently in a similar way in almost every civilization on the earth (Grof, 1988). It is found in Africa, Korea, the Andes, India, Northern Russia, Northern Scandinavian countries. It is used by Sufis in the Middle East, Australian bushmen, Inuits, and Native American peoples. Before Christians came to Europe, tribal people lived there and their Shamans used drumming for healing, celebration, ritual, worship, rites of passage, for communicating tribe to tribe, and with the earth and spirit realms. With few exceptions, all of us have genetic roots, perhaps a genetic memory, of a culture with its own unique drumming patterns.

Religions of the Book and Religions of the Drum

Some distinguish between two categories of religion: religions of the book and religions of the drum (Stephens, 2000). Some religions are written down, and based on holy writings. These religions are referred to as high religions, religions of civilized peoples, and members speak of the words of God found in their holy writings, although these writings are based on the direct, personal experiences of their founders. Other religions are unwritten - the "unhistorical", or "primal" religions; these are the religions of the drum. Members of these religions speak of the living word of God experienced in their hearts.

Some argue that there is a longing in our culture today for this direct religious experience. Alan Watts (1973)

argues that rather than spending our time in church talking, we should let the church become a center of contemplation, that we should honor the Christian Bible verse, "be still and know that I am God." Two contrasting religious movements in our society today share a focus on a direct experience of spirituality rather than an intellectual concept or a theology; Pentecostalism, which is the fastest growing religious movement in the U.S. (Stephens, 2000), and the New Age movement, which is an informal network of spiritual groups which integrate thinking from a variety of religions, philosophies, and contemporary science (Corbett, 1997).

Contemporary Uses of Drumming

Drumming has a number of contemporary uses, in addition to its place in traditional religions. It is used in the spiritual practice of New Age groups. It is incorporated into the services of some religious organizations; for example, the Unitarian Universalist Church in Lewes, Delaware has a men's drumming circle which meets once per month, and the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans has a home page on the internet. Modern youth programs use drumming, for example the nonprofit group Drums Not Guns, which is devoted to stopping violence through the power of percussion. Through celebrating the world's percussion traditions, this group provides youth with creative ways to rechannel negative energy, diffuse anger, build team spirit and community, and increase self esteem.

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Director's Notes

Robin Russel, Ph.D., University of Nebraska at Omaha

Wonderful relationships have developed between people in the Society over the years. Our annual conference has particularly fostered connections across the country. Periodically I'll get calls from members facing difficult challenges: life threatening illnesses and surgeries; defense of doctoral dissertations; death of a loved one; adoption/birth of children. They will request that I let others know what's going on with them and ask for their prayers or positive energy. I received quite a few calls of this nature this past winter and spring. This led to my proposing to members of our board of directors the development of what has come to be called our Spiritual Support Circle.

In developing this circle the Society wishes to clarify that its creation does not signify the endorsement or efficacy of certain spiritual beliefs/practices over others. This is simply a forum in which to provide support for one another in whatever spiritual approach one feels comfortable with such as non-directive affirmative prayer, meditation, or visualization.

Here's how it works. To be part of the Spiritual Support Circle you must email the Society at sssw@unomaha.edu. Please list 'SSC' as the subject and include your name and the email address you wish us to use in the body of the email. Cris Lydon, our Administrative Assistant, and I will serve as coordinators of the circle and will periodically send messages including recent requests.

The Spiritual Support Circle began connecting members in this fashion in March. I've already heard stories from members of the positive impacts they feel they've experienced as a result of the Circle's support. I love the idea that we can be there for each other in this fashion. You are all welcome to join our Circle.

Call for Manuscripts

Short articles are invited for the next issue of *The Spirituality and Social Work Forum*. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced, typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double-spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Three hard copies of the manuscript without name or identifying information, and one copy including identifying information, on IBM-compatible 3.5" disk, with files saved in either WordPerfect or MS Word format should be sent to: Robin Russel, Ph.D, Professor
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182



Ask Professor Cosmos!

1. Dear Professor: I am a second year student who is finding it difficult to become motivated to read yet another textbook. I thought perhaps one as great as yourself could provide some insight. How does the professor motivate himself? —Bored with books

Dear bored: You think you are bored? Look at me! I have to wade through a constant stream of Dear Professor Cosmos letters. Plus, every day I have to entertain dignitaries from around the world, check my day trading page, get my beard trimmed, and meet with my board of directors for ProfCosmos Incorporated. You people have no idea what a guru has to go through to make everybody happy. Believe me, it is no easy street.

2. Dear Professor: What should one focus on when preparing to take the licensure exam? And do you think social workers should have to take the licensing exam? —Clueless

Dear Clueless: You might want to contact www.ProfessorCosmosInc.com and go to the "Cos-tapes" web page. I have a new line of videotapes that might help you center yourself and thus prepare your mind for your test, including "bringing out your inner Einstein", "transcending transcendence", and my own personal favorite, "rap with FunCoz HipHop soulband". Oh and regarding your second question, yes, but I would like to be more personally involved in rewriting the exam. Here is an example of a question I sent to the board last year (for some reason they have not yet responded):

The true father of modern psychology, social work, and psychiatry is:

- (a) Sigmund Freud
- (b) Ken Wilber
- (c) George Bush Jr.
- (d) Professor Cosmos
- (e) all of the above

Correct answer is (DUH!) "d"

4. Dear Great One: I am just starting my doctoral program and have to take a statistics course. I am curious as to whether there is any redeeming spiritual value in studying statistics. —Student

Dear Student: Hey, I use sadistics all the time. They are of great benefit in many scholarly and cosmic activities, including fantasy football, and interviewing for a job. The Professor also reads his old stats book when he has insomnia. Actually I was one of the originators of the use of statistics in personal computers, where do you think they got the idea from to call them a "PC"?

May you all be at two with the universe!
—Professor Cosmos

...continued from page 1

In addition, Shamanism, and its accompanying drumming practice, has an important place in ecofeminism because of the convergence between these two belief systems - including common beliefs that the earth is sacred, that humans and nonhuman nature is part of the interconnected web of life, that spirit resides in matter, as well as in other dimensions, and that via shamanic practices, humans can make contact with the spiritual.

Effects of Drumming

Monotonous drumming can cause an altered state of consciousness. This is rarely involuntary, and takes years of practice to become focused enough to achieve deep levels of altered states. But to the extent one can enter into the experience, drumming can affect us physically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Research by Neher in the early 1960's (1961, 1962) demonstrated that rhythms produced in the laboratory can have remarkable effects on the physiological activity of the brain. Drumming engages both the linear, rational left brain in the learning of the rhythms and techniques, and the creative, intuitive right brain in the feeling and enjoyment of the rhythm in the body. The two brain hemispheres emanate different wave frequencies, and drumming, like deep meditation, brings them into synchronization, which is experienced as an opening of consciousness. This synchronization along with an alpha state can create feelings of euphoria. Some claim that drumming slows down the brain waves to 8 cycles per second, the same frequency as the planet, and that this has healing effects. Drumming is used by shamans for healing, and has potential for healing according to Grof (1988). The sufi master, Adnan Sarhan, uses drumming for healing, and some people claim that hearing his drumming has cured people of addictions and disease.

Drumming can also affect us psychologically, through relieving stress, relaxing our conscious minds and allowing the subconscious mind to guide our movements without the tendency to analyze and control our actions.

Finally, drumming can affect us spiritually. It can put us in a transcendent state of clarity and heightened awareness, and promote a sense of oneness - a direct perception of unity and immediate encounter with the sacred, or primary religious experience. It can promote a unity of purpose, and allow us to go deeply into our own true natures in a sense of community. When we beat the drum, we are touching a part of ourselves that we cannot often reach in the confines of our social restraints. We touch our primitive selves and feel our hearts beat with the sound of nature and the rhythm of the Earth. We can experience the opening of some secret doorway in the psyche, and have transpersonal experiences of an ecstatic nature. Some report visionary encounters with nature spirits, teachers, spirit guides, energetic forms composed of geometrical shapes and light, entering into mediumistic-like experiences and communicating with other beings and sources of knowledge. A common effect is a sense of oneness, that the whole is greater than the individual parts. Through this

experience we develop an awareness of the energies we should be creating together in our other activities and interactions. One mind, one soul, one love, one joy.

The fruit of direct experience of the spiritual is compassion, which arises naturally out of a growing awareness of the unity of all (Dass & Gorman, 1987). This is what will transform the separateness in our world into tolerance, then acceptance, then celebration of diversity, and finally a realization of the interdependent web of existence of which we are a part.

We're in the state we're in cause we're out of touch with our selves, sufferin from long-term memory loss. Forgettin where we come from. Forgettin we're family. Forgettin all relations are sacred. What we be is stardust with an attitude. Drumming opens the crack between the worlds, to the throbbin primal pulse of grand papa and mama. The pulse that contains all our knowin an' all our memories. When the rhythms sync up you go slippin on thru. When the rhythms begin to smoke, bodies start groovin an shakin. Can't help emselfes. Bellies dance. Arms thrust. Earth moves under your feet. The mutha ship lands, shines a light illuminatin your fractal self, n you are the One Heart again. You feel it. You know it. You remember (Excerpts from "Drummin Be My Dharma Dance", Karen Berggren, undated).

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"Perhaps the only limits to the human mind are those we believe in."
— Willis Harman

Religion and Social Work: First Amendment Paradigm Shift

Lawrence E. Ressler, Ph.D., Roberts Wesleyan College

W.I. Thomas, the noted sociologist, once stated, "There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time as come." There is revival of interest in spirituality and religion that seems to be touching all aspects of American society, including the profession of social work. Increased interest among social workers related to religion and spirituality is evidenced by the CSWE Annual Program Meeting Spirituality Symposium which had among the best attendance averages at the 2000 meeting in New York City. The emerging interest was also evident at the tables of publishers in the exhibit hall with the topic being given significant attention in journals and books, including a more balanced treatment in textbooks. The number of universities offering courses on spirituality and religion continues to increase.

It is not entirely clear why spirituality and religion lost favor in the profession during the early part of the 20th century. A definitive historical analysis, one that goes beyond dismissing religion because it was moralistic and paternalistic, is yet to be written. It is also not clear why the profession is once again acknowledging the positive role of religion and spirituality. What is evident is that the movement involves forces well beyond the profession. It appears related to the forces that have led to the emergence of postmodernism. It is also linked to the forces that have brought about a federal shift in service delivery strategy leading to active solicitation of religious organizations in the Charitable Choice provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 commonly known as Welfare Reform. There is a hungering for meaning in life and for many people, clients and social workers alike, religion fills the void.

Central to the shift related to religion and social work, is the constitutional interpretation of the First Amendment which states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise, thereof." Many constitutional experts suggest that a shift is taking place here as well from what is referred to as "strict separation" between government and religion to that of "equal treatment" of religion. The strict separation model was first introduced in 1947 by Justice Black in *Everson v. Board of Education*, a case related to the use of tax dollars for transportation to sectarian schools. Writing for the majority, Justice Black stated, "The First Amendment has erected a wall between church and state. That wall must be high and impregnable. We could not approve the slightest breach" (as cited in Eastman, 1999, p. 67). The strict separation model was crystallized in the Supreme Court decision in 1971 (*Lemon v. Kurtzman*) in what is referred to as the Lemon test. According to the Lemon test, law must have a secular purpose, the law must neither advance nor inhibit religion, the administration of the law must avoid

excessive governmental entanglement with religion. The intention of the application was clear, keep religion as far from government as possible.

The problem, according to critics, was that the interpretation promoted an anti-religion worldview giving priority to secularism which itself serves a religious-like function. The moral basis that religion brings to life has been undermined in the process. The critics of strict separation have argued that the constitutional prohibition was directed at government favoring of one religion not the rejection of all religion. Jeffrey Rosen (2000) suggests the equal treatment model was first embraced by the majority of Justices in the *Widmar v. Vincent* (1981) which concluded religious organizations could not be excluded from using public property simply because they were religious. According to Rosen, this interpretation has been gaining in support for the past two decades with the Supreme Court poised to overturn the strict separation approach during the 2000 term. His conclusion is that "the era of strict separation is over" (p. 40).

What is most fascinating is the explanation that Rosen gives for the shift in interpretation. He suggests that the building and crumbling of the wall between government and religion had most to do with the distrust between religious groups. A driving force, maybe the driving force, behind the strict separation interpretation was anti-Catholic southern Protestant resistance to Catholics who would most benefit from public funding for parochial schools. Justice Black, Rosen points out, was an "enthusiastic anti-Papist." The anti-Catholic sentiment was quite active in the 40s and 50s, even into the 60s as the election of President Kennedy demonstrated.

Rosen suggests that while suspicion of Catholics may have been one of the most powerful forces behind strict separation, other religious groups also saw an advantage in it. Rosen suggests that mainstream Jewish organizations like the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith believed the best way to protect Jews from discrimination was to have a high wall between government and religion. Ivers (1989) documents the effective work of Leo Peiffer, a lawyer for the American Jewish Congress, in building the wall of separation with his crowning achievement the *Lemon v. Kurtzman* decision in 1971. In other words, according to Rosen, one of the fundamental causes for the wall of separation was religious resistance to other religions.

The shift to an equal treatment interpretation, Rosen suggests, is possible because the walls between religions themselves have come down. Both Catholics and Jews, he

...continued on page 5

...continued from page 4

argues, have assimilated into society and experience far less prejudice and discrimination than was the case 50 years ago when the strict separation model was embraced. Indeed, three of the current Justices are Catholic and two are Jewish. Hunter (1991) makes the same observation about religious cooperation in his popular book Culture Wars (1991). Hunter suggests that the primary cultural clash has shifted from religious tensions to epistemological tensions. There is far more agreement, he suggests, between Protestants, Catholics, Muslims and Jews who hold an orthodox worldview (characterized by an acceptance of transcendent absolute truth) than their counterparts who embrace a progressive worldview (characterized by an acceptance of unfolding relative truth).

Recent Supreme Court decisions have revealed a serious division between the Justices on the issue of religion and government. In one of the most significant recent decisions, *Rosenberger v. the University of Virginia* (1995), four Justices came out clearly for equal treatment of religious groups with respect to benefits available to others (Rehnquist, Kennedy, Scalia, and Thomas) and four Justices were clearly for the older model of strict separation (Souter, Stevens, Ginsburg, and Breyer). The swing vote was Sandra Day O'Connor who agreed with the equal treatment approach for this case but did not commit herself to the model in the future. Clearly the next president, who may well have the opportunity to appoint one or more Justices, will impact the division that now exists.

Dealing with religious diversity is a daunting challenge. There is great diversity among religions and religious peoples, and as history clearly shows, religions and religious people have had trouble getting along. This is directly related to the fact that religious people find great solace in their beliefs and are deeply committed to them. In addition to personal benefits, Cnaan (1999) demonstrates the social contribution that religious groups bring to society. As the profession commits itself to empowering people and understands the importance of spirituality, it must find ways to apply the strengths perspective to religion. The social work profession, much like the Supreme Court, for the better part of the 20th century, has trivialized the role of religion in the lives of client systems and larger society. It must, in its own way, make a shift from strict separation to equal treatment.

Rosen argues that the strict separation model of religion and government is an aberration even in our own history and that it appears likely the Supreme Court will move to a more typical accommodation model. The same argument can be made with respect to the relationship between religion and social work. Religion and helping have historically been intimately linked. The attempt to secularize helping, possibly a necessary development as the country became more heterogeneous, now must find ways to once again include religious perspectives including those whose theology and worldview do not fit neatly with the dominant progressive paradigm held to tenaciously by many social workers. No less than the NASW Code of Ethics and the CSWE Curriculum Policy Curriculum mandate it.

The questions are immensely complicated and fraught with tensions as deeply held beliefs are juxtaposed. It would seem that the social work profession, of all professions, should be at the forefront of the move to give equal treatment to religion and that it should be a model to others about how to embrace this form of diversity. Sadly, social work is not much of a model in how it deals with the tensions that accompany religious diversity. This is clearly not the case as many religious faculty, students and clients in agencies clients know. Emerging evidence (Ressler & Hodge, 2000; Pellebon, 2000) suggests a serious problem of religious prejudice and oppression in the profession towards those with a different worldview or theological orientation. There is surely a better alternative to the extremes of dismissing the entire phenomenon of religion, as the strict separationist position tends to do on the one hand, and the imposition of the majority on the minority, as Ivers fears will take place on the other.

Diverse and at peace. Is it too much to hope for? Is it more than social workers can envision? Does it call for conflict transformation skills beyond those currently at our disposal within the profession?

As the Supreme Court struggles to find a newer and possibly better link between government and religion, so must the profession begin to seriously engage in a way to accommodate religious diversity. Religious members themselves must lead the way by finding ways to interact with more comfort and respect. There is also a need for the profession, including the academy, to develop a commission on spirituality and religion to give serious attention to this matter. And from the beginning, the commission must avoid political posturing and find ways to include all voices in the search for a better way.

Diverse and at peace may be hard to achieve, but it is not too much to work toward.

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To Forgive Is Human After All

Robert C. Hopkins, ACSW, PhD, London Brook Associates

Like many others with a religious upbringing, I was encouraged to respond to the old adage "To err is human, to forgive is Divine". The encouragement was to aspire to the Divine and practice forgiveness as a spiritual virtue. In the context of work with people who have suffered traumatic injuries, this mandate has come under challenge. It was through one of the aphorisms for which Alcoholics Anonymous has become renowned, that it was possible to see a more worldly view of the forgiveness process. The phrase was: "Resentments are nothing other than allowing other people to take up space in your head rent free." This began a process of examining forgiveness not as a virtue but as a necessary component of adjustment and recovery from traumatic events as well as chronic illnesses.

It was at this juncture that it became apparent that my clients might expect to hear from their minister, priest or rabbi on the topic of forgiveness, but were not expecting to have their counselor/Social Worker address this issue. After all, wasn't forgiveness intrinsically a religious or spiritual issue? How could forgiveness relate to recovery? Anyway, their logic went, who they blamed for their injury or illness was a personal decision and even their religious guide might encounter a barrier when broaching that subject.

One approach that seemed justifiable, from a lay person's perspective, was to find support for challenging blaming on the grounds that it represents a distorted thinking style, placing it in the grand tradition of Cognitive Therapy. Blaming is identified as one of the fifteen distorted thinking styles examined by McKay, et.al. (1981). Surely, a Social Worker might challenge a client to let go of blaming, and thus resentment, using this approach. Inspired by this theory, it seemed useful to add that assigning blame to any event or illness is reductionist. There are almost always multiple contributing factors to any of life's circumstances. To attach blame is to single out one or a few people for a disproportionate amount of causality. It is thus, inaccurate, as well as unfair.

This theory seemed to work well with an elderly gentleman who initially was determined to blame himself and feel guilty for the death of his ex-wife. She had died in the same accident that had caused him to suffer a brain injury. He was depressed, in part, because he blamed himself for choosing the route that he had taken in providing her a ride home. He recognized that there was no way he could avoid the auto that had pulled out in front of him. Still, he could not forgive himself. The logical analysis of the accident and use of cognitive therapy to point out his distorted thinking about blame was successful. After a second session, he was able to forgive himself for his part in the accident.

The cognitive approach was without success in reaching a young woman whose accident was caused by a drunken driver who was traveling north on a southbound

stretch of freeway. She was determined to see that justice was done. She spoke out forcefully after viewing a videotape presentation of Rabbi Harold Kushner based on his book When Bad Things Happen to Good People (1981). She stated that she could forgive God for her accident, but she couldn't and wouldn't forgive the other driver. Cognitive therapy might have been successful in challenging her negative self-talk about her own ability to forgive until his punishment was completed, however, she was so emotionally charged that a rational analysis of her resentment was not feasible within the group session in which the videotape was reviewed.

In the brief time that was available in that group session, what was attempted was to persuade her to set a deadline on her mission of resentment. She herself suggested this in outlining that the court date was coming up for him to face the legal charges attendant to driving under the influence. The duration of the support group session made it difficult to pursue the issue of forgiveness much further. However, another client took an interest in her resentment and sought to urge her to consider forgiveness for the sake of her own peace of mind. Time did not permit a thorough discussion of this approach in the group setting, although it proved to be a fruitful avenue to pursue in individual therapy with the client, which was done with another therapist.

These ruminations on success and failure in helping clients achieve forgiveness, highlight some ways that Social Workers might employ their expertise in conjunction with religious leaders in helping people achieve the healthy state of forgiveness. First and foremost, is to help the client to see that forgiveness is something other than a moral imperative. It is an essential ingredient in restoring balanced mental health. Carrying guilt, as well as resentment interferes with happiness and successful functioning.

Yet, the book of religious philosophy, A Course in Miracles (p. 214, 1996), offers the following compelling reasons for the pursuit of forgiveness.

The unforgiving mind is full of fear, and offers love no room to be itself; no place where it can spread its wings in peace and soar above the turmoil of the world. The unforgiving mind is sad, without the hope of respite and release from pain. It suffers and abides in misery, peering about in darkness, seeing not, yet certain of the danger lurking there.... The unforgiving mind is in despair, without the prospect of a future which can offer anything but more despair. Yet it regards its judgment of the world as irreversible, and does not see it has condemned itself to this despair. It thinks it cannot change, for what it sees bears witness that its judgment is correct. It does not ask, because it thinks it knows. It does not question, certain it is right.

If one's client is Christian, one may be successful in appealing to this desire by invoking the words of Christ in the Lord's prayer, regarding forgiveness, emphasizing that forgiveness is received as it is given. However, for those who are unmoved by religious motives or equations, a more powerful appeal may be made to logic and/or self-interest, or even peer pressure.

As a Social Worker, I think we need to be conversant in these three approaches. The *first* is the Cognitive Therapy approach discussed above which can help the client see the inaccuracy of blaming self or others for unwanted events, illness, insufficient or ill-timed treatment. It might also be used to challenge the repetitious self-talk that accompanies ongoing resentment. The *second* approach attempts to counsel the client that guilt or resentment poisons his or her own experience of life and that no good return will come from harboring these feelings. With this approach anything from problem solving to behavioral interventions to accepting the need to just let go of the ill feelings can help the client leave it behind once the dysfunctionality of the guilt and/or resentment is realized. The *third* approach makes use of a support group and the value of shared

experience. No matter how well intentioned the Social Worker, or how good the rapport, there will undoubtedly be clients who will not be persuaded by anyone who has not walked in their shoes. A peer group is likely to contain at least one person who has a tale to tell of the relief (s)he has experienced in unloading the weight of ill feelings and will speak knowingly and convincingly of the value of forgiveness.

With these approaches, I believe that we can bring our clients to realize the joy that follows forgiveness and the peace of mind that will allow them to get on with life.

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Society Chapter Updates

Oregon Chapter

The Graduate School of Social Work at Portland State University was the site of the Oregon Chapter's January meeting. Director of Field Instruction and Assistant Professor at PSU, Risa Kiam, MSW, made a powerful presentation about 'Educational Trends in Spirituality and Social Work'. Risa began by engaging with interesting facts from a national survey on course work intersecting spirituality and practice. A lively discussion ensued about our personal experience of applying spirituality in our practices. The group applauded Risa's announcement the PSU Graduate School of Social Work is teaching its first class in Social Work and Spirituality this term.

The core leadership team of four continue to meet every other month to determine what guest speakers will be invited to our open meetings. For more information, please contact Eddy Crouch at (503) 282-2483.

Buffalo, New York Chapter

The next meeting of the Buffalo chapter will be June 14, 2000. Attendees are encouraged to read the book *Walking A Sacred Path- Discovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool* by Lauren Astress before the meeting and be prepared for a lively discussion. If you are interested in attending, please contact Bonnie Collins at (716) 648-4455.

Utah Chapter News

The Utah chapter is continuing under new student leadership. We are still using our popular format of inviting participants to take turns leading meetings and presenting experiential programs on their own favorite spiritual practice or intervention. Interest in spirituality continues to increase in the University of Utah and in the community, and our membership reflects a diversity of

spiritual and religious practices. For more information, please contact David Derezotes at (801) 585-3546 or dderezotes@sowk.utah.edu

Washington DC Area Chapter

Linda Haake reports that the chapter is still looking for other individuals who are interested in small group meetings for personal and professional development. Contact Linda at (703) 750-0022.

Erie, Pennsylvania Chapter

A very successful one day conference was held in April 2000 in hopes of organizing a chapter in Erie. For more information contact Jim Dimperio at (814) 868-8661.

New York Chapter

In February, the Society assisted member Don Cornelius in organizing a one day conference at Molloy College in Rockville Centre. The conference was a success and a new chapter is being formed. Anyone interested in more information may contact Don at (516) 678-5000.

Southern California Chapter

Society member Verna Fisher is interested in organizing a Southern California Chapter. Anyone interested please contact Verna at (562) 860-5804 or vernalwhispers@juno.com .

Lincoln, Nebraska Chapter

A new chapter is starting in Lincoln. Contact Kristin Landis at 402.420.2129 or kristinlandis@yahoo.com for additional information.

Join the Society

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and nonreligious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and nonreligious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory and practice.

Membership benefits include a subscription to the Society newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference. At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year.

Make checks payable to: The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0001

Please complete the membership form below.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Country: _____

Work Phone: () _____

Home Phone: () _____

E-Mail: _____
(E-mail addresses are case sensitive. Please distinguish between upper and lower case letters.)

Check all that apply:

- Student, school _____
 Practitioner, field of practice _____
 Educator, school/university _____

Areas of interest: _____

Level of Contribution

- Discount Regular Member (Students/Retirees) \$15
 Supporting Member \$60

- Regular Member \$30
 Sustaining Member \$100

- Contributing Member \$45
 Special Benefactor Member \$500 and above



School of Social Work
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

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Membership expiration date.
This is the last issue we can send you if your membership is not current.

The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Volume 7, Issue 2

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Toward a Deep-Ecological Social Work: Its Environmental, Spiritual and Political Dimensions

Fred H. Besthorn, Ph.D., Washburn University

*We are of Earth, and belong to You. Every step that we take upon You should
be done in a sacred manner; each step should be as a prayer.*

-Black Elk, First Nations Spiritual Leader

Social work has always claimed for itself an ecological awareness. Our person-in-environment, ecological, systems and eco-systems models of practice have consistently centered our collective attention on the link between the individual and their unique surroundings (Besthorn, 1997; Besthorn & Canda, In press). They have been helpful guides to our intervention strategies and our understanding of the human condition (Germain & Gitterman, 1996). Indeed, few social workers would claim that their professional orientation is not guided, if only peripherally, by some form of environmental or ecological consciousness. Yet, for all their descriptive and explanatory power, social work's conventional environmental models, with few exceptions, have shown a near complete disregard for integrating a comprehensive understanding of the connection between person and the natural environment and the way we derive individual and collective meaning from this association. Social work doesn't generally recognize the connection between person and nature, inquire into it, or develop theory around it, or place it in its computations of what's important to those the profession serves. Nature has tended to become the benign backdrop for more fundamentally important personal or social interactions.

Toward a Deep-Ecological Social Work

Recently, however, social work has begun to discover the importance of being deeply ecologically conscious (Besthorn, 1997; Coates, 1999; Hoff & McNutt, 1994; Park, 1996). Yet, there are few explicit examples of social work developing language and descriptions to help the profession better depict and explain the relationship between humans and the natural realm (Besthorn & Tegtmeier, 1999; National Association of Social Workers, 2000; Robbins, Chatterjee & Canda, 1998). The social work profession seems locked in an inhibiting provincialism, content in behaving as though there is little, environmentally, to capture our concern. While our business-as-usual priorities largely remain psychological adjustment, service brokerage or social control, the bulk of recent international activity suggests that the world community is taking seriously the need to move beyond previous environmental viewpoints (Hallman, 1995). It is coming to a holistic realization of humankind's alliance with the natural world, the priority of pre-

servicing and protecting nature, ensuring ecological justice and envisioning sustainable societies (Brown, Flavin & French, 1998; Hoff, 1998). Social work professionals need to become active participants in this revitalized ecological ethos. We need an orienting framework of ecological awareness with sufficient depth and breadth to help prepare us for the complexities and challenges of the next one-hundred years. If it is true that the 21st century will be the global/environmental century (Hamilton, 2000; Molitor, 1999) then social work must position itself to respond to a new set of contingencies. Social work needs to go beyond its narrow environmental and ecological discourse to a Deep-Ecological Consciousness.

Dimension of a Deep-Ecological Social Work

Any appreciation for a Deep-Ecological Social Work is greatly advanced by a focused reflection upon specific dimensions of this orienting framework. While the current discussion cannot fully articulate a theory and praxis for a Deep-Ecological Social Work, it can act as a place to begin a dialogue. I see the contours of a Deep-Ecological Social Work as coalescing along three dimensions.

Environmentally Aware: A Deep-Ecological Social Work is environmentally aware. That is, it recognizes that (1) nature is the irreplaceable source of humankind's absolute physical sustenance and imaginative capacities and thus the hinge point of our theoretical orientations and practice strategies; and (2) because global natural disasters and environmental calamity increasingly impact large numbers of people while having disproportionate repercussions for the poor and marginalized, the profession has an ethical and moral responsibility to be actively involved in addressing problems of environmental crisis.

Nature is not merely an abstraction debated by philosophers or cosmologists. Nature is the tangible core or ground of all our human experience and preoccupations. It becomes our great cosmic interrogative—a penultimate question of life or death of humankind and the whole planetary ecosystem. Indeed, it is the question that makes relative all other questions and is the beginning of the wisdom of all wisdom. Nature is not the inherent concern of physical scientists, government officials, environmental groups or business interests. The earth is a universal

Director's Notes...

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
Omaha, NE

The annual conference has become a wonderful opportunity for us to get together, share ideas and experiences, and build community with fellow social workers interested in the interface of spirituality and social work. But, these conferences only take place once a year and there are many members who can't afford the time or expense involved in traveling to one of these national meetings. The Society's Board of Directors, at our last meeting in June, discussed ways to facilitate more widespread opportunities for members to connect.

Facilitation of the development of new Society chapters was one avenue discussed. Chapters began to spring up somewhat organically since the earliest days of the organization. Some have come and gone, particularly as chapter organizers moved or no longer had the time to keep the chapter going. Others have changed focus over time and new chapters continue to develop.

Chapter activities and meeting formats have varied widely. Some chapters meet at schools of social work on university campuses. Others have met at agencies or in members' homes. Some chapters regularly schedule speakers and may give CEUs for the programs. Others have meetings that are informal and provide a forum for members to share ideas and experiences.

So, what do you do if you live in an area that does not have a Society chapter? If you are interested in starting a chapter please contact me and I will give you ideas and suggestions as to how you might begin that process. I will also put you in touch with other chapter organizers around the country to get ideas and support from them. I can send you packages of this publication to distribute to interested persons and provide you names, addresses and phone numbers for other members in your area.

A number of chapters have started by initially having a one-day conference in their area on the topic of spirituality and social work. I can help with the planning, organization and administration of such meetings. And, I can travel to join you and/or speak at these meetings. Chapters have recently started in Erie, PA and Long Island, NY in this fashion. For further information you can reach me at either (402)554-2941 or rrussel@unomaha.edu.

The Catholic University of America to Host 2001 Society Conference

The Society is pleased to announce that The Catholic University of America National Catholic School of Social Service in Washington, DC, will be the host site for the 2001 Seventh Annual Conference, "**The Creative Power of Spiritual Diversity**". Focusing on both creativity and diversity, the 2001 conference will provide an opportunity for participants to come together as a community, sharing innovative approaches to integrating spirituality and religion into practice and education. This year, in response to conference evaluations, some exciting new changes will be introduced into the format. Beyond our traditional retreats and workshops, Morning Sessions, an Arts Forum and Arts Display will be included. Completely experiential in nature, morning sessions will be designed to introduce participants to a variety of meditative, prayerful and silent practices. An Arts Forum to share spiritually inspired creative works such as poetry, music or visual arts will allow participants to share creations and the inspiration for his/her work. The Arts Display will provide an opportunity for participants to share visual art and will be open throughout the conference. *We invite all members to submit proposals for retreats, workshops, morning sessions, the arts forum and the arts display (application forms on pages 4 & 5). Submissions will be accepted until December 1, 2000.*

Other changes

The most obvious of the changes will be the switch from our traditional Saturday through Tuesday format. This next year the conference will run from Thursday, June 28 to Sunday, July 1, 2001.

In the Works

The Catholic University of America and our Washington DC Area Chapter are already busy with plans to make 2001 a different, exhilarating and memorable experience. If you are interested in volunteering with the DC Area Chapter, please contact Linda Haake at LaHaake@aol.com. We are very excited about the upcoming conference and look forward to seeing all of you next year in Washington DC!

**Society for Spirituality and Social Work
Networking Meeting
at the
NASW National Meeting
Baltimore, Maryland
Friday, November 3, 2000**

SSSW is sponsoring an early morning networking meeting at the NASW National Meeting this year. If you are interested in attending, refer to your meeting program for the time and room of this session or contact Robin Russel at (402) 554-2941, or rrussel@unomaha.edu.

CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

Seventh Annual Conference of The Society for Spirituality and Social Work

'The Creative Power of Spiritual Diversity'

June 28 – July 1, 2001
The Catholic University of America
National Catholic School of Social Service
Washington, D.C.

Proposals are invited from practitioners, faculty, and students for the seventh annual conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. *We seek presentations that focus on the use of creativity in social work practice and education, in the context of spiritual diversity.*

Beyond our traditional retreats and workshops, *Morning Sessions*, an *Arts Forum* and *Arts Display* will be included. Completely experiential in nature, Morning Sessions will be designed to introduce participants to a variety of meditative, prayerful and silent practices. An Arts Forum to share spiritually inspired creative works such as poetry, music or visual arts will allow participants to share creations and the inspiration for his/her work. The Arts Display will provide an opportunity for participants to share visual art and will be open throughout the conference (see page 4 for application).

All topics are welcome that address spirituality in relation to social work practice, policy, education, research, and theory. The following topics are especially encouraged:

- Innovative approaches to integrating creativity and/or diversity into practice and education
- Direct practice approaches that integrate attention to the body, mind, spirit, social relations, and relations with the natural world
- Agency administrative approaches that attend to the spiritual growth and strengths of staff, clients, and community
- Macro practice and policy approaches that promote peace, justice, and spiritual development for all people and well-being for the planetary ecology
- Innovations in social work education that address spirituality and religious diversity
- Theory development that applies insights from religious studies, transpersonal psychology, eco-psychology, and other cross-cultural and international disciplines
- International and inter-religious collaborations and new developments in all regions of the world on spirituality, religion, and social work

Proposals may use various didactic and experiential formats. Proposals will be accepted if at least two of three reviewers approve it and space is available in the program. Presenters must have appropriate training in social work or another relevant discipline that prepares them to present on their topics. MSW and BSW students must co-present with a practitioner or faculty member. Presenters must be members of the Society (see membership form on page 13). Presentations should be consistent with the mission of the Society to respect all people and to develop spiritually sensitive helping that honors diverse religious and nonreligious forms of spirituality. Primary presenters may submit only one proposal through this Call for Presentations. No author may be listed on more than two workshop or retreat proposals (one as primary, one as non-primary). *Exempt from this policy are submissions for morning sessions, the arts forum and display.* Please submit four copies of the proposal application and four copies of a 300-word maximum abstract (see page 5). Include title but no identifying information on the abstract. A separate set of forms and abstracts must be submitted for each presentation. Send all materials to: Robin Russel, Ph.D., School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha NE 68182, USA.

Phone: (402) 554-2941 e-mail: sssw@unomaha.edu

Fax: (402) 554-3788

PROPOSALS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY DECEMBER 5, 2000

Society for Spirituality and Social Work 2001 Morning Sessions and Artistic Works Application

Morning Sessions: Completely experiential in nature, morning sessions will be designed to introduce participants to a variety of meditative, prayerful and silent practices (yoga, tai chi, qigong, circle dancing) for both personal and professional growth. The content of these sessions will be to learn through actual practice of the specific discipline, not through a didactic presentation. Individuals applying to lead such sessions need to have at least one year of experience and/or training in the specific practice.

Arts Forum/ Display: We are looking for individuals to share spiritually inspired creative works such as poetry, dance, music or visual arts. We encourage a variety of presentations from members and students utilizing diverse mediums. Indicate whether you are applying to the Arts Forum, Arts Display or both.

3. Presenter Information:

Primary Presenter (*Correspondence will be sent to this presenter*)

Name: _____

Social work academic degrees and professional licensures (*If not a social worker, indicate profession and relevant licensures*):

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Are you a ___ student, ___ practitioner, ___ faculty member?

Additional presenters: List names below. (*For each additional presenter, provide the above information on a separate sheet of paper*).

Indicate total number of presenters here: _____

4. Submission information

Morning Sessions:

Indicate discipline (meditative, prayerful or silence practice)

How long have you practiced this discipline (indicate any specific training)

**Attach a short description (50 words or less) of the content of your session.*

Arts Forum/ Arts Display:

Please fill out separate sheet for each submission.

Artistic submission (*check all that apply*):

___ music (*instrumental, vocal, both*)

___ movement (*dance*)

___ word (*poetry, narratives, one acts, etc*)

___ visual arts (*specify medium*) _____

___ other: _____

**Attach a short description (50 words or less) of the content of your session along with a picture, tape, or copy of your submission.*

I want to be included in:

___ Arts Forum, ___ Arts Display, ___ both the Forum & Display

Note: To be included in the conference brochure, your presentation must be accepted. Membership must be current.

Society for Spirituality and Social Work 2001 Presentation Proposal Application

1. Title of Presentation:

2. 50-word description:

3. Presenter Information:

Primary Presenter (Correspondence will be sent to this presenter)

Name: _____

Social work academic degrees and professional licensures (If not a social worker, indicate profession and relevant licensures):

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Are you a ___ student, ___ practitioner, ___ faculty member?

Additional presenters: List names below. (For each additional presenter, provide the above information on a separate sheet of paper).

Indicate total number of presenters here: _____

4. Presentation Format: Please indicate the format of your presentation below. Presentations, whether experiential or didactic, present information directly relevant to the social work profession, promoting participants' skills in practice, research, social work education, policy, or theory. We encourage the combination of experiential and didactic approaches, especially with the 3-hour presentations. **Retreats should include some didactic content, but will be mainly experiential in nature, with the goal of enhancing participants' own spiritual development.** Retreats are not necessarily academic in orientation or directly relevant to social work practice. However, they should be consistent with the mission of the Society.

Time Format (check one)

- 3 hour presentation 3 hour panel
- 1 1/2 hour presentation 1 1/2 hour panel
- 3 hour experiential retreat

Content (check one)

- didactic experiential (all retreats)
- both didactic and experiential

Focus (check any relevant)

- creativity
- diversity
- practice
- policy
- education
- research
- theory
- personal/ professional growth

Note: To be included in the conference brochure, your presentation must be accepted. Then each presenter must pay membership and the discounted presenter's registration fee by March 15, 2001. After March 15, no refunds will be made. Non-registered presentations will be deleted from the program.

***Attach a 300-word maximum abstract describing the content and format of your presentation.**

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concern for all individuals and professions. Its despoliation and lasting protection is not limited to the purview of experts, any given culture or any specific generation. We all have a stake in our one earth community.

Spiritually Sensitive: A Deep-Ecological Social Work is acutely conscious of the complex relationship between spirituality and ecology. Indeed, we can comfortably say that spirituality is inherently ecological and ecology is inherently spiritual. That is, spirituality is frequently understood in terms profoundly related to the natural world. A Deep-Ecological spirituality impresses on our consciousness an awareness of the (1) interconnectedness and interdependence of all things and (2) the rightful place of humankind in the cosmic order.

Deep-Ecological spirituality recognizes that humans share a common destiny with the earth. It celebrates an ongoing cultivation of a deeper identification of self with the whole of the cosmic order. From this vantage point self-interest becomes identical with the interest of the whole. Humanity and nature cannot be separated- the sacred is in and of both. A Deep-Ecological spirituality acknowledges that we belong, from the very core of our physical bodies to the finest creations of our mind, to a constantly emerging cosmic/spiritual process. Humans emerge from, are dependent upon and shall return to an underlying energy or Divine presence pervading all reality. Nothing exists outside of this relationship cycle. Humans are embedded in a cosmic web that is shared with a host of mutually interdependent beings, human and nonhuman. This web confirms that everything that exists co-exists and pre-exists at one and the same time. The planetary ecosystem, of which humans are one part, is a whole: soil and water, atmosphere and land, plants and minerals, animals and plants, and human beings interacting in a dynamic, mutually supportive way.

Much of the dominant western worldview, both secular and religious, regard human beings as the pinnacle of the created order. We believe ourselves to be the focal point of everything. We regard all things and all other beings as existing for our purposes, our benefit, our convenience. Indeed, ubiquitous anthropocentrism understands all creatures as finding their meaning only through our benevolence. All beings are then at the mercy of the human enterprise and subject to our contrivances, exploitation and domination. Western conceptualizations of the human place in the cosmic scheme of things sanctioned and bolstered the spreading violence and aggression unleashed against nature since the beginning of the industrial era. This same model of superiority and pugnacity has been reproduced in aggression against women, weaker peoples and militarily inferior civilizations. An eco-spirituality requires that humankind advance beyond this anthropocentric or human centered orientation to reality.

Politically Involved: A Deep-Ecological Social Work necessitates that we study human historical-social-political systems in interaction with environmental systems. Human patterns of collective organization are inseparable from those of the natural world. Social injustices and ecological injustice are interwoven in a dynamic interplay of mutual involvement. Poverty is

seen not only in the lack of financial assistance and social support infrastructure but also in polluted water supplies, poisoned air, and unhealthy living quarters. A politically involved Deep-Ecological Social Work is made manifest in at least two ways. First, in a willingness to question deeply and insistently the social, political, economic structures and assumptions of modern, industrial society, and second in the capacity to offer a vision of the kind of society and ecological sensibility necessary to sustain human and ecosystem viability.

The crisis of the modern world has been created, in large measure, by the Western industrial growth model of production and consumption. This model tends to appreciate only those entities and practices which have market value—material things and the flow of goods and services. Industrial economies create need for products even when needs for such things do not legitimately exist. Needs and wants become relatively indistinguishable and the illusion created implicitly suggests that consumption and human happiness are essentially equivalent. The controlling logic of growth and progress uses up enormous capital and decimates non-renewable natural resources. It promotes ruthless competition and isolating individualism—the struggle of all against all. The inevitable consequence of this pattern of development is growing economic, social and political imbalances between diverse sectors of the world's societies and callous exploitation of nature and fellow beings for the benefit of the dominant classes. Human potential for compassion, tenderheartedness and unhesitating cooperation are put aside for wanton proclivities toward exclusion and class or personal advantage. Indeed, despite promises and flashy marketing campaigns to the contrary, the truly enduring and most notable by-products of this system has been garbage, toxic waste, atmospheric contamination, acid rain, ozone depletion, global warming and human hunger, dislocation, disease and exploitation in unparalleled proportion.

While questioning this deeply flawed system is an essential beginning for a politically involved Deep-Ecological Social Work; it must not end there. A Deep-Ecological Social Work must also contribute to a alternative vision of the good life. This vision must be compatible with a natural environment than can support the continuation of human life and well being. Without this necessary intuition of the mind, of our personal and collective imagery, it will not be possible to bring about a revolution in relationship between humankind and nature. This alternative vision must reflect a long-term commitment to identifying sources of human satisfaction that can intergenerationally flourish in harmony with nature. The focus of human satisfaction changes from quantity of life's possessions to quality of life. Modest activities such a simple work, ordinary conversation, spiritual and celebratory ritual, artistic endeavors, and family leisure are just a few of the ways of being that are not based on consumptive materialism. They are ways of being which can endure through countless generations and, in the end, are the kinds of activities and associations that most of us would confess are the main determinants of our happiness.

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Conclusion: A Call to Solidarity

As environmental crises grow, as economic and political stratification on a global scale continues to be ever more imbalanced, and as the world progresses toward a different model of collective understanding and social organization, social work must also adjust. Our current ecological and environmental models are not enough. It is not enough to think of a human ecology that is preoccupied exclusively with human reactions relative to family, friends, agency, community or social relationships. It is not enough to think of an environmentalism whose twin cornerstones of shallow conservationism and preservationism simply favor sequestered natural reserves or least damage scenarios while the wholesale plundering of the earth's carrying capacity goes on unabated. It is not enough to think of an earth ecology which is misanthropic to the human presence, as if humans are only capable of devastation and pillage and are not to be considered in the ecological equation. Our first task, as social workers deeply concerned for both people and nature, is to join hands to seek solidarity with other concerned social workers. We must create a new partnership in dialogue to begin redefining social work's existing ecological awareness. I suspect that there are social workers around the world who, like myself, share a deepening ecological consciousness, but who feel isolated in their devotion to the earth community and find it difficult incorporating their ecological commitments into professional discourse and practice.

Let us make common cause together. Let us come together during the summer of 2001 in Washington DC as part of the annual meeting of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work to discover how we begin. Let us tentatively call ourselves a "Global Alliance for a Deep-Ecological Social Work", recognizing the global scope of the dilemmas, the international reach of the concern and the combined strength we can gain from each other.

Dr. Besthorn is working to develop a web site for social workers who would like to learn more. If you would like to contribute to this new initiative or have questions or input, please contact Dr. Besthorn at Washburn University, Social Work Department, 1700 College Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66621. He can be reached via e-mail at zzbest@washburn.edu

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Spiritual Support Circle

The Spiritual Support Circle is open to all members of the Society. It's intent is to share with members requests for prayer/ energy/ positive thoughts during illness and times of need via the internet. To participate in the Spiritual Support Circle, send an email with the subject listed as 'SSC' to sssw@unomaha.edu. Robin Russel and Cris Lydon serve as administrators of the Circle and will send periodical messages including recent requests.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work wishes to clarify that the creation of the Spiritual Support Circle does not signify the endorsement of certain spiritual beliefs/ practices over others.

Holistic Social Work Perspectives and Baha'i Principles for Promoting Global Social Welfare

Sondra SeungJa Doe, Ph.D., Indiana University Northwest

Throughout history, religious teachings inspired progressive human relations and social systems, often initiating social movements for promoting social welfare. In this article, the author will examine the conceptual linkage between Baha'i teachings and holistic social work perspectives. The purpose of this article is to briefly examine Baha'i Faith's primary teachings that can serve as a theoretical base for social work intervention for promoting social welfare on a global level.

Holistic International Social Work and the Universal Value System

As reviewed by Midgley and Sanzenbach (1989), earlier studies by social work scholars concluded that teachings of various world religions were generally compatible with humanistic social work values such as the inherent value of man and self-determination. However, when religious teachings are too narrow and dogmatic, social workers need to guard against the challenge posed by them (Midgley and Sanzenbach, 1989). It is the author's opinion that, Baha'i teachings, compared to other religious perspectives, provide a broader holistic theoretical framework for international social work, transcending religious, dogmatic, cultural, regional, and ethnic boundaries.

As technology allows humanity to become seamlessly connected worldwide, international social work is seen as an increasingly important field. In enhancing global social welfare, it is imperative to incorporate a universal value system into holistic social work perspectives. In the digitalized contemporary world, the question is how effectively international social work can reflect a universal value system, uniting the members of the global village ideologically, thus making technological global networking an even more meaningful instrument for sharing knowledge and expertise. Taking a holistic perspective, social workers need to understand human needs on a global scale and how unmet human needs in the world influence the sense of well-being across communities and countries. It is the author's opinion that holistic social work perspectives can be made complete when a universal value system is incorporated into international social work interventions.

Baha'i Principles of One God, One Humanity, and the World as One Country

It needs to be noted that Baha'i Faith's principles are all encompassing and universalistic in dealing with humanity's conflicting needs. Of all Baha'i Faith's principles, the most fundamental teachings include the themes of one God, one humanity, and the world as one country. In Baha'i Faith, the common foundation of all religions is one God. The theme of one God unites all world religions in that Baha'is believe that various religious teachings in different forms and traditions all come from one God. It is taught that the essential truths of all religious messengers are from one God who meets diverse human needs in different ways at different times (Baha'u'llah, 1983; NSA,

1992). Religious unity and progressive revelation of God's reality is a central theme in Baha'i teachings, tied to the concept of one God (Esslemont, 1980).

The principle of the **oneness of humanity** is based on the Baha'i teaching that "Ye are all leaves of one tree and the fruits of one branch." (Abdu'lBaha, 1982, p. 154). The world's humanity is likened to a tree with different limbs of people and branches of nations. In Baha'i Faith, a future is envisioned in which all mankind actualize the concept of one humanity and live harmoniously as one family like fruits of the same tree (Abdu'lBaha, 1982; Baha'u'llah, 1982). Under the concept of one humanity, Baha'is are taught to eliminate prejudices of all kinds -- whether religious, racial, national, or political -- which are destructive of divine foundations in man (NSA, 1992). From a Baha'i point of view, the principle of the oneness of mankind is considered no mere indication of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of an impractical hope. Rather, "it represents the consummation of human evolution" (NSA, 1992, p. 46), which culminates "the evolution of institutional capacity for social and economic development" (OSED, 1994).

Baha'is are taught to regard the world as one country and mankind its citizens (Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1986). Religion is seen as the greatest instrument for achieving the world order as well as individual tranquility (Esslemont, 1980:133). The concept of the **world as one country** and world unity is the goal towards which mankind is expected to strive. It is taught that "to be a Baha'i simply means to love all the world, to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood" (Esslemont, 1980, p. 71). Baha'i principles include universal peace upheld by a world commonwealth, a universal auxiliary language, and other peace-promoting approaches. It is envisioned that under the federal world commonwealth, all races, creeds, nations, and classes are permanently united, while its state members enjoy the autonomy and individual freedom. Baha'is envision that the organic unity of the whole commonwealth will be safeguarded by a world legislature (NSA, 1992).

Individual Spirituality and Social Progress

Whereas human beings' desires to promote others' welfare have largely been met through various religious systems on the local and regional level, the realization of collective human well-being on a global level demands greater religious inspirations. The actualization of international social and economic development requires a global perspective that transcends regional religious beliefs, dogmas, values, traditions, and customs, thus overcoming the divisiveness of various religious systems.

To Baha'is, the Kingdom of God or human institutions is considered the expression of the kingdom within or the inner spirituality. This leads to a balanced Baha'i perspective that recognizes mankind's needs for both individual spiritual progress

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and collective material civilization (Abdu'lBaha, 1982). Baha'i Faith as a religious system is unique in that it provides a global outlook on the relationship between the individual's spiritual development and the entire humanity's collective progress. From the Baha'i point of view, material civilization or social progress cannot be isolated from individual progress or spiritual development (MDS, 1999). The transformation required for establishing a new social order is expected to occur "simultaneously within human consciousness and the structure of social institutions" (MDS, 1999, p. 40), reflecting "a dynamic coherence between the spiritual and practical requirements of life on earth" (MDS, 1999, p. 15). Baha'i communities are defined as "communities of service to humankind" (MDS, 1999, p. 7), in which spiritual teachings are applied to various aspects of life to bring about patterns of social change.

Holistic Social Work Theory for Global Social Welfare

In the 21st century in which global networking has become a technological reality and political ideological conflicts between countries have also eased, international cooperation for promoting global social welfare requires a reexamination of universal value bases. Universal minimal moral principles and a fundamental humanitarian value base for guiding global social and economic development, have developed transferable intercultural social work scholars recognizing, among others, the importance of *empowerment* perspectives and *social justice* (Gray, 1995; Mullaly, 1993; Taylor, 1999).

International social development is based on a holistic perspective that there is one human community. The concept of empowerment as a value base for international social work has a particularly unifying function of promoting collective responsibility and solidarity, which transcend Western individual values (Taylor, 1999). Empowerment-based social work toward global social development has the dimensions of personal, social, educational, economic, and political empowerment (Anderson, et. al, 1994). In addition, from a Jungian perspective that individuals' mental conditions are manifested in the world social and political situations, Woodruff (1996) suggested that the transpersonal or spiritual dimension of empowerment may be added to the five dimensions identified earlier.

It is the author's belief that international social work can become truly holistic when the transpersonal or spiritual dimension of empowerment is added to its work for promoting global social and economic development. Individual spiritual strengths can be mobilized not only for enhancing a personal sense of well-being but also for facilitating structural changes toward optimal global social welfare. According to Baha'i viewpoints on the relationship between individual well-being and society's collective welfare, Baha'i spirituality readily translates into full participation in building a new world order whose central theme is justice.

The Baha'i principles briefly highlighted in this article need to be further examined by postmodern social workers interested in expanding the holistic social work knowledge base and developing empowerment-focused expertise for international social work. In Baha'i faith, the whole world is compared to the

human body whose parts are intimately connected with one another (BICOPI, 1995). Baha'i Faith may be examined as a religious system with a holistic global mission and a universal aim to harmonize and balance one's spiritual relationship with the whole world.

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Storytelling Employs the Power of Imagination to Inspire Hope

Don Streit, L.C.S.W., New Opportunities Inc. & the University of Arkansas

The story as a therapeutic medium is a powerful vehicle of communication whether it takes the form of myth, fairy tale, memoir, or metaphor. The impact of storytelling can be seen in a child's smile, a parent's curious grin, and a highway patrol officer's raised eyebrow. The common thread in the stories is the power of imagination to overshadow the accuracy of the facts. The imagination's ability to picture oneself and the world in a different frame is the fertile ground for the story's transforming and reframing influence. The value of storytelling is widely affirmed from Joseph Campbell (1988) in the *Power of Myth* to Bruno Bettelheim's (1977) work on fairy tales in *The Uses of Enchantment*. Stories and legends energize the imagination and one reason for studying them is to be able to see the archetypal in daily experiences (Campbell, 1998). Milton Erickson wrote "The story aims at evoking and utilizing the patient's personal repertoire of positive understanding in order to obtain therapeutic responses that would have otherwise been beyond the patient's reach" (Erickson & Rossi, 1981, p. 189).

The process of storytelling in 'therapeutic conversations' is a primary means of building rapport between worker and client. When the client tells her bio/psycho/social/spiritual history she is conveying *her* history. That is, the story of her significant life events and her responses and decisions about the events. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a story is worth at least several meanings. Her story is spiritual in the way it embodies the "gestalt of the total process of human life and development, encompassing biological, mental, social and spiritual aspects." (Canda, 1990a, p. 13). In the client-worker relationship the meeting of the teller and the listener becomes a powerful alliance on the road to new behaviors and new meanings, especially when the client reveals the truth about her own shortcomings and/or missteps on the journey to wholeness. Her willingness to risk disclosing her true self is the leading edge of recovery and *re-storying* her life. An important aspect of working with the story is assisting the client to find meaning within the story. White proclaims the value of working with the client's story. White's work is based on the idea "that people's lives and relationships are shaped by the very knowledge and stories that (persons use) to give meaning to their experiences, and certain practices of self and of relationship that are associated with this knowledge and stories" (Roberts, 1994, p. 25).

Another powerful aspect of storytelling is the activation of the imagination, especially with the use of metaphors. In the metaphoric story "the therapist bears in mind all along that he's trying to reach the unconscious resources of the patient-forgotten learnings, unaccomplished programs, or gifts not yet exploited" (Zieg, 1994, p. 189). The imagination has much grist for the mill in the client's story. It sees with a different pair of eyes and ears when (it) hears the client's history. Imagination sees potential rather than the limitations that are usually the client's primary focus. It is this view, this image(ination) that the therapist encourages the clients to envision for themselves, gives the client a more hopeful glimpse of surviving, even thriving,

beyond the crisis.

The therapist can engage the client's imagination by telling a story (metaphor, myth, etc). This encourages the client to identify with a character or theme in the story and the opportunity for the therapist to invite the client to go out of their minds and into their imagination. The process of active imagination challenges the client to bypass the intellect's scrutinizing tendency to see logical or rational limitations to new behaviors or perspectives. Both daydream imagination and nighttime dream images offer suggestions for new life choices that are not logical. The symbols in these images powerfully suggest recovery and growth that the intellect typically discredits as unachievable or ludicrous. Yet when the client is presented with these images from another's perspective, she will likely experience hope in the imagination's novel vistas.

The therapist utilizes techniques that activate the imagination and use of metaphors. Sometimes the metaphors present themselves in hard facts, if a person has the eyes of imagination (perhaps the eyes of faith) to see. I was treated to such an experience during a time when I had convinced myself that some difficult realities of my life could never change. Naturally, I was delighted with the following experience.

As I walked my son up the driveway to his preschool, I noticed that the cracked old pathway had been freshly paved with new asphalt. There was nothing surprising about that, in fact, I welcomed the change. A few days later I noticed a slight crack and bulge in that hardened surface that I had not noticed the week before. I spent too much time looking down when I walked during those days so I noticed even the slightest change on that 'road before me'. Amazed, I thought about the curious flaw even when I wasn't walking on it. Something told me there was a message breaking through. Several days after I first noticed the crack, I noticed that a green shoot had definitely broken through that 'impossible', impenetrable surface. Two days later that shoot proclaimed its victorious daffodil. I could not imagine how this happened. No matter what logical, physical explanation for that violation of the hard realities, somehow the spirit has the eyes to see new possibilities. The spirit recognizes there is more that is possible than what reason would reveal. It is the use of such metaphoric experiences, in the therapeutic environment, that can present a new awareness and the opportunity for growth to a client.

Use of storytelling within the therapeutic relationship assists not only in building rapport but in guiding the client a method of gaining greater personal insight and solutions for problems. When the client and the worker use storytelling in their therapeutic conversations, imagination emerges as a viable treatment asset. Using the faculty of imagination empowers the client to see beyond present crises to and experience of renewed spirit and restored sense of hope.

Don Streit, LCSW, is in private practice in Little Rock, Arkansas and is an adjunct professor at the University of Arkansas, School of Social Work. He can be contacted via email at lcstreit@msn.com.

Research Update...

Spirituality a Strong Presence at 2000 APM

Michael Sheridan, Ph.D., Virginia Commonwealth University

It was certainly an easy task to find offerings related to spirituality at this year's 46th Annual Program Meeting (APM) of the Council on Social Work Education, held in New York City from February 26th - 29th. The Spirituality Symposium was a particularly strong presence. Under Dona Reese's able leadership, this Symposium presented the largest number of refereed papers of any symposia at the conference – quite an accomplishment given that this was only the second year of the Symposium's existence! Presentations covered a wide variety of topics, including curriculum development, research, theory and practice models, and current issues regarding spirituality in social work education. The following lists the titles and authors of the 13 papers offered through the Spirituality Symposium, plus 3 additional papers that were presented through other symposia. The affiliation of each author is also listed to facilitate contact for those who would like to get a copy of one or more of these papers.

1. *Integrating spiritual content into core generalist direct practice classes.* David S. Derezotes (University of Utah)
2. *Zen and social work: A spiritual approach to practice.* Mark J. Brenner (Harvard Medical School) & Emeline E. Homonoff (Simmons College)
3. *Going below the tip of the iceberg: Social work, religion and spirituality.* Emily J. Bruce, Sandra Owens, Gloria Messick Svare (University of California at Berkeley), & Sydney L. Harrison-Jay (Prevention Research Center)
4. *Poverty, Protestants, and programs: Black and white church responses to PRWORA.* Katherine Amato-von Hemert (University of Kentucky)
5. *Assessing African American spirituality with spiritual eco-maps.* David R. Hodge & Trina R. Williams (Washington University)
6. *Spirituality in social work practice: An emerging social justice trend for the 21st century.* Leola Dyrud Furman (University of North Dakota) & Edward R. Canda (University of Kansas)
7. *Addressing spirituality in hospice: Results from the National Hospice Social Work Survey.* Dona J. Reese (University of Arkansas)
8. *Radical environmentalism: Reflections on educating social workers in spirituality and social justice.* Fred H. Besthorn (Washburn University)
9. *Empowerment meets oppression: Infusing spirituality and religion in MSW practice.* Helen G. Deines (Spalding University)
10. *Surviving two diseases: Spirituality and recovery among mothers living with HIV disease.* Kathleen Tangenberg (University of Washington, Tacoma)
11. *Social work and Koranic mental health healers: Implications for international/spiritual practice.* Alean Al-Krenawi (Ben Gurion University of the Negev) & John R.

- Graham (University of Calgary)
12. *The use of spiritually-based interventions in social work practice.* Michael J. Sheridan (Virginia Commonwealth University)
13. *Spiritually-derived interventions in social work practice and education.* Robin Russel, Susan E. Bowen, & Brenda Nickolaison (University of Nebraska at Omaha)
14. *Mystic, agnostic or saint: The spirituality of Jane Addams.* Sherrie K. Schulke (Portland State University) [Social Welfare History Symposium]
15. *The relationship between religious orientation and depression in lesbian women.* Diana L. Hays (Options, Inc.) & Penny Smith Ramsdell (Louisiana State University) [Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Symposium]
16. *Spiritual and religious problem solving in seniors: Mechanisms for managing life challenge.* Holly Nelson-Becker (Aurora University) [Gerontology Symposium]

In addition to the paper presentations, there were several other events related to spirituality at the 2000 APM. Michael Sheridan [Virginia Commonwealth University] conducted a Faculty Development Institute on *Approaches to Teaching Spirituality Across the Curriculum* and Connie Saltz Corley [University of Maryland at Baltimore] facilitated an Early-Bird Exchange on *Mind-Body-Spirit Wellness*. In addition, the Meet the Authors event showcased two new books: *Spiritual diversity in social work practice: The heart of helping* by Edward R. Canda [University of Kansas] and *Leola Dyrud Furman* [University of North Dakota] and *The newer deal: Social work and religion in partnership* by Ram A. Cnaan and Stephanie Boddie [University of Pennsylvania]. There were also two spiritually-based presentations at the Arts Festival: *Gospel Bluegrass as an Expression of Southern Appalachian Culture* by Lawrence Ressler (Roberts Wesleyan College) and Daniel Liechty [Illinois State University] and *The Spiritual Dimension of Social Work Education* by Mari Ann Graham [University of St. Thomas]. Finally, there were three special meetings held during the conference: the Society for Social Work Meeting, the Spirituality Symposium Annual Meeting, and the Christians in Social Work Discussion Meeting. During the latter meeting, interested parties talked with Donald Beless, Executive Director of CSWE, and Barbara White, CSWE President, about ways to increase the emphasis on religion and spirituality within CSWE, possibly through the establishment of a special Commission.

All of these presentations and events were well attended, creating useful dialogue and enthusiastic networking. In the space of just a few years, the relevance and importance of spirituality to social work education and practice appears to well-recognized within CSWE's Annual Program Meeting. Thanks to all – presenters and attendees – who made this possible!

Society News

We've never before had a column to report news about our members. So this is a bit of an experiment. Write and let us know what you think of this column and share brief personal news items with us. Congratulations to:

...Robert Miller who received his Ph.D. from Columbia this spring and just began his first teaching position at the State University of New York at Albany.

...Ed Canda who was named chair of the doctoral program at the School of Social Welfare at the University of Kansas.

...Ann Lichliter and Jay Palmer who were married on September 23rd. Ann and Jay met at our second national conference in Blair, NE. in 1996.

...David Derezotes and Robin Russel who were promoted to "full professor" at the University of Utah and the University of Nebraska at Omaha, respectively.

...Michael Yellow Bird who accepted a new position on the faculty at Arizona State University and has moved to Tempe.

...Dona Reese who accepted a new position on the faculty at the University of Arkansas and has moved to Fayetteville.

Ed Canda, Robin Russel, Michael Sheridan and Elizabeth Smith have been invited to present a half day workshop at the national N.A.S.W. conference in Baltimore in November. The title of their workshop will be "Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: The Art of Helping".

... continued from page 10

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Chapter Updates

Buffalo, New York Chapter

We are in the process of making plans for the fall. For more information about this chapter, please contact Bonnie Collins at (716) 648-4455.

Erie, Pennsylvania Chapter

Eight persons attended the initial meeting of the Erie chapter in June. The group reviewed and discussed a brief paper on what the chapter hopes to become and what it is not intended to be. After a summer hiatus, the chapter met again on September 15 at the home of one of the members. For more information, please contact Jim Dimperio at (814) 868-8661.

New York Chapter

For more information, please contact Don Cornelius at (516) 678-5000.

Southern California Chapter

The Southern California chapter had their first meeting in August with a wonderful turn out. The group reports that they will continue to meet on a monthly basis. For more information, please contact Verna Fisher at (562) 860-5804 or varnalwhispers@juno.com.

Oregon Chapter

The Oregon chapter met this summer at Portland State University with guest speaker Sam Gioia, LCSW Adjunct Professor at Portland State and Fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. Gioia addressed "Education in Spirituality in Schools of Social Work". Included in the presentation was information about the student interest in spirituality and social work. Gioia also addressed defining the core knowledge base in spirituality and social work education. Our next meeting will be in October. For more information, please contact Eddy Crouch at (503) 282-2483 or eddy@pastoralcounselor.com

Utah Chapter

The Utah SSSW continues to meet the Graduate School of Social Work, University of Utah. The topic of the last meeting was "Creating a Sacred Space" and our last meeting of the year will be entitled "Body Spirit in Action". We will be developing a new schedule of meetings for the next year, continuing with our format of presentation and discussion led by individuals associated with the Utah chapter. For more information, please contact David Derezotes at (801) 585-3546 or dderezotes@socwk.utah.edu.

Washington DC Chapter

The Washington DC Chapter is currently organizing to prepare for the 2001 conference. Anyone interested in helping can contact Linda Haake at (703) 750-0022 or LaHaake@aol.com.

New Office Space!

Cris Lydon, Administrative Assistant, has been given her own office space at the UNO School of Social Work. Her new phone number is (402) 554-2001. Robin Russel can still be reached at (402) 554-2941. Both Robin and Cris can be reached via email at: sssw@unomaha.edu.

Join the Society

Join the Society

Join the Society

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the *Spirituality and Social Work Forum* and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

Additional contributions are welcome.

Make checks payable to:

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University of Nebraska at Omaha
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When do I need to renew my membership?

Memberships to the Society are to be renewed on an annual basis. Refer to the top right hand corner of your mailing label for the date when your renewal membership fee is due. We are an organization that depends on membership dues to support our activities. Please support the Society by keeping your membership current.

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Call for Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Four hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk, with files saved in either WordPerfect or MS Word format, should be sent to: Robin Russel, Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

Where in the World is Professor Cosmos?

The Great Professor extends his apologies for not being able to respond to the mass mail he has been receiving from all of your inquiring minds. Since the summer conference in Lawrence, the Professor has been traveling throughout the galaxy to promote his latest book, "Cookin' with The Cos". Professor Cosmos wishes to encourage each and every one of you to continue sending such thought provoking questions which he will answer once returning from his current adventure.



**University of
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School of Social Work
6001 Dodge Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68182

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Society for Spirituality and Social Work

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THE POWER OF PRAYER - A CASE STUDY

by Jim Raines, MSW, MDiv., Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
Aurora University

I must confess I haven't always believed in prayer. I sometimes, perhaps most times, prefer to solve my problems on my own. Maybe I see bothering the Almighty with the concerns of the puny as impertinent or at least importunate. I remind myself that answers to prayer also include words like, "No" or "Wait." Like any dependent child, I resist these words. I would rather hear words like "Yes" or "Now." So I recoil from my dependence with pseudo-independence and declare in my soul that I can resolve matters myself. Then something happens which confronts my audacity with the facts of my own powerlessness, ignorance, and fear.

That something has been the health of my only son, Jeffrey. When he was born two months premature, we were told that he had a ventricular septal defect (a hole between the ventricles of the heart), which would gradually close over the next five years. When it came time for his routine kindergarten check-up, his heart still

sounded abnormal in the pediatrician's stethoscope, so an EKG was ordered. The electrocardiograph also came back abnormal, showing the left side of his heart was enlarged, meaning that it was hypertrophied or working too hard, so an "echo" was ordered. The echocardiogram showed that there never was a ventricular septal defect, but the real problem was his aortic valve. The trifold leaflets were not opening enough to allow all of the blood out and ridges had formed just below the valve (sub-aortic stenosis), which further hindered blood flow. Surgery was the only option for my five-year-old boy.

Friends often ask if he had any symptoms. Symptoms are rare or at least rarely noticed. These are the children who drop dead after a sports event with no apparent precursors. The only complaint a parent might hear is that their child is tired - one that is easily dismissed. Shortly after learning of his diagnosis, we walked three blocks to the local ice cream shop with his two-year-old sister, Caitlin. On the way back, she got tired and I started carrying her. A block later, Jeff also complained of tiredness and so I picked him up in my other arm, carrying 75 pounds of children the final two blocks home.

We found a surgeon whose full-time practice was pediatric cardiology at Hope Children's Hospital in Chicago. He removed the stenotic ridges and patched the hole with a piece of gortex covered by heart sack tissue so the body wouldn't reject the foreign material. He carefully cut between the leaflets so that they would open fully. The operation lasted five agonizing hours. When Jeff emerged, he was groggy, but okay. He healed remarkably quickly and was released from the hospital 36 hours later!

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QIGONG AS MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT INTEGRATION FOR HOLISTIC PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK

By Douglas Chung, MSW, MA, Ph.D.

Professor of Social Work
Grand Valley State University

QIGONG AND SOCIAL WORK

Social work is the helping profession dedicated to treating individuals with a holistic perspective, promoting health, freedom, and dignity. Yet we have little understanding of how the mind, body, and spirit are related to each other; how biology and culture interact in the production of psychosomatic symptoms; or how to cure and prevent chronic illness, psychosomatic illness, or somatic styles (Shorter, 1994). Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization, 1988). Four to ten million people experience anxiety and panic attacks characterized by rapid, shallow breathing, increased heart rate, and a sense of impending doom (Lee, Lee, & Johnstone, 1989). Hollingsworth and Hollingsworth (1994) argue that the social and medical management of services thus far have been inadequately met. They state that there is an increasing need for the integration of community-based care, including home care, and an objective health policy. Smith (1992) points out that the control of rising health care costs is a major problem domestically and in advanced Western societies. Social workers and other helping professionals are suffering from anxiety and burnout. In order to preserve themselves, they are in need of skills for self-care and self-healing (Collins, 1992). The National Institute of Mental Health stated that exercise has beneficial emotional effects across all ages and in both sexes (Walters and Martin, 2000).

Various Qigong technologies were developed in ancient China and in contemporary Confucian societies for personal enhancement, self-care, health promotion, and spiritual transformation (Ma, 1985; Hu, 1991; Lee, 1989; Min, 1988; Shi, 1990; Wozniak, Wu & Wang, 1991; Wu, 1992). The validity and reliability of these Qigong technologies have been examined scientifically during the last two decades in China, Taiwan, and the United States (Shi, 1990; Hsu, 1989; Lee, 1993; Min, 1988, Yang, 1990, 1991; Yan, 1991, Wu, 1992). However, these Qigong therapeutic technologies have never been officially introduced into social work education and

practice as a therapeutic model. This article will introduce Qigong applications for holistic practice in micro-level social work.

WHAT IS QIGONG AND QIGONG THERAPY?

Qigong is considered to have started when human beings felt tired and closed their eyes to rest, felt painful and touched for healing, felt depressed and yawned, learned the postures from other animals for healing and revitalization, designed dances to prevent and heal diseases, and started to record and interpret these learned experiences. I-Ching (Book of Change, about or before 1122 B.C.,) used the concepts of Yin and Yang counter-forces to prescribe the relationships of the three natural energies (cosmic energy, earth energy, and human energy.) It is conducted by the Qigong therapist to prepare the participants physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually to integrate their internal and external energies through posture, breath, mental reframing (cognitive therapy), and spiritual reconnection.

THERAPEUTIC CONCEPTS OF QIGONG THERAPY

Qigong Therapy is based on Yin Yang Theory, which is an Open Systems Theory that can be clearly defined and applied in various inter-disciplines as well as in spiritual traditions. It is called Qigong because "wherever the mind goes, the qi (energy) flows there - wherever the qi arrives, the blood circulates there." The essence of Qigong Therapy is that it requires the participants to adjust the "disturbed energy dynamics". Meditation, a key component of Qigong, is variously conceptualized in the East as a therapy, a research tool, and a perceptual training device (West, 1991). It is a mental state in which a person intends to calm down one's energy systems and engage in the search of self and truth in order to increase personal development and self-actualization.

The basic training of Wisdom Meditative Qigong starts with counting inhalations and exhalations of
(Continued on next page)

(Qigong continued from page 2)

breath to regain control of the mind, promote attention span, and promote the quantity and quality of one's life force energy. It was found that fitness levels are most effectively enhanced by regular, moderate, low-impact exercise (Blair, 1989). Major diseases are preventable with only gentle fitness practice and scientific studies have now confirmed ancient wisdoms, including Chinese Qigong, that low intensity fitness methods are frequently preferable to more vigorous forms of exercise (Jahnke, 1997).

Qigong therapy is in contrast with the theory-centered approaches. By stressing the uniqueness of a person's worldview and by accepting her/his own perceptions, hopes, and visions, the Qigong Therapist seeks to understand the person/client as a human being first without moral judgment. Qigong Therapy is a growth-oriented therapy in contrast to methods seeking symptom relief. To the Qigong therapist, the presenting symptom is a ticket into therapy as well as a signpost indicating the need for lifestyle evaluation and change. Qigong's perspective considers that health has various levels and is an endless growth process among various life dimensions, i.e. physical, emotional, attitudinal, behavioral, cultural, economic, social, political, and spiritual. Qigong Therapy involves an inner affirmation of

one's own intuitive response to a person. Intuition during the Qigong state reveals more about a person and her/his interaction with social and natural environments than can be understood by reason alone and is a holistic thinking process that integrates diverse, often hidden, elements of one's experience. Detached caring is a manner of responding to a client/person's pain, complaint, or protest without getting caught in the emotional melodrama portrayed (Krill, 1995). The most common failures of detached caring are over-identification with the client (seeing the client as an extension of oneself) and rescuing (believing your job is to relieve the client's immediate stress or sickness). An ideal detached caring state of the Qigong therapist is that of peace, respect, assurance, encouragement, gratitude, and love. It implies that the therapist should respect self-determination and that the change or self-improvement is based on self-help and mutual aid.

Cognitive therapy and many other therapeutic approaches use mental reframing as a therapeutic means to change the client's perception and reality. Qigong therapy uses energy exchange through inhalation and exhalation of breath to cleanse and enhance the energy system for disease prevention, healing, energy enhancement, mental reframing, and health promotion. Transforming the negative energies into positive ones is the key concern of Qigong practice. Some examples of mental reframing include the ending affirmations, such as "I am healed." "I am integrated." "I am a non-smoker." "I am free from addictions now." "I am in control now." "I have overcome my anger now." By cleansing the energies, promoting the health, and reframing the perception, one can gradually upgrade his/her self-esteem, revitalize the positive self, and promote the self-image.

Relaxation in Qigong practice emphasizes the importance of physical techniques and cognitive skills as well as beliefs, values, and commitments. Qigong relaxation has many purposes that involve learning to visualize, think, and view oneself and the world in ways conducive to deeper relaxation. It is far more than reducing bodily tension. To elaborate, Qigong relaxation skills and its related therapeutic concepts include: the task to relax the whole body physically, detach the self from ego involvement, put aside unnecessary and emotionally wasteful effort, project and infuse the energy-self with the universal energies, and remain open to potential integration psychologically. Cognitively perceive the self as a space giant standing on the top of the earth with an empty body, visualize the self as an empty pipe mentally channeling the earth and cosmic energies, and sense the

(Continued on page 6)

The General Transformation Method of Qigong Therapy

- Adjust posture for improved energy flow;
- Adjust the respiration to calm the mind, body and spirit;
- Reframe negative energy into positive energy and meditate the mind in order to:
 - Transform energies (semen/hormone and essence - food & air) into Qi (vital life force);
 - Transform Qi into spiritual energy" (sub-conscious state) - a process from energy to message or information form of life;
- Spiritually reconnect with the Ultimate in order to:
 - Transform into the spiritual state - process from being/form to non-being/form;
 - Transform into the Ultimate (the unification with the Macro Self).

TEACHING CROSS DISCIPLINARY ETHICS THROUGH THE LENS OF SPIRITUALITY

By Gary Behrman, MSW

Admissions Director
St. Louis University

As educators at a Jesuit University, we have a responsibility to pattern our work and develop our character based upon the mission of our university. Actualizing this mission in our daily involvement with students, colleagues, and the local community is our vocation. One aspect of our mission at Saint Louis University is "to transform society in the spirit of the Gospels." In response to this we have developed a course entitled, "Social Responsibility and the Professional." This cross disciplinary course involves graduate students from the Schools of Public Health, Social Service, Law, Nursing, and Graduate School departments of Public Policy, Theology, and Communications. Our intention is to guide our students toward developing professional and personal responses to social injustices that are "motivated by the inspiration and values of the Judeo-Christian tradition and guided by the spiritual and intellectual ideals of the Society of Jesus."

Our first task is to raise student awareness of the social injustices that operate in societies and to provide them with a responsible framework to make specific ethical decisions as professionals. Secondly, we strive to develop the moral character of our students and provide them with the support and resources needed to courageously live a professional life that builds just relationships among all people.

Utilizing the ethical decision-making framework provided by Jesuit education, "Experience, Reflection, and Action," we have expanded this model to encompass a framework that responds to the needs of a diverse professional student population.

Beginning with our unique and yet common human experiences, we ask the questions, "Do the relationships and systems that I participate in promote the well-being of everyone?" "What kind of relationships degrade and deny human dignity based upon determinants such as gender, income, age, race, or religion?" Reflecting upon this experience, how do we determine if there is an injustice present and what criteria do we use to make that determination? Also, who is responsible for this injustice and what just action may be demanded of us?

As educators in a Jesuit University, we go beyond asking students to simply reflect upon their relationships and human experience. We add to this the question, "who or what is informing and shaping this reflection?" Many paradigms can be operating, and our responsibility is to guide our students toward the tradition and values that have permeated Jesuit education for centuries. Without these structures and processes, students may be making ethical decisions based solely upon utilitarian efficiency, capitalistic profit, or immediate self-gain.

Ignatian education in the U.S. has a consistent history of respecting diverse spiritualities and religious traditions as well as being immersed in the society in which it finds itself. Thus, we guide our students' reflection towards that which is both immediate to them and that which may be hidden. We begin with their immediate profession by asking, "What does your Professional Code of Ethics say about this situation?" We also search U.S. law and the Bill of Rights, and from there we reflect upon the mission of the organization we work for. What do all of these have to say about this situation? Thus, we challenge graduate students of law, social work, public health and policy, etc, to search their particular profession for wisdom, insight and guidance as to what is a "just" action.

Secondly, we inspire the students' reflection to include religious traditions. What do Vatican II documents, U.S. Catholic Bishops pastoral letters, the Quaker tradition, Jewish thought, etc. have to say about this situation? Each student searches not only their own religious tradition, but also traditions that might otherwise be hidden from them.

Thirdly, we invite the graduate student to be present to their own faith journey and their family cultural values. What do they personally believe is a just society and who shaped these values and ethics?

This process obviously leads to the next stage, which is integration. Is there conflict or disparity with any of these references or traditions? Which reference may take precedence in this situation and why? Is there a

(Continued on next page)

(Cross Disciplinary Ethics continued from page 4)

common social justice thread in all of these references? Before we can move into action, there needs to be an integration of these frameworks that creates a cohesive stance that embodies integrity.

Following integration is empowerment. A student may come to see what is just in a particular situation but lack the resources, courage, skills, and character to act justly. How we empower our students will have a significant impact upon the level and depth of integrity that is operating in their lives. What teaching methods encourage character development? What resources enable our students to act justly? What is our responsibility to our students in this area?

Eventually there is an action that is taken and what follows between the teacher and the student is evaluation. Who benefited from my actions? How and why did they benefit? Will someone inevitably be treated unjustly in every human action? Can all just actions be reduced to measurable outcomes? These are questions for the teacher and student to grapple with together.

This model of "experience, reflection, integration, empowerment, action, evaluation," support students from diverse professions to be aware of how other professions and religious traditions perceive their responsibility in creating a just society. It also encourages them to look beyond their immediate sensibilities to investigate resources that they may not have considered in making an ethical decision. Without this education, students may resort to emotion, self-interest, rigid utilitarianism, and protection of power or privilege to inform their ethical decision-making. Our students will be making decisions, some of which will have significant consequences in the lives of others. We recognize that there is no absolute authority that can adequately inform our reflection that leads to action. However, searching our Jesuit tradition, we may discover a consistent "faith that does justice."

INTRODUCING NEW STAFF!

DeeDee Chance and Andi Schueler are the Society's new Administrative Assistants, having taken Cris Lydon's position following her graduation in December. They are especially grateful to the wonderful members they have had contact with and who have made them feel welcomed.

(Power of Prayer continued from page 1)

We followed up with regular appointments with his pediatric cardiologist, who monitored his progress and medication levels every six months. A year ago, we got disturbing news - Jeff would need more surgery. It was a moment we had been dreading. When we went through the first surgery, we knew that we were opting for the least invasive intervention - a repair job. The more radical choice would have been a replacement. We hoped that the first operation would last him until adolescence so that any replacement surgery would occur on an adult-size heart. At eight-years-old and 53 pounds, he was hardly full-grown - it meant multiple surgeries because replacement valves don't grow.

We braced for the worst. We interviewed surgeons, we recruited blood donors, and we scheduled a date for the summer so it wouldn't interfere with 2nd grade. Then my church asked if I could preach a sermon in April. I wasn't in the mood, but I agreed to it anyway. I chose the book of Ruth for my text, partly because one never hears sermons from that book due to its suggestive language, but more importantly because it dealt with the issue of theodicy - why does a God who is all-powerful and all-good allow evil to happen? My son's heart condition seemed like it definitely qualified as an evil to me. Ruth is not an easy book to read - God did not protect Naomi from evil. She loses her husband and both of her sons. She becomes bitter and empty, but God does bring good from evil through the ministrations of Ruth. At the end of the sermon, it is customary to bestow a benediction on the congregation, but I asked for a blessing instead. With tears in my eyes, I asked my listeners to pray for my son.

A month later, we had one more echocardiogram just before surgery. The pediatric cardiologist was surprised - despite the regular deterioration, which had occurred every six months prior to this, there was almost no change - surgery could be postponed. Now nothing had changed in those six months. He was on the same medication, the same dosage, the same doctor, and the same test, even the same machine. The only thing that had changed was prayer.

Last week with fear and trembling, we took Jeff for yet another echo. Amazingly, we had the same results - virtually no change. While this study does not have the hundreds of patients reported on by Dossey (1993), it was double-blind: neither Jeff nor his doctor knew that a congregation had lifted him up in prayer. This was no "placebo effect." For us, it was nothing short of a miracle.

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(Qigong continued from page 3)

unification spiritually to facilitate the energy flow and enter into the Qigong state.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK

Given the extent of health and social concerns in human communities, it is critical for helping professionals to consider the practice of the Qigong Therapy.

Helping professionals must understand that physical health is linked to mental health and social welfare issues. All social issues and health problems are energy management issues. Good energy management leads to balanced systems, such as personal health, community health, and social well-being. The Qigong strategy integrates mind, body, and spirit into interdependent energy networks driven by a loving and caring life-force with a common vision for a universal community. It involves both people and a process of interaction between people and environments. The process is directed toward the personal experience of exchanging internal energies and unlimited external energies to purify internal energies, prevent disease, promote health, and develop potential. It is a process that is evolving so an individual can keep pace with an ever-changing world.

Energy mismanagement and other related activities should be addressed. Energy mismanagement includes prejudice, discrimination, negative perception, self-limitation, and attachment in a diversified environment. In effecting individual change, the Qigong strategy seeks to increase synchronicity among subsystems, such as stomach, lungs, kidneys, liver, and heart as well as between the individual and its environments at the micro level. At the macro level, it seeks to increase collaboration among sectors such as education, business, human services, religion, government, and the environment. The individual has to intuitively experience the Qi (vital life forces) feeling and commit to foster the Qi constantly. The Qigong Therapy, as an integration of the mind, body, and spirit, is a form of energy management for individual, group, community, and cross-cultural healing. The Qigong Strategy facilitates practitioners in searching, accepting, and transforming the real (micro/macro) self and experiencing the interconnection of life forces among all life forms, appreciating the oneness. The most difficult human barriers, such as prejudice, discrimination, self-limitation, and attachment can be removed and/or transformed from negative energy into positive energy through Qigong therapy. It may therefore serve as an effective cross-cultural healing approach through the personal experience of the interdependent energy network (Oneness).

Attention must be focused on the preventive, thera-

peutic needs of clinical approaches as well as the developmental needs of the general population. Qigong Therapy, as an energy management, serves as preventive, therapeutic, and developmental medicine in one single shot. As a preventive medicine it adequately prevents burn out, disease, and stress or anxiety. As a therapeutic medicine it may heal the hidden diseases that have gone undiagnosed in a holistic way. As a developmental medicine it promotes effective performance, intelligent conduct, longevity, and individual and collective potential development.

Qigong Therapy is an energy management for vital life forces, which is an empowerment for life enhancement and actualization. It is an art and science to integrate mind, body, and spirit to serve as a preventive, therapeutic, and developmental medicine. It is an endless energy transformation with a holistic approach to appreciate the unlimited oneness. It is an individual and collective energy transformation for a complementary, loving, and caring society. It is an advanced generalist model for global interdisciplinary practice with holistic perspective and multiple role functioning. Human service professionals may educate their students and practitioners to serve as role models for their clients by using these Qigong technologies for their holistic health, problem-solving, potential development, self-actualization and universal well-being.

For further study check website: <http://asiancenter.8m.com>

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Society for Spirituality and Social Work

Apparel Order Form

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The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the *The Spirituality and Social Work Forum* and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are supported entirely by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization. Additional contributions are welcome.

Make checks payable to: **The Society for Spirituality and Social Work**
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
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Please provide the following information:

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UPCOMING SYMPOSIA

The Global Alliance for a Deep Ecological Social Work, in conjunction with the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, announces the First Annual Symposium on, "Expanding Earth Consciousness: Toward a Deep Ecological Social Work" to be held on Thursday June 28, 2001 prior to the 7th Annual SSSW Conference in Washington, D.C.

This one day symposia will bring together social work teachers, scholars, practitioners, students, and interested guests in an informational and supportive forum to discuss ways the profession may deepen its understanding of the Earth Community and utilize the wisdom of Nature to inform and enliven professional practice, academic/teaching excellence, and personal well-being.

Keep an eye out for future information!

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
University of Nebraska at Omaha

One of the goals of the Society has been to further recognition of the importance of the interface of spirituality and social work and to advocate for its inclusion in the curriculum in social work educational programs. I'd say we've been pretty successful on this score. In 1995 we surveyed all accredited graduate schools of social work in the United States and identified 17 schools that offered courses with a spiritual and/or religious focus. I put together materials that included representative course syllabi and since that time we have made them available to faculty developing new courses in this area. I would guess that I've sent out somewhere between 75 and 100 of these packets. I've also consulted with dozens of faculty who have called looking for information on curriculum development in this area. Often I've put them in touch with other Society members teaching these courses around the country.

Last year the Society repeated the survey of accredited graduate programs and new graduate programs in candidacy status with the Council on Social Work Education. And there are now 50 schools offering electives on spirituality and/or religion and social work. Wow! That's a lot of growth in just 5 years. And, there are other schools having discussions about offering new courses in this area. We've come a long way from the not-so-long-ago days when faculty and students with a strong interest in this area felt like they had to "stay in the closet" at graduate schools of social work. I'm convinced this infusion of spiritual and religious content is filtering its way into social work practice. During the coming year the Society will be surveying B.S.W. programs and exploring their curriculum development in this area. If you are a faculty member interested in obtaining a syllabus packet or just dialoguing with me and others about how to bring this content into your teaching, please feel free to contact me at any of the following:

russel@unomaha.edu
(402)554-2941

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0293

SPECIAL CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!!

This summer's conference is entitled, "The Creative Power of Spiritual Diversity." In this spirit we would like to dedicate a special Summer issue of The Forum to the creativity we hold as individuals.

We encourage submissions of all forms of creative writing and any art that would fit within the limitation of this monochromatic format. Since many of us do hold a special talent that doesn't lend itself to representation on paper, we would also encourage submissions of first-person accounts describing the power of creativity in your personal and professional lives.

While professionals are welcome to submit work, many of our creative talents inspire true spiritual growth within the process rather than within the product. The more diversity we are able to witness in these accounts, the more we are able, as individuals, to grow beyond the circle we already possess.

Written submissions should be no longer than three double-spaced typed pages. Four hard copies of the submission and one copy saved on an IBM-compatible 3.5 disk, with written files saved in either WordPerfect or MS Word format and visual files saved as bitmaps should be sent to:

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Omaha, NE 68182-0293

Genesis Listserv

(genesisgroup@unomaha.edu)

A listserv is a great way to share information with a wide group of people. One subscribes to a list to be able to share information and ideas and to gain a broad understanding and reaction to what is being shared. The larger or broader the list, the more diverse the views and discussion; therefore, the richness of the discussion increases.

For the past two years, The Society for Spirituality and Social Work has operated the Genesis Listserv. The List was begun following a workshop entitled, "Family Dysfunction and Family Therapy through Genesis" with the emphasis to continue the discussion on how to use the bible in working with individuals.

The discussion continues with a current thread on the use of Ecclesiastes in therapeutic practice. However, it does not have to be limited to that thread. The nice thing about a listserv is that it can move in whatever direction the members of the list would like it to move.

The List owner is the Society. To subscribe to the list all you need to do is send a message to: majordomo@s-cwis.unomaha.edu with the following command in the body of your email message: subscribe genesisgroup.

Check it Out!!

We are proud to announce that our web page is currently in the final stages of construction!

We would love to hear your feedback!

www.unomaha.edu/~socialw/SSSW/index.html

(Note: this is case-sensitive.)

Spiritual Support Circle

The Spiritual Support Circle is open to all members of the Society. Its intent is to share with members, via the Internet, requests for prayer/energy/positive thoughts during illness and times of need. To join the Spiritual Support Circle, send an email with the subject listed as "SSC" to sssw@unomaha.edu. Robin Russel, DeeDee Chance, and Andi Schueler serve as administrators of the Circle and will send periodical messages including recent requests.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work wishes to clarify that the creation of the Spiritual Support Circle does not signify the endorsement of certain spiritual beliefs/practices over others.

CHAPTER AND AREA NEWS

BUFFALO CHAPTER: The Buffalo Chapter is meeting on a regular basis every second Monday of the month from 7-9 PM at Bonnie's new Wellness Center at 162 Main Hamburg, NY 14075, (716) 648-4455. Their January meeting involved the guest speaker Jean Lily, an American psychologist who spent the last year in India and who will be sharing with us how that visit has changed the way she does therapy.

For information, please contact Bonnie Collins at (716) 648-4455.

ERIE PENNSYLVANIA: For more information, please contact Jim Dimperio at (814) 868-8661.

UTAH: For information, please contact David Derezotes at (801)585-3546

WASHINGTON, DC: The Catholic University of America and our Washington, D.C. Area Chapter are already busy with plans for this summer's conference. We are very excited about this year's conference and look forward to seeing all of you in Washington, D.C.!

For information or if you are interested in volunteering with the D.C. Area Chapter, please contact Linda Haake at (703) 750-0022 or LaHaake@aol.com.

LONG ISLAND: The Long Island Chapter meets monthly and has about 20 regular attendees. Their meetings are held on the third Sunday of the month at 4 PM on the Molloy campus. Since this is a new group they are "still looking for a focus".

For more information, please contact Don Cornelius at (516) 678-5000 or dcornelius@molloy.edu.

OREGON AND WASHINGTON: In October, the chapter was invited to attend the "Coalition for Youth Empowered and Striving for Success" (Co-YESS) meeting. The meeting focused on helping youth have more satisfying and successful lives. We viewed a powerful video called "Freedom Writers". It showed the transforming effect one teacher had on her class of "at-risk" young people. The meeting provided a lot of opportunity to network. Participants were invited to bring materials and flyers for the resource table. Lunch was provided by the Willamette Falls Hospital.

We will join New Thought Ministers at Living Enrichment Center on March 22 from 10AM-1PM for a workshop titled "The Power of Spirit to Heal". A continental breakfast will be provided and participants are asked to bring a brown bag lunch. We will join with Ministers, Pastoral Counselors and Coaches to increase our ability to facilitate healing. Questions the workshop will address include: What does it mean to be spiritually sensitive? How can prayer, meditation, and ritual sup-

port our work with others? What can we learn from other professionals that will enhance our work? Workshop events include: supportive connection, music therapy, affirmative prayer, inspirational message, group discussion, guided meditation, sharing our stories and movement meditation. Facilitating the workshop will be Rev. Mary Manin Morrissey, Rev. Frances Lancaster, Rev. Eddy Marie Crouch, L.C.S.W and Rev. Val Hammond, M.A., N.C.C. Music will be provided by Jo Anna Burns-Miller.

For more information about this chapter, please contact Eddy Marie Crouch at (503)282-2483 or eddy@pastoralcounselor.com

EASTERN KANSAS AREA: A group of University of Kansas-related scholars, students, staff, and practitioners formed in the spring of 2000, calling themselves the University of Kansas Association for Spiritual Diversity in Social Work. Kris D'Atri, a student in both MSW and MA in religious studies programs, is the president. Miko Nakashima, a PhD student and board member of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, is the vice-president. Ed Canda, a faculty member and society board member, is the advisor.

The group held two meetings last school year. At the first, Dr. Ed Canda gave a presentation on re-envisioning social work scholarship as a spiritual path, highlighting Confucian values and what they bring to social work. At the second, Dr. Sandra Zimdars-Swartz of the KU Department of Religious Studies gave a talk on Christianity and ways of understanding pain based on her research of the religious experiences of medieval nuns. The new group also helped greatly in planning and carrying out the SSSW's Whole Person/Whole World conference this past summer in Lawrence.

Members of the group are connecting with two new research and training grants at KU dealing with spirituality and health and mental health. Ed Canda became director of the doctoral program in social work in August. He is encouraging people who want to study spirituality and social work at the doctoral level to apply and get involved with this group. During spring semester, the group will co-sponsor presentations by visiting scholars from Germany and Korea.

If you are interested in joining the group, please email Kris D'Atri at kdatri@ukans.edu.

The Creative Power of Spiritual Diversity

Seventh Annual Conference

June 28—July 1

Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. is hosting this year's conference. Focusing on both creativity and diversity, the 2001 conference will provide an opportunity for us to come together as a community, sharing innovative approaches to integrating spirituality and religion into practice and education.



Look for a Conference Brochure
in the mail this April!



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(402)554-2941
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Membership expiration date.

This is the last issue we can send you if your membership is not current.

The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Volume 8, Issue 2
Summer/Fall 2001



The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work

Summer/Fall 2001

Vol. 8, Issue 2

In following the theme of this summer's conference, "The Creative Power of Spiritual Diversity", this special edition of The Forum has been dedicated to the spirituality and creativity of our members.

The Creative Spirit of Helping

We are potters when we turn a vessel strong enough to hold another's sorrow
We are sculptors when we lend shape and form to someone's dream

We are painters when we help a wounded soul find its own true colors
We are musicians when we play backup for a young one's song

We are dancers when we create space for a couple's forgotten waltz
We are weavers when we hold the threads of an old one's life

We are photographers when we reveal a family's long-lost snapshots
We are writers when we publish a people's true history

We are poets when we speak for truth and justice
We are builders when we work for love and understanding

We are creators in every breath and moment
We are part of the Creator's great design

~ Michael J. Sheridan, MSW, PhD
Associate Professor
Virginia Commonwealth University

Director's Notes

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY

A week and a half ago I moved from Omaha, NE to Binghamton, NY. Almost everything about my life changed as I packed up a house and office that had been home for 13 years, said good-bye to my two adult children, near-perfect 16-month-old grandson, and a group of close friends. I've known that I needed to write a column about creativity, a favorite theme of mine. But, in the chaos of a major life transition, just couldn't seem to get it together. Driving across Interstate 80, I began to spontaneously reflect on creative power and change.

Buddhism teaches that nothing stays the same; that change is a natural characteristic of life, as we know it on earth. Some times it is easier to embrace the changes that life throws our way than others. Some people seem more comfortable with change than others. I used to think of myself as one of those more fluid folks. My senior year in high school our year book staff had each of us have one of our best friends write some thing about us, that appeared with our pictures and the laundry list of activities we were involved with. My friend, Barbara, wrote about me, "always ready for something new". Change seemed so much easier at age 17.

I've learned many things about change this year and I'd like to share a few.

We can let changes come into our life unsought, and those changes can be pleasant or difficult. For instance we can lose a job, have an accident, experience the loss of a loved one, meet someone new and fall in love, inherit a large sum of money, discover a new hobby, or meet a new friend. Or, we can be agents of the changes we desire, co-creators of our life experience. This ability to co-create our lives exists whether or not we own it. Cognitive theory teaches that our thoughts shape our behavior and experi-

ence. Creative visualization has been a powerful tool for successful living taught in many spiritual circles. For many of us this is not new knowledge. Still I would guess most of us do not consciously use 10% of our creative power.

A year ago I began to consciously use visualization and affirmations to create a picture of the new work situation I wanted to create for myself. I've been teaching this stuff for years; yet, I'm still a little surprised when it works. We need to own our power.

Buddhism also teaches about the pain caused by attachments. There's nothing like a move to teach you how much you are attached to and how difficult it is to let go. Attachments to things are difficult enough, attachments to the way we think our lives should be are often much more challenging.

When I was first learning to cross country ski I was taught that I would do a lot less damage to myself if when I began to fall I could remain loose and not stiffen up as if to brace myself for the impending trauma to come. It's often seemed to me that life in general is like that. When faced with impending or existing loss or major change we emotionally brace ourselves, stiffen up if you will, in an instinctual effort to try to control what will happen to us.

Post Script, September 21, 2001

A month has passed and life got in the way of finishing this column. I'm reexamining my words in the aftermath of last week's tragedies in New York, Pennsylvania, and D.C. I am currently working on a campus where a high proportion of students come from the New York City area, many of whom were impacted in some personal

(Continued on page 3)

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way by the destruction of the World Trade Center. I've observed the feelings of grief, fear, and anger sweep across the country as we gear up for a major war. I hear of incidents on this campus and else where in our country in which persons of Islamic faith are encountering harassment, violence and prejudice based on their religious identification.

Earlier this week I saw a billboard outside a diner that read "No surrender, no retreat." And, I reflected on how, for me, the spiritual path has been about surrender; surrender to the aspects of the Divine that I experience in my life and in encounters with others.

It is easy to feel victimized by this turn of life events. As a nation we seem unwilling to take any responsibility for the current world situation. But, we certainly had a role in creating it. And, it is easy to face the future with fear and feel helpless in the face of the war we are told we are facing. But, we are not powerless.

Social work has a long history of involvement in issues related to peace and justice dating back to Jane Addams. It is time to put our collective creative and spiritual power in the service of peace, compassion and justice for all people. ✎

The opinions expressed in this column are strictly those of the author, and do not reflect the opinions of the organization or its board of directors. As social workers and spiritual people it would be hard not to be effected by the events of the past few weeks. I invite other members of this organization to submit their reflections and thoughts related to the current world situation and issues of war and peace for a special issue of the Forum. General submission guidelines should be followed and can be found on this page.

***** **New Contact Information** *****

Dr. Robin Russel
**School of Education and Human
Development**
Binghamton University - SUNY
PO Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000

Email: rrussel@binghamton.edu

We would like to wish Robin the best of luck as she begins her new position. She will maintain her director position of the Society, while the main office will continue to be at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. All correspondence relating to membership, Forum submissions, or other general matters should still be directed to the office in Omaha.

Call for Submissions!

The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Short articles are invited for the next issue of *The Spirituality and Social Work Forum*. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double-spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double-spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy, and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Three hard copies of the manuscript without name or identifying information, one copy including identifying information, and one copy, with identifying information, on IBM-compatible 3.5" disk, with files saved in either WordPerfect or MS Word format, should be sent to:

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Omaha, NE 68182-0293

True Leader: A Parable

Patricia A. Burke, MSW, LCSW, BCD, C-CATODSW

There was once a young man who left his parents' home to seek his way in the world. He dreamt of unimaginable wealth and fame; but most of all he wanted to be a powerful leader.

The young man wandered about until he came upon a factory in a distant city. In his arrogance he applied for the position of CEO of the company. The personnel manager gave the young man a job on the assembly line.

Grumbling and resentful, the young man took his place, but refused to follow directions and wouldn't watch the other workers to learn how he fit into the overall production process. Then he started ordering them around. He thought, I know how to do this job better than anyone. If they'd just listen to me this factory would become the biggest and most profitable in the world. Then they will thank me and put me in charge. Before the end of his first day the young man was fired.

He went from one job to the next with much the same result. Finally, one day, as the young man was sitting on a curb, eating his last sandwich, that he bought with his last dollar, grimacing at the lingering, bitter taste of the humiliation he had swallowed, he resolved to find out what was wrong with a world that simply refused to appreciate his talents.

The young man asked around. He heard rumors about a sage, a wise old woman, who lived in the forest beyond the boundary of the city. People told him that she would have the answer to his problem.

So the young man journeyed deep into the forest where he found the sage and told her his plight. The old woman looked him fiercely in the eye and said, "Go out into the forest and watch ants for three days and three nights. Then return and tell me what you have learned."

At first, the young man protested. He had hoped the sage would give him a quick and easy answer to his problem. Finally, having no other ideas about what to

do, the young man walked off in search of ants.

He settled himself by a rotten tree stump and began to observe a colony of black ants busily building tunnels, carrying egg sacs, and storing bits of food. The young man followed their every movement for three days and three nights, until, much to his great surprise, he turned into an ant. He suddenly became aware of how small he truly was in relation to the rest of the world. He also saw how each member of the community had an essential job to do and if one worker failed they all failed, but if one worker succeeded they all succeeded. For the first time in his life, the young man felt a sense of belonging.

The young man returned to the sage and reported his findings. The old woman said, "Good. Now go out into the forest and watch a hawk for three days and three nights. Then return and tell me what you have learned."

This time the young man did not protest, but walked through the forest with a sense of curiosity about what he might encounter. He came to a clearing, sat down on a boulder and turned his eyes upward. He immediately spied a red-tailed hawk circling above.

The young man watched the hawk dive and soar and spread his wings to the wind. For three days and three nights the young man followed the hawk's every movement until he became the hawk. Then he felt the power of his true nature and the freedom of seeing the world from a greater perspective.

The young man was thrilled and returned to the sage to report his findings. The old woman said, "Good. Now go out into the forest and watch a tree for three days and three nights. Then return and tell me what you have learned."

This time the young man eagerly rushed into the forest to find a tree. He settled himself on a massive root of a great white oak. The young man heard the wind rustle through her leaves and watched the rain gently bathe


(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

her bark. The young man followed the inner and outer movements of the oak for three days and three nights until he became the tree. Then he felt the sap run through his own veins and his roots sink deep into the earth and his branches reach, stretching toward the sky. He felt calm and at peace with the simplicity of his being.

Filled with his own presence and a deep respect for all life, the young man returned to the sage and reported his findings. The old woman looked him fiercely in the eye once more and said, "Good. Now

go out into the world and become the person you were meant to be. And remember . . . A true leader is one who has learned to follow."

With these words and his own experience to guide him, the young man made his way into the world. He continued his practice of observing and following. At the end of each day he rested in the simplicity of his being. All his dreams came true. He became a great leader in his community and his wealth was the richness of his friendships and his fame was his own recognition of his true nature. 

Spirit Speak to Me

*Spirit speak to me,
My soul is searching.
Come to me now with your wisdom.
Lead me from darkness,
Show me your path and light my way,
O, Spirit, guide me on this journey today.*

*Spirit speak to me,
My heart is trembling.
Come to me now and give me courage.
Teach me to walk the path that you have shown me,
O, Spirit, come take all my fears away.*

*Spirit, speak to me.
I am your servant.
Send me your fire of inspiration.
Make me your instrument.
Let not my pride lead me astray.
O, Spirit, breathe in me each song I sing today.
O, Spirit, lead me on my journey, I pray.*

*-Dean Santos, MSW
Associate Professor at National Technical
Institute for the Deaf
Rochester Institute of Technology*

A Time of Renewal

By Jacquelyn S. Dwoskin, LCSW

A woman sits before me. She has reached the age of separations. During her second marriage, her teen-age daughter had decided to go and live with her father. Having raised her two children until adolescence, her daughter had opted to live in their father's house, a place where parenting conflicts were fewer. This woman, this mother, had a wild streak. At times, her inner conflicts would erupt. A yeller, she would criticize her children, especially her younger daughter. Given a choice, her daughter had moved in with dad, who lived in another state. Her older daughter, close to college, remained at home.

During a recent visit home, the mother's wild streak had awakened in the face of mounting criticism from her older daughter who had responded by packing her bag and returning to college. The daughter had refused to speak to her mother since. "Was I such a bad mother?" she asks herself over and over. "Was I such a bad mother?" the question, which revolves in her brain, is slowly eroding her sense of self. "I'm having trouble concentrating at work. I can't stop crying. I can't go on and function like this."

Growing up in her own home, this woman experienced a lack of both mothering and fathering. The family was dominated by her mother's parents. These elders were the grand patriarch and matriarch of the family. Their children made few decisions without consent. Unhappy with their son-in-law they contributed to their daughter's divorcing him. The daughter, who was emotionally frail and dependent, began to suffer from a ceaseless march of physical ailments, which left her bedridden. In a sense, losing both mother and father, the household was then run by a housekeeper paid for by grandfather. Love was scarce.

Two weeks ago this woman's younger daughter telephoned. She is in her last year of high school. Crying to her mother, she expressed a deep misery she could not expel. Her mother took the next flight and spent the weekend mothering her daughter. The question, "Was I such a bad mother?" had become *the* question. In the weekend with her daughter's pain, being no stranger to misery. She also apologized to her daugh-

ter for having raged at her in the past. She shared with her daughter some of her own life and how that struggle had sometimes become anger, anger she had misplaced onto her daughter. They shared tears. Her daughter forgave her. The mother gave, and the daughter received, comfort.

"Was I such a bad mother?" The past is over. Renewal in its purest sense is an act that happens in the present, an act that is correct or corrective. In her response to her daughter's cry, she was a good mother, *now*, in the present. Looking backward, this woman had tangled herself in old stories. The old stories from her own growing up and the haunting memories of scant mothering presented a powerful combination, a combination in which she had become lost.

In the work that I do, I present mental imagery as a tool to enhance positive change. There are many exercises from which to choose. This woman and I chose one. In the imagery...

She saw herself walking through a garden. It was vibrant with color and rich in variety of growing things. She came to a pool in the center of the garden. She dove in and found a red rose, which was hers to keep. Upon emerging from the water, a new set of clothing awaited her. It was a dress, patterned with an array of flowers rich in color and variety. She was wearing the garden. She put it on. She left the garden with a light heart.

The exercise completed, she opened her eyes. She described what had happened. Her eyes looked into mine and mine into hers. She was smiling and I was smiling back.

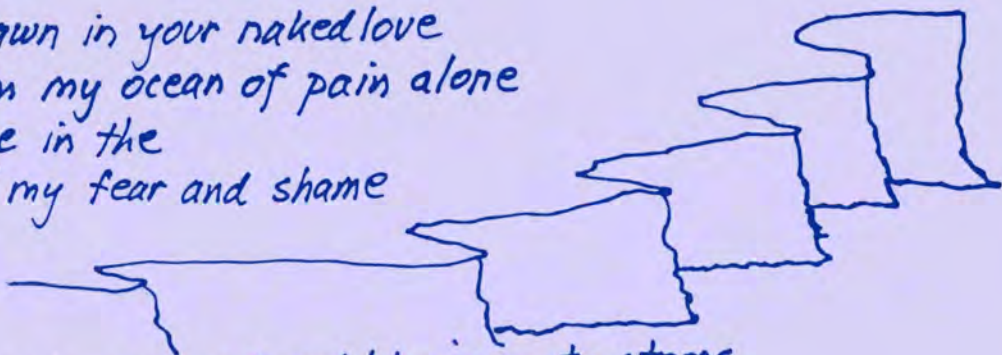
Words had no place in this moment. We smiled because she had found a piece of herself that was truer than old stories. How could she torment herself with guilt when she was wearing a garden? She had found within herself a place of renewal. What else could a garden be? And she had taken me with her. ☸

cliffdancer

this springwind arriving from
farther than imagination ever told me
from where sunlight meets darkness
clouds revealing godmirrors in your eyes



wrapped until dawn in your naked love
I can no longer swim my ocean of pain alone
your heart finding me in the
silent canyons of my fear and shame



now I am slickrock, scoured and blowing into atoms
my egoself scattering back home to desert stars
soul free feeling
our ancient love again



David Derevotes

By David Derevotes, LCSW, Ph.D

A Celebration of Creativity



By Candle Light

These candles we do light
to show our commitment to continue this fight
to ensure you will always have the right
to be free from the fear of men's violence

It was on such a night as this
when a gunshot shattered your marital bliss
killed by the man who shared your first kiss
yet another victim of men's violence

There are others too whose lives ended thus
men who they loved who shattered their trust
they lost their dominion so their love was a bust
one more perp of men's violence

Another death another shedding of tears
remembering the killings all through the years
we state our promise through the cheers and the jeers
to put a stop to men's violence

Women, children and men are all killed
the promise of life not allowed to be filled
a travesty of justice that must be revealed
all different kinds of men's violence

So together we stand to show our trust
ending men's violence is nothing less than a must
from the breaking of dawn to the last rays of dusk
we *WILL* put an end to men's violence.

- Rus Ervin Funk, MSW, LICSW

Existing on the Edge as a Trauma Therapist

I exist on the edge of another's reality
I circle around the pain in her story
Always watching for a space..

A sacred space..

Where I can invite her into her own
wisdom
Where I can encourage her to see the gifts
embedded in her trauma

When she enters this sacred space
she absorbs a healing wisdom...
sees new realities...
moves on in her life...

I stay behind
waiting..
For new stories of pain
New realities of yet another

To exist on the edge of..

- Bonnie J Collins EdM,CSWR
Hamburg NY 14075



AUGUST 6

August 6 is the anniversary of my birth
it is also a day that forever changed this earth

'64 was the year I finally came to be
20 years b'fore, we killed thousands with a force never seen

I celebrate this day with friends and laughter and love
all the while keeping one eye looking above

I dread this day, the destruction remembered
all those lives lost, those bodies severed

One day - - a celebration of hope, of love, of life
also a memory of death, destruction and strife

I hear the echoes ringing on my ears
of my own cries screaming out "I'm here"
of tens of thousands screaming in pain and in fear

I look across this meadow blessed to have my chance to say
and from half across this planet, say never again, no way!

I'd like to have my day to observe only with joy
to celebrate the life of a fat little boy
but this day of joy is only half, recalling those killed on my behalf
their lives ended by another 'fat boy'

So happy birthday to me! let's rejoice, let us sing
and let us all commit that this'll happen no more, never again!

- Rus Ervin Funk, MSW, LICSW

PRELUDE

Faith is the condition of an open heart
Doubt the circumstance of a questing mind.
Thus the veil 'tween spirit and logic,
'Tween reality and time.

From unspeakable nothing,
Primal being,
(Genesis: the onomatopoeic "Tohu V'vohu")
Calls, calls:
"I am that Nothing..."
I am that Nothing from before time began.
Find me
For Nothing will satisfy nor fulfill,
Nothing is real,
'Cept the bliss
Of timelessness.

Nothing calls into becoming the universe,
One stanza.
Seed of energy penetrates
Egg of consciousness,
Primal force converging with
Matrix requiring, demanding inevitable fulfillment.

And here we all are billions and billions of everything
later.

The universe was created for me
So that I can work out where I went wrong,
Misapprehended, forgot,
So that entity that I am having been healed
Be reconciled and unified with What Is
Which demands that to properly complete itself
I will be tormented until
I recognize and return to some ultimate reality of
Oneness.

Either that or instead
I am a grain of insignificant sand
Here for less than an instant and gone
Chewed up in the mill of universal becoming.
Becoming what?
A father, a face,
Someone else's memory...

The seed of my father and the egg of my mother
Unified.

At once both violent and sweet,
Full of desperation, anger, loneliness, and fear
Yet permeated in the love that can't help itself
Surrendering to the call of DNA insistent to duplicate
itself, to pass itself on,
Surrendering to the yearning of people to weave two
pale and single threads
Into a rich and textured tapestry.

As I was created
The universe itself was so formed.

Once I was two cells
Made of protoplasm and the space between.
I knew to grow myself--
For here I am--
Though I am not aware of how I did it.
Unconsciousness --the mechanics of reality--
Does not give up its secrets easily.
But two became four, became eight...
Became kazillions...

Newly-formed cells rhyme with the rhythm of being,
Pulsating in time to the great expansive pulsation of
the cosmos,
Consonant with the systole and diastole of Mama's
womb
And according to the natural movement of the being
they constitute,
Rhythmic movement generates waves of energy,
Waves of energy feels like me living
Feeling the pleasure of being: yesness,
Love, delight, intensity, discovery,
Inherent connection to what is:
The melody of me polyphonically beautiful,
Sonorous as befitting an integral voice in the choir of
the spheres,
Implicitly knowing the significance I am--
Energy made conscious,
Consciousness energized.

I arrived here with a will, a wish,
Glad to be here,
To have a good time of it,
Optimistic, enthusiastic, engaged,
I needed what I wanted
And wanted what I needed--

Simple indeed.
The mind that imagined itself
Knew not the body;
The body that craved
Had a mind all its own.

Seeking satisfaction
Here was hunger,
Seeking pleasure
Here was danger,
Seeking to slather it on
Here was meagerness,
Seeking fervor
Here was indifference,
Seeking independence
Here was intrusion,
Seeking freedom
Here was restriction.

Imagining transcendence
Meeting gravity.
Imagining I was other than I was
Now gives rise to emotion.

lossorrowangerfearlossorrowangerfearlossor-
rowangerfearlossorrowangerfearlossorrowangerfear
lossorrowangerfearlossorrowangerfearlossorrowan
gerfearlossorrowangerfearlossorrowangerfearlossso
rowangerfearlossorrowangerfearlossorrowangerfea
rlossorro

Will turns to won't,
Yes to no
A glacier renting apart what was whole
To create a chasm
Gradually, gradually...
Splitting open a soul
Body from mind
Good from bad
Happy from sad
Splitting one to two;
No longer I want a good life,
But instead, no matter the cost,
You can't make me,
I'll show you, You'll be sorry, I'll get you...
And thus emerges spite,
Arises hateful hostility,
Power to the powerless,
Pleasure to the unhappy,

Identity to whosoever has lost his own.

Personality, counterfeit of inner reality:
Rationalization, justification
Superior, inferior
Exterior, interior
Perfection, dejection
Rejection, detection
Hard, soft
On, off
Unfulfilled, overbilled
Nice, overprices
Submission, aggression
Strange, change
A therapy session!

Goodbadvictimblamegoodbadvictimblamegoodbad-
victimblamegoodbadvictimblamegoodbadvictimblam
egoodbadvictimblamegoodbadvictimblamegoodbadvi
ctimblamegoodbadvictimblamegoodbadvictimblameg
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To get me to leave this world,
They'll have to take me kicking and screaming
I am not that curious or anxious about whatever's
next.

While I am here,
I want to have a good time
Even though it's not perfect.

May your roads roll through beautiful landscapes
And spectacular vistas,

May your sojourn take you to exotic lands
And fantastic marketplaces,

May your destination be full of cheer
And warmth,

May you be glad you were here
And that you did right by yourself.

- Steve Hancoff, LCSW
Rolfer & Core Energetics Therapist
Concert & Recording Artist
www.stevhancoff.com

TWO MOTHERS

By Fred Schneider, LCSW-C

St. Agnes Hospice Center for Bereavement Care, Baltimore, MD

"A sound is heard in Ramah. The sound of bitter weeping. Rachel weeping for her children: and she refuses to be comforted because they are no more." -Jeremiah 31:15

I have great respect for hospital chaplains. Many years ago while substituting for the regular chaplain at St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland, I was summoned to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. As I approached the nurses station I could hear a woman wailing loudly. Two young nurses greeted me with "Can you help us Father? There is a single mother in the Quiet Room whose baby just died."

As I approached the "Quiet Room" bitter sobs were punctuated by loud cries from within; "Don't you tell me my baby is dead. My baby is not dead!" I opened the door to find a young woman crouched on the floor in the fetal position. A doctor and nurse sat helplessly in chairs above her. Fixing her gaze on my Roman Collar she screamed, "You get out of here! Don't you tell me this is God's will! Get out of here!"

Although I had no intention of invoking "God's Will" I slowly backed out of the room softly muttering "It's okay. It's okay." Not okay that your baby has died, but okay to be angry at God and me, and what I represent to you at this moment of pain and grief. Feelings are not sins.

The two young nurses apologized to me in tears. No apologies were necessary.

I took some slight comfort when I learned that later a little old nun dressed in blue refused to be ejected from the room and ended by rocking the bereft young mother in her arms like a baby. Like the baby she could never again hold and rock to sleep.

I am told that in the Russian Orthodox Tradition they say one cannot get past the burden of suffering until one learns to "forgive God".

Perhaps that young mother, now a middle aged woman, has learned to forgive God.

Some weeks later I would encounter another woman, a bit older, whose 13-month old baby girl was dying. After anointing her child I sat as she rocked her sleeping baby. "You know Father", she said, "I've been real angry at God. Shaking my fists and asking why. Why does my innocent child have to die? And why did she have to spend most of her 13 short months of life in this lousy hospital? She couldn't even be at home with us."

"Finally, however, I realized that if I knew the answer to a question like that I'd be God," she said. "And if there is one thing in this world I am sure of, it's that I'm not God. So I have decided to let God be God. If my little girl has to die, I trust that God will take her to Himself and it'll be alright."

I have tried to live by the wisdom of that young woman ever since; letting God be God. ✎

What is happening to the mail?

As many of you have found out through experience, we have been having difficulty with mail getting to where it needs to go! We are asking that you PLEASE notify us if you do not receive things that you have requested from us or if you have not received mailings. We are trying to fix this problem, but it is quite difficult. Please be patient and continue to let us know.

A Collection by -Nancy Ging, LCSW, Hinsdale, IL

We help
from different places
a variety of spaces
deep inside ourselves
with motives many
mixed
some innocent
and pure
some convoluted
coming from a need for drama
a distraction from our pain
by falling into traumas of another
to lift the focus from our own malaise
motives shift from stages
phases of our lives
so often gratitude inspires our actions
a desire for giving back the good
repaying the Divine for intervention
when at times we've been dejected
disconnected
rescued, resurrected
by a friend, a mentor
then again we've found our center
sometimes by helping others
we are seeking
quite unconsciously
to balance
those bad places
deep and dark within
yet always there's a spark
of Light involved
with any kind of service
lifting pain of friend or foe
lifts us as in those moments
we take on an angel glowing fragrance
as agents of the God we're born to be
whatever human else goes on
with you and me.

DENIAL.
I HATE THE LIAR THAT YOU ARE,
DISTORTING, BENDING TRUTH
IS UNACCEPTABLE.
YET, WITHOUT YOUR STYLE
OF DEALING WITH REALITY
HOW WOULD WE HANDLE SHOCK,
UNSPEAKABLE SURPRISES
MUCH TOO HARSH
FOR ANY NERVOUS SYSTEM?
YOU ARE A NECESSARY EVIL.
NOT ONLY DARK, DISHONEST
YOU'RE A NECESSARY GOOD
DEFENSE AS WELL;
YOU GET US THROUGH
THIS LIFE.
WE DO
NEED YOU
AT TIMES,
DENIAL.

come kindness,
softness,
gentle flowing ripples
of a heart's vibration;
replace the harshness
of the mind's calculations,
cold with judgment,
and evaluation;
come instead with kindness,
soft as baby's blanket
now's the time
and here's the place
for grace and loving kindness;
do descend on me,
impart the peace
your ever warm and tender love can
bring
and share again the wealth of your
wellspring.

... JOIN THE SOCIETY ... JOIN THE SOCIETY ... JOIN THE SOCIETY ... JOIN THE

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year.

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This is the last issue you will receive if your membership is not current.

Edward Canda 21-May-02
 University of Kansas
 School of Social Welfare
 Lawrence, KS 66045

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The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

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Special Edition Forum

The articles in this issue of the Forum were presented at a symposium entitled "Deepening Earth Consciousness in Social Work," held prior to the 2001 Spirituality and Social Work Conference at The Catholic University of America in Washington DC. The articles have been reprinted as they were presented at the Symposium.

Enhancing Environmental Awareness Among Social Workers

By John Coates, Ph.D.
St. Thomas University

Social work students, like many people in our culture, have grown up to regard nature with its trees, flowers, rivers and mountains, as distinct from humanity. Most understand that social workers 'deal with people', and they minimize the physical environment as little more than background for human activity. As a result, when I begin to talk about the physical environment and social work, I frequently find myself facing a few curious students, but mostly, I find a room full of questioning faces and blank stares.

In the courses I teach which include environmental awareness, I usually begin my overview by saying to students that I wish to 'disturb their thinking'. I say this because I believe that if those of us in modern industrial society fully appreciate the scope and depth of environmental devastation, and if we explore the root causes of this destruction, we will begin to challenge our fundamental values and beliefs. We will begin to closely look at how we think about our relationship to nature, our relationships to each other, our beliefs about society and the role which social work has in it.

I do not wish to reduce the significant influence which power and politics have in shaping our society. However, for most of us living in economically privileged countries, a deepened Earth consciousness demands that we examine our beliefs and values. In encouraging social work students and professionals to develop an awareness about and sensitivity to our natural environment, four issues are important.

1. It takes time.

It takes time for students to come to an appreciation that environmental destruction and social injustice are significant threats to our well-being and that of the Earth. It takes information for students to understand that environmental

destruction is embedded within modern society. It takes support for students to fully comprehend the wide and severe impact which environmental destruction has on our personal and professional lives.

Over time, information is presented on the scope of ecological destruction and the impact that this devastation is having and will have on the human community. There are numerous publications (for example, Colborn, Dumanoski & Myers, 1997; Hoff & McNutt, 1994), including Special Issues of *TIME* (November, 1997) and *MACLEAN'S* (Dec. 16, 1991; Oct. 5, 1998), which discuss environmental destruction and how it impacts our personal and professional lives. As well, almost every week newspapers report on issues such as global warming, loss of fresh water, toxic pollution, habitat destruction and extinctions. For example, over this past year numerous reports regarding unsafe drinking water have occurred in Canadian communities including Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Walkerton, Ontario, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, and Moncton, New Brunswick. The reports of deaths and hospitalizations reinforce the fact that agricultural runoff, untreated human waste and industrial effluent are serious social problems (see Kumov, 2000; Mittlstaedt, 2001, May 5). Social workers are frequently involved as members of the 'crisis response teams' called in to help.

Other common everyday realities, such as smog, further demonstrate human vulnerability to environmental degradation. In Ontario, for example, there are about 9,800 hospital admissions and 45 million lost work-days directly attributed to smog related illnesses (Luciw, 2000). In New Brunswick, my home province, trips to hospital emergency rooms increase dramatically on days when smog makes it

(Continued on page 7)

Is it Time for a New Ecological Approach to Social Work: What is the Environment Telling Us?

By Fred Besthorn, Ph.D.
Washburn University

*As humans we are born of the Earth, nourished by the Earth,
healed by the earth.
The natural world tells us:
I will feed you, I will clothe you, I will shelter you, I will heal you.
Only do not so devour or use me that you destroy my capacity to
mediate the divine and the human.
For I offer you a communion with the divine.
I offer you gifts that you can exchange with each other.
I offer you flowers where by you may express
your reverence for the divine and your love for each other.
.....Thomas Berry*

Welcoming

It is a great pleasure to welcome you this morning to the first ever symposia of the Global Alliance for a Deep Ecological Social Work. While the sound of that particular phraseology, perhaps, seems overly confident and even a bit ambitious, its true intent and desire is being expressed in your presence here on this wonderful day in Washington. Our urgent task is to explore ways to continue to affiliate ourselves as a group of like-minded social workers and human service professionals deeply concerned about ecological and environmental issues and the disintegration of earth communities and how we can begin to get “our profession” to pay attention. At the core of the creation of this environmental, spiritual, and political joint venture is the recognition of the conspicuous absence of a deeply ecological perspective in the profession that we have come to call our own; and a passionate desire to bring about a detailed and nuanced appreciation of the natural world and the depth of our kinship interrelationships with communities of life made up of all living creatures. It is in this spirit that we come together. I hope my remarks this morning will provide a framework for a beginning in social work—for beginning to bring a deep ecological sensitivity that we share into the pace, the practice and the perspectives of social work.

Introduction

There can be little denying that we are living in a period of transformation on the Earth generally and in all the institutional and popular culture icons of Western Society, specifically. From the recent callous response of the President, bent on severing the US from its responsibility to the global community, and his ongoing attempts to plunder the few remaining pristine areas of American and third world-wide wilderness in the name of energy exploration to the less apparent but nonetheless harmful impacts of rampant bio-technology and genetically engineered foods, we are experiencing unprecedented changes in the way we experience our world. Social work is also experiencing deep changes in its awareness; in what it believes and values and how it goes about its everyday business of service and care. Never

before have we, as professionals and citizens, had so much wealth, so much affluence, so much knowledge and information, so much expert advice about ourselves and about the conditions of our world around us. And yet, as we move into this new millennium, most of what we know both professionally and personally is scaring us. What we know, in most cases, is deeply unsettling, while at the same time the changes that need to occur to heal ourselves and to bring our relationships with the Earth and each other back into balance seem monumental and, at times, overwhelming. So, as we begin, let us look, just briefly, at what we know and then where we might begin to go.

The challenges we face are daunting! How do we balance the needs of billions of the Earth’s people with the needs of the rest of the biological world? How can we replace the ethic of endless economic growth and consumption with a commitment to meet basic human needs? How do we build a profession of helping that recognizes the intrinsic value of all beings and how do we create an ethic that seeks to identify the way humans fit within that larger cosmic scheme rather than how they can capture and mold it for their own purposes? And especially, how do we balance the rhetoric of our profession’s environmental models, steeped in a myopic preoccupation with internal psychic problems and close social circumstances, toward a deeper ecology and environmentalism of whole earth awareness. How do we build a global community based on cooperation and tolerance instead of militarism, economic colonialism, and corporate imperialism? Where does our commitment to collective social, economic, and political justice meet our dedication to personal change?

The answers to these questions and many more like them are not simple. And, any answer is always tentative and open to change and reinterpretation. But, the answers do give us a hint at what it might mean for us to develop a new and deeper ecological approach to social work. I’d like to spend my remaining time developing four core themes that might be needed to affect a social work response that is sensitive to what the earth is telling us and what the marginalized of the earth have also been saying to us for generations, if not, millennia.

1. Expand our Connections with the Diversity of Life

Over the past several decades, we have learned a great deal about the effects of human industrial activity and consumption on the Earth’s ecosystems. Industrialism, fueled by consumerism and global corporate expansion, is wiping out the planet’s ability to sustain itself. This corporate imperium, based on competition and an ideology of endless growth, is at the center of a desacralization and homogenization of life that is overwhelming

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

the planet's life-support systems, numbing us psychologically, spiritually, socially and alienating us from our place in the robust web of harmonic interrelationships with the earth community.

Respect for human diversity has always been a core social work concern. It is the centerpiece of many of our best efforts to enhance human growth and potential. And yet, we find ourselves living at a moment in history in which the very concept of diversity, while intoned in ever louder incantations, grows more distant and unapproachable. Respect for cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual diversity in the U.S. seems to grow ever more illusive. I come from Topeka, Kansas where some of the most virulent forms of anti-gay and anti-lesbian intolerance is an everyday experience on our street corners and in our civic and public institutions. And, on the world stage, the United Nation reports that in this century alone 2,000 distinct tribal peoples have become extinct, mostly as a result of advancing industrialization necessary to feed the appetites of first world consumerism. And, more telling yet, and sadly out of consciousness of most social workers; in a single year over 50,000 individual plant, animal and insect species become extinct in the world's tropical rain forests (Suzuki, 1997). Do social workers know this? It is doubtful that most social workers even care—so great is our disconnect from the full meaning of diversity. This wholesale demise of Earth's biotic variability represents a pace of extinction 1000 to 10,000 times higher than had existed in prehistoric times under natural evolutionary conditions. At the current accelerated rate over 20% of the world's remaining plant, animal and insect species will disappear in just under 30 years.

What price do we pay for our cavalier and superior approach to the world's fragile balance of diverse species living and interacting in a delicate dance of mutual regard? What price do we pay when social work does not extend it's diversity heritage to include all members of the earth community? We often know the high price of broken relationships, of inadequate support and years of oppression expressed in the faces of our clients and in the experiences of our own lives; although we often don't associate it, even remotely, to our earth detachment or our alienation from the greater community of being. We need now, more than ever, to listen more carefully and to see more clearly the high price expressed in the anguish and travail of the multiplicity of more-than-human species that disappear each day as a result of our extravagance and our inability to see ourselves in the life-web of all living things.

2. Reclaim a Sacred Relationship with Earth.

Perhaps a more difficult path toward developing a deeper ecological approach to social work is reclaiming a sacred relationship to the Earth Community. The effects of the ecological crisis on our communities, on the clients we serve, on national and international socio-economic and socio-political relations and on us as professional healers and helpers offer a unique opportunity for social work to re-evaluate it's connections with nature and community.

It may seem a bit out of the ordinary, at a symposia such as this—positioned as it were between a focus on ecological and

spiritual awareness—to claim that the path toward reclaiming sacred relationship with earth is difficult. It is certainly not difficult today. It will not be difficult this week in our goings and comings with one another or later at the Society for Spirituality and Social Work conference. But when you leave here—when we return to our places of practice or to the relatively quiet or flamboyantly hectic domains of our personal lives—that is when we shall return to the difficulty. We live in a culture and occupy a profession that has historically defined the relationship between humans and nature in terms suggesting separation, isolation, fear, or at best a kind of benevolent stewardship. The defining human issues of this last century have been couched in the mechanistic and consumptive language of the Western scientific and mostly secular worldview. Nature is a standing reserve of resources, ripe for human dominion and exploitation. We have become societies dedicated to the love of money, consumer comfort, and technological innovation at the great and lasting expense of the earth community. In addition, our dominant sacred and religious traditions in the West have also, in large measure, failed to recognize that the basic human issue is not simply divine/human or human/human relationships, but rather our human relations with the larger Earth and the comprehensive community of the entire universe, the ultimate sacred community. The sacred failure of the dominant Western religious, spiritual and philosophical traditions has contributed heavily to the plundering of the planet's resources and many of her indigenous, earth-valuing, peoples. And this pillaging has often been, to our great disgrace, in the name of, or under the sanction of, deeply religious persons and institutions, or with the prescriptive power of canonical dogma.

So, the difficulty of our task as we leave lies in this: We are in and draw our livelihood from a place and time that in sacred terms and practice generally values the interior life of the soul to the near exclusion of the divine in nature, pays attention to a redemptive scenario taking place principally between humans and the Godhead, and finds the natural order of life as both potentially dangerous and, in many cases, imminently harmful. From that very narrow and largely anthropocentric place, nature and all the astonishing diversity of her creative unfolding is simply there as a kind of moral injunction for humans to learn humility—as a kind of reminder of the eternal consequences of original sin.

3. Honor and Defending both Human and Earth Communities

The ecological crisis, which is a very significant part of a deeper crisis of western culture and institutions, impels us as professionals to rethink and redefine our relationships and our actions toward each other and, especially, toward the planet. Scientific findings in the quantum world over the last decades and fresh re-awakening of a deep earth-based, spiritual knowingness brings us into an ever deeper awareness that humanity is an inseparable part of the natural world. We are not simply stewards but are, at the cellular level and at the level of greater consciousness, linked with every species on Earth. Nature is never just "out there" in the wilderness, in the oceans,

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in the deserts, in the rainforests; but is “in and around here” always, eternally.

If we social workers were to truly know, in its intense noetic sense, and experience the shift that is taking place in human relationships with nature, our political life, our policy statements, our advocacy proposals, not to mention our direct practice roles, educational enterprise and research agenda would be entirely transformed. We would begin to recognize that neglect of nature, violence toward nature, deprivation of nature is of the same essence as neglect of, violence toward, and deprivation of the poor, marginalized, the oppressed—all the people that we claim and often find ourselves most passionately involved with. Virtually every major global environmental issue is related to and/or a byproduct of the mal-distribution of power and resources between this world’s “haves” and the world’s “have-nots”. For social work to reclaim the dignity and sacredness of the Earth, it must also embrace the predicament of the most vulnerable of the human populations. Social work’s priority is not only with social justice but is, in fact, with the connection between social and environmental justice. Social work must be in and about the work of increasing our activism and our advocacy for residence of the natural world at the same time it develops greater compassion for human communities, wherever they may be. Social work can and must be part of a greater effort to create an ecological re-awakening which seeks to repair damage to the earth, but which also continues to work to repair the damage of a long history of patriarchy, racism, ethnocentrism and classism .

4. Immerse our Lives in Hope

It is easy these days to feel so overwhelmed with the problems of the earth, with the problems of justice and oppression, with the issues of violence and peace. Social workers are often in the front lines of these struggles and for those of us who are not, it just seems best, as my wise and late mother-in-law used to say, to “tend to your own knitt’in”. It is easy for social workers to become bewildered by what may seem like just another in an ever growing list of catastrophes and concerns that the profession must attend to. By what I say, I don’t expect that you become an environmental activist, and join the first Green-Peace protest that you can find. But, I do fervently hope and pray that we will begin to stop denying, stop avoiding, and stop being afraid to face the peril that indeed faces our home, the earth. As a profession we cannot, with any real justification, continue to say well, “this just isn’t our field” someone else is taking care of it or ought to be doing so. The simple fact of the matter is, I believe, that we’ve been afraid to find out more than the bare essentials of environmental destruction because we’re afraid to know more, afraid that the scope of it all will completely overwhelm us. And yet, in attempting to face the truth or to find the reality of our ecological situation we strip away the first and most resistant barrier to change: our own fear. Mohandas Gandhi had felt that the most he could say of his life is that he was steadfast in his commitment to understand truth. He didn’t claim to have much more than just a glimpse of the truth-force that is ever present and always seeks to be made manifest in the world. And yet, his life

was satisfied because he devoted it to the effort of knowing this truth.

This is what I ask of you: To do your best to resist the destruction and objectification of nature and natural beings, to immerse yourself in the hope of a great awakening (what Joanna Macy calls the “great turning”) in our time--nothing short of a miraculous rediscovery of new truth-force that will and must change the very core of the world’s collective view of itself and its relationship to the rest of the natural world. As we sing the praises of the earth and cultivate the garden of compassion for all her species, we strive for the truth.

But a warning: If we stop the avoidance and the denial personally and professionally it is likely, yes even necessary, that you will have your hearts broken again and again with the suffering that you will witness and experience in the defense of the Earth. But social workers, as we have done countless times in the past around the great issues of poverty and class, racism, sexism, and ethnocentrism, must take the responsibility to bear witness to the suffering we know and join with the many in transforming this awareness into countless selfless actions in defense of our home and in resistance to those forces which destroy by ever increasing acts of self-indulgence and callous disregard. As the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and Matthew Fox suggest; spirituality without resistance, without the effort to transform oppression and marginalization, (the *via transformativa*) without the effort to end the pain of others, to work for the liberation of all beings is a empty and selfish spirituality.

Conclusion

None of us here today can know what the future holds. We can only work in the hope of a just and ecologically sound and sustainable society even amid our current insanity and violence toward the world and its inhabitants. But, we do know that we need to become hopeful conservators of our spirit, the world’s spirit ,and remain strong in the conviction that resistance is essential, no matter what the outcome of the struggle. We do know that in order to continue the healing work of our profession, the healing of the earth, of our communities, and ourselves, we will need to renew our spirit and be open to the power of love and companionship with one another and all our brothers and sisters in the earth community. In the words of Thomas Berry:
...I would suggest that we see these early years of the 21st century as the period when we discover the great community of the earth. A comprehensive community of all the living and nonliving components of the planet. We are just discovering that the human project is itself a component of the Earth Project; that our intimacy with the earth is our way to intimacy with each other. Such are the foundations of our journey into the future.

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Healing Ourselves Healing the Earth

By Joleen Benedict, LCSW

As a clinical social worker working at a community mental health agency, I am writing from a practitioner's point of view. I have been a nature lover and a lover of the earth since I was a child, and an environmentalist since the early 1970's. In the mid-1980's before I became a social worker, I was the Executive Director of the Watershed Association of the Delaware River, a citizens' watchdog organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of the Delaware River and its tributaries.

In the 1980's as a professional environmentalist and a spiritual seeker, I had an insight that the environmental crisis was a psycho-spiritual crisis before Al Gore published a similar insight in his popular book *Earth in the Balance* (1992). As a result of this insight, I believe that, in order to heal ourselves and prevent ecological catastrophe, the transformation of human consciousness is essential. This new consciousness embraces our fundamental oneness with the earth and all living creatures, not just in a material or emotional sense but, more importantly, in a spiritual sense. The new consciousness not only perceives, but also experiences the natural world, including ourselves, as manifestations of the divine.

My insight contains a vision of combining ecology, spirituality and healing as a method for change and transformation. In my quest to realize my vision, I explored transpersonal psychology and earth-based spiritualities—women's spirituality, deep ecology, creation spirituality and ecopsychology. I also explored a variety of alternative healing modalities and attended seminars, workshops, and conferences. At that time my vision excluded the social work profession because, I contended, social work had a limited conception of "person-in-environment." For example, I have not seen the natural world included in any ecogram. Although I had integrated spirituality and social work practice, I had compartmentalized my vision of my work as a social worker, perceiving the profession as myopic.

Fortunately, this symposium is an attempt to remedy social work's shortsightedness. Our purpose today, I believe, is to begin the process of a paradigm shift in the social work profession. Now, I have hope and excitement about the possibility of social work embracing a spiritual perspective of reverence for the Earth and of the natural world. I am reminded of my first Society for Spirituality and Social Work conference in 1995 where I was a panelist discussing spirituality and social work. At that time I was skeptical and talked about "being in the closet" regarding spirituality and social work practice. In six years time social workers' interest in spirituality has blossomed, becoming a vital movement in the profession. I hope this is a foreshadowing of a positive future for a Deep Ecological Social Work.

A Deep Ecological Social Work calls for a "re-enchantment of the world," where the natural world is experienced as sacred,

imbued with healing and wisdom to impart to us. The re-enchantment of the world requires a transformation in consciousness, integrating our bodies, minds and spirits into a new level of being in the world. It also requires a spiritual awakening, a process that expands our experience of unity with the universe, including humankind, the natural world and, ultimately, the cosmos. This transformation is a reciprocal process of healing ourselves and of healing the Earth. As we heal ourselves, individually and collectively, we begin to realize that the destruction of the Earth leads to our own demise. We learn to love the Earth as we love ourselves. Our ethical and moral standards begin to include the natural world. As we move beyond an exclusively anthropocentric worldview, we transcend our limited identity and then experience ourselves as interdependent parts of a much greater unity.

I believe social workers, as well as environmentalists, need to heal in order to shift to a Deep Ecological paradigm. The methods and practices of both social work and of environmental activism overlap. However, one's psycho-spiritual development and maturity is key for truly embracing a wider unity. On both micro and macro levels we can begin the healing process for ourselves and for our clients.

On the micro level, borrowing from ecopsychology, we can begin in small ways to help our clients experience more fully the unity of the whole embedded in place. Ecopsychologists contend that the natural world has healing power. Guiding clients to experience the natural world therapeutically is basic to an ecopsychological approach. Lane and Sarah Conn (1995), prominent Ecopsychologists, propose a variety of techniques for using the natural world therapeutically. For example, clinical social workers can encourage their clients to spend time in nature, walking, observing, journaling, and sketching to gain feelings of peace and relaxation, insight and clarity. In session, social workers can invoke healing by using nature imagery in hypnotherapy processes. The Conns conduct "miniature vision quests" for their clients that open them to the wisdom of the natural world inspiring healing and creativity. The natural world is also a source of therapeutic symbols and metaphors that can be used in a multitude of therapeutic processes, such as art, poetry, music, and ritual. The Conns use ritual involving elements from nature for rites of passage and other meaningful events, as well as constructing altars of natural objects for therapeutic purposes. They also ask clients to become acquainted, individually and communally, with their immediate neighborhoods, including identifying and caring for trees, plants, wildlife, and watersheds. The natural world offers much creative material for therapeutic use.

On the macro level, social workers can join deep ecologists and other environmentalists in shaping environmental policy, strategic planning and activism regarding a host of socio-

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environmental issues including environmental racism and ecojustice. While these are important concerns, I would also like to raise the possibility of using sacred places in nature as vehicles for healing and transforming consciousness in social work practice.

"In many earth-based cultures, the Earth is revered for its mystery as well as its beneficence. This is seen in the practice of designating certain powerful areas as 'sacred places'—lands that are understood to stand outside of ordinary life" (Gomes & Kanner, 1995). In American culture, we have lost our connection to the sacredness of the Earth and with our sacred places—streams, rivers, wells, groves of trees, caves, mountains, and stones. Sacred places are an important part of the spiritual experience of the indigenous people of the North American continent, of non-European cultures, and of some European cultures. I propose that our society begin the process of creating sacred sites - transdenominational in orientation - that have the potential to unite people of various cultural and religious backgrounds. These sacred sites, either publicly or privately owned, would be places of reverence, healing, prayer, worship, meditation, and celebration. These sites would be designated and maintained as sacred and could be either natural or human-made. Labyrinths, stone circles, wells, and meditation gardens are some examples of human-made sites. Our relationship with the site would be reciprocal in that we give to the site our love, attention and care, as we receive healing, spiritual attunement, and creative inspiration. We can also build community with others as we work to care for these sites and use these projects to advocate for geo-justice.

An example of communing with the sacred in nature is the River Sounding Project, sponsored by the Delaware Riverkeeper Network in 1994. The purpose of the River Sounding Project, a communal silent meditation on seven sites along the Delaware River, was to receive inspiration and knowledge regarding the river's sustainability. Artwork inspired by participating in the Sounding was exhibited at a Philadelphia museum. The sites were natural sites that were perceived as sacred by the participants.

An example of a human-made sacred site is Columcille, a megalithic park created by Bill Cohea and located in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Columcille, described as "a play ground for the Spirit," includes a stone chapel, a stone bell tower, many megalithic standing stones, a ring of megaliths, a sacred well, a meditation garden, nature trails and a labyrinth. Visitors are instructed to enter Columcille in silence and with an attitude of reverence. Thousands of people from a variety of backgrounds visit Columcille yearly.

As one can see, there is much opportunity for creativity in our endeavor to heal our sacred Earth and ourselves. The scope of social work practice can greatly expand. Is there a place in social work for these kinds of projects? Can we use our creative imaginations to give the environment a more dynamic presence in our profession's "person in environment" perspective?

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Call for Manuscripts The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Society's Newsletter. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Four hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk, with files saved in either WordPerfect or MS Word format, should be sent to: UNO School of Social Work, SSSW, 6001 Dodge St., Omaha, NE 68182-0293.

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difficult for many to breathe (Bueckert, 2000). Social workers are staff members in hospital wards and emergency rooms which deal with patients and anxious family members.

Globalization also plays a role in environmental destructiveness. For example, trade rules allow the USA to export into Canada thousands of tons of toxic waste to be disposed of in landfills and by other methods. Many of these same activities are illegal in the United States (Mittelstaedt, 2001, June 25). Toxins impact behaviour and emotions, as well as physical health (Bertell, 1998; Hoff & McNutt, 1994), and social workers are involved in these concerns through work in schools, treatment centres and family and individual counselling.

As students realize that many of the activities of modern society cause significant and possibly irreparable harm to the environment and to all of life, an ecological consciousness begins to develop. It is this consciousness which leads each of us to accept responsibility to resist the destruction and to seek sustainable activities.

2. The root cause of exploitation rests in modernity.

With information and support, social workers come to understand that the root cause of environmental degradation rests in the basic assumptions we hold about the nature of our society (modernity) and what it means to be human. Modernity manifests itself most dramatically in the absolute value placed on rationalism, positivism, individualism, anthropocentrism, and linear progress (Harvey, 1989; Irving, 1994; Spretnak, 1997). It takes time and support for students to appreciate that the fundamental beliefs and values which inform modern society are in need of transformation. Most students quickly realize that it is these same characteristics that contribute to human and ecological exploitation, and to social and environmental injustice.

If we look further into these beliefs we find, at their core, assumptions of dualism, dominance and determinism. *Dualism* is the belief that reality is composed of separate and autonomous parts; for example, that people are separate from the Creator (however understood), people from nature, intellect from emotion, personal from the professional, material from the spiritual. Consistent with this assumption, the social work profession, in general, has limited environment to refer almost exclusively to the social environment. *Hierarchical domination* is the assumption that those above in ordering systems have the right to control those below. This supports the existence of class, status and power. As a result, rational is superior to emotional, male to female, and humans to the rest of nature. Modern humans have come to see themselves as the central and primary species on Earth. The rest of creation is considered less valuable and are treated as commodities which are bought, transformed, and sold. *Determinism* assumes that reality is a collection of parts. This deterministic view sees the Universe as a fixed, unchanging, and endless resource.

The bias inherent in modern belief systems leads people to assume they are separate and superior to the 'rest of nature' and

can do whatever they wish to achieve whatever goals they establish. The quest for progress, economic growth, and profit has led to the exploitation of 'other' - of nature, of people who are different, of women, - and has contributed to ecological destruction and social injustice.

3. Social work, as a profession, is embedded in modernity.

Social work developed within, and functions in service to, modern industrial society. Through its efforts to establish a professional status, and its place in the emergence of the modern welfare state, social work settled into its role as one of the professions which cared for people who had difficulty fitting into industrial society. Social work has become quite skilled in helping, and at times policing, those who are unable to support themselves or who are cast aside by modern society.

In general, however, social work accepted the assumptions and beliefs of modernity and its growth oriented, exploitive, acquisitive, dualistic, and anthropocentric biases. Our profession is embedded within modern belief systems, and the profession's role in society is that of a co-dependent participant. Our interventions, while creating a role for social work by helping individuals and families adapt, also serve to support and sustain a system of beliefs and practices which create inequality and destroy the environment.

Social work is becoming aware that critiques have emerged in the form of radical, structural, feminist, and anti-oppressive approaches, which challenge the unequal distribution of wealth, status and power. However, even these critical perspectives do not challenge the inherently exploitive and extractive nature of the economy, nor do they challenge the dualism, anthropocentrism, and materialism of modern consciousness.

If our profession is to play an effective role in the movement toward sustainability and social justice, the profession must examine how its ideologies and practices are embedded in modernity and how it might challenge its modernist foundations. "An adequate response by the profession of social work ... will entail a re-appraisal and re-orientation of the most basic paradigms that guide the social welfare field" (Hoff & McNutt, 1994).

4. Social work needs to develop alternative assumptions and beliefs.

To effectively oppose human and environmental exploitation, social work must put aside dualism and the primacy of individualism, materialism, and economic growth, and establish an alternative foundational system of assumptions and beliefs that lead toward a mutually beneficial human/Earth relationship. I suggest that such a transformative world view can be found in adopting a 'new story' (Berry, 1988) or what Benyus (1997) calls a 'change of heart'. Such a world view builds on a deep ecological metaphor and sees all life as having intrinsic value, celebrates human embeddedness in nature, and realizes that people are intimately and fundamentally connected to humans and to non-human species everywhere. Modernist assumptions would give way to interdependence,

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connectedness, self-organization, cooperation, balance, diversity, and complexity.

Within a transformative world view humans are assumed to have an important role to play on Earth but are only one of the many life forms that share the planet. Social workers, informed by connectedness and interdependence, understand that every community, every person, and every ecosystem has a unique contribution to make to the unfolding of creation. Our tasks as social workers will expand to include the creation of communities and social structures which foster a mutually beneficial human/Earth relationship; a relationship within which every living being has the opportunity to maximize self-realization. Within this perspective, human well-being is dependent upon a thriving ecosystem, and individual well-being is dependent upon the well-being of all.

Such a transformative world view requires that we re-define what is of greatest value and importance. For many this will include a spiritual, economic, political, and social transformation as we are challenged at the very core of our being to redefine what it means to be human.

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Spiritual Diversity and Social Work

The First Annual Canadian Conference on Spirituality and Social Work

May 25, 2002
University of Toronto

This conference seeks to bring together social work academics and practitioners to discuss, for the first time in Canada, the issue of Spiritual Diversity and Social Work. The conference hopes to encourage Canadian scholarship and to generate an association of academics, graduate students and practitioners to stimulate a dialogue on research, professional education and practice.

The conference includes a keynote address by Dr. Edward Canda, as well as a number of workshops and presentations. The workshops address spirituality in education, practice and the workplace while the presentations discuss spirituality and social work from both theoretical and practice perspectives such as history, Aboriginal spirituality, ecology, education and practice.

The conference is held in Toronto, Ontario and is held in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. Information about the conference, including registration, can be obtained from John Coates (JCoates@StThomasU.ca).

Director's Notes:

On Conferences, Past and Future

This special issue of the Forum reflects the themes of a day-long symposium that took place prior to our national conference last summer. As social workers we've been trained to consider the person in the context of their environment. The summer meeting and this issue challenge us to broaden and deepen our understanding of the role of environment in human welfare...and, then, to take action.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work began to have summer conferences in 1995 with our first meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. Over the years wonderful relationships have developed at these conferences and many practitioners, students and educators have found them to be a source of inspiration and renewal. The conferences were kept very low cost through dependence on volunteer and student labor. Over time, the conferences grew in size and scope, making them more of a challenge to manage in this fashion.

We will not be having a conference this summer for a number of reasons that range from the personal, to the organizational, to the societal. Personally, having moved half a year ago from Nebraska to New York, I need a summer to adjust to my new job and surroundings, relax, and not have the responsibility of coordinating a national conference. Organizationally, the Society for Spirituality and Social Work is also in a time of transition in which it needs to explore and examine how to best facilitate meetings of our members. On a broader societal level, many people are reluctant to travel distances to attend conferences after the events of September 11.

We are exploring options for a national conference in the summer of 2003 and will keep members apprised of developments. In the mean time, I would really like to hear from the membership about ideas they might have for future meetings. Are national conferences a good idea and worth the resources and energy it takes to pull them off? Where and when should conferences take place? What topics should be addressed at meetings? You can reach me with your comments and ideas at russel@binghamton.edu or at the address below.

Robin Russel, PhD
Professor
School of Education and Human Development
Binghamton University
Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000

Chapter Updates

ARKANSAS: The Northwest Arkansas regional chapter in Fayetteville, AR meets quarterly at Kathleen Johnson's house and sponsors a workshop each semester at the University of Arkansas School of Social Work in Fayetteville. The workshops feature presentations on addressing spirituality in social work practice, and provide CEU's to participants. For further information, contact Kathleen Johnson at (501) 713-7385 or Dona Reese at (501) 575-3782.

BUFFALO: The Buffalo Chapter is meeting on a regular basis every second Monday of the month and they usually have a guest speaker. The night before Sept 11th they had a drumming circle. Quite a few of the members went to New York City to help out at the World Trade Center. In March they are having a storyteller as their guest. In April they are having a presentation on "Healing Yourself with Music." In May they are having a speaker on "Integrative Bodywork" and in June an evening of "Aromatherapy." The group meets at 162 Main Street in the village of Hamburg, south of Buffalo, New York. For further information, contact Bonnie Collins at 716-648-4455.

CHICAGO: No formal SSSW chapter has been formed in Chicago, but several SSSW members get together at various related groups and organizations. For more information please contact Nancy Ging at 708-323-5402 or nancyging@aol.com

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA: For more information please contact Jim Dimperio at (814) 868-8661.

LONG ISLAND: The Long Island Chapter continues to meet monthly. The chapter is in its second year. The members have been involved in responding to various aspects of the September 11th disaster including supporting each other in their work. For more information, please contact Don Cornelius at (516) 423-0773 or stanwood22@aol.com.

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY: Barbara Jellinek is in the process of forming a Chapter at the School of Social Work at Rutgers University. If interested in becoming a member please contact Barbara at 732-329-8621 or bjellinek@comcast.net

UTAH: For more information, please contact David Derezotes at 801-585-3546.

WASHINGTON, DC: For information, please contact Linda Haake at (703) 750-0022 or lahaake@aol.com

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Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

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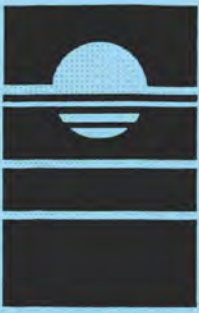
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See Page Nine for Conference Information

The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Volume 9, Issue 2

Spring 2002



The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work

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Distinct but not divided: A reflection on an old question

Jacquelyn Dwoskin, LCSW
Palm Beach Gardens, FL

When I was in high school, my English class was required to read George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*. What I remember of this novel about a devoted brother and sister who cannot reconcile the sister's venturing forth into another lifestyle, is the flood that takes both of their lives at the end of the story. The last line in the novel, written as an epitaph, has always stayed with me for its simplicity that speaks volumes, "In their death they were not divided."

What does this have to do with the practice of social work and its spiritual nature? Here is the old question pondered for centuries by the thinkers that form the canon of western philosophy: what is it to *be*? A question with philosophical and spiritual implications. A question that is implicit or explicit for each of us. Social work has been said to be an ethic and a philosophy in search of a practice (Siporin, 1985). The values of social work lie in its "historic and defining feature ...[which] is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society" (NASW, 1996). The practice of social work answers the question of what it means to *be* through action. Being is reflected in being of service; giving service to others who are suffering within the context of their inner and/or outer selves. According to Martin Heidegger, a modern philosopher whose actions fell short of his ideas, identified 'being' as a constant presence, as the quality of always being available for interaction (Routledge Encyclopedia).

Parmenides, a Greek philosopher (c.515 B.C.E.-450 B.C.E.) credited with beginning the tradition of rational thought, was disturbed by the thinking of Heraclitus, his contemporary (Melchert, 1999). Heraclitus had observed the passage of things coming and going, appearing and disappearing. Heraclitus posited that all is in motion. Parmenides understood that Heraclitus' observations were based on his senses, what comes and goes is information that comes through experience. But how can anything come from nothing? The human mind cannot think of nothing. It is impossible. Whenever we think, it is of something, so the

nature of being cannot be based on the sensual world. If it is impossible to conceive of nothing, then our experiences of flux must be an illusion. Parmenides concluded that all is one, for what could possibly separate what is from what is?

Both Plato and Aristotle inherited this incipient tradition of rationalism. They pondered their predecessors' ideas and found their own sets of questions. Part of their answers included classifications of things. They wanted to answer: what kinds of things are there in the world, visible and invisible? This question arises from wondering 'what is it to be'. Observing what things there are has the possibility of revealing being, just as wondering about being points to what is. Classifying is a way of knowing about the world. Science begins from this philosophical pondering. Once we begin to make classifications, we are making distinctions. If all is one, according to Parmenides, and we accept this notion of what it is to be, we cannot help but notice whereas we all are joined together, we also differ. I am not the same as a leaf. I am not the same as the ocean. I am not the same as my neighbor. So how do we differ? Thus science observes and further classifies what things there are, what properties are shared with what or whom. The thinking leads to a method of observing that brings forth knowledge.

In our western culture we have absorbed these ideas as ways to view the world: divisions, classifications, categories. The profession of social work seeks to sensitize us to our differences, to respect them, to enjoy and, even, celebrate diversity. And yet, embedded in this notion, may still lurk a sense of our differences. We cannot help but notice differences. We compare and contrast. We may participate in diagnosing. We live with binarisms, i.e. a two-world theory (Arendt, 1971), an I-it perspective (Buber, 1984), the Cartesian mind-body split, the Newtonian paradigm of cause and effect, Freud's psychic determinism, our grammatical structure of subject and object. Judgments are made in this fashion. And so is separateness.

A study of modern physics is challenging the

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Director's Notes

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
Professor
Binghamton University
Binghamton, NY

Change, change, and more change. Last summer I moved, now it's the Society for Spirituality and Social Work's turn. While there will still be boxes to pack and unpack, at least the Society doesn't have a house to sell. During the month of June the organization will be moving to Binghamton University from Omaha, Nebraska, where it has been housed at the School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, since 1994.

Many of you know, I moved to Binghamton to develop a new MSW program. Binghamton University is one of the four university centers in the State University of New York system. The MSW program will be part of the School of Education and Human Development here. Our school is very welcoming and supportive of the work of the Society and recognizes the importance of spirituality in human service.

We will begin publishing the Forum here in Binghamton this fall. I hope members will continue to submit manuscripts and share their insights, views and experiences with their colleagues. (Details on how to submit an article for review are in the Call for Manuscripts, see page 11). All manuscripts are peer-reviewed by at least three reviewers prior to being accepted for publication. The continuation of the Forum is dependant on our members' contributions.

This year we will not be hosting a conference. The annual conference was the Society's largest fund-raising activity. It was largely the conference that paid the salaries of all of the wonderful student assistants that have worked for us over the years. This coming year, we will again be dependent on volunteer help to keep the organization running. Just at about the point I was questioning how that would happen, assistance almost magically appeared in the form of Khushmand Rajendran. Khushmand is an experienced social worker from India who moved to Binghamton this past year and contacted me about volunteering her time and talents. Khushmand has her MSW from Bombay University and is both an experienced writer and editor. Khushmand will be joining us on a regular basis in September and will be returning emails and phone inquires on a weekly basis over the summer months. I hope you will all join me in welcoming her to the Society.

The lack of conference revenue this year will make it especially important for members to keep their dues current, so that we can continue to publish the Forum and cover other organizational expenses. Please check the front of your Forum, by your name and address, to find out when your dues were last paid. Dues have remained at the same low level since 1996. Please consider a contribution to the organization at a higher level of support, if you can afford to do so.

The organization will be saying good-bye to Andi Schueler and DeeDee Chance who have worked as graduate assistants for the organization since January of 2001. Andi and DeeDee both wanted you to know how grateful they are for the wonderful people they had an opportunity to meet and work with through the organization. I'm particularly thankful for their assistance in keeping the organization operating during this past transitional year. They will both continue with their MSW program and anticipate graduating in May of 2003. DeeDee is also going to be a first-time mom in August. Best of luck to both of them!

Change, while often stressful, is full of possibilities for growth and new adventures. I have experienced both since moving to New York in August. Life changes challenge both individuals and organizations to remain fluid and stretch in ways you cannot always anticipate. I think the Society for Spirituality and Social Work can step up to that challenge.

New Society Contact Information **Effective June 2002**

Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Education and Human Development
Binghamton University-SUNY
Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000
Phone: 607-777-4603
Email: sssw@binghamton.edu

Wellness and Spirituality: A Psychospiritual Support Group for Cancer Patients

By Debra Mattison, MSW, ACSW and
Jack Harrington, MSW
Ann Arbor, MI

The Forgotten Spirit

Spirituality as an important factor in health has begun to be explored by a number of authors who focus on the interconnectedness of mind, body, and spirit (Dorsey, 1993; Myss, 1996; Cooper, 1995; Lawlis, 1996). Spiritual well-being can be a central factor in enabling cancer survivors to use inner resources to survive and potentially grow through their experiences with illness. Yet it is an often overlooked dimension in care. In our efforts to meet the holistic needs of people with cancer, it is no longer enough to focus only on the physical and psychological care of survivors.

We must also address important spiritual issues such as: How will cancer patients find meaning and hope? What will they hold onto during their cancer journey? Where will they find strength to face the challenges of the disease and the treatment process? What will help them endure the chronicity of their illness? Believing that this spiritual dimension is often forgotten in our assessment of and interventions with patients, the authors designed a four-week time-limited psycho spiritual support group to tap into this powerful resources for patients.

While we will describe our interventions with cancer patients, the incorporation of psycho spiritual interventions into clinical practice has broad applicability to other client populations.

Group Structure and Format

The group was titled "Wellness and Spirituality: Mind, Body and Spirit Connections" and was promoted as a group designed for people with cancer who wished to explore spirituality and health issues. Participants were asked to commit to attend all four sessions. For the purpose of the group, spirituality was defined broadly and inclusively as a universal human need and experience of meaning, purpose and connection. The goals of the group were to identify and validate spiritual needs and issues; to understand spiritual beliefs as resources for meaning, purpose and connection; and to increase awareness of spiritual perspectives, practices and experiences that may assist in coping with cancer.

The group met weekly for four sessions and explored the links between health, illness, and spirituality. Each week consisted of a brief didactic presentation on a specified theme followed by group discussion and sharing. Experiential activities such as drawing, poetry, writing or metaphor exercises were used to elicit feelings and

thoughts. For example, during session 3 of the group which explored spiritual feelings that may be more difficult to "carry" such as anger and guilt, participants were asked to select a rock and label it with their chosen difficult feeling. They were asked to hold onto this "feeling rock" throughout the one and a half hour session. At the end of the session, participants discussed insights about the weight of their feelings and what they might choose to do with these feelings. The rock serves as a metaphor in pointing out options that are available to deal with feelings. Some participants chose to place their feeling rock in a flower garden giving it a different meaning while others transformed it's usefulness into a door stop or simply decided to let go of it by laying it down.

A sample of a structured group poem written in the final session of the group is provided at the end of this article. The first line of each stanza was provided and the group is asked to complete the verse based on their experience of the group together and each member is given a copy as a memento of the group. These creative exercises helped explore group topics in ways that often helped participants gain new insights into issues related to their cancer and spirituality.

The session topics and sample content consisted of the following:

Spirituality: What is It?

- What is spirituality for you?
- What gives meaning to your life?
- What does spirituality have to do with health?

Finding Meaning in the Cancer Journey

- What changes, challenges and choices has cancer brought for you?
- Is a "balanced" life possible?
- What "meaning" choices can you make?

Exploring the Dimensions of Spirituality

- Anger and doubt are spiritual feelings, too.
- Forgiveness and letting go
- Hope, peace, wisdom and creativity

Wellness and Spirituality

- Living as a whole person
- Spiritual practices and personal rituals, ceremonies
- Creating and strengthening connections

(Continued on page 8)

Memoirs of a Spiritual Outsider

A Review of Memoirs of a Spiritual Outsider by Suzanne Clores

Jim Raines, MSW, MDiv., Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Aurora University

In my Spirituality and Social Work Practice course, I always try to include one nonacademic book as part of the course. For years now, I have been using Ron Hansen's Mariette in Ecstasy. That book is now ten years old and I have been looking for a replacement. I happened across Suzanne Clores' Memoirs of a Spiritual Outsider on the new non-fiction shelves and was immediately intrigued. As a self-acknowledged Gen-Xer, she describes her alienation from her childhood religion (Catholicism) and her spiritual quest for "something more" that leads her to explore Wicca, Shamanism, Yoga, Voodoo, Sufism Reoriented, and Shambhala Buddhism. It culminates in her search for community through participation in the Burning Man ceremony held in the Nevada desert each year.

She begins with her estrangement from Christianity and its limited role models for women. While she meets a peer who talks excitedly about her relationship with Jesus, she reacts negatively to any attempts at proselytization. Despite her "secret jealousy" that someone could find meaning within a spiritual system, she rejects its patriarchal hegemony and takes comfort in joining others of her generation who belong to the ranks of the "spiritually bereft."

In the next six chapters, she describes her own naiveté and provides the reader with a brief introduction to the beliefs of each group. I identified with her when she spoke of how American mass media had led to cultural caricatures of each one. Her concept of Wiccans suffered from the ideas gleaned from the Wizard of Oz; Shamanism was initially associated with the ancient Indian man from the movie Altered States; her first impressions of voodoo were formed from the film Angel Heart. Fortunately, she provides some alternative sources for each one.

As a young woman seeking independence from her family, she continually seeks out older women who can simultaneously serve as spiritual mentors and role models. She provides a detailed account of the spiritual journey of each female practitioner she finds. As a feminist fed up with patriarchal persecution, she evaluates each tradition

for its understanding of women as "inherently strong spiritual beings who sought growth and depth" (p. 13).

My one criticism of her book is while she alludes to her own "psychotherapy," she never recognizes that the very term means "soul healing" (Becvar, 1997). Thus, the reader is forced to read between the lines about how her personal struggles with finding a career and committing to a relationship are reflected in her spiritual wanderings.

Despite her naiveté, she also suggests caution in exploring unknown spiritual territory. Belonging to a generation that has seen the likes of Jim Jones, David Koresh, and Heaven's Gate, she is respectfully concerned that powerful group dynamics do not overwhelm her individuality. She also worries about the social ostracism that can result from any spirituality which is too effusive when her skeptical peers consider going to Dogma a spiritual experience. She expresses regret that some may ridicule her smorgasbord approach as a kind of "cafeteria spirituality," but points out that her generation has an aversion to authority of any kind. Thus, in the end, she must find her own amalgam of beliefs and disciplines from which she can put her fledgling faith into action. Devotion to her own path, regardless of pressure to keep spirituality a completely private issue, becomes an act of bravery.

This book is more than one woman's quest for meaning in the 21st century; it speaks about an entire generation's approach to the existential questions that it faces. There are no easy answers, only nagging questions that refuse to go away. An easy read, I was done with the 228 pages in just two days. Once it's out in paperback, I'll be recommending it to my students.

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PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE

Irene Borins Ash MSW, RSW

Consultant on Aging, Photographer, & Writer

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

This is planting time. It is Autumn and I am planting bulbs, which will come into their full beauty and splendor early next spring. I find myself thinking about the significance of what I am doing. There was an attack on America a few weeks ago. The United States and their allies are now responding with various forms of retaliation. I am still uneasy about what will come next and I am not alone in this concern. I ponder what we can do to find meaning in life at this difficult time in history.

I have worked extremely hard at this project, as my perennial garden is new, having been planted for the first time this past summer. Two hundred bulbs were planted in a garden that is really quite small. They range from hyacinths, to crocuses, muscari and narcissus. I could become depressed and withdraw from people, for every time I turn on the news more and more events make me feel uneasy. Perhaps that is why I am choosing to plant "a garden of hope" which will bloom early next year.

My husband and I often have lunch at a neighborhood deli. I have made an acquaintance with one of the waitresses. Every time we go there she has some new garden tips to share with me. She has taught me so much about what to do with my garden, which has become the talk of the neighborhood this past summer. Gardening is one way of connecting people with others. So many of the passers-by will share tips with me, while others will comment on the lush, splendid array of heights and colors that have taken over the once ordinary grass.

For this new garden, patience, consistent nourishment and newly acquired knowledge have helped it look like a far more mature endeavor. The planting of the bulbs will make it more complete.

When neighbors see me working in the garden, they will often say how good they feel when they walk past. I respond by saying "wait until spring- wait until you see the two hundred bulbs that have been planted, start to poke their heads through the snow". I often tell the neighbors that I am planting a "garden of hope" as this is a time to reflect and, unfortunately, to be anxious. I need to have something to focus on during the long winter months that will slowly unfold. I need to have hope for the next few months, as events evolve in the world.

I find myself struggling inwardly to maintain my faith

and my spirituality, but it does take some concentrated effort these days. Like so many others, I will never be able to erase the horrific images of September 11th. The entire landscape of the tragedy that shook the world has been burned into my memory forever. This is why I am planting "seeds of hope" to help me through the long cold winter in order that I can see the beauty that will blossom in the early spring.

I have been trying to make some sense out of the tragedy that happened on September 11th- when the world profoundly changed for all of us. There is something that I cannot get out of my mind. Upon returning from what initially was a vacation to Santa Fe, from which I did not return until September 19th, a week later than originally planned, I learned that a young man, who had been a tenant in our home four years ago, perished in the attack. He had been attending a meeting at the World Trade Center on the 106th floor. His young, pregnant wife was in New York City at the time but, thankfully, not in the building. The tragedy has hit very close to our home.

Ten years ago, I visited Salaspils, a concentration camp outside of Riga, Latvia. One hundred thousand people perished there. When the camps were evacuated, all of the barracks were burned down so the world would not know what had occurred. Immense monuments mark the place where the buildings once were located. Where the children's barracks stood, flowers now adorn the cold earth. These too were flowers of hope, hope for a better, kinder world.

When the Second World War ended, life gradually returned to normal. People regained their hope and their lives became meaningful once again. It will take time, but I choose to believe that we will heal individually and as nations around the globe. Perhaps we can all learn from our past mistakes.

While pondering the fear I feel today, I will choose to believe humanity will rise above inhumanity, as has happened following the many tragedies and mass deaths throughout history. I will choose hope over fear, despair and anxiety.

And I will begin to watch for my flowers to poke their heads above the snow in early March, and once again feel a sense of peace.

Animated exploration of spirituality in the classroom: A simple question becomes a provocative “what if?”

Mary Corrigan, RN, CASAC, MSW, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Binghamton University

This article describes the context and process of a discussion in spirituality in an undergraduate human development course at a public university in upstate New York. The class included 41 students, many of whom came from the New York City area. Nearly half the class indicated they are preparing to apply to graduate programs in social work.

I have incorporated some consideration of spirituality in my courses in the past, yet hadn't previously found a way to effectively engage the majority of the class in active discussion in this area. While some students had readily engaged in the topic, more had remained relatively silent and offered little beyond polite head nodding. That experience changed dramatically in the fall of 2001 in a course on “Resilience and Coping” in which we explored many aspects of adversity, and the multitude of ways that people find to cope. We also saw the events of September 11th unfold and many familiar class discussions no longer seemed quite so routine. Early in the semester some students commented how they'd “never seen so much praying” going on around them as they had since September 11th. It was clear that there was both some comfort and some real awkwardness about the issues of prayer and religion, and around the existential questions with which many of them were wrestling. A number of students in the class had direct connections to people associated with the World Trade Center, including both those who had escaped and those who had not. The attacks and their aftermath became a major new context for what was already challenging course material. The subsequent airliner crash in Queens, New York further intensified this, both for the geographic connection to many students' homes and for deepening the overall sense of vulnerability. I decided to revisit and expand these explorations later in the course where issues of faith and healing were illustrated in the assigned readings of life stories and in the context of the increasing demands on students' coping and well-being (Kamya, 2000) in addition to the learning goals of the course.

In setting the stage for this discussion we had explored a variety of frameworks on coping and resilience using individual, family and community perspectives. We explored various means of coping, including some traditional cognitive issues about perception and belief (Sapolsky, 1998) as well as the healing benefits of writing (Pennebaker, 1990), positive relationships, support and

connection (Katz, 1997), and altruism and social activism (Higgins, 1994). Specific readings explored the relationship of belief to quality of life and healing (Benson, 1997), and the importance of spiritual anchors in one's identity and life course (Garbarino, 2000). Much of the course emphasized the use of narrative, bringing to life consideration of resilience and coping with grief and loss in the context of life stories such as described by Angell, Dennis & Dumain (1998), as well as from popular literature (Angelou, 1969; Pelzer, 1995). Many of the stories included perspectives on the role of faith, organized religion (with or contrasted with) spirituality, and the idea of a “master narrative”, an evolving and guiding sense of self and purpose in the context of the universe (Higgins, 1994). Many students indicated this was the first reading they had done in these areas. Some indicated a newfound interest in the topics as part of an attempt to come to terms with September 11. I suspect that the variety of beliefs portrayed in the readings normalized and validated students' views and that this, combined with the increased public attention to prayer and the heightened vulnerability and uncertainty of the times, made for such an engaged and animated class experience.

I can still be amazed by the power of a question. Even a seemingly simple question, in its time and context, can free so much energy. In this case, a brief question triggered an animated, thoughtful and broader discussion of spirituality, some personal soul searching by a number of students, and consideration of some of the complexities and ethical issues that might arise.

During a mid-class break, I began listing a spray of words on the board that reflected some key course themes including identity, adversity, coping, belief, faith, spirituality, higher power, religion, community, connection, support, hopefulness, hopelessness, resilience, “master narrative” and “remembered wellness” (Higgins, 1994). As students returned from the break I started quietly adding the names of various religions and communities of faith. As students caught on they continued to shout out additions to the list until we ran out of ideas. I asked students to form small groups and to reflect on the readings, the board, and their own lives, and then to do a brief “quick write” for themselves on what struck them. I then said that I had a “What If” for them. I wanted each student to imagine that they were meeting with someone

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who was in distress. Then I asked, "What if that person asked you to pray with them?" Students added to their quick writes and then shared in their small groups.

Up until this point in the course, this had been an active and generally vocal group of students. It seemed as though the ceiling tiles would lift out of their moorings, the volume and energy in the room was so intense. Physically, the circles grew smaller, the body language more animated, the listening more intent. What I thought would be an interesting question seemed to open a dam. It took up the rest of that class and carried over to subsequent discussions.

When processing reactions in the large group it was striking how attentive students were to each other and how much the discussion seemed to resonate with where they were individually at this point in their lives. For example, a number of traditional age students indicated that this shifted their thoughts from the required and organized religion of their childhood toward a broader view of sorting out their own beliefs, in contrast to merely echoing the beliefs of their parents. Some students, especially those who were older, commented on the painful and punitive experiences they had had with organized religion and how they were now more clearly separating out issues of religion and spirituality, and "then" from "now". Some students expressed relief to be able to talk in a class, many for the first time, about such an important part of who and how they have always been - sharing the comfort, strength and peace they have drawn from their spiritual beliefs and practices. Other students uncovered and articulated aspects of their own master narratives, focused on being guided by their beliefs about higher purpose, connectedness, service and being true to self, rather than by a belief in God. Many students commented on how surprisingly vast the subject was, their appreciation for the diversity of ways that people find spiritual meaning, and their understanding of the need to explore and value this in others as well as in themselves.

Four students came to see me after class to follow up individually on the experience and to indicate that they were going to talk with their parents or other family members about what it meant in their reflecting on their own beliefs and current practices. One of these students shared how powerful and comforting it had been for him as he was in the midst of attending a series of memorial services for friends still missing in the World Trade Center. He spoke of being from a family and culture that always spoke in terms of faith and belief in God and related his spiritual roots as very much the type of protective influence described by Haight (1998). He talked about how additionally painful and isolating it had been for him to be grieving away from home and in a place where he had found such talk to be rare or hidden until the

discussions in class helped him feel less alone.

The intent of this "what if" was to be thought-provoking and to provide a forum for students to consider a variety of perspectives. It naturally prompted some consideration of additional "what if's" in terms of looking at how such a request to pray with someone might unfold in terms of possible ethical issues (Miller, 2001; Canda and Furman, 1999). The class opened consideration of various ongoing practice issues and began the process of identifying and working through issues of "value clarity" (Canda and Furman, 1999, p.186). Some students, for instance, initially indicated that they would be uncomfortable praying with someone because they weren't sure whether it would be allowed (by an employer). Many students said they would be fine with the request because it was a request to them rather than from them, but a number expressed awkwardness about what to then actually say or do. One student shared strongly that she would not pray with someone of a different faith because that would be "compromising with" or "being untrue" to her own faith and she should "absolutely not be required" to do so. She went on to explain that the intensity of her emotional response had been rooted in a high school experience where she was participating in an extracurricular activity in which the group was spontaneously and unexpectedly gathered for a prayer circle. She expressed her frustration that the adults involved thought the prayer was "neutral" and "optional" but that it was decidedly Christian. As a Jewish student she was placed in a difficult bind on several levels, including feeling compelled to participate or be ostracized.

Overall, students indicated that they felt more sensitive to and more comfortable with discussions of faith and spirituality, consistent with the abilities described by Raines (1996) as elements of spiritually-sensitive practice in social work. They also indicated a greater curiosity about exploring these issues with others, especially in the context of learning how to best support coping, rather than undermine or silence it.

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Spiritual Outcomes

Initially a pre-group survey consisting of nine Likert Scale items was used to gather information about participants' expectations regarding the group and to measure self-reported levels of hope, anxiety, depression, and uncertainty as well as the importance of spiritual beliefs and practices in relationship to their cancer. Themes emerged from the pre-group data indicating what members hoped to gain from the group: insight into their individual spirituality; skills to help them live in the moment; the ability to be more connected; and new ways to incorporate spirituality into their lives.

Post-group surveys were administered to gather feedback and identify changes in the self-reported feelings of hope, depression, and anxiety. While statistical analysis was not possible due to the limited number in each group, general trends were noted with participants reporting an increased opportunity to reflect on the meaning of cancer along with an increased perception of cancer as being a positive change agent in their lives. Increased feelings of hope along with lowered levels of anxiety and depression were also self-reported. Narrative feedback expressed common themes illustrated in these participants' statements:

"I'm so glad to have had the opportunity to be a part of this group! It allowed me to focus on my own spirituality and to draw upon my inner strength to find my healing self. Sharing knowledge, emotions, beliefs, concepts helped me get back to my core self and peeled away layers of confusion."

"The most important thing is that it [the group] got me back on the journey of life and living and

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off the journey of cancer exclusively and it helped me to do this in a relatively brief period of time."

In addition to the pre- and post- self-report inventory, the Herth Hope Index, comprised of 12 items to measure levels of hope was administered pre- and post-group to look at the impact of the group on levels of hope (Herth, 1992). Again, inadequate numbers have not allowed for statistical analyses, but trends indicate increased hope scores at the end of the group compared with hope scores prior to the group.

The series ends with the participants writing a group poem representing the four-week journey they have taken together. One sample poem entitled "The Spirited Five" reflects the connectedness and the meaning the group members find together. This poem is included with the hope that it may be an encouragement and inspiration to other people with cancer who can use their spirituality to find a path to wellness.

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The Spirited Five

(continued from previous page)

Our spirituality is a part of our whole selves.
We came together and found commonality and began to explore and build the petals
of our flowers that are watered from the spring which feeds other parts of ourselves.
We discovered thoughts that give us strength and balance.
And they became the glue that held us together.

There is meaning to be found in all of life's journey though it may take time to discover it.
The dis-ease of cancer creates challenges, brings changes and gives us choices to make.
There is a process of tearing down and building back up that requires
the cooperation of our whole systems.
We must view our lives considering the colors of our hearts, minds and spirits.

Spirituality has many dimensions—some comfortable and some uncomfortable to feel.
We all know where we want to go, we just don't always know how to get there.
Fear and anxiety must be acknowledged in order to travel
through the uneasiness of life's journey.
We need to accept everything about ourselves including strengths and weaknesses.
Spirituality seeks health and survival.

I am a whole person choosing to create and strengthen
my spirit and connections to life.

I have learned about many ways to strengthen my spirit and affirm
that I am more than just a "sick" or "well" person. I am a whole person.
I strengthen my spirit through light, air, music, touch, smell and rainbows,
prayers, love walks in the woods, sunrises and sunsets.

I take a part of each of you and this experience as I go forward to live as a whole person.
The tenderness and vulnerability of the group brings out a nurturing response.
I value and thank each of you for the space to safely explore these
thoughts, concerns and moments of renewal.
Your openness in sharing and positive approach to surviving cancer encourages me
to make a renewed commitment to go forward to live as a whole person.
Your strength and understanding in sharing the agonies of a common enemy—cancer—
has given me a confidence that all will be well in the future.
Or at least I will challenge it realistically and spiritually drawing upon the unique energies
of each member of our group and will live as a whole person.
I will remember the unique light of our hope and ability to share
our journeys of survival by taking control of our lives.

A Spiritual-Religious Perspective on Mass Casualty Terrorism and Mass Population Protectionism - An Editorial

David Derezotes, LCSW, Ph.D.
Professor
University of Utah

I believe most people on Earth want to live in a nonviolent global community that affirms human diversity, dignity, and democracy. I realize and appreciate that without the freedoms we enjoy in the United States, I could not write this essay without fear of political oppression or worse.

In this brief essay, a spiritual perspective is given to the mass-casualty terrorism the United States has experienced and to what I will call the Mass Population Protectionism that has apparently been the policy of the United States since September 11, 2001. I will take the position that the policy of the current federal government is unbalanced, with too much emphasis on physical protection and not enough on healing and going beyond the root causes of mass casualty terrorism, which are largely spiritual-religious.

Spiritual-religious perspective

What is a "spiritual-religious" perspective? I think too often these two terms are unnecessarily viewed as opposing and dualistic, perhaps even by some of us in our own Society for Spirituality in Social Work. Commonly, spirituality is seen in the United States as an individual experience and expression, whereas religion is a "bringing together" of people. I do not think religion is in itself necessarily either good or bad for spirit, unless spiritual diversity is oppressed within and between religions. A spiritual-religious perspective then is a tolerant perspective, allowing for spiritual diversity, dignity, and democracy within and between religions and allowing for religious diversity, dignity, and democracy within and between spiritual people. For me, a spiritual-religious perspective is also a broad perspective from which we view events and decisions with the well-being of future generations yet unborn as much in mind as the well-being of our current generation.

Communities of diversity and narcissism

As a species, we humans have not yet learned how to effectively co-create such communities of diversity, whether these communities are on the family, local, or global level. Instead, we co-create communities of narcissism in which we seem to react violently in the moment, from the stormy seas of our immediate needs,

feelings, or concerns. One does not have to look at the sorry state of international relations to see communities of narcissism. One can see social workers react to each other in our own community meetings, national conference meetings, and faculty meetings. I can talk about this not only because I have observed others act out of their own narcissistic needs, but because I have seen these same tendencies in myself as well.

Mass casualty terrorism

I believe mass casualty terrorism is, at least, in part rooted in the communities of narcissism that exist today. The terrorists themselves, of course, are responsible for their own violence. However, the United States is co-responsible for co-creating a global community of narcissism characterized by growing economic and political disparity and policies that continue to shift wealth, power, and resources from the poor to the already rich. We are guilty of violence when we ignore the suffering of other people and fail to do what we can to help other countries in greater need than our own.

Mass population protectionism in Fortress Utah

As a citizen of Salt Lake City during the 2002 Winter Olympics, I have had the experience of living in the "safest" city in history and I do not like it. I do not like the experience of having armed soldiers, military helicopters, road checkpoints, undercover yet obvious guards, and other vast protections present around the university and community I live and work in. In the short run, perhaps such measures are unavoidable, if we want to avoid further terrorist attacks. In the long run, the United States cannot afford to live this way, nor can any country in the world. The walls of what I could call Fortress Utah, like those of any castle, cannot stand forever. For one thing, the whole effort is too expensive to maintain every time we want to have a big media event like the Olympics. In addition, the inhabitants within the walls pay a spiritual-religious price. We do not feel more secure, instead we start to become hyper vigilant and less trusting of people who seem to be different than us. Is this the lifestyle of the future? I hope not.

An alternative: Becoming a spiritual-religious leader in a

(Continued on page 11)

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global community of diversity.

The United States is currently blessed and cursed to be the undisputed economic, political, and military leader of the world. I would like us to use the incredible and rare opportunity history is giving us now to also become a spiritual-religious leader of the world. By this I mean we begin to co-create global policies that recognize in this era of weapons and mass destruction, the only safe world is a world recognizing the interconnection and value of all diverse human life and the ecosystems that support such a life. Such policies would always prioritize the collective well-being of all people living today and yet to come. Such policies I would imagine include the improvement of

(Continued from page 1)

paradigm of cause and effect, looking at the world and cosmos as a series of interactions between observer and observed (Dossey, 1999). In this view, it is easier to see that there is a whole in which there are distinctions; but not differences, not separations.

A spiritually sensitive social work practice benefits from an underlying and deep-seated sense of being part of a whole (Canda & Furman, 1999). Martin Buber writes, "all life is encounter". And Karl Jaspers, the existential philosopher, emphasizes an "openness to existence" (Mannheim, 1954). To practice with these perspectives requires not just knowledge and theory, but an attitude that develops from consciousness shifts and transformations, shifts that make it possible for us to wander within the philosophical question: what is it to be?

The brother and sister in George Eliot's novel transcended the divisions that arose from the conventions of their time only in death. Let us, as social workers engaged in developing a spiritually sensitive practice, be careful observers of the particulars that create our distinctions, yet not succumb to division; let us be present to the moments of encounter in life.

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biopsychosocialspiritual well-being for those communities that today suffer from hunger, poverty, lack of basic services, loss of dignity, and political\economic marginalization.

Back to the Society for Spirituality in Social Work

The SSSW can play a role in changing the policies of our own federal government. It is time for us to use the insights we have gained over a decade of self-reflection, national conferences, scholarship and practice and become leaders in a global spiritual-religious movement. I would begin by making our next national conference focused upon global issues. Is it an easy task? No. Can we afford to embark on such a project? Can we afford not to?

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Call for Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Spirituality and Social Work Forum. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Four hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5 disk, with files saved in MS Word format, should be sent to: Robin Russel, Editor, SSSW, School of Education and Human Development, Binghamton University—SUNY, Box 6000, Binghamton, NY 13902-6000

Continuing the conversation: Reflections on 9/11

Jacquelyn Dwoskin, LCSW
Palm Beach Gardens, FL

The winter solstice is past and a new year has begun. Perhaps it is time to put into writing some on-going reflections enlarged by the tragedies of 9/11. Practicing from a spiritually-sensitive social work perspective encourages awareness and challenge to dominant cultural themes and beliefs; nevermore so when tragedy strikes.

The Jewish Family and Children's Service Agency in West Palm Beach, Florida, asked me to run a bereavement support group for families that had lost adult children through the attacks at the World Trade Center and Pentagon. I have been meeting with five families since the end of October. As those who work in the area of bereavement know this place of deep sorrow calls forth a need that is not easily answered by our concrete, visible world. Of many conversations held in our meetings, there are two principles associated with a life guided by spirit that emerge and re-emerge. One is the principle of uncertainty; the other is connecting to the sacred, the mystery of living.

There is a large body of social work literature dealing with postmodern, existential, feminist, and spiritual themes (Besthorn, 2001; Damiankis, 2001; Fook, 2000; Goldstein, 1999; Imre, 1982; Krill, 1995, 1998; Siporin, 1982; Smith, 2001; Weick, 1999). These scholars describe the legacy of the modern era, a time that has not sufficed when it comes to satisfying the human hankering to make sense of this business of living. The modern era gave rise to an impossible belief in man's (sic) ability to achieve expertise that would transform knowledge into authority and would transform authority into certainty and absolute truths. Older ways of knowing that draw on imagination, intuition, and experience, ways of knowing that could not be quantified or proven, became suspect. As these ways of believing either died or faded our western culture provided a context in which we have come to expect and require explanations; a culture in which we believe we have control or should be able to control what happens. Along with this belief in control, comes an emphasis on security. We can be physically safe and secure through our abilities to control our future, our money, our families, and our health. We have countless treatises on how to achieve lasting security in all areas of life. Results, not process, are lauded. Then as often happens in life something unexpected occurs. But this time on such a huge scale that our belief systems are called into question. Our beliefs as well as our country

were attacked on 9/11. We still crave security, but in what direction does security lie? And is security an objectified experience, another result to be achieved and possessed? Or is the need for security a need to be questioned and challenged? What part of being alive do we give up when we seek and expect security? Is life not about change and flux? Is feeling alive more akin to adventure and risk and curiosity than certainty?

In our group we explored what we believe about death. Members shared tentative beliefs that point to the invisible world of spirit. One father expressed an oft-repeated lament, 'what might have been'. His son was at the beginning of what promised to be a skyrocketing career when he was killed on the 89th floor of the World Trade Center. Do we know 'what might have been'? Or is this another aspect of some belief in control? Does this belief keep us stuck as we gaze at images we create and then feel sad about? We cannot know what might have been. We can, however, take out the rusty parts of ourselves, and explore what is, and be open to what will be.

The second principle, connecting to the sacred, is about releasing or setting aside our reliance upon the visible world. The world we know through our five senses, the world in which we can hug, touch, and hear the voices of others. The way in which we know others is usually through what is visible and tangible. While other ways of knowing are present, we are unaccustomed to tuning in to them. When we lose someone, we miss the tangible presence. The sacred resides in the invisible, the 'in between', to borrow from Martin Buber's philosophy (Kaufmann, trans., 1984). How does one sustain a connection to a loved one when the connection resides in a dimension of being to which we are unaccustomed? In our group, members shared ways they could know that their children lived, not in body, but in spirit.

Although the members were all of the Jewish faith, their ways of believing differed. They shared a common faith, but they were unaccustomed to speaking, thinking, or having feelings about invisible, intangible, or transcendent aspects of life experiences. I believe the combination of my spiritual practice orientation and the openness that can come with grieving allowed us to explore bereavement in this way. We were able to explore a different way of knowing: how you can come to know

(Continued on page 13)

connection not based on visible, tangible presence.

The families shared finding objects in unexpected places that gave them the feeling their loved one had meant for them to find it. They shared the way in which relationships that had been distant were being rediscovered. They shared ways in which they were learning to cope, strengths that may have been dormant. They shared their deep wish to live in a way that would not deny death; a way that would diminish fear of death and loss. In these tumultuous places of uncertainty lie our connections to mystery. Loewenberg (1988) quoting the philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, reminds us in the contemporary world problems "have replaced mysteries." In our group, problem-solving took place. The problem-solving was a subtext to mystery.

I think in these past months of meeting together the spiritual core of social work has been alive and encouraged. Canda and Furman (1999) define the spiritual as relating

[t]o the person's search for a sense of meaning and morally fulfilling relationships between oneself, other people, the encompassing universe, and the ontological ground of existence (p.44).

Smith (1995, 2001) has written about the fears of death and dying as being related to a predominant sense of self, another legacy from the modern era. This then locks us away from finding meaning and connection in living and dying, for death and dying invite us to go beyond the self.

As each of our meetings has come to a close, I have chosen the same quote for our group to recite together. The quote is from the prayer service recited on the Jewish High Holy Day, *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. This is what we say together, and what we are striving toward, "[w]e are thankful for the power to live and to act, and for the blessing of love that is stronger than death."

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The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year. For those who wish to increase their contribution we have the following categories: Contributing membership \$45, supporting member \$60, and sustaining member \$100.

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Society for Spirituality and Social Work

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**See page two for
important information
about The Society's
move to New York!**

Edward Canda 21-May-02
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare
Lawrence, KS 66045

The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Volume 9, Issue 3

Fall 2002



The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Fall 2002

Vol. 9, Issue 3

Love Made Visible

Bonnie Collins EdM, CSW-R
Buffalo, NY



**A Group of Clinicians Find Ways to be Vicariously Renewed
Rather than Vicariously Traumatized**



As a result of September 11th, there is a great deal of discussion among trauma therapists today about burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious traumatization. Such discussions include identifying the growing research confirming health concerns for those therapists who withhold emotional reactions to a client's trauma and also their own reactions to current world trauma. As evidence of this, therapists are experiencing symptoms of vicarious traumatization such as their own nightmares about their client's trauma, their own increasing lack of trust in people and their own grief reactions to the trauma they hear day in and day out.

How do therapists, in a profession that often has little time or money for their own emotional support, get the care and nurturance they need in order to face the trauma of their clients day in and day out?

For a group of us in Buffalo, New York, it was these feelings of lack of professional support that brought us together about two years ago. Our purpose is still evolving as we meet once a month. We want to explore ways of keeping ourselves emotionally healthy and share ways to continue our work with trauma work without experiencing burning out ourselves.

We have identified ourselves as THE WEAVING GROUP. Our mission statement reads:

We have joined together as helping professionals who wish to weave together an exploration of our own spiritual lives with possibilities for blending spiritual themes into work with our clients.

We started out with the belief that the work we do is "love made visible" which is the title of a poem in an old book called THE PROPHET (1961) by Kahlil Gibran.

We began to look for ways to help each other keep

working with love; and what developed was a deeply spiritual experience for many of us. Together, we began to find a sense of being centered that transcends our professional and personal anxieties. We now meet for two hours on a monthly basis in a space where we have candles burning, soft music playing and comfort foods (mostly sweets!) that we bring to share. Such a setting in itself has become medicine for our struggle with vicarious traumatization. (Refer to Pearlman (1996) TRANSFORMING THE PAIN for more information about vicarious traumatization.)

We start our time together by sitting in a circle and lighting a candle. We then share a moment of silence, which for some is a meditative experience, and for others, a quiet prayer. We have discussed whether there really is a difference between prayer and meditation. (Refer to Dossey [1996] PRAYER IS GOOD MEDICINE.)

We then share "our holy moments" in our work and seek support from each other on cases that we find particularly challenging and maybe not so "holy." It isn't exactly supervision. It isn't exactly consultation. It is more of a bonding of clinicians who are honoring each other as compassionate healers and sharing ways to cope with the trauma their clients bring with them. In one of our sessions, we had an evening of "experiencing an orange." Here we consciously slowed down our fast-paced life and took about half-an-hour to simply eat an orange!

This wasn't only beneficial only for us as clinicians. Many of us shared the experience with our clients as a metaphor about how much more meaningful healing can be when we go at a slower pace and work through the issues with a sense of focus.

(Continued on page 3)

Director's Notes

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
Binghamton University
Binghamton, NY



I am part of the generation that grew up in the ever-present shadow of the cold war. I remember air raid drills in kindergarten in which we were seated against the wall in the elementary school gymnasium with our arms and hands protecting our heads. A few years later I remember bringing home from school a booklet with instructions on how to build a bomb shelter in the basement of your family home. I worried because my parents weren't willing to build one. As a ten or eleven year old I remember having nightmares about nuclear war. At the time, those dreams did not seem unrealistic. During the midst of the Cuban Missile Crisis our junior high school science teacher told our class how lucky we were that we would be dying young and not having to experience all the losses and difficulties people invariably face in adulthood. As the Viet Nam War heated up during my adolescence, I stopped watching the news on a regular basis; it scared me too much. Nuclear war always seemed to be lurking in the corners of my consciousness.

I am very aware that children have and still are growing up in much more terrifying environments than the one experienced by the American baby boom generation. War, for many, is an everyday fact of life and has cut short millions of young lives. Wars and threats of new wars are a part of the context in which we live. We've been lucky in the United States ... at least until September 11, 2001. Unless you were sent to a foreign conflict in a branch of the armed services or had a loved one lost or injured in one of these conflicts, we were generally spared the horror that has been the context for so many people on the planet. Most of us didn't have a clue about the realities and prevalence of the horror. It's as if we lived in a protective bubble. We grew up with sitcoms that made fun of war and as children played with war toys. As a kid I used to like watching McHale's Navy and Hogan's Heroes on television. I remember that it disturbed my father who was a World War II veteran. He solemnly told me that "war is not funny."

There was a popular poster that hung in many dorm rooms when I was in college. It said "war is not healthy for children or other living things." As a profession, social work looks at people in the context of their environment and seeks to impact environments that cause suffering. The N.A.S.W. Code of Ethics states that: "A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living." It should be no surprise that social workers as far back as Jane Addams have been part of peace movements or that many social workers today are voicing protest to the impending war in Iraq.

In the shadow of yet another war, the Society for Spirituality and Social Work has chosen as its 2003 conference theme, *Spiritual Peace Making: Embracing Self and Others*. Most of the world's spiritual and religious traditions espouse love of others as an overarching value. Certainly the killing and maiming of fellow human beings presents us with a spiritual crisis. Let us come together this coming summer and explore the role of peace making in our individual and collective lives.

Call for Manuscripts



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(Continued from page 1)

We also have studied many of the rituals of the world's great belief systems and shared family rituals from our own families of origin. This experience helped us explore the value of rituals and gave us some ideas to integrate these into our work with survivors of trauma. As a result, some of us helped our clients create healing rituals for themselves as part of their recovery. (Refer to Biziou, B. [1999] *THE JOY OF RITUAL* for more about rituals.)

We also had an evening of group drumming as a meditative experience and are planning on building a labyrinth at one of our monthly meetings. (Refer to Artress [1995] *WALKING A SACRED PATH* for more about labyrinths.)

At one meeting we simply sat quietly together and tuned into the silence of the group as a source of comfort for us personally and professionally. We then questioned ourselves as to how many times we allow for such silence as a source of support and comfort in sessions with our clients. (Refer to Kundtz [1998] *STOPPING* for more about how to "be still.")

In all of these exercises we became aware that we were finding ways to honor the divine in all of us and we feel like we are joining together on our spiritual journeys. We take such experiences back to our work and share them with clients as a way to encourage a sense of peace within them too. Thus we find ourselves weaving our learning together for our clients and ourselves.

We have found that this gathering has enriched our lives both personally and professionally. As a result of the support we feel from each other and the experiences we share, we have discovered that we are "vicariously renewed" instead of being vicariously traumatized! We are also aware of a sense of energy that stirs our compassion once again so that we are able to continue our work as trauma therapists. Many of us leave these monthly gatherings with a sense that our work is truly "love made visible."

Please feel free to contact us at collins@pcom.net or (716) 648-4455 for more information about our group or to share your ideas and experiences with us.

Moving to New York

Marilyn Stickle, MSW, LCSW, BCD, Arlington, VA



Down the Personal Memory Lane of Places, Experiences, Hopes and Dreams

The announcement of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work's move to Binghamton in the Summer newsletter brought home to me, a flood of memories and associations. In important ways, I have been moving from New York much of my life.

My parents grew up in rural NY and met in Binghamton. I was born and lived there until my father who was attending Harpur College (now a part of Binghamton University) was recruited as a Russian translator for the CIA. Our family moved to Washington DC in the early 1950s. It was an exciting time for us. The importance of my father's ensuing overseas assignment made for a stimulating and challenging late childhood.

We moved back to Binghamton in the late 50s, but without the fanfare of our earlier departure, and without my father. We returned to Binghamton to seek refuge from broken dreams and lost opportunities, only to experience deeper loss with my brother's death at the age of 16, on a Binghamton street.

In 1960, we moved to Wisconsin, my mother trying to assuage her deep grief by building a new life. It didn't work. At age 14 I drew on the one strength available to me at the time, religion. I left Wisconsin to attend a religious boarding school in South Dakota. For three years, I experienced a safe haven on the plains from which to recover and just be a teenager.

Binghamton. South Dakota. Washington, DC. There were more moves back and forth across the country — the weaving of a tapestry, the unfolding of a life; college, graduate school and marriage.

My first job after graduate school was at a state hospital in Indiana. Perhaps I was drawn there as an unconscious response to the frightening memories from childhood when, during visits to my grandfather at Binghamton State Hospital, I heard patients shouting madly from barred windows. By the early 70s, medications had subdued their voices and I was able to help improve patients' lives by placing them back in rural communities.

When I learned that social workers do psychotherapy, I decided to get a Master of Social Work degree and do outpatient work. Perhaps I was drawn to clinical social work following in my father's footsteps, in my own way, as a "translator" of the unconscious.

My father disappeared during the last 25 years of his life. Ironically, after his death, I learned that he had been in Binghamton all along, and that in his last days he was trying to have an "out of body" experience, using M. Esther Harding's book, "Psychic Energy: Its Source and Its Transformation," as his guide. There is no mark on any page, no clues to follow in gaining insight into his personal process. I believe he was trying to create a spiritual experience with his powerful intel-

lect. He failed. The book was his only guide, his only connection, covered carefully in brown paper for protection.

Perhaps as part of the “mystery,” children weave their own tapestries to include resolving the issues their parents can’t. I was taught to “use my head,” a useful lesson, but my heart was not given the same importance.

The integration of the intellect and the heart.

The warp and the weft.

Back and forth.

Our tapestry continues to form by our design, consciously or not.

As a teenager, religious beliefs provided a holding environment, but I needed help that was not available at the time. My choice of clinical social work facilitated receiving the training and therapy I needed to remove the barriers created by my experience.

Perhaps it was my father’s intellectual gifts that drew me to psychoanalytic theory and psychodynamic practice, and his legacy that draws me now to work towards balance and connection. Or perhaps, in some unknown way, it was his deep, unfulfilled desire to have a spiritual experience that has drawn me so powerfully in a similar direction. Ironically, at the completion of an eleven-year psychoanalysis, I turned to an aspect of my personal experience that had not been addressed in professional training or therapy — intuition. And in my exploration of intuition, I met my spirituality.


Now, I sit in chairs, leading meditation groups, having deep experiences of connection that can be described as “out of body.” My skills as a translator/therapist have grown so that I witness stunning experiences of connection that dissolve barriers in the people whom I treat.

Over the past decade, I have worked to integrate spirituality into the clinical dialogue in Washington and have taken an active role in developing the Clinical Social Work Institute, a free standing clinical PhD program.

During the last Society conference here in Washington, I met one of our students. He conveyed his discouragement over the lack of recognition given to the patient’s spirituality and religious beliefs as an additional resource of healing. Just one short year later, in June 2002, a course titled “Spirituality in Clinical Practice” was offered at the Institute. I taught the course and the student I first met at the Society conference was there, celebrating opening the intellectual discussion to include the whole person, with four fellow doctoral candidates.

In preparation for the course, I reviewed the social work literature on spirituality for the first time. I found the names of the founders and leaders of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work and felt gratitude for the groundwork that has been laid in building on our knowledge. Most importantly, the intellectual and heart connections have been developed with people in the Society, and the importance of a treatment paradigm of the whole person draw me more powerfully than ever to the Society, and its mission within our social work profession.

I have not returned to New York in five years. Perhaps when I go next, I will sit on the hill by my brother’s grave overlooking Binghamton, and see not through the eyes of a broken hearted 13-year old, but through the eyes of a woman who has experienced the joys and sorrows of life, who is grateful to live in each moment with the miracles each day brings. When I go back to New York, I imagine it will be in connection to the Society.



Spirituality in Diversity: The Application of Spirituality to Social Work in a Few Voluntary Organizations in India

Mielin Augustine, MSW, Lecturer, College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Bombay
and Khushmand Rajendran, MSW, Binghamton, NY



If there is a hell on earth, it has to be here in the bowels of a red light district in the crowded city of Bombay, India. One can become immune to the grinding human tragedy and helplessness, here the oppressor is, in turn, as oppressed as the victim. Instead, one finds cause to rejoice as one hears the chant of a group of sex workers paying tribute to a higher being, inhales the pervading aroma of incense sticks, and

views the oil lamp lighting up a woman’s face, and probably her life. India is widely known for her mysticism, spirituality, and enlightened leaders, both religious and secular. Yet professional social work, laboring under the need to seem modern, scientific, and objective, has often refused to acknowledge that spirituality is a powerful adjunct to professional intervention.

Although exact figures are hard to find, it would be safe to say that a large number of voluntary organizations inspired by religion are performing dedicated service. Most colleges of social work in India incorporate a course on the philosophy of social work, touching upon its religious roots in the West, emphasizing the need to be in touch with oneself, and inculcating the ethics and principles of practice. There is a good deal of experiential learning taking place in sessions on yoga, vipassana, and other routes to self-realization. It is agreed that professionals must be attuned to their own spirituality before engaging in efforts to help others. This can lead to many heated debates in classrooms wherein beliefs, prejudices and individual goals are compared and contrasted.

There is little doubt that faith in a higher power can help social workers in a variety of settings, especially in a country like India where people are taught to value the soul and after-life much more than the body and one's present circumstances. Many Indian myths and legends would dispute Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which places self-actualization at the top of the hierarchy; last to be realized and least fundamental to survival. In Indian culture, spiritual growth is considered a primary need. An illiterate peasant may forego food or shelter and accumulate insurmountable debt, but he will still consider his duty to God of primary importance. In this context, faith can definitely enliven the tasks of professional social work intervention.

Admittedly, spirituality should not be confused with religious sentiments and rituals. Spirituality refers to inner feelings and experiences of the immediacy of a higher power. These feelings and experiences are rarely amenable to the political formulations of creedal statements or to theological discriminations (Bullis, 1996). Because organized religion plays such a major role in the lives of many people in India, religious rituals and spirituality often blend during social practice, despite being separated from each other in the analytical mind of the professional social worker. Our experiences at the College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Bombay, have given us the opportunity to witness spirituality in practice at a few voluntary organizations.

At JJ Dharamshala, a home for destitute senior citizens, social workers have found that clients are well-versed in spiritual coping. The old people who live here are often lonely, abandoned by their families and reduced to begging, with little to look forward to in life. Some of them come into the institution bitter and angry, but over time, learn to deal with their feelings stoically. Caseworkers focus on their feelings about their loss of mental acuity, physical ailments, and their need to make adjustment to a new place and people at a time when most elders seek security and familiarity. What gives them hope and the courage to readjust is not just the support of social workers but also the belief in a spiritual power.

One particular woman, whom we can call Sheila, organizes bhajans (religious group songs) on a regular basis. Although the residents are from diverse religions, they all join

in and for that time, relinquish their cares to a higher power. Sheila is always ready with words of comfort. Her favorite refrain is, "God will take care of it," or, "It is all in God's hands." If one walks into any of the residents' shared, austere rooms, one is likely to find a neat corner reserved for prayer with tattered pictures of a spiritual guide. In this context, it is not surprising that the use of spirituality in counseling improves efficacy of practice.

A group of street children at Sneha Sadan, a home for such children in Bombay, might seem unlikely beneficiaries of a spiritual approach. These children come from extremely diverse religious backgrounds, but they all join hands in a general prayer every morning. Even though the street child trusts few people, the Jesuit priests who run the home seek to inspire faith that reaches beyond any particular religion. Once in a while, the children are taken to a camp where they have personal growth sessions interspersed with recreational activities. In one of the sessions, the boys were asked to roll pieces of newspaper and throw them as far as they could. The vehemence with which some of the boys carried out this task suggested the latent anger in them. Later, a group sharing helped them come to terms with this anger. Folk tales and stories replete with universal values of faith, loyalty, trust and honesty are exchanged and the confidence with which some of the children speak out is quite reassuring. Many of the street children have been assisted through this program and are sent back to their homes to grow up to be mature adults. This could mean that somewhere down the line, the children have come to trust social workers and, it is hoped, find continuing comfort in spirituality.

We believe that spirituality is also especially appropriate for helping victims of trauma and crisis, be it cases of bereavement, terminal illness, rape, domestic violence, or sexual abuse. However, it has to be introduced at an appropriate time. Studies in trauma and grief suggest that the initial reaction to any crisis is physical shock, numbness, fear, and possibly regression. This may be followed by anger, bitterness, and hate. Persons who have suffered trauma or are experiencing crisis may lash out at others or feel empty and inhuman. Frustration, confusion, and guilt also take a heavy toll on one's coping resources. Crisis intervention and supportive counseling professionals must be cognizant of all of these feelings and help the person see spirituality as one possible ray of hope and respite from troubling emotions.

The use of spirituality in treating addiction has been well documented. Our experiences with commercial sex workers, many of whom are also addicts, suggest that belief in a higher power certainly helps in their rehabilitation. Many of the commercial sex workers with whom we have worked have had a very strong belief in God. They are aware that every time they entertain a client, anything could happen to them. One woman had her face slashed by a client. Others have been badly wounded and abused, yet they continue to have faith and pray because that is one of the things that keeps them going. Their health and their lives are constantly at risk. They

are fearful that their lives could be lost if they don't give in to particular demands of their clients. Yet, despite all this, they display remarkable faith. After long term counseling laced with spirituality, one of the women is now happily married. Another works from home, tailoring clothes. This kind of rehabilitation came about because these women were inspired to trust themselves and the divine.

Tinges of spirituality in work at hospitals, school social work, and counseling for harassed women also show promise. However, in community work, especially in volatile urban slums, the application of spirituality has to be tempered with an awareness of the social and political dynamics of the residents. Vested interests find it easy to spread discontent and unrest by exploiting well-intentioned social workers.

Finally, social workers themselves are finding their own innovative means to keep their spirit and motivation alive. It is idealistic, and sometimes anachronistic, yet we conclude taking inspiration from the words of Mohandas K. Gandhi: "I have but shadowed forth my intense longing to lose myself in the Eternal and become merely a lump of clay in the Potter's divine hands so that my service may become more certain, uninterrupted by the baser self in me" (Gandhi, n.d., Quotes).

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Using Films to Encourage Student Reflection on Spirituality

Carolyn J. Tice, DSW

Associate Dean, The School of Social Work
The University of Maryland, Baltimore County



Teaching students to include spirituality in a Strengths Assessment, often begins with individual explorations of values, beliefs, and behaviors. Feature films can be an effective vehicle to facilitate such reflection. The ability of films to portray a riveting story supported by auditory amplification and dazzling special effects, immerse students in the immediacy of a scene (Morissey, 2001). Symbols are woven into the fabric of the story line to communicate subliminally, the messages significant to the director. The art of cinematography closely restricts vision and directs the students' viewpoint. Dialogue focuses students on the story line through interpersonal relationships and involvement with the environment. Background music sets a specific emotional pitch to the scene and the entire story.

The presentations of certain films center on issues associated with spirituality such as pain or crisis, people in vulnerable situations, illness or death, tragedies and life transitions. The characters' efforts to address or resolve these issues provide the motif of dramatic development. Indeed, so real are some films that an aesthetic distance is difficult to achieve. Such is the case in *Philadelphia* (1993) as

Tom Hanks poignantly argues for social justice in the workplace as a person impacted by HIV/AIDS and facing death. The use of opera, family interactions, physical fragility, and medical intervention highlight not only issues of discrimination but also hope, meaning, and inner strength.

It can be argued that films are relatively permanent records represented in sound, speech, color, music, and visual action. Consequently, they lend themselves to critical analysis, group scrutiny, and personal consideration. This is the case in *Awakenings* (1991), the story of friendship and the tenderness of human heart as portrayed by Robin Williams and Robert DeNiro. Based on a true story, *Awakenings* depicts a maverick doctor, catatonic patients, and an experimental drug that, when administered, provides both patients and doctor the opportunity of rebirth. The film's conclusion reveals the simplicities and complexities of life from several vantage points and centers on personal, social, political, and spiritual elements that can help students examine their own perceptions.

Selecting a film to use with students involves considerable time and preparation. Previewing is essential to insure

content is appropriate, stereotypes are not portrayed, and sensationalism is avoided. Providing students with a menu of questions to guide their reflection often proves helpful. Although the questions would be tailored to reflect course content, the following are provided for consideration:

- What role did spirituality play in the film?
- What were the spiritual beliefs portrayed through characters, symbols, or settings?
- What gave the characters meaning in life?
- Was spirituality discussed? If so, please provide some examples.
- Were there certain lifestyle activities or practices that spirituality encouraged or discouraged?
- How did the visual and auditory design impact you and why?
- As the plot unfolds, what lifts you up and what lets you down?
- As the film ends, how do you feel about life?

The linear questions related to spirituality help students to clarify the story-line and character development of the film. Reflections on the spiritual elements portrayed in the film's symbols and action encourage students to consider the premises of the filmmaker from their own experiences. This in turn can encourage students to contemplate situations outside of their own. Ending the guided reflection with questions on emotional reactions to the film invites students to interact with the film on a more personal level.

In conclusion, a film can offer students a framework of analysis to explore the role of spirituality in the lives of peo-

ple in various communities. The characters in films can help students explore what the effects of various actions and reactions can be. Associating events from the film with personal experiences provides a focus to examine analogous situations students might encounter and aids them in discerning paths available to follow including those associated with social work intervention (Morrissey, 2001).

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Society Contact Information



*Society for Spirituality and Social Work
School of Education and Human Development
Binghamton University - SUNY*

Box 6000

Binghamton, NY 13902-6000

phone: 607-777-4603

email: ssw@binghamton.edu

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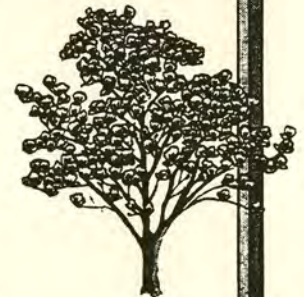
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The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

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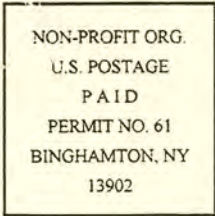
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Edward Canda 5/21/2002
University of Kansas
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The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Volume 10, Issue 1

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Society for Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Fall 2003

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Rekindling Hope for the Hopeless



Jim Raines, Ph.D., Illinois State University

It is common for clients to seek treatment as a last resort. As a result, they often come in feeling defeated, discouraged, and depressed. William James (1902) named this phenomenon “the sick soul” and Jung prescribed spiritual rebirth as the only cure (Wulff, 1997). More recently, Franklin (2000) cites research that 15% of a client’s improvement can be attributed to a positive expectation of improvement. Thus, one of the first tasks of treatment is to rekindle hope that change is possible. Curiously, there are very few references on how to do this in the social work literature. A recent exploration of social work abstracts turned up just four articles on the topic of hope.

Two of the authors (Ruvelson, 1990; Shechter, 1999) agreed that instilling hope requires a delicate balance. On the one hand, we do not wish to appear “Pollyannaish” (Saleebey, 1996) and fall into the pitfall of offering false assurance. This tends to minimize clients’ problems and make light of their pain (Sevel, Cummins, & Madrigal, 1999). Perhaps most importantly, it communicates to the client that the practitioner cannot hear the negatives or handle the hurt. On the other hand, we do not wish to be engulfed by the client’s despair to the point that we also feel helpless and hopeless (Babits, 2001). Perhaps most significantly, minimization of the client’s pain communicates the social worker’s hostility to the client - a tacit wish that the recalcitrant client would just drop out of treatment and go

away.

In Casement’s (1985) chapter on “Unconscious Hope,” he suggests that hope begins as an infantile expectation that one’s needs will be fulfilled. He posits that the client’s unconscious hope is that the clinician will tolerate this neediness. If we understand negative behavior as nonverbal communication (Raines, 2002), then we are capable of learning from the client. Thus, the hopeless client may attend sessions irregularly, complain about the “exorbitant” fee, or whine that therapy is just making things worse. The average clinician begins to feel unwanted, unappreciated, and ineffective at these times. Casement argues that the unmet need being stated is that the client needs someone who can “be truly in touch with what the patient is feeling” - a type of “emotional holding” (p. 305).

If this is correct, how can social workers prepare to offer hope to the hopeless? First and foremost, we must be aware of our own history of tragedy, loss, and betrayal. It is only when we accept our own despair, sadness, and hurt that we can extend this ability to others. Second, we should be conscious of our current anger and resentment toward the client for giving up or not getting better. Admitting to ourselves that some clients are aggravating and irritating prevents us from acting out on these feelings. Third, we must acknowledge feeling ineffective, rejected, thwarted, or “burned out.”

(continued on page 6)

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Director's Notes

Robin Russel, PhD
Binghamton University
Binghamton, New York



Two Rivers, One Heart



number of months ago, I watched a documentary on our local PBS station, on the history of Binghamton, New York. It described how early settlers were struck by the lushness of the land where two great rivers come together. The settlers wrote that it seemed like a primordial forest. When I moved here two years ago, I, too, was awed by the beauty of the landscape. After more than two decades in the Midwest, I really noticed the mountains, the forests and old trees, and the greenness of the land. Autumn is particularly amazing in my neck of the woods. When I began to think about a theme for the Society conference that we will host here next summer, the metaphor of two rivers coming together immediately came to mind. One of our members came up with the conference title, "**Two Rivers, One Heart.**"

I am teaching the first foundation generalist practice course in our new MSW program this semester. Writing about the history of the profession, Shulman (1999) states, in one of the texts we are using, that social work in its present form "was created through the merger over the years of two basic streams of thought about the helping process. One was rooted in the work of those interested in issues of social change...The other...was rooted in a focus on fulfilling individual needs" (pp.17-18). When I thought about the spiritual work that social workers do, I thought of the two rivers coming together as the work of individual healing and growth and the work of social transformation.

This merging of the two streams/ivers is what first attracted me to the field of social work 23 years ago. I had initially chosen law as a profession, at the ripe old age of 21, out of a desire to bring about social change, particularly around issues of poverty. After six years of practicing law in public interest settings, I realized that I lacked the knowledge and skills to bring about social change and to heal the wounds of clients injured by the status quo. I entered social work education because it seemed to have something significant to teach me. My experience of social work education lived up to my expectations.

I was perplexed, as a student, by what seemed to be an artificial separation between "micro" and "macro" practice. Twenty years later, I am still perplexed when I encounter this separation in social work practice or education. I feel much more comfortable when the rivers run together, as opposed to running parallel to each other. An important theme in many of the world's spiritual and religious traditions is the importance of compassion, which includes both the "relief of pain and suffering and the active struggle against injustice"(Fox, 2000, 438). I look forward to our mutual exploration of this metaphor next summer and to welcoming you to this land of the two rivers.

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*****CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS*****

Ninth Annual Conference of The Society for Spirituality and Social Work

'Two Rivers, One Heart: Individual Healing and Social Transformation'

June 19 – June 22, 2004
 Binghamton University
 School of Education and Human Development
 Division of Social Work
 Binghamton, N.Y.

Proposals are invited from practitioners, faculty, and students for the ninth annual conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. **We particularly seek presentations related to the dual focus of the profession: responding to the needs of individuals and social transformation. All topics are welcome that address spirituality in relation to social work practice, policy, education, research, and theory.** The following topics are also encouraged:

- 1 Innovative approaches to integrating creativity and/or diversity into practice and education.
- 2 Direct practice approaches that integrate attention to the body, mind, spirit, social relations, and relations with the natural world.
- 3 Agency administrative approaches that attend to the spiritual growth and strengths of staff, clients, and community.
- 4 Macro practice and policy approaches that promote peace, justice, and spiritual development for all people and well-being for the planetary ecology.
- 5 Innovations in social work education that address spirituality and religious diversity.
- 6 Theory development that applies insights from religious studies, transpersonal psychology, eco-psychology, and other cross-cultural and international disciplines.
- 7 International and inter-religious collaborations and new developments in all regions of the world on spirituality, religion, and social work.

Beyond our traditional retreats and workshops, Morning Sessions, and an Arts Festival will be included. Completely experiential in nature, Morning Sessions will be designed to introduce participants to a variety of meditative, prayerful and silent practices. The Arts Festival will provide an opportunity for participants to share spiritually inspired creative works such as poetry, music or visual arts.

Requirements: Proposals may use various didactic and experiential formats. Proposals will be accepted if at least two of three reviewers approve it and space is available in the program. Presenters must have appropriate training in social work or another relevant discipline that prepares them to present on their topics. MSW and BSW students must co-present with a practitioner or faculty member. Presenters must be current members of the Society (see membership form on back page). Presentations should be consistent with the mission of the Society to respect all people and to develop spiritually sensitive helping that honors diverse religious and nonreligious forms of spirituality. Primary presenters may submit only one proposal through this Call for Presentations. No author may be listed on more than two workshops or retreat proposals (one as primary, one as non-primary). Exempt from this policy are submissions for morning sessions and the arts festival. Please submit by mail the proposal application and a 300-word maximum abstract on a disk in MSWord format. Please include title but no identifying information on the abstract. A separate set of abstracts must be submitted for each presentation.

Send all materials to: Robin Russel, Ph.D., Division of Social Work, SEHD, Binghamton University, P.O. Box 6000, Binghamton, New York 13902-6000. Inquiries can be directed to:

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PROPOSALS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY DECEMBER 15, 2003



Society for Spirituality and Social Work

2004 Conference Presentation Proposal Application

1. **Title of Presentation:**
2. **50 word description:**
3. **Presentation Format:** Please indicate the format of your presentation below. (Presentations, whether experiential or didactic, present information directly relevant to the social work profession, promoting participants' skills in practice, research, social work education, policy, or theory. We encourage the combination of experiential and didactic approaches, especially with the 3 hour presentations. Retreats should include some didactic content, but will be mainly experiential in nature, with the goal of enhancing participants' own spiritual development. Retreats are not necessarily academic in orientation or directly relevant to social work practice. However, they should be consistent with the mission of the Society.)

Time Format (Check One)

- 3 hour Presentation or Panel (circle one)
 Didactic Experiential
 Both Experiential and Didactic

 1 ½ hour Presentation or Panel (circle one)
 Didactic Experiential
 Both Experiential and Didactic

 3 hour Experiential Retreat

Focus (Check all relevant)

- Practice
 Policy
 Education
 Research
 Theory
 Personal/Professional
 Growth

4. Presenter Information

Primary Presenter (Correspondence will be sent to this presenter)

Name: _____

Organizational affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____ **E-mail:** _____

Student Practitioner Faculty Member

Social Work academic degrees and professional licensures: _____

(If not a social worker, indicate your profession, degrees and licensures relevant to your profession.)

Additional Presenters: (Please provide the above information for each).

Total Number of Presenters: _____

5. **Please attach a 300 word maximum abstract describing the content and format of your presentation.**

****Note:** To be included in the 2004 Conference Brochure, your presentation must be accepted by peer reviewers. Each presenter must have a current society membership before any proposal will be reviewed. The discounted presenter's registration fee must be paid by March 15, 2004. After March 15th, no refunds will be made and non-registered presentations will be deleted from the program.**

An Awakening Within

Andrea Russo, MSW Student and Society Graduate Assistant
Division of Social Work, Binghamton University



wakened and Alive! For the first time in my mere 27 years, amidst the intense heat and beauty of Austin, Texas, my inner spirit awakened from a dormant state and cried out for someone to listen. In my six years of college studies, and my three years as a full-time fundraiser I never heard my inner voice speak at a tone above a whisper, never mind sing to me as it did at the Society for Spirituality and Social Work Conference in June.

Having grown up in a Roman Catholic household, I believed for so long that spirituality only meant that which was spoken or read to me during Sunday mass. Those teachings did not explain many of things I felt outside of those four church walls. But when spirituality was described to me as that which gives your life meaning, the definition went far beyond the walls of organized religion. This new definition in my life didn't explain totally the ability to feel so alive that you wanted to sing to those around you with joy at times and at others to close your eyes and sink in the warm inner-peace that was rushing through your body. That week in Austin was my time to explore the true definition of spirituality for myself.

Along with my uneasiness in defining the term spirituality for myself I was also feeling slightly unsure of making the leap of faith to quit a job, move and enroll in a social work program. All of this restless thought brought me to the opening of the conference wondering what would take place and uncertain of how I could relate it all to my current life. I thought I may be learning the best ways to infuse spirituality into my future practice of social work. I had no idea that I would learn how to integrate spirituality and the profession of social work into my own life with such zest and veracity!

I began this awakening of my inner spirit while constructing a shrine. This concept tested my former beliefs that one could create a "shrine" that wasn't a religious icon of sorts. Grabbing art supplies with a fogged mind as to what the concept was, I began the process and found myself unable to stop. It was as though something other than my mind had taken over. All the rational feelings and beliefs I had carried into the workshop disappeared for those three hours as I filled an Altoid tin with my sacred beliefs. I couldn't bring meaning to what had taken place in Molly's class until I attended Michael Sheridan's workshop on *Reclaiming the Spiritual*. It was obvious to me that I had just made an attempt to awaken my inner child and allow it to enter into my life. It was a feeling I had felt at other occasions in my life but couldn't name. But never was it calling to me the way it was in Texas. How could this be that I've never heard my inner child so clearly before? Acknowledging the voice within began my awakening. A great deal of questioning followed.

Amazing experiences were bountiful. They became more obvious and glaring with each day. I learned quickly,

through the guidance of three wonderful social workers and one incredible woman, who is a social worker at heart, that asking questions of others and yourself is what leads you on the spiritual path. Ask an art therapist to explain how building a shrine can elicit such a sense of sacredness. Ask Willie, a public city bus driver, or possibly a spiritual guide, to stop his bus and wait while you jump off because you had a holy moment that had to include ice cream. Ask Justin, a taxi driver, who may also have been a spiritual guide, to allow two adult women to fit into the small front seat of his cab. I wondered about all of these adventures; but the moment of truth came when I asked myself if the waters would be as refreshing as they looked in a beautiful fountain on campus and if it would be a great idea to take a plunge with the rest. I asked myself what I was doing at a conference on Spirituality and Social Work and why I felt the way I did. Asking all of these questions led to a different kind of spiritual awakening for me.

As a first-time attendee at this year's conference in Austin I learned that if I asked questions, almost every time I was blown away by the answers or insight I received. If I listened carefully to my inner child I could hear the real me speaking. Although at the time I could not say exactly what it was that made this experience so inspiring and spiritual for me, upon reflection I can attempt to be more clear. The sense of community, belonging, acceptance, compassion and love was more bountiful in this conference community than anywhere I have ever been, including those four walls of my church I spoke of earlier. It was the first time I was at a conference where I had the least amount of experience on the topic, yet felt I had so much to contribute. It wasn't just about sitting and listening to those "in the know" dispense what they have found through research. It was so much more!

It is without a doubt the memories of individuals I met during this experience, the experiences of the workshops and the awakening within that I know will get me through the stress of graduate school. Reflecting on my experience in Texas, I find myself looking at those around me who claim to be so unhappy and wanting to tell them "I was there once, listen inside, listen to the voice, and awaken the spirit. It's wonderful". Spirituality is truly that which brings meaning to one's life.



(Continued from page 1)

If we can recognize these feelings as an unconscious communication from the client, then we will learn from "the inside out" how the client feels. Fourth, we should carefully balance empathy with the client's misery and encouragement for the possibility of change (see Figure A). Sheafor and Horejsi (2001) provide an excellent example for communicating faith in the potential of change:

Worker: The problems you have described are serious. I can understand why you feel overwhelmed. But I think you can successfully deal with these problems if we work together and start chipping away at the problems one at a time. It won't be easy, but I believe we can make some progress over the next few weeks (p. 152).

Fifth, when a client is acting inconsistent and uncommitted, we must become a model of consistency and commitment. This may require on-going consultation or supervision to sustain, but it is vital that we do not give in to the client's despair. Sixth, we should focus on strengths instead of deficits, but be realistic. Clients are often quite adept at discerning whether a practitioner is being genuine or not. We should not say more than we confidently believe to be true. Finally, we must support achievements, however small (Darlington & Bland, 1999). What looks like a minuscule change to us is often a momentous change for the client. We may only see a single step in the right direction, but they may perceive it as finally turning a corner.

(Figure A: The Balance of Hope)



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Chapter News

Washington, D.C.: The Washington, D.C. chapter has been inactive over the last year and is presently undergoing reorganization. We expect to have some activities planned in the fall, possibly a study group. Linda Haake is retiring from active duty as the main contact for the group, but will still participate and advise. The new contact is Marilyn Stickle who can be reached at mbstickle@aol.com. Ideas, resources, and interests for the reconstituted group are welcome!

Buffalo, NY: The Buffalo chapter welcomes new members! The chapter has been active recently with yoga classes, a drumming circle in memory of September 11th and a demonstration on acupuncture for treating addictions! The chapter generally meets the 2nd Monday of every month from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the new Wellness Center, at 162 Main Street in Hamburg, NY. If you are interested in attending a chapter meeting or have any questions please contact Bonnie Collins at bcollins@buffalo.edu

Utah Chapter: The Utah Chapter is run by students and is alive and well! The chapter is always welcoming new members. Any questions can be directed to David Derezotes at dderezotes@socwk.utah.edu.

Kansas Chapter: Students at Kansas University have a chapter up and running under the direction of Ed Canda. Updates on their activities will be included in the next Forum.



Holy Moments

TRAUMA RUG

Bonnie Collins, EdM, CSW-R, Hamburg, New York



It wasn't like I hadn't heard terribly sad stories before, but this woman had suffered such severe sexual trauma as a child I wondered how she was able to sit in front of me and tell me story after story of the horrors she had been through.

Maryann spoke clearly and looked down at her lap as she softly told me of her mother torturing her and her father sharing her sexually with other men. She described scene after scene of trauma. Her voice would tremble and sometimes she would stop speaking all together and seem to be gathering up some miraculous inner strength that would quietly renew her courage to continue her stories.

She was a nurse with a compassion for her patients beyond what was required of her. She always sat so still facing away from me, never even glancing at me to see if I was still next to her on the floor where she had requested that we both sit.

Session after session she talked with very few tears but she continued to tremble as though the tears were traveling throughout her body searching for a way out.

She never missed a session and continued to ask me to push her to tell more to break through her shame and to get to the deep hurt and agony just waiting to be released.

Each session started with a hug and talk of her daily struggles and then she would say, "Do you want to go there?" My response would always be "yes" and she got me to promise that I would "push" the telling of these stories. When she had told as much as she dared at that point in her healing, she would say, "Have you had enough?"

When I responded with "have you had enough?," she would hang her head even lower and cry softly as though she didn't want anyone to hear her. Eventually she would stand up, still with her head down, go to the door, take a deep breath and turn to go, but only after we hugged.

As the stories continued to be released, Maryann began to vary her routine. She would bring me coffee and we would chat like two old friends before getting to the "push" part of her session.

She also would write to me between sessions to share how our work was healing for her and how what we did together was changing her daily life. She became eager to tell me about the new joys she was finding in her life—such joys as walking the beach with her head held high, laughing with friends without fear, playing with her children in a much freer way than before the telling of her stories of childhood abuse.

As she became freer in her world outside of our sessions, I noticed that she began to raise her head and we looked at each other as she integrated a new awareness that came to her when she released her story. Finally, the day came when she felt she could leave therapy, go out into the world, and practice her newfound freedom. I was proud of her and impressed with her courage and resiliency.

At what was to be her last session of therapy, she spoke to me of the rug. Yes, the rug. There was a throw rug on the floor that we had been sitting on during all our sessions. She said, "I want you to know that I have always focused on this rug as I told my horror stories."

She explained, "I was concentrating on this rug because I want to believe that I was pouring my childhood abuse stories into that rug. I want to believe this was a way to leave the stories here so that I would be released from carrying them around with me in my current life." She also said, "I felt that pouring such horrors into this rug was safer than sharing them with you.

"I didn't want to pour them into you," she said with a caring look at me. "I worried about you carrying these stories inside of you forever and I knew what that felt like. I care about you too much to burden you with my trauma."

I was speechless for a moment as I absorbed her kind intent. I said, "How wise you are to find a way to contain those stories that was both safe for you and protective of me." As the session was ending, she stood and as usual asked for a hug. We stood in our embrace and she said she wanted to ask me one more thing.

"Anything," I stated, hoping I could answer a question of one with so much wisdom. She said, "May I take that rug home and wash it of all its trauma?" I caught my breath and at that moment realized what a wonderful idea that was! I eagerly rolled up the rug and handed it to her. We walked out of my office and down the hall together and out to her car. We both agreed we somehow felt lighter and freer as we shared how the washing of the rug would release the pain and suffering into the universe where it would dissipate and be gone.

In parting, I said to Maryann, "I can't wait until you return this rug because I want to put it back in place for the next person who needs to use a trauma rug to release pain. Thank you for this ritual. I will use it as often as necessary for future survivors of trauma."

As I watched Maryann drive away, I thought to myself, "Whose healing was this anyway?"

This is the beginning of what we hope will be a regular column in The Forum. We are asking for stories from you of "Holy Moments" or "Spiritual Highs" that you have experienced in your work. Our purpose is simply to provide a space for such stories to be preserved and if, along the way, we also help you, the reader, to be more aware of the spiritual connection that comes with social work, "blessed be!"

Please send submissions to sssw@binghamton.edu

Assessing Client Spirituality: Understanding the Advantages of Utilizing Different Assessment Approaches



David R. Hodge, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania

Interest in spiritual assessment is growing among clients (Arnold, Avants, Margolin & Marcotte, 2002; Bart, 1998), practitioners (Canda & Furman, 1999), students (Sheridan & Amato-von Hemert, 1999), and accrediting organizations (JCAHO, 2002). While the importance of conducting a spiritual assessment is increasingly acknowledged, less discussed is the fact that clients and social workers frequently have a variety of needs and interests when it comes to conducting a spiritual assessment. In other words, there is no single, universal assessment instrument that ideally suits every situation. Ideally, practitioners should be familiar with a number of assessment instruments and, with clients, co-select the most appropriate assessment instrument for the situation at hand.

The purpose of this paper is to acquaint social workers with some of the available qualitative options and their respective advantages. More specifically, this paper provides: a) a brief overview of five different spiritual assessment instruments and b) highlights the respective strengths associated with each instrument relative to the other instruments in the set. Since each instrument was designed so as to supplement the other tools in the series, each approach offers unique characteristics that suggest its use in various contexts.

It is important to note that many other assessment instruments exist besides the five tools discussed in this brief paper. To list just three examples, Boyd (1998), Bullis (1996), and Canda and Furman (1999) have all developed important qualitative assessment approaches. For readers interested in quantitative measures, valuable resources include compilations by Hill and Hood (1999), Mytko and Knight (1999) and the Fetzer Institute (1999) report on the Multidimensional Measurement of Religiousness/Spirituality. The purpose of this paper is not to detract from the work of others, or to suggest that the five tools reviewed represent the last word on spiritual assessment, but rather to highlight the various strengths of a complementary set of assessment approaches with which the author is most familiar.

The five instruments consist of one verbally based approach, spiritual histories (Hodge, 2001a), and four diagrammatic instruments: spiritual lifemaps (Hodge, in press-b), spiritual genograms (Hodge, 2001b), spiritual eco-maps (Hodge, 2000; Hodge & Williams, 2002) and spiritual ecograms (Hodge, in press-a). These instruments are most appropriately used in situations that call for a more extensive spiritual assessment as they are designed to elicit a substantial amount of clinically relevant, spiritually based information. In addition, the instruments are designed for use with individuals from a diverse array of spiritual traditions. Below

each instrument is briefly summarized and its particular strengths discussed. I begin by overviewing spiritual histories.

Spiritual Histories

Verbally based spiritual histories are analogous to family histories. To guide the conversation, two sets of questions are used (Hodge, 2001a). The first set of narrative questions provides practitioners with some tools for assisting clients in the telling of their spiritual narratives. A second set of anthropological questions, based upon the spiritual anthropology developed by Chinese spirituality writer Watchman Nee (1968), is provided to help social workers explore clients' spiritual reality. These anthropological questions are integrated into the natural flow of the conversation. In other words, the narrative questions help clients tell their stories while the anthropological questions assist practitioners in eliciting clinically salient information as the stories unfold.

There are a number of advantages associated with this assessment approach. Spiritual histories require minimal preparatory work, are relatively easy to conduct, and clients typically have little trouble understanding the concept of relating their spiritual narratives, or the rationale animating this assessment approach. The relatively non-structured format allows clients to relate their stories in a straightforward manner that is tailored to their unique experience of transcendent reality. Indeed, spiritual histories may be the best assessment method for verbally oriented clients who enjoy face-to-face interaction.

Spiritual Lifemaps

Spiritual lifemaps represent a diagrammatic alternative to verbally-based spiritual histories (Hodge, in press-b). More specifically, a spiritual lifemap is a pictorial delineation of a client's spiritual journey, an illustrated account of the client's relationship with God (or Ultimate Transcendence) over time--a map of the client's spiritual life. Drawing pencils and other media are used to depict various spiritually significant life events on paper. The method is similar to various approaches drawn from art and family therapy in which a client's history is depicted on a "lifeline" (Tracz & Gehart-Brooks, 1999). Much like road maps, spiritual lifemaps tell us where we have come from, where we are now, and where we are going to.

Spiritual lifemaps are perhaps the most client-directed of the assessment approaches reviewed in this article. The relatively secondary role that social workers play during assessment offers important advantages. Less risk exists that social workers may jeopardize the therapeutic relationship through

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comments that are inadvertently offensive, an important consideration given that most social workers have had minimal, if any, training in spiritually sensitive practice (Canda & Furman, 1999). The pictorial lifemap affords practitioners the opportunity to learn more about the client's worldview while focusing on building therapeutic rapport by providing an atmosphere that is accepting, nonjudgmental, and supportive during assessment (Kahn, 1999). By placing a client-constructed media at the center of assessment, the message is implicitly communicated that the client is a competent, proactive, self-directed, fully engaged participant in the therapeutic process. For clients for whom spirituality is a highly personal and sensitive area, lifemaps provide a means of shifting the focus from the client to a more neutral object, a process that may help set clients at ease. Additionally, individuals who are not verbally oriented may find pictorial expressions more conducive to their personal communication styles (McNiff, 1992). Similarly, more creative individuals may feel that this assessment approach allows them to express their spiritual journey in a manner that is more personally authentic.

Spiritual Genograms

While lifemaps typically depict a story across a single generation, spiritual genograms portray a graphic representation of spirituality across at least three generations (Hodge, 2001b). Colors are used to depict individuals' spiritual traditions and symbols are used to portray affiliations, devoutness, spiritual awakenings, changes in affiliation, relationships between family members, significant spiritual others, etc. The end result is a graphic "color snapshot" of the overall spiritual composition of the family system that helps both practitioners and clients understand the flow of historically rooted spiritual patterns through time.

Spiritual genograms may be particularly useful when the family system plays an especially significant role in the client's life. For instance, Poole (1998) suggested that genograms may be helpful with Hispanics as they show respect for tradition and family while helping connect spirituality to treatment plans. Problems involving family members or family of origin issues are often effectively explored with spiritual genograms. For example, spiritual genograms might be used with interfaith couples experiencing spiritually-based barriers to intimacy to expose areas of difference and potential conflict as well to highlight the respective spiritual strengths each person brings to the relationship. Genograms may also be appropriate for clients who prefer a very structured assessment approach.

Spiritual Eco-maps

In contrast with the above assessment tools, spiritual eco-maps focus on clients' current, existential spiritual relationships (Hodge, 2000; Hodge & Williams, 2002). While spiritual histories, lifemaps, and genograms all tap some portion of a clients' spiritual story as it exists through time (typically one to three generations of a client's spiritual narrative), spiritual eco-maps focus on that portion of a client's

spiritual story that exists in present space. In a manner analogous to traditional eco-maps (Hartman, 1995), significant spiritual systems or domains are depicted as circles on the outskirts of the paper, with the names of the respective systems written inside the circles (e.g., God, faith communities, transpersonal beings, etc.). A circle in the center of paper represents the client. The heart of the map is the relationships between the client and the spiritual domains, which depict the quality and content of the relationships.

Spiritual eco-maps are relatively easy to grasp conceptually, quick to construct and, perhaps most importantly, focus upon clients' current, existential, spiritual strengths (Hodge, 2000). This assessment approach may be ideal for operationalizing clients' spiritual assets in a timely fashion since the time spent in assessment is focused upon tapping into present spiritual resources. As is the case with all diagrammatic instruments, spiritual eco-maps provide an object that can serve as the focal point of discussion, which can be an important consideration for those clients who find it less threatening to have a concrete object that functions as the focus of conversation. However, by virtue of their design, eco-maps may be particularly helpful in transferring attention from the client to the concrete, diagrammatic assessment tool since they focus on environmental systems rather than, for example, a client's life story. While other approaches may implicitly emphasize the client, spiritual eco-maps explicitly stress the spiritual systems in clients' environments (Hartman, 1995).

Spiritual Ecograms

Spiritual ecograms combine the assessment strengths of spiritual eco-maps and genograms in a single diagrammatic instrument (Hodge, in press-a). Ecograms tap information that exists in space, much like a traditional spiritual eco-map, as well as tapping information that exists across time as occurs with a traditional spiritual genogram. In short, ecograms tap information that exists in space and across time. In addition, ecograms depict the connections between past and present functioning. Historical influences on current systems can be seen as well as present relationships with historical influences. In terms of their construction, the client is drawn in the center of the paper, with the top of the page used to chart the family tree and bottom half used to portray the client's relationships to present spiritual domains.

The primary asset of spiritual ecograms is their ability to illustrate current and historical resources as well as the connections between those strengths on a single sheet of paper. This ability may be particularly advantageous when working with populations in which the family system plays an important role. For instance, due to the sense of cohesion and interdependency among Muslim family members (Daneshpour, 1998), ecograms might be used to highlight present spiritual resources and important historical relationships, as both areas are often critical for understanding clients and helping them to ameliorate their problems.

Conclusion

This paper provides social workers with an introductory understanding of some of the more recently developed

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assessment tools and their respective advantages. Readers interested in further information on assessment may wish to obtain recently published texts on conducting spiritually sensitive assessments, such as the work of Canda and Furman (1999), Koenig (1998), Richards and Bergin (2000) and Van Hook, Hugen, and Aguilar (2001).

It is important to emphasize that many of the strengths discussed above apply to other assessment approaches beyond those profiled in this paper. For example, the advantages associated with spiritual histories, such as their intrinsic appeal to more verbally oriented clients, apply equally to the spiritual history assessment approaches developed by other authors (e.g., Boyd, 1998). As noted above, the approaches profiled in this paper were selected due to author's familiarity with these models and the fact that they were developed as complementary set. Readers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with a number of approaches beyond what can be discussed in an article of this length. Indeed, it is the author's hope that this paper functions to encourage practitioners to consider the strengths of a wide variety of assessment models and co-select with clients the method that best suits each client's individual needs and interests.

The realization is growing that conducting a spiritual assessment is often required to provide culturally sensitive services and to tap spiritual strengths. Accrediting organizations such as the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) are now recommending that a spiritual assessment be undertaken with clients (JCAHO, 2002). As Cascio (1999) suggests, spirituality and religion represent the diversity issues of the future.

It is, however, important to remember that spirituality remains a very personal, individualized topic for many individuals. An assessment approach that may work well with one client may be ineffective with another. As practitioners develop their understanding of the advantages associated with different assessment instruments, they are better equipped to provide client-centered services in this area that is of critical importance to many clients.


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Rituals Say It with Feeling

Don Streit, University of Arkansas at Little Rock



uman beings have a strong need and desire to express their intense reactions to events. Whether celebrating or grieving, people of all nations find that rituals give voice to the meaning of significant events. As social workers we work with people of all ages and diverse cultural backgrounds. When we encounter clients, they are usually entwined in a crisis that causes them distress and challenges them to use their resources. This crisis is truly a spiritual challenge because clients are struggling to find meaning in the distressing situation and to discover sources of hope and inspiration. Canda & Furman (1999) highlight how the use of rituals is an integral part of social work practice. "Therefore, theory of ritual process provides us with keen insight into the workings of transformational process, which is so important in spiritually sensitive social work." (p. 253) Robert A. Johnson (1986), speaking of the power of rituals and symbols in dream work interpretation, says, "Although we can understand the meaning of symbols with our minds, our understanding is made immeasurably deeper and more concrete when we *feel* the symbols with our bodies and our own feelings." (p. 103)

Since the events of September 11, 2001 this nation has been re-awakened to the need for rituals to express deep sorrow and loss, shock and rage. The war in Iraq has also given our nation pause to think, to feel, and to express the meaning of significant loss and suffering on a global scale. There is a communal need to commemorate the impact of both loss of life and loss of innocence that malicious destruction engenders.

When events so traumatic grip a person's consciousness, the person's spirit longs for full and meaningful expression. The events since September 11 have compelled our nation—one person, one family at a time—to express meaning through ceremonies enhanced with banners, flags, vigils, songs, pictorial displays, lighted candles, yellow-ribboned trees and, yes, even public prayer. All of these reflect the depths of emotions and soul-full intentions to recover hope, to scream outrage, and to honor the souls of those who have died.

When cries and shouts, raised fists and tears do not fully express the depths of outrage, sorrow, and grief a person's soul resorts to rituals and symbols to make a statement of meaning. The actions and symbolic gestures in a ritual become powerful vehicles for a person's and a nation's soul to proclaim the full truth of their deepest reactions to horror and sorrow, and their soul's need for hope. Rituals speak in soul-talk. This talk speaks the language of deep emotions, urgent longings, and inspired dreams. This language is woven throughout worker-client interaction. Richards and Bergin (2002) address the therapeutic value of ritual in the helping relationship:

Forms of worship and ritual that help clients affirm their spiritual heritage, identity, worth, life purpose and involvement with their religious community may be especially helpful for clients who struggle with a lack of life purpose and meaning or who struggle with guilt, shame, alienation, anxiety, depression, and grief. (p. 216)

Van Hook (2001) also endorses the benefit of social workers querying the client's appreciation of rituals. "Social workers can explore religious rituals that are meaningful to clients, the barriers to using these rituals, and the ways clients can draw strength from the rituals, to help clients use the rituals of their faith in healing ways." (p. 179) Rituals may take a "religious" form, but they can also be defined in a more general sense. Johnson (1986) defines ritual as "*symbolic behavior, consciously performed.*" (p. 103) Finally, in the context of family therapy, Nichols and Schwartz ((2001) cite the work of the Milan associates who use "family rituals to help clients make transitions between life cycle stages. (p. 129)

Rituals do not change realities. They do intend to make meaning of events. Funerals are an excellent example of this. Mourners do not attend funerals with the intent of raising the dead. However, they (we) do utilize opportunities to ritualize their relationship with the one who died and with the other fellow survivors. This gathering gives family and friends the opportunity to make a statement that says, "Our relationship with him has not died and we have a common bond with all who survived him." Or, "her body has gone, but she still lives in our hearts."

Another standard part of rituals honoring the dead is observing a moment of silence; just one moment of silence. Is one moment really enough? I think not. Instead, remembering a deceased loved one is an opportunity to take several moments of silence. Perhaps several moments would give pause to reflect, to listen to the words and wishes of persons who have died. And then we might realize what they longed for us to know about their dreams, fears, and values. During more than one moment of silence we might hear their side of our heated discussions with them when the force of their honesty scorched our patience so much that we could not hear the meaning in what they said. But now, in longer silence, we might hear for the first time what they wished for us to understand. How important it is to take several moments of silence with those still around us who want us to hear their side, their values, and their dreams. What a valuable silence...to finally hear the voices of the living and not just a memory of the dead. What an opportunity we have *now!* Families of victims of "9-11" will long remember the last words they spoke to their lost loved ones on that September morning, now September mourning. Just as families treasure the last words

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they whispered in their soldiers' ears before their sons and daughters were deployed to the Middle East.

Did those families recognize those good-byes as rituals? Did daily greetings and conversations feel like opportunities to honor their bonds with each other? The conversations in which people reveal their souls in statements that beg, "I just wish you could understand what I'm trying to say to you." Would that understanding have disarmed any malice between individuals or nations, possibly precluding 9-11 attacks? Would everyday reconciliation rituals lessen survivors' regrets at funerals?

The truth is that many traumatic events, from both malicious intent and accidental causes, cannot be avoided. Yet people have choices of how to give voice to their deepest feelings, their most treasured values, their long-held hopes and dreams, and their soul's passion. The choice of rituals, traditional and individual, serves our souls by proclaiming meaning through symbols. Rituals articulate our soul's depth because they speak with feeling. Each person, each family has their own "9-11" experience and subsequent intense reactions. Rituals employ symbols to deliver significant meaning.

Symbols are powerful, energized objects that induce strong reactions. Symbols can be simple objects, empowered by meaning to communicate. These objects-turned symbols are readily accessible and available. An item of clothing of a lost loved one takes on a special meaning that says, "We remember and honor him as we display his shirt." Personal effects become a treasure to the family because the item touched father, mother, sister, wife, son or daughter. There are mourners who keep their loved one's clothing in a sealed bag to preserve the scent of son Billy or wife Marie. Families already have symbols that bear something of the family's signature. A family's coat of arms, family albums and keepsakes speak of what each family values and what it stands for.

Nations communicate prized values and heritage on flags, monuments, and laws of the land. "September 11th" and "9-11" have themselves become symbols for yet another day of infamy in American history.

When social workers conduct a psycho-spiritual-social assessment it is important to determine how the client uses, appreciates, and responds to symbols in his or her life. The client's use of symbols is another resource of strength in the recovery process. Mills & Crowley (1986) cite Jung's appreciation of symbols in a client's therapeutic process. "Indeed, Jung saw the symbol as the vehicle for a modern-day spirituality which would grow out of the vitality of each person's own psychodynamic processes." (p. 14)

Peoples of all nations also experience moments of celebration expressed in rituals of gratitude and elation. The Olympic Games are a testimony to that. The rituals of the Games embody many symbols and forms that display both the unity and the diversity of humankind. Even further, the

Games carry a subtle admission that the real world does not march to the same music, but there is hope that nations could learn a lesson from the Olympic spirit. The Games use many classic, universal symbols. There is the lighting of the flame, athletes parading together in native dress with a national flag, and an electrifying tribute to the winners of events ignited by playing the athletes' national anthems. No matter what the event is or which athlete wins, these rituals serve as a global display of emotions of disappointment, joy, and pride. These ceremonies are experienced both collectively and individually because the human spirit resonates with the feeling of national pride and personal accomplishment.

Social workers can acknowledge and validate a client's progress in treatment through the use symbols, chosen by the client or prescribed by a program's tradition such as coins in AA. These mark milestones of healing and recovery. Worker and client can devise a fitting ritual using these symbols. Canda & Furman (1999) list suggestions for designing rituals that express a specific process of "affirmation or transformation". (p. 305)

There are myriad opportunities to imbue ordinary actions with feeling, examples of daily ritual events that quench a thirst for meaning and that feed hungry souls. A husband brings coffee to his wife, seemingly a simple action of walking a few steps with a cup of hot liquid. But his delivery intends to show her that his love for her honors her morning wish to have coffee touch her lips before her feet touch the floor. A mother matches glances with her son when he looks back to tuck one last gleam of encouragement into his thoughts before he takes that intimidating math test. Those glances say more than good-bye; they seal the trust that she believes in him and that he can borrow her hope.

There are daily rituals through which people reach for the connection with the divine. Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" on the ceiling of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel portrays the mutual desire of humankind and the divine to consummate their connection with one touch. Spiritual journeyers attempt to reach that touch of the divine through meditation, journaling, reflection or prayer. Sometimes this connection wears a formal rite of bar mitzvah, dedication, confirmation, or ordination. These become sacred rites, especially when a minister, priest, or rabbi performs the ritual. The divine connection in these ceremonies marks the participant's new role in relation to an ultimate power, a source of superior favor.

The rituals between two human beings celebrating their connection can be every bit as electrifying and transformative, especially when their touch communicates, "I forgive you", or "I'm proud of you", or "We are good together". Anniversaries and engagements can be formal ceremonies, but two lovers can decide to celebrate a one-week anniversary if that is what their yearning spirits choose. Engagements can be sealed by the exchange of a man's 20-year-old baseball glove and a woman's size 3-ballet slipper. The ring will come later.

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No matter what the life event, it is evident that people throughout the world recognize the need to ritualize the significance and impact that each dramatic event has in their lives. The soul finds a voice for the meaning of those events. Families find a place where those events fit in the family story. There is such a blessing, even in tragedy, in discovering the power of rituals. We don't have to wait for a "9-11" to proclaim what our souls will not conceal.

As social workers offering our services, we have an opportunity to instill hope in our clients who are facing their own "9-11" experience. This is a time when the practice of social work implies the value and the urgency of practicing from a strengths perspective. The client-worker relationship embodies a ritual of compassionate interaction that is both a reflection of and a vehicle for hope and healing.

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Call for Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Spirituality and Social Work Forum. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. Four hard copies of the manuscript and one copy on IBM-compatible 3.5" disk, with files saved in MS Word format, should be sent to: Robin Russel, Editor, Division of Social Work, School of Education and Human Development, Binghamton University, Box 6000, Binghamton, NY 13902-6000



Spiritual Support Circle

The Society maintains a Spiritual Support Circle with the intent to share with members requests for prayer/energy/positive thoughts during illness and times of need via the internet. This is a forum in which to provide support for one another in whatever spiritual approach one feels comfortable with such as, nondirective affirmative prayer, meditation, or visualization. The Spiritual Support Circle is open to all members of the Society.

To be part of the Spiritual Support Circle, you must email the Society for Spirituality and Social Work (sssw@binghamton.edu) and list 'SSC' as the subject. Please include your name and the email address you wish us to use in the body of the email.

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work is not endorsing or claiming the efficacy of any particular type of spiritual support belief/practice over others.

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The Parable of the Tribes: On Anarchy, Peace and Spiritual Transformation

Fred H. Besthorn, Ph.D.
The University of Northern Iowa

Introduction:

In the weeks and months following September 11, 2001, much of the public debate in America and in many places around the world focused on issues of retaliation, retribution and war. For most people, the immediate response to being harmed by another, especially when that harm is as great as it was in New York, is to avenge the act in a manner that equalizes the hurt. Retaliation creates a kind of harm-quotient that, while not removing the hurt of the original act, attempts in some manner to force the other to experience the relatively same amount of pain; thus balancing the ledger. When nations avenge harm and seek retribution through the use of unbridled power, we commonly refer to it as war. For millennia, the average lay person, and men and women of letters have contemplated and debated the cause of war. Looking at history through the prism of war makes it clear that violent tribal to tribal, and nation to nation conflict has been the one universal reality that has existed cyclically for at least the last three to four thousand years. While the modern era has prided itself in seeing history as a gradual progression to higher and higher levels of social organization and civilized behavior, the record seems not to justify the optimism. We view with mounting fear the rise of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are reminded again and again of the risks of building and attempting to maintain a democratic society against the encroaching apparatus and control of totalitarianism.

The problem of peace, more appropriately the problem of how to avert war and encourage peace among nations, is according to Andrew Schmookler's "Parable of the Tribes" theory, related to two fundamental factors. First, peace has always been, at least since the agricultural revolution and rapid rise in world population, a transitory state. This has been the case because if just one member of a group of tribal communities chooses violent action against ones neighbors it is all but assured that all the members must then engage in war. Exploitative power is then spread throughout culture like a pandemic and will gradually become the dominant, though not exclusive way, of resolving inter-tribal disputes. Secondly, war between tribal groups or nation states reflects

and is reinforced by an internal war between human consciousness and the conditions of alienated, unfulfilled lives. This is premised on the assumption that the ways of power leading to war and collective violence has distorted a much older, more organismic, holistic, peaceful and spiritual way of being. We moderns continue to war with each other because we have been at war with ourselves ever since we found a way to escape our perceived brutish existence and bond to the rhythmic cycles of the natural world (Oelschlaeger, 1991).

Primitive Worlds and Civilized Society

Increasingly, anthropologists and cultural theorists have come to the conclusion that ancient hunter-gathering societies were not mired in a violent, uncivilized and horrific mode of existence. It was not a life beset by unceasing drudgery and feelings of privation but was, rather, as Schmookler notes, "a surprisingly humane existence" (Schmookler, 1984, p. 8). The overwhelming burden of labor, production and consumption experienced by many in modern western society was comparatively small for our primitive ancestors. There was much more time for play, dance, music and sensuality than modern *civilized* culture has ever known (Callicott, 1994; Shepard, 1995). For perhaps ten-thousand years prior to the onslaught of agriculture and increasing population densities, primitive peoples of pre-history lived relatively peaceful and fulfilling lives (Besthorn, 2002). This doesn't suggest that the primitive condition was somehow a romanticized Eden of plenty and absolute contentment but, rather, that it was one relatively free from incessant warfare of the kind that has plagued civilized history for thousands of years.

What changed this peaceful way of existence? Schmookler (1984) describes the parable of transformation from peace to war in this manner:

Imagine a group of tribes living within reach of one another. If all choose the way of peace, then all may live in peace. But what if all but one chooses peace, and that one is ambitious for expansion and conquest? What can happen to the others when confronted by an ambitious and potent neighbor? Perhaps, one tribe is attacked and defeated, its people

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destroyed and its lands seized...another is defeated... it is subjugated and transformed to serve the conqueror. A third, seeking to avoid such disaster flees from the area into some inaccessible place, and his former homeland becomes part of the growing empire of the power-seeking tribe. Let us suppose that others...decide to defend themselves. But the irony is that successful defense against a power-maximizing aggressor requires a society to become more like the society that threatens it. Power can be stopped only by power, and if the threatening society has discovered ways to magnify its power through innovations in organization or technology... the defensive society will have to transform itself into something more like its foe in order to resist the external force (p. 21).

So, no matter what the preferred response of any given tribe, the ways and will to power is spread like a cancer throughout the system. It is irrevocable and all but unstoppable except for brief periods of respite and retooling. This means that individual human beings and collective cultures don't have the freedom of choice and action that they might assume as a matter of course. "No one is free to choose peace, but anyone can impose upon all the necessity of power" (Schmookler, p. 21). Individual self-interest is ultimately sacrificed to the interests of the larger systems in which citizens are embedded. The ultimate lesson of the parable is that the struggle for power took on its own internal momentum, so that over time, even in the absence of active warfare, societies and institutions within societies sought power for its own sake. It is important to consider, however, that the thirst—in truth the necessity—for power and the preference for war and war-like iconoclasm according to the tribes theory does not rest on a theory that sees aggression as an innate drive in human beings. The parable of the tribes:

...offers no indictment of human nature. The irresistible social evolutionary forces that have swept us along since the breakthrough to civilization have depended very little on human nature for their origin and their direction. All that is required was that we be creative enough to develop culture to a certain point of freedom from natural limits, and that we be capable of (not necessarily inclined toward) aggressive behavior. (Schmookler, p. 21).

The problem of war and inter-tribal violence is structural. It has been built into the very internal gearing of civilized societies and institutions. The source of war is not psychological (competition), not physiological (strength), not genetic (aggression), nor philosophical (ideas) (Wink, 1984). The will to power, eventuating in war, is built into the fabric of civilized societies and becomes the central controlling factor in social evolution. The ways of power and the inevitable anarchy that follows in its wake become the dominant value determining virtually all societal choices. It has shaped the lives of civilized peoples for countless generations. The chief characteristic of the power/war system is that while developed, staffed, and theoretically controlled by well-meaning and free-willed individuals, is in fact beyond merely human or individual proscription. In a sense the ways of power represent a spiritual force or momentum—a dark spirituality if you will.

It is a perpetual and nearly irredeemable social, evolutionary *via negativa* (Fox, 1991). The struggle against violence, maximizing power and war is as the biblical writer suggests "not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). This powerfully descriptive and not easily exaggerated passage suggests that there are both outer and inner manifestations of power systems. And by far, the real evil of civilized society lies within a domination system and not in evil individuals.

Internalized Warfare

The consequence of living in an ostensibly *civilized* and sane society surreptitiously, and most recently conspicuously devoted to war, carries a high psychological and emotional toll. The anarchic conditions which have been created by the parable of the times are "unnatural and therefore unfulfilling conditions for human life" which "generate pathological distortions of human nature" (Schmookler, 1984, p. 170). These then act to continue and reinforce the tendency to perpetuate war. An additional piece of the puzzle of incessant war is to suggest that it has a second source. War is "an expression of the war...between ourselves and the conditions of our lives" (Schmookler, 1988, p. 26). The pain of living in a power obsessed society alienates us from our natural inheritance, our embodiment within the nurturance of the natural order, the pleasurable of sustaining relationships; the striving for wholeness. The cost it exacts is that of physical and psychic numbing. Our bodies become objects of use, our minds simple repositories of facts and ideas. We are separated into parts and our parts become alienated from one another and the cosmic wisdom that seeks expression in us.

We have become so numb to the real loss to our natural existence that we rarely grasp the severity of the defeat. Our numbness produces a kind of amnesia about what a fully human and fully alive existence would be like. Indeed, it turns into a deep-seated fear and terror of remembering our natural condition of living in harmony with others and the natural world around us (Kahn & Kellert, 2002; Wilson, 1993). It should not surprise us that environmental destruction and psychic numbing go hand-in-hand. The power maximizing regime necessitates environmental destruction partly because of the change in human attitudes toward nature precipitated by the cost of living within a competitive, power-maximizing system. Schmookler describes it in the following way: The emergence of modern Western civilization was accompanied (rather, it was fostered) by a new attitude that facilitated the more complete overthrow of the natural order for the enhancement of human power...This ideological change is inseparable from the technological revolution that so explosively has escalated the growth of power. Those who can eye nature with an uninhibited urge to use her are far more likely to discover the techniques for manipulating her. And those who hold to an ideology that encourages the unlimited exercise of power are the more likely to put their technology to use. The selective process that has favored the technologically advanced has therefore also favored the spread of the less pious, more exploitative and rapacious attitude toward the natural order (p. 259).

So, what civilization has been creating is a humanity at war with each other and at war with itself. The internal conflict created by the demands of the power system and the inherent need of the human organism for dependence and safety creates human beings culturally structured in such a way as to adapt to and appease the powers they rely upon. The internalization of the ongoing conflict between human nature, evolutionarily rooted in a natural world, and civilized culture is fully fixed in the great machine metaphor of modern civilization. In the words of Walter Wink (1992):

We internalize the ethic of productivity, the constraints of patriarchy, the imperative of success, the drivenness of modern life, the obligations of machismo, the laws that prevent our achieving for ourselves what the powerful achieve at our expense. We become complicit. And so we leave unopposed the world that injures us, restructuring ourselves to appease the powers we depend upon. To achieve peace with the world, we declare war upon ourselves (p.42).

Spiritual Transformation

The parable of the tribes hypothesizes that the current condition of maximizing and cohesive power reflects only a transitional stage between two spiritually related and phenomenologically connected relational systems. The first is governed by our very limited capacity to break out of the confines of our natural environments and our own naturalness. The second is controlled by a volitional choice of individuals and groups toward spiritual transformation that consciously welcomes and accepts our traditional limits and rebuilds a society based on a new wholeness. This transition to wholeness is not inevitable but will require concerted human effort and collective action. In Schmookler's words: If we are lucky, the evolution of civilization to this point may prove to have been a transitional period in the history of life. It may be a period of anarchy and destruction between two eras of synergetic order. In the beginning, there was the biologically evolved order that gave and protected life. Then the break of a single species from that order brought into the world the reign of power which now threatens life with destruction. But perhaps before power has a chance to fulfill its worst threats, mankind will be able to use its growing opportunities to shape a new order which, like the old, will control the actions of all to the degree needed to protect the well-being of the whole (1984, p. 33).

The creation of this new order requires an end to inter-societal anarchy which has been the overarching context of modern, civilized life. Global, holistic consciousness—an individual and collective spiritual transformation—is the solution to the problem of war.

This new wholeness will emulate the ancient wholeness from which we arose, but it is a new kind of wholeness. This new whole might be called the "bio-civisphere." Like the biosphere that evolved by wholly biological means, the bio-civisphere will embody the harmonizing of relationships and the cycling of resources that safeguard the system's stability and long-term viability (Schmookler, 1988, p. 311).

This new wholeness that Schmookler speaks of will have multiple dimensions including cognitive, emotional, spiritual,

ecological, political, and economic. Indeed, the bio-civisphere "will require a consciousness of a very different sort, a consciousness that is the expression of the harmony and integration that characterized the system of life before civilization" (Schmookler, 1988, p. 311). The chart below, adapted from Wink (1992), may help to clarify the possibilities between the current power-maximizing system and a global system of harmony and wholeness.

It would be incorrect to assume that the problem of war can be reduced to individual transformation. According to the parable, the age old argument as to whether the end to violence can be achieved by individual wholeness or by the emergence of group wholeness is not the strategic dilemma. For Schmookler, while the source of the problem of violence and war is an anarchic system rather than attributes of the individual, this does not necessarily equate into a single emphasis on systemic change. His analysis suggests that individual transformation depends on the transformation of the entire world. "The parable of the tribes shows why the level of the individual life—of spiritual salvation, of right conduct in daily living—cannot suffice" (Schmookler, 1989, p.85). "Only the creation of a new, overarching order that fosters harmony and wholeness will enable the members of humankind to become whole....And only when the human elements of the system are whole can the greater whole we need to create be established." (Schmookler, 1988, p. 311). For Schmookler, the solution to world peace lies in individual *and* collective action toward the establishment of some form of global governance based on biospheric and human values; although it may not yet be clear what form that authority may take. The global community must be built on the foundational supports of community building in the context of our personal lives. The only way to global wholeness is through individual wholeness. However, individual wholeness will not be achieved in the absence of global wholeness. These remarks of Schmookler (1989) suggest the optimism he brings to this challenge:

People often feel despair that there is nothing they can do to heal the world. Admittedly, the problems of the world are huge in comparison with the abilities of us individuals to address them....But the good news is that we are nonetheless each in a position to contribute to the healing; feeding goodness and love into the system makes a difference wherever it occurs. In the raising of our children, in the way we treat our friends, in the way we fill our role at work—all these arenas afford us an opportunity to contribute to the healing of the world. Metaphorically, we are living at the ground-level and above us some thirty or forty feet there is a ledge to which we need to raise ourselves. All we have available to build something for us to climb up are a number of stones. The stones are our positive actions; each time we act constructively in the world, we place a stone. In the arena where the great decisions are made—say on war, peace, or the environment—this can be likened to the very top of the pile. To say that the only efforts that contribute to our reaching the higher level of civilization are those that directly involve those great issues is like saying that we will climb up a narrow column of rocks....But if we place many, many rocks down, gradually there will emerge a rock pile that goes high enough and that has a stable base to support it. It is still important to keep the top of the rock pile

rising, but the rocks along the side play an indispensable long-run role. The many rocks along the side are the countless small contributive actions we all can do in our daily lives that can build the base that supports the peak. All that we do to nourish one another, and to raise the level of consciousness, adds up; cumulatively it builds the foundation of love and understanding that must nonetheless someday culminate in wise global policies (pp. 106-107).

Conclusion

The Parable of the Tribes suggests that the march of systemic anarchy and war in cultural evolution is not inevitable. Humankind can and must undergo a transformation of individual and collective consciousness based once again on the ideas of wholeness and harmony. The revitalization of a spiritual and religious emphasis in social work theory and practice provides the profession with a uniquely timed opportunity to be about the same work of transformation and renewal spoken of

by Schmookler. Indeed, social work has always been about calling the larger culture to change and regeneration.

This article has explored the message of the Parable of the Tribes and what it has to say to us about the sources of war and peace, and how humankind may avert its own self-induced apocalypse. This is especially relevant in these days when the war drums beat incessantly and the talk of heroic battles, smart bombs and sacrifice for flag and fatherland cloud our collective vision of peaceful tomorrows and brighter worlds yet to come.

The distinction between a world haunted by war and a world ruled in harmony and peace may not always be easy for us to visualize. It is important though that we not allow the difficulty of the task to narrow our capacity to create and dream. And, it is important for us as social workers to join in these visionary efforts to create a just and peaceful world. This is a part of our professional legacy and must become a cornerstone of our future aspirations.

Cultural Dimension	Power-Maximizing System	Global System of Wholeness
Power	Power over; power to take life, control, destroy Win-lose Domination Competition	Power with; power to give, support, nurture life Win-win Partnership Cooperation
Politics	Conquest Pseudo-democracy Autocracy Authoritarian Centralized Militarized	Diplomacy True Democracy Enabling Decentralized Communalized
Gender	Patriarchal; difference implies superiority/inferiority	Equality of sexes: Difference may lead to specialization but not ranking
Economics	Exploitation, greed, privilege, inequality, corporate capitalism, "globalization", privatization	Sharing, sufficiency, responsibility, sustainability, social development, economic justice, public-good
Religion	Male-God—jealous, wrathful, punishing, lawgiving, "redemptive violence"	Inclusive God-images-Mother/Father, Goddess/God loving/judging, compassionate/severe, merciful/demanding
Relationships	Ranking Domination hierarchies Slavery, classism, Racism, We/they, Rigidity	Linking Actualizing hierarchies, State of beingness, Equality of opportunity, we/we, flex
Transformative Mode	Violence, coercion, intimidation, force, war Suppression of conflict	Nonviolent confrontation, negotiation, inclusiveness, diplomacy, conflict resolution
Ecological Stance	Exploitation, control, contempt, anthropocentric	Harmony, cooperation, respect, sustainability, non-anthropocentric
Logic	Either/or, analytic, rationalistic, linear	Both/and, analytic/synthetic, intuitive, cyclic
Ego	Self-centered, bounded by individual, inter-psyche awareness	Affiliation-oriented, expansive, web of relationships
Education	Indoctrinating, memorization, elite-benefit	Enabling, creative, free-public
Sexuality/Sensuality	Subordination of women's reproductive capacities and sexual expression to male control, body-mortification, limited to humans contact	Control of sexuality by individuals in the light of community values, body-honoring, sensation with all of natural world
Eschatology	Status quo, holding and keeping power; this evil world; life to come; eternity in the future, injustice in the present	Cultural and spiritual transformation; the reign of Goddess/God, the coming eon; eternity in the present, justice in the future

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Holy Moments

If I Could Only Smile

by Trina Laughlin, CSW
Rochester, NY

My first conversation with Robert was over the phone. I couldn't tell when he first began speaking, if he had a foreign accent, or if he had some sort of physical disability. His speech was hard to understand, yet I found that if I closed my eyes, I could "see" the words better than I could actually hear them. It got easier as the call went on, and I was able to establish that he was referred by his primary doctor because he was feeling very depressed.

The day of his appointment I went to the waiting room to meet him. As I approached he was reading a magazine. Even with sort of being slumped into the magazine he seemed to be a man of stature. If I had to guess he would be at least six foot. He appeared to be in his late 50's or early 60's and at least from my approach angle, he didn't look foreign. As I said that to myself, I remembered thinking, "What does someone foreign look like? Foreign to what?" As he stood to greet me, he turned to shake my hand, and exposed the right side of his face for the first time. The right side of Robert's face was scarred. It looked as if the top half of his cheek had been pulled as tight as it could be, and fastened to the lower half, leaving a severe indentation where the two halves met. His mouth area had been pulled very tightly over toward the side of his face. As I remembered our phone call, it became apparent that this was the reason behind the difficulty I had had understanding him.

As it turns out Robert was actually in his early 70's. His youthful appearance was testimony to a man who had stayed active and vibrant. Robert had been on the town board of his little hamlet for years. He was a former teacher who knew everyone. He had been either the teacher who taught a parent, or a child, or both, for just about every family in town.

About a year and a half prior to this day, Robert had been diagnosed with mouth cancer. Today he was free from the spread of the ravaging disease, however his freedom came with the removal of about half of his tongue and a great deal of his cheek and neck. Either they had done all the reconstruction they could do, or Robert had had enough. Robert went to a speech therapist three times a week. The more time I spent with him, the easier his speech was to understand. Depression was not a hard diagnosis to make. This man's entire life was about being a speaker. He had used his education and intellect, through his words, as an educator, and as a town spokesperson. Surgery and illness had left his sense of who he was, and what he could be for the rest of his days, topsy turvy. When words became difficult to both deliver and understand, Robert began to question who he was, and if he had any worth.

As he talked, he actually broke into a sweat, and questioned if I could understand him. Once he felt comfortable that I understood him, he talked openly and honestly about how the disease had affected him. He was an easy man to get to know. There was an easy going rhythm to our sessions. It often was as if I was meeting an old friend for coffee and we were just visiting. He must have felt that same, "feel like I've known you forever feeling," because one day in the course of a story, he just spontaneously said, "Yeah, when they told me about what the surgery was going to be like, it was like the day of the slap. I knew the same thing the day of the slap, that I knew the day they told me about the surgery." When I asked what that was that he knew, Robert softly and rather meekly responded, "Oh you know, you just know in your bones that

life is just never going to be the same, or ever even going to be good again." As we began to talk more deeply, it was revealed that the slap that set up the rest of Robert's life to be, "never even good again," was delivered when Robert was six years old...some 70 years earlier. This very proud and gentle man wept when he told me about the day he was walking his sister home. Robert was two years older than his sister, and he had been entrusted with walking her from the bakery back home. Mom and Dad had gone ahead after Sunday service, allowing Robert to go in and buy the bread, and walk the short block back home. I am always amazed when people remember things from their past. It is as if their present substance silently floats out of the room, and is replaced with the six year old they are remembering. Before me I saw a perfectly intact little boy. In my minds eye, the surgical ravages on Roberts face had been transformed, and been replaced with the smooth sun tanned skin of a six year old. As he remembered how proud he was at having received such a grown up assignment, his eyes glistened with pride and excitement. He recounted how he felt and refelt the quarter in his pants pocket. He was unsure which part of the assignment made him feel more responsible. He had been entrusted with his little sister, who he adored. With one hand he squeezed her hand to be sure he had a good hold on her, and also to be sure that the moment was real. With the other hand he re-established that the quarter was safe in his pocket, he just knew that it was "more money than anyone had ever been entrusted with." He watched his parents get all the way to the front gate and go into the house before he entered the bakery. He had established for himself, that when they entered the house, then, and only then, was he actually on his grown up assignment. No one was watching him from around the corner, he was officially responsible and in charge.

The bakery bell on the back of the door announced their arrival to Mr. Woodson, the bakery owner. Robert talked about hearing the bell and remembering the sound as if it announced, "Mr. Robert Knight, the big boy, has arrived. Step to it, he would like a loaf of fresh baked bread." He remembered that Mr. Woodson must have heard the bell say that too, because he looked down at Robert and his sister and said, "Well good morning Mr. Knight. Lovely Sunday morning isn't it? I have fresh loaves just out of the oven, might I get you one?" Robert remembered feeling as if he would fall over. Being called Mr. Knight played over and over in his head. Robert gave a bit of a chuckle and smiled as he related this seventy year old story. He told me, "I can't even remember if I told him 'yes please' or not. I just remember being Mr. Knight, and somehow the quarter coming out of my pocket, the bread coming into my arms, and the bakery bell, as the door closed behind me, announcing to the pedestrians on the street... "Here comes Robert Knight...big boy." As he approached the gate at his front walk, his Dad was coming out of the house. Robert could barely wait to hand him the bread. Somehow the transfer would make the mission complete and validated. Robert's father approached with the same excitement. They got to the gate at the same moment and Robert was amazed as his father snatched him up by his shirt, and slapped him as hard as he could across his face. He remembered seeing the bread float out his arms. Robert said to me, "I remember my father's

words sounded distorted and his face was ugly with rage. He screamed at me, 'how could you not watch Lily? What's the matter with you boy, are you stupid? Why did your sister get home without you? How many times did I tell you to hold her hand?'" There before me was a seventy year old man, crying the tears of a six year old boy. Tears rolled gently down the left side of Robert's face. Although there were tears in his right eye, they came down his cheek and got lost in the scar that pieced the two halves of his face together. I remember thinking that they got lost like they had for the past 70 years. They had been lost from easily retrievable memory until one day when he heard about a surgery that would change his life. On that day, the day he had heard about the surgery, he felt like... "the day of the slap."

In the course of the next couple of months, Robert told me lots of stories about being his father's son. We didn't talk much about the cancer or his current depression. We talked a lot about his Dad's alcoholism, his Dad's explosive temper, the Christmas his Dad threw the Christmas tree through the front picture window, and the night they got the call from the Sheriff late into the night. Robert wasn't sure if he became a man that night, the night his Dad wrapped his car around the tree and was killed, or if he became a man the day when he could see the warm loaf of bread fly out of his grasp. We talked a lot about the difference between transitions into manhood, versus the theft of innocence. By mid November, Robert was off his anti-depressant, he was back at town board meetings, and he actually wanted to attend an awards dinner where he was the recipient of a town lifetime achievement award. One day in my office, Robert grinned, as best he could, about the acceptance speech he had written. He was genuinely grateful when he said, "you know when I started coming here, I was afraid to talk to my wife. I was afraid no one could understand me. Now I'm getting ready to do a speech, with lots and lots of people looking at me. I guess I've been worrying about the wrong kind of understanding. It seems like you understood me just fine." The moment passed and we began talking about the holidays.

I was taken a bit off guard when Robert announced that he had always hated the holidays. He talked about even with all the things he had overcome and survived as a result of being raised in his household, the one that had remained the most challenging was the holidays. Year after year he would get grumpy and irritable. He always had a bah humbug attitude and he described feeling tremendously guilty about that.

Robert and his wife, married late in life. They had one daughter who was now in her early 30's. Their daughter was born with some developmental disabilities. She was in a wheelchair and had been all her life. She lived at home with them, and was totally dependent on them. As hard as Robert had tried, he could never seem to shake the ghosts that invaded his mind and spirit during the holidays. He therefore felt as though his daughter's experience with the holidays, in some ways, was as bad as his had been. He felt he just never was a good enough Dad during this time of year.

I left a couple of weeks later as I was taking some extended holiday time with my family in Chicago. Robert and I had ended our sessions together the week before I left. He

had attained the goals he had set in our work together.

As I wandered in and out of shops on Chicago's Magnificent Mile, I stumbled into a cozy bookstore. After having been in and out of the cold blustery snow, the bookstore was inviting and offered warm cider. There on the front promotional tables was a children's book called The Polar Express. It was a Caldecott award winner, and beside the hard bound book was a narrated tape. On the tape, William Hurt read the story. I took the sample package into a "listening room" and thumbed through the book as William Hurt's strong, soft voice walked me through the illustrations before me. The Polar Express, was a beautiful story about Christmas and about believing. Although it was somewhat expensive, and although I was not in the habit of buying my clients' holiday presents, I purchased it purely with Robert in mind. The girl at the counter asked if I wanted it wrapped and shipped, but I found myself gratefully declining. For some reason I felt the need to wrap the present myself. I remembered some of the elaborate wrapping we had on presents from my grandmother. The present itself might have been a pair of hand knitted socks, but the foil wrapping with some decorative pin, or hand made toy or decoration on top, made what was inside almost meaningless. Gramma's presents were like boxes of magic. They were elaborate labors of love, which made other presents under the tree seem lifeless. Although I knew that it would be impossible for Robert to ever feel it the same way I had felt it with my grandmother, I wanted very much for Robert's present to at least look like mine of old. I got a very pretty red foil wrap, there was a green satin flat ribbon, and poised at the center of the ribbon was a white dove. Gently hanging from the dove's mouth was a sprig of red holly berries and a single Christmas bell. The next day I was off to the post office and shipped Robert's present. The card read, "Robert, I found this story about magic and believ-

ing. For some reason it reminded me of you. May you and your family have the happiest of holidays."

When I returned to my office after the New Year, there was a card that awaited me.

Trina,

I can't thank you enough for the present. Although the man on the tape is very eloquent, I have taken to reading the story aloud myself to my daughter and my wife. They seem to like it best when I read it. The first time I read it out loud, I was propped up beside my daughter on her bed. It was as though I was tucking her in, like so many years ago. There is no other word to describe her face as I read, other than...sheer delight.

I remember when we first started working together, one of my complaints was that my face was so distorted that I couldn't smile. It seemed like no matter how I tried to contort my face, it never quite looked like a smile. I distinctly remember saying, "If I could only smile!"

I just want to let you know, seeing my daughter that night, and realizing that I was the source of her happiness...well, let me just say, my face hasn't changed much, but I felt what it feels like to...smile from my soul.

Thank you;

Robert

I knew in that moment...what it felt like too.

This is the second of what we hope will be a regular column in The Forum. We are asking for stories from you of "Holy Moments" or "Spiritual Highs" that you have experienced in your work. Our purpose is simply to provide a space for such stories to be preserved and if, along the way, we also help you, the reader, to be more aware of the spiritual connection that comes with social work, "blessed be!"

Please send submissions to sssw@binghamton.edu

Call for Manuscripts

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Short articles are invited for the next issue of the Spirituality and Social Work Forum. Generally, submissions should be no longer than three double-spaced typed pages. Occasionally, articles up to six double-spaced pages will be accepted. Manuscripts from diverse perspectives are sought on various aspects of spirituality and social work theory, practice, policy and education. Descriptions of innovative efforts to integrate social work practice and spirituality are particularly encouraged. One copy on IBM-compatible 3.5" disk, with files saved in MS Word format, should be sent to: Robin Russel, Editor, Division of Social Work, School of Education and Human Development, Binghamton University, PO Box 6000, Binghamton, NY 13902-6000. Submission may also be emailed to sssw@binghamton.edu

We Don't Know Jack: A Path to War and A Path to Peace

Thomas F. Capshew, MSW, JD, Ph.D.

The University of Northern Iowa

Most of us know the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. We heard it over and over again as children growing up in the United States. The story is told from the perspective of Jack, the hapless, poverty stricken little boy who discovers a shimmering land of plenty at the top of the beanstalk. Unfortunately for Jack, this enchanted land is populated by a terrible Giant. Our cultural legacy of rooting for the underdog has helped us to identify with Jack and cheer when the beanstalk is chopped down and the Giant comes tumbling to the earth at the hands of Jack and his axe.

It may come as a surprise to many Americans, but we aren't Jack. In fact, we don't know Jack. In today's world, America is the Giant. Americans enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world today. While some Americans live in relative poverty today, few Americans have had to sell a family asset or a cherished heirloom to buy food for the day. From the perspective of much of the rest of the world, we live in a shimmering land of plenty. In most of the rest of the world, over 840 million people, equaling almost one seventh of the world's population, are malnourished (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2002). Of that estimate, 799 million are in the developing world, 11 million in the industrialized countries, and the remaining 30 million are found in countries considered in transition from developing to industrialized (Id.). In North America, the proportion of malnourished in the population is around five percent. In India, Central America, Caribbean, Central, East and Southern Africa, and parts of Southeast Asia, the proportion of the population malnourished ranges from twenty to nearly sixty percent (Id.). It is estimated that every six seconds a child under five dies as a result of hunger - a rate that equals the total number of lives lost in the World Trade Center tragedy every four and a half hours. This nightmarish fact plays itself out 24 hours a day, every day of the year. In other words, every day five times as many people die of hunger as died in the September 11 attacks. And yet the Giant still sits at his table wolfing down food and using up the land's plenty at a gluttonous pace, all the while complaining of lack.

In many parts of the world today, people have no opportunity to work because jobs are not available. At the same time, economic globalization results in factories being built in some impoverished areas - to produce shoes and clothes or other finery for the Giant. The work conditions are mostly exploitative and unsafe and the wages paid are often not enough to put food on the table, much less to afford the pleasure of the clothes or shoes or other luxuries the workers spend hours stitching and assembling (Milanovic, 1999). The Giant wears the finest clothes, continually yearning for more and at less cost. Some people in this land of plenty judge the desirability of a new house in part by the size of the closets and the amount of storage space.

Countries lacking the Giant's financial resources offer up their natural resources in an attempt to eke out an existence and to gain a modicum of the Giant's lifestyle. As a result, the world's rainforests are being cut down, the world's fossil fuel

stores are being depleted, and the ecosystems of the world's oceans are being destroyed. Still, the Giant sits at his table and counts his storehouses of riches and grain and demands the hen lay yet another golden egg.

The Giant has many cousins - it is true that America is not alone. The twenty wealthiest nations, mostly in Europe and North America, use 86% of the world's resources (United Nations Population Fund, 2001). That leaves the remaining 171 nations to share 14% of the world's resources. And there can be little question that America is the leader in the values that create, perpetuate and accelerate the differences between Jack and the Giant.

A Path to War

From the Giant's perspective, Jack chopping down the beanstalk is a *senseless act of terrorism*. From the Giant's perspective, Jack is evil and the Giant intends to eat him alive when caught. But what of Jack's perspective? We all know Jack's perspective. Jack and his mother live in grating poverty, where each bad decision means deeper hardship. Jack climbs the beanstalk originally out of curiosity, not even aware of the land of plenty. After glimpsing the land of plenty, Jack sees his world on the ground existing in a state of needless and painful inequality and oppression. Jack then makes trips up the beanstalk not out of malicious intent, but to provide for his family. As we know from the story, the Giant does not take kindly to losing any of his wealth and will use any means possible to protect it. Since September 11, 2001, our leaders have renewed and redoubled efforts to "protect the American way of life." So the Giant runs around frantically seeking to annihilate every Jack that might lay claim to the Giant's way of life, naming as "evil" anyone who threatens him, questions him, or challenges the values underlying the Giant's way of life.

A Path to Peace

The moral of "We Don't Know Jack" strikes at the very core of our values and illuminates our influence in the world. We must not rush around like the Giant looking for every Jack to eliminate on an endless quest for "homeland security." This behavior creates as many, or more, new Jacks as it destroys. We must instead choose a new path, one that leads to lasting, peaceful coexistence. An essential element of this path is honest self-reflection. Honest self-reflection is something that is much harder to do than projecting all evil to the "bad people out there," but it pays a much bigger dividend.

September 11 was a national tragedy. Yes, it is important for the people responsible to be held responsible and be brought to justice. But if lasting good comes from these events, it must include calling ourselves to account: bringing ourselves to justice. This requires a responsible and honest search of our hearts and souls, asking if the way we live, in the world and with the world, recognizes the rights of all humanity to live in peace, health and sustainable prosperity.

There can be no question that America has done good around the world. In fact, some individual Americans have lived out of, and continue to live out of, values that recognize

the worth and dignity in all humans. Being self-reflective requires asking ourselves probing questions. The core question is: "What is the intention out of which our actions arise?" This question is neither new nor burdensome for those who make choices grounded in a recognition of each person's dignity. But all too often this question is loathsome for those who produce "good" with only their own benefit in mind.

Crisis brings danger and opportunity. The danger from "without" is palpable. The danger from "within" is less recognized but even greater. That danger is maintaining values that perpetuate and escalate the divide between Jack and the Giant. There are many opportunities. One opportunity is to find a way to thrive on this earth *with* other inhabitants, rather than at their expense. In our nation's current version of Jack and the Beanstalk, Jack did not kill the Giant. He only got his attention. Now that our attention is focused, let us pause to consider new options for the United States' global relations. What if, in this current story, the Giant were to have a change of heart about the way he lives his life in relationship to others instead of running off to kill Jack?

And how might that change of heart look? A place to begin might be with our religious or spiritual values. Consistent within every major faith tradition found in the United States is what some call "the Golden Rule", do unto others what you would have them do unto you. While it may not carry this name in all faith traditions, the values underlying the concept are found in nearly all of our faith traditions and have deep resonance with many Americans (Robinson, 2002; Teaching Values, 2000). The values stated in this rule have been more of an aspiration for many of us, seen as an ideal rather than a way of daily living. Were we to daily live this rule as individuals and as a nation, our world would be transformed and we would be on the path to peace.

The Golden Rule as we have come to know it is stated in the positive. Stated in the obverse, it becomes: "do not do to others what you would not want done to you." A logical extension of the obverse is "do not ask anyone to do anything you yourself are unwilling to do." If this extension of the obverse statement of the Golden Rule were adhered to in all human relationships, our world would be transformed and its application would usher in a new era of peace. The Golden Rule, in its obverse and extended forms are, at their core, about reciprocity - recognizing that the worth and dignity of others is equivalent to one's own worth and dignity. Adopting the value of reciprocity requires a shift from placing primary value on our material existence to placing primary value on our spiritual existence. A few brief examples will illustrate how the world might be different if this path to peace were taken.

George W. Bush would not ask other countries to destroy weapons of mass destruction unless George W. Bush was willing to destroy the United States' arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Army Generals and Presidents would not send off young American soldiers to die without going themselves or sending members of their own families. Just imagine what Israel might ask the Palestinians to do - or not do - if reciprocity were lived out in that conflict. For example, would Israel recognize the right to an autonomous Palestinian state? And

finally, how would the ending of this current version of Jack and the Beanstalk change if the Giant lived by the rule of not asking Jack to do anything the Giant was unwilling to do himself? This author believes the Giant would, through self-reflection and a change of values, learn to share the abundance of this world with the Jacks of this world and Jack would have little reason to take out his axe except to chop wood for a warm fire on a cold evening.

This path to peace will not start with our leaders, it starts with us. It starts with honest self-reflection of our place in the world and our examination of our own spiritual values and how we manifest those in our daily lives. As long as we continue to value "what we have" more than "who we are," there will be a widening gap between Jack and the Giant, and as the gap widens, the Giant will grow more insecure about maintaining what he has. Once each of us has realigned our values with our spirituality, and lives into those renewed values, we will begin to positively affect those around us, inviting them to join us in living in reciprocity. Lived values always affect those around you, both personal or professional relationships, both intimates and acquaintances. There are numerous quotes which capture this point, including ones from Gandhi, Margaret Mead, and others. Robert Kennedy captured the essence of the process in the following quote:

It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped each time a man stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest wall of oppression and resistance.

Robert F. Kennedy, Day of Affirmation Address, University of Capetown, South Africa, June 6, 1966.

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Chapter News

New Hampshire

Elizabeth (Althea) Chadwick would like to begin a chapter of the Society in New Hampshire. Those in that area interested in forming a group, please contact Althea at 603-895-4530 or nhsanctuary@comcast.net

Buffalo, NY

We call our group "The Weaving Group" in Buffalo, NY, because we gather on a monthly basis to weave spirituality into our work as well as into our personal lives. Our last several meetings included a Mandala drawing night, a house blessing of one of our members, and a celebration of IMBOLC (a Celtic Festival of purification and hope in which we acknowledge our dreams, intentions and that which is lying dormant within us and needs nurturing to bring it forth into the new year.) We usually meet from 7 to 9 pm on the second Monday of the month at the office of Bonnie Collins in Hamburg, NY. All helping professionals are welcome! For more information email Bonnie at collinsb@buffalo.edu or call her at 716-648-4455.

Arizona

SSSW Members in Arizona have been meeting monthly or bi-monthly at the Tucson Component of the ASU School of Social Work for almost two years. In November of last year, the group held its first Retreat at the La Purisima Retreat Center in Sierra Vista. In January of this year, the group sponsored a Mini-Conference which was attended by 60 professionals where Executive Director, Robin Russel, was the keynote speaker.

Kansas University Association for Spiritual Diversity in Social Work

Students and faculty at the University of Kansas have had a campus organization linked to the Society for Spirituality and Social Work for several years. During the past one and a half years, we have been in full swing under the leadership of Loretta Pyles, Ph.D. student. We have set up an e-mail list-serv that has about 30 members and the list is growing. This list-serv provides a forum to discuss issues, and post upcoming events. Also, last spring we held a brown bag colloquium to highlight some doctoral student work on spirituality and social work. Bob Prue talked about Spiritual Exploitation of Native Americans and Loretta Pyles talked about Engaged Buddhism and Social Change.

This year, we have been having monthly meetings for regular discussions and guest speakers on specific topics. For example, Dr. Ed Canda facilitated a discussion, "Religion and Social Work Values: Dilemmas and Opportunities," using recent articles and letters to the editor published in *Social Work* about Evangelical Christianity as an entry point for discussion. The discussion was reflective and lively. Sixteen people attended, including BSW, MSW and PhD students, as well as faculty. Another meeting focused on "Gerontological Social Work and Spirituality," with a presentation by Dr. Holly Nelson-Becker who is a Hartford Faculty Scholar affiliated with our school's Office for Aging and Long Term Care research. Our most recent presentation was by Rebecca Vela, Ph.D. candidate, regarding her dissertation research about implementation and study of a meditation program with elders in a residential center. We are planning a special meeting with the Department of Religious Studies to explore common interests in spirituality, health, and social issues.

We are assisting Dr. Canda and school staff in development of a major interdisciplinary conference on Spirituality and Mental Health Recovery to be held October 28-29, 2004, here at KU. The conference is supported by a grant from the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund. It will feature nationally renowned speakers, such as Pat Deagan (mental health consumers movement and recovery) and David Lukoff (transpersonal psychiatry), as well as social workers, mental health professionals and clergy, and service recipients. Presentations will deal with ways that spiritual experiences and practices and participation in religious communities can contribute to recovery from mental illness and mental health challenges. This will be cosponsored by the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. You are all invited!

Contact Loretta Pyles at (785) 864-1047 if you would like more information or visit Dr. Canda's home page (www.socwel.ku.edu/canda) for other activities and resources relating to spiritual diversity at the University of Kansas.

*The University of Kansas School of Social Welfare
presents
Spirituality and Mental Health Recovery Conference
October 28-29th, 2004
Holiday Inn Holidome, Lawrence, KS*

Keynote Speakers: Pat Deegan; Edward Canda; David Lukoff; Sally Clay; Priscilla Ridgway

*For Information Contact: Debbie McCord: 785-864-3804, debbiem@ku.edu
or Monika Eichler: 785-864-3873, monikae@ku.edu
Or visit: www.socwel.ku.edu/mentalhealth/index.htm*

Spiritually modified cognitive therapy: Evidence for effectiveness

David R. Hodge, Ph.D.
Philadelphia, PA

A growing number of social workers are interested in tapping clients' spiritual and religious strengths to ameliorate problems (Canda & Furman, 1999). Although many clients are interested in integrating their spiritual beliefs and values into the therapeutic dialogue (Bart, 1998), resistance can still occur at the institutional level. Spirituality is often perceived as too esoteric, having little practical utility in clinical settings. Practitioners may be told that no evidence exists that spirituality and religion can be effectively used in clinical settings to address problems or alternatively, that spiritual interventions are too far outside the therapeutic mainstream to be considered in conventional agency settings.

It is true that research on spiritual interventions is still in its infancy (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001). It is also likely that some spiritual interventions, such as "spiritual mourning," in which clients spend prolonged periods of time in isolation praying and fasting (Griffith, Mahy & Young, 1986), represent approaches that strike many practitioners as unconventional. Researchers have, however, explored the effectiveness of various spiritual interventions, and some of these interventions are quite compatible with traditional clinical strategies.

Cognitive therapy is a mainstream therapeutic modality and is one of the more widely used approaches in social work practice (Hepworth, Rooney & Larsen, 2002; Travers, 2002). This method, pioneered by Albert Ellis, focuses on identifying unhealthy thought patterns that underlie unproductive behaviors. The goal is to replace negative cognitive patterns with more salutary thought patterns that foster enhanced functioning.

This basic model has been modified for work with clients with whom spirituality is a salient life-dimension. More specifically, unproductive beliefs are replaced with tenets drawn from the client's spiritual belief system. The overarching theoretical underpinnings of spiritually modified cognitive therapy are essentially identical to those of traditional cognitive therapy. The central difference is the substitution of spiritual precepts that are similar to the non-spiritual, secular precepts used in traditional cognitive therapy.

A number of studies have been conducted to explore the effectiveness of spiritually modified cognitive therapy. Efficacy has been explored with adherents from at least three faith traditions: Islam, Mormonism, and Christianity. With Muslims, unproductive beliefs are modified or replaced with tenets derived from the *shari'a*, which Muslims believe represent the straight path of God's precepts. To examine the effectiveness of cognitive therapy based upon Islamic belief, at least three studies have employed clinical trials in which one group received traditional cognitive therapy while a second group received comparable therapy that had been enhanced with an added spiritual component. Using what is considered to be a more stringent research design, researchers found that the spiritually enhanced therapy was at least as effective as traditional therapy with anxiety disorders (Azhar, Varma &

Dharap, 1994), bereavement (Azhar & Varma, 1995a), and depression (Azhar & Varma, 1995b). In all three studies, however, problems were ameliorated at a faster rate, an especially significant finding in light of time constraints under which many social workers function under.

One particularly interesting study explored the effectiveness of spiritually modified cognitive therapy with three Muslim clients wrestling with schizophrenia (Wahass & Kent, 1997). The administration of traditional anti-psychotic medications had failed to alleviate persistent auditory hallucinations. The use of spiritually modified therapy, however, achieved some measure of success. Although one client was reluctant to engage with the therapist, the other two clients benefited significantly from the intervention, reporting reductions in the frequency, loudness, and hostility of the voices, in conjunction with a heightened ability to disbelieve and ignore the voices. Lower levels of distress, anxiety and depression were reported at the end of therapy. In contrast, no change occurred among the three persons that comprised the control group.

Using a group counseling intervention, spiritually modified cognitive therapy has also been used to address perfectionism among devout Mormons (Richards, Owen & Stein, 1993). Traditional cognitive therapy protocols were adapted using material taken from sources such as sermons by Mormon church leaders that emphasized self-acceptance, forgiveness and grace. At the conclusion of the group, participants recorded lower levels of perfectionism and depression and higher levels of self-esteem and existential well-being.

A number of studies, most of which have employed a clinical trial research design, have recorded similar results for the treatment of depression among Christians (Hawkins, Tan & Turk, 1999; Johnson, Devries, Ridley, Pettorini & Peterson, 1994; Johnson & Ridley, 1992; Propst, 1996). In these studies, Biblical beliefs were used in place of traditional cognitive therapy suppositions. In all studies conducted, spiritually modified cognitive therapy was as least as effective as traditional therapy in reducing symptoms of depression.

It is important to qualify these findings by noting that more empirical work needs to be done to fully establish the effectiveness of spiritually modified cognitive therapy. These studies cannot be interpreted to prove that spiritually modified therapy is superior to traditional cognitive therapy, on which a much larger empirical body of work exists (Chambless & Ollendick, 2001). Nevertheless, the empirical evidence is sufficient to foster changes in the opinions of prominent leaders about the utility of incorporating spiritual beliefs into traditional therapeutic methods.

Perhaps most notable, or at least relevant to this article, is the shift that has occurred in the views of Ellis who, as noted above, is widely considered to be the founder of modern cognitive therapy. In the past, Ellis (1980) has associated devout Biblical belief with various forms of psychopathology, a stance that essentially precludes incorporating Bib-

lical tenets into cognitive therapy since, in Ellis's view, any such attempt would run counter to enhancing clients' mental health. However, due to a growing body of empirical research associating spirituality and religion with mental health (Koenig, et al., 2001; Johnson, 2002), Ellis (2000) has modified his views significantly. In fact, Ellis (1993, p. 336) has even gone so far as to state that the Bible has "probably enabled more people to make more extensive and intensive personality and behavioral changes than all professional therapists combined." More recently, Ellis (2000) has taken the step of modifying traditional cognitive protocols to reflect theistic tenets.

These developments are sufficient to warrant cautious optimism regarding the use of spiritually modified cognitive therapy in clinical settings. Evidence for effectiveness does exist. Although research has explored effectiveness with Muslims, Mormons and Christians, it is not unreasonable to surmise that similar positive outcomes can be achieved with members of other faith traditions.

In keeping with the NASW Code of Ethics (1999), it is important to respect client autonomy. Practitioners should ensure that clients are open to incorporating their spiritual beliefs and values into therapy and then ensure that attempts are not made to change or alter clients' spiritual belief systems (Cascio, 1998). Rather, practitioners should seek to work within the parameters of clients' spiritual worldviews to co-identify health enhancing tenets that can be emphasized.

Using a spiritually modified approach can be understood as one manifestation of cultural competence in social work practice (NASW Code of Ethics, 1999). A foundational principle of cultural competence is the development of interventions that are relevant and sensitive to the client's worldview (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992). By working with clients to co-select spiritual beliefs that resonate with their worldview, clients may be more invested in the therapeutic process than if secular precepts are used about which clients may have less intrinsic motivation to apply. Spiritually modified cognitive therapy may be one way of delivering more effective, client-centered services.

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Call for Papers

Special Edition - *Critical Social Work*

Arrangements have been made with the Editorial Board of *Critical Social Work: an interdisciplinary journal dedicated to social justice*, for a Special Edition (Winter 2005) based on presentations at this year's Third Annual Canadian Conference on Spirituality and Social Work, Spiritual Identity and Transformation, and at the Ninth Annual Conference of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work: Individual Healing and Social Transformation (USA). John Graham (University of Calgary) and John Coates (St. Thomas University) will be guest editors for this Special Edition.

An invitation to submit manuscripts for peer-review and possible inclusion in this dedicated issue is extended to those who presented at our conference. Manuscripts from people unable to attend the conference are also welcome. The format for manuscript submissions is on the reverse side of this notice. Manuscripts should be submitted to John Coates or John Graham no later than **September 17, 2004**. For further details, please contact John Graham (jrgraham@ucalgary.ca) or John Coates (jcoates@stu.ca).

Submission of Manuscripts:

Four copies plus a diskette, with a copy preferably in MS Word, are required for anonymous review (double-blind peer review). Copies should be submitted to: John Coates PhD, Department of Social Work, St. Thomas University, Fredericton, NB, Canada, E3B 5G3 or John R. Graham, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada, T2N 1N4.

Format of Manuscript:

Cover Page: Title, author's name, academic degrees, professional title, mailing address; statement of credit and/or research support.

Title Page: Title of manuscript only.

Abstract: 100 words

Length: 5-20 pages

Font: 12 cpi

Size of page: 8.5 x 11 in.

Margins: 1 inch on all sides

Spacing: Double spaced

Style: APA

For manuscripts accepted for publication, a hard copy (revised as requested) and diskette copy of the manuscript will be required. Preferably the diskette copy will be in Word. The disk label should contain author's name, manuscript title, and word processing program used.

Earth as a Source of Spirit

Michael J. Sheridan, Ph.D.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Human beings have known since the beginning of time that interaction with nature can be a source of healing and renewal. Direct and mindful connection with the earth provides sustenance, comfort, wonder, challenge, peace, beauty, and nurturance in a way that cannot be found elsewhere. Social workers and many others are increasingly recognizing this ancient and ever-abiding well-spring of transformation by proposing practice approaches that directly engage the human with the non-human world (Besthorn, 2002; Besthorn & Tegmeier, 1999; Coates, 2003; Cohen, 1997; Durning, 1995; Roszak, Gomes & Kenner, 1995; Winter, 2003).

One example of an earth-centered approach to practice is Besthorn's (2003) Eco-Spiritual Helping (ESH); a multifaceted model of healing concepts and practices that is based on three overarching principles: 1) "healing individual alienation from the earth by enhancing openness to being nurtured by nature in a manner that is both intentional and frequent"; 2) "enable[ing] clients to become more aware of the spiritual or transpersonal dimension of their experience with the natural world", and 3) assist[ing] clients in adopting more earth-caring lifestyles and belief patterns that focus on contributing to an ecologically and socially just and sustainable society" (pp. 10-11). This third principle of ESH explicitly links "ecological, political and economic contributors to...personal or familial pain" (p. 11). The overall goal of this helping approach is to deepen clients' sense of their connection with nature, with themselves, and with their communities, and thereby, facilitate a process toward healing and wholeness.

Another example of employing earth as a healing modality is Chard's (1994) engaging book entitled "The Healing Earth: Nature's Medicine for the Troubled Soul." He provides several descriptions of employing earth as his "co-therapist" with wonderfully transformative results. In one case, he sits with a woman in a state park listening to the sounds – the lullabies – of nature to help heal her profound feelings of homesickness and aloneness. In another instance, he sends a man out into the country during the dead of winter to answer the questions: "What is alive? What is dead? What is the difference?" In yet another story, a woman who had suffered many losses, finds a way to grieve and heal through digging a garden with her bare hands. Chard offers several creative exercises and ceremonies for use with clients in their journeys toward healing that could easily be incorporated into social work practice.

In my own experience as a social work practitioner and educator, the powerful potential of nature to inspire, restore, and transform has also been evident. I share the following "snapshots" as simple examples of earth as source of spirit.

Snapshot #1: In a maximum security prison, a circle of men are discussing how they keep going within a world of concrete, locked gates, razor wire, and guard towers. This is an ongoing group for inmates with substance abuse problems who are trying to put recovery into their lives. I am facilitating a guided imaging session with them about finding a "safe place" inside, asking them to deepen their sense of this

place – its visual details, its smells, its textures, how it makes them feel inside. When it is time to share what they've found during the exercise, the pervasive power of nature comes through. *"Well, my safe place is a particular spot by the river near by where I grew up. Me and my brothers would go there in the summer when it was really hot, you know. And we'd jump off that river bank into the cool water – over and over again until it was so dark we had to go home cause we couldn't see anymore. Man, I loved that place."* *"I went in my mind to the grassy space beside the Washington Monument. There's just lots and lots of pretty green grass there. I used to lie on my back and just watch the sky and clouds for hours. No one thought to look for me there."* *"Mine is this tree in a park. I could climb up there and hide out. I could watch all the craziness going on below me and still feel safe."* *"I talk with the moon here every night, when I walk to the main building to polish the floors. I always pause and see if I can see her and how big or small she is and, I don't know, it just makes me feel kinda peaceful and like I can make it another day."* One by one, every man – most of whom had grown up in inner cityscapes and who had been behind bars for at least ten years – brought forth a cherished image of earth that made them feel safe, made them feel connected, made them feel whole.

Snapshot #2: I am working with ten adolescents in an urban summer work program. The program is designed to be a work opportunity, a lesson in ecology, and a mentoring program for "at-risk" youth. The task at hand is to clean out a creek that runs through a city park, which also houses various animals and birds. We are to start at the part of the creek that begins in the bison pen and end at the seal pool. The creek is full of all kinds of trash and debris and, in some places, is so grown up that the water barely trickles by. All ten kids live in various housing projects in town; home spaces of concrete, sparse grass, litter, and asphalt. All ten show up the first day in their most fine, "look at me" clothes. I am in old jeans, t-shirt, and rubber boots, with a shovel in my hand. I point to a pile of boots and shovels and tell them they all have to get into the water and the mud – up close and personal. *"Man, are you crazy, lady? I ain't messing up my clothes in that mess!"* The guy from the city tells me I'll be lucky if I get them to do any work at all. I punt that day and get them to wear different clothes after that. The first couple of weeks are spent trying to get them to not automatically kill every living creature that they come across. Slowly, ever so slowly, the fear of nature is replaced with awe and curiosity about her wonders – fish, flowers, bugs, rocks, little magic pools of water. A major breakthrough comes when we spend an entire afternoon transporting fish from a shallow part of the creek to a deeper part. I'll never forget the look on each face as they lovingly carry each creature in their hands, careful not to drop them or the precious water that surrounds them. And as the reverence for the wild life they encounter grows, the care for one another emerges. Less harsh put downs, less fake profiling, more honest expressions of affection, more opening of

painful stories. We sit one day and listen to a young girl explain why she has a scar down the whole midsection of her stomach, a mark left by a drunken stepfather with a knife. She is the only white youth among the other nine African-American kids and had struggled to belong. They listen, they witness, they do not judge. They create sacred space for her and for each other among the grass, the critters, the mud, and the water. At the end, we finish the project ahead of time and have to ask for more work to do. The sense of pride and ownership is palpable.

Snapshot #3: A specialized group is being offered for women in a residential, drug treatment center. The group is being facilitated by two graduate students who are both scared and excited about doing this "meditation nature thing" with a group of real clients as part of their research project on stress reduction. I am their research teacher – I am a little scared and excited, too. This kind of project represents "new ground" for the research sequence. The students have developed an 8-week program and have worked very hard to create what they hope will be meaningful exercises. They enter the process with fearful questions: Will the women be willing to try the exercises? Will they think it's just too "fruit-loopy"? Will it make any difference in their lives? Each week, a report comes back. *"They had a little bit of a hard time getting the meditation part, but the recording of the ocean sounds helped a lot."* *"We actually got to go outside today, and they loved just being able to relax out there."* *"They're really opening up a lot about their lives, especially the pain of not having their kids with them."* *"They're telling us that the connection to nature is really helping with the stress of being in treatment."* At the end, the data shows some statistical significance and the students are elated. But the real findings are in the stories, the reflections on the part of both the women and the students. The lines between helper and client have softened as each person has shared in the healing powers of the natural world.

Snapshot #4: I find myself to be a tired, overworked, running-on-empty academic. I feel joyless, dispirited, unconnected to anything of real meaning. A thought occurs to me one day – a frightening thought. I realize that I can get up every day, walk out of my city house onto the sidewalk, get in my car, drive to my office, step out onto sidewalk again, and into the concrete building. And reverse the process in the evening. And I become painfully aware that I have done this day after day, never putting my feet on earth. No wonder I am feeling "groundless." How did I let this happen? I make a vow to put my feet on earth every day and I discover a tiny, vibrant world of nature in my back alley – complete with an over 100-year-old elm tree that is just magnificent and gives me wise counsel when I ask. I start noticing the sky again. Feathers find me, one coming up to rest on the threshold of my front door. I bring in images of nature for opening meditations prior to beginning each class session. I bring in elements of nature for closing ceremonies in my classes, and bring my students rocks from my various travels. And with each inclusion - each recognition or remembering - of my true home, my earth home, my spirit begins to recover and I have more to give.

In these brief snapshots, the capacity of the natural world

to bring power, counsel, joy, comfort, and a sense of belonging is hopefully evident. The sacred gifts of earth are truly "sources of spirit" that social work must recognize and utilize as we simultaneously address the very serious threats to existence that face us now. Some speculate that we could manage to figure out a way to continue human life on a treeless, airless, waterless, creature-less, earth-less planet through technological processes that somehow maintained physical life in some sort of bizarre, synthetic bubble-land upon a totally destroyed planetary rock. I assert that even if we could continue to exist without the natural world, much of what constitutes life would be lost. I believe that we would lose the very essence of our being, because the natural world is as much about nurturing and protecting our spiritual selves as it is about maintaining our physical selves.

As Chard so eloquently states: "...there is more wisdom in the voices of wind and water than can be found in any talk show, self-help tome, or politician; there is as much spiritual sustenance in a night sky or a misty morning as an ornate cathedral or charismatic sermon; and there is more life purpose in growing a garden than in many careers, and more education in exploring a marsh, pond, or prairie than can be gained from months in a classroom" (1994, p. 14). Earth is truly a source of spirit in all its wondrous and healing manifestations.

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...JOIN THE SOCIETY...JOIN THE SOCIETY...JOIN THE SOCIETY...JOIN THE SOCIETY...JOIN THE SOCIETY...

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year. For those who wish to increase their contribution we have the following categories: Contributing membership \$45, Supporting Member \$60, and Sustaining Member \$100.

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Spiritually Sensitive Practice and Faith-based Human Service Initiatives

Kathleen Tangenberg, Ph.D., University of Iowa



Spirituality, religion, politics, and social work are entering a new era of entanglement and controversy due to reduced public funding for social services and increased emphasis on private responsibility for social welfare. As congregations and other religious organizations are being encouraged to increase social service programs (Cnaan & Boddie, 2002), social workers are faced with a number of ethical conflicts. While the NASW Code of Ethics (1996) clearly asserts the importance of non-discrimination, it also emphasizes client self-determination and practice focused on empowering historically disenfranchised communities. Many of the organizations currently receiving funding available through faith-based service initiatives are located in diverse communities with high economic need (Sinha, Cnaan, Jones & Dichter, 2003). Researchers have consistently noted that congregations are primary service locations in many of these communities, and residents are likely to pursue faith-based services due to cultural and ideological familiarity and trust (Chang, Williams, Griffith & Young, 1998; Williams, Pierce, Young & Van Dorn, 2001). Researchers documenting religious trends in American culture have also noted increased religious conservatism and greater interest in social helping efforts implementing a faith perspective (Farkas, Johnson & Foleno, 2001). The goals of this article are to clarify implications of Charitable Choice and related executive orders for professional social workers and to explore the relevance of spiritually sensitive practice principles (Canda & Furman,

1999) to faith-based human service initiatives. Greater understanding of the implications of faith-based service initiatives is necessary for effective, ethical responses to a changing culture of service delivery. Although political changes may affect the future status of several faith-based initiatives, support for further religious involvement in social services is likely to continue due to charitable choice legislation, public budget reductions, and trends of privatization and devolution related to economic globalization (Piven, 2002).

Changes Resulting from Charitable Choice and Related Executive Orders

Organizations with religious affiliations have provided social services for many years, and their eligibility for public funding has been contingent upon removing religious iconography in service settings and ascribing to the same employment standards as secular agencies. Congregations were historically ineligible for public social service funding because of frequent links between their religious identities and sponsored activities. Since passage of charitable choice provisions of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, congregations and other religious organizations have been able to access public funding for services related to welfare reform. The scope of charitable choice was expanded by executive orders signed by President Bush in December 2002 that more generally authorized public funding of social services in faith communi-

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Director's Notes

Robin Russel, Ph.D.
Binghamton University
Division of Social Work
Binghamton, New York



SOCIETY LOOKING FOR NEW HOME

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded by Ed Canda at the University of Kansas in 1990. I took over the directorship of the organization from Ed in 1994 and the organization moved to the University of Nebraska at Omaha where I was on the faculty. At that time the organization had been largely inactive for the previous two years. Ed mailed me packages of information, old membership lists, and a check for \$400 to publish an initial newsletter.

I got out a first issue of this newsletter in the fall of 1994. I remember typing the entire issue myself and hand addressing the first issues of the publication. There were no funds available for clerical or student support. People began to send in memberships which paid for the printing and mailing of the newsletters.

We hosted networking meetings at social work conferences and in the summer of 1995, held our own first conference at the University of Utah. It was part of a larger continuing education program held in Utah each summer. The following year we held our first freestanding summer conference at Dana College in Nebraska. We have held seven of our own conferences since that time, the most recent having been held here at Binghamton University last June. Conference fees eventually generated the funds to employ graduate student assistants to assist with the work of the organization.

The Society has grown a lot over the last decade and been an influential force in the "mainstreaming" of spirituality in social work education, research and dialogue. In the early days many of us felt like we were "coming out of the closet" when we began to sponsor/attend meetings at larger professional conferences or talk to our clients or students about spiritual issues. We've come a long way.

I felt privileged to be at the forefront of this organization at such an exciting time. But, now it feels like it is time to pass the baton on to a new leader. My professional life has changed a lot in recent years. I currently direct a new MSW program which takes much more of my time and energy than teaching did ten years ago. I no longer have the time that running this organization deserves.

So, I am initiating a search for a new home for the organization. The Society has been under the institutional sponsorship of three different state universities. The organization never legally incorporated. I am hoping that another school, with a social work program, either private or public, will come forward and adopt the organization. The university or college would need a faculty member or other social work employee who would be willing to serve as the organization's director.

What will this involve? At a minimum it would involve the publication of our newsletter, The Spirituality and Social Work Forum. This publication is currently refereed, so publication includes: soliciting manuscripts, sending them out for review to volunteer reviewers, overseeing the rewrite/resubmission process, layout, printing and mailing.

It would also involve maintenance of our membership data base. This includes collection of dues, updating of dues records, and updating of member contact information. For the past ten and a half years financial transactions have been processed through a special account at the host university.

The organization also maintains a syllabus bank for spirituality and social work courses. This needs to be periodically updated. We have also made syllabus packets available to faculty around the country developing new spirituality courses. And, requests for packets need to be responded to, as do other inquiries and requests for information.

Optional other tasks include: planning, organization and management of conferences; upkeep and forward of the spiritual support network; planning of networking meetings at professional conferences. Running conferences has been both an opportunity and a challenge. It provides the organization with enough funds to employ a graduate assistant and gives a part of our membership an opportunity to gather, educate and nurture each other. However, conference management takes an enormous amount of work, much of it volunteer. Twice our conferences were managed by continuing education programs at host universities. In both instances, because their costs were high (can't beat the cost of volunteer labor), the organization lost money on the events.

I am confident that the right school and director is out there to come forward. Ideally the person taking on the director role will have others to support their work at their school. Should a faculty member desire to take on the director role, I would strongly recommend that they already have tenure as the involved tasks can be very time consuming.

I would be glad to answer any inquiries about the director position and/or the organization, and can be contacted at russel@binghamton.edu. It is my hope that a new home will be selected for the organization by early spring and that the transition of leadership can take place in early June. The Society has provided an important perspective in our profession and I hope it will continue to do so.

ties, including programs focused on chemical dependency treatment; anger management; employment training; youth mentoring; and/or providing emergency assistance such as food, shelter, or clothing. Funding guidelines stipulate that government funds cannot be used for inherently religious purposes including worship, proselytization, or instruction. Government officials encourage religious organizations to set up separate 501(c) (3) accounts to assure separation of funds for religious and non-religious social service programs (White House Office on Faith-based and Community Initiatives, 2003). Religious organizations receiving public funding cannot discriminate against any person seeking help and cannot require participation in religious activities or compliance with certain belief systems. Federally funded faith-based programs may consider religion in hiring decisions (a ministerial exemption granted under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act) but may be subject to certain state and local laws regarding non-discrimination. For example, faith-based organizations may consider religion in hiring employees for federally funded programs assisting transitions from welfare to work, yet may not consider religion when hiring staff members funded through state or municipal grants to provide employment services.

Challenges of Policy Changes for Social Workers

Social workers typically support service efforts that are accessible and congruent with client beliefs but are likely to object to the conservative political ideologies motivating faith-based initiatives and related policy changes. Positions on faith-based service initiatives are frequently polarized due to the volatile political and emotional issues involved. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has consistently opposed faith-based service initiatives and re-asserted primary government responsibility for social services. Concerns expressed by NASW focus on concerns about discrimination (related to employment and client services), proselytization, and lack of expertise to address complex psychosocial issues. Policy-makers supporting faith-based initiatives assert that religious providers have traditionally been discriminated against in competition for government service contracts and should not be required to compromise their religious identities in order to receive public funding (White House Office on Faith-based and Community Initiatives, 2003). Without conclusive outcome data regarding the comparable effectiveness of secular and faith-based programs, proponents argue that there is no legitimate reason to withhold public funding from faith communities wishing to provide services. The association of faith-based service initiatives with broader conservative political reform has been especially concerning to social workers, who fear further religious influences on social services and violations of constitutional separation of church and state. Social work scholars concur that government must maintain primary responsibility for social welfare, yet recognize the important role of faith-based providers in meeting a variety of human needs (Cnaan, 2002; Wineburg, 2001). Research examining characteristics, values, and practice strategies of faith-based service organizations has indicated that programs represent a wide range of

political and ideological beliefs, and few engage in overt proselytization (Cnaan, 2002; Smith & Sosin, 2001; Tangenberg, 2002). In their analysis of provider interviews representing a wide class of faith-related agencies in Seattle and Chicago, Smith & Sosin (2001) identified a common concern with protecting the "dignity and rights" of clients. This "dignity and rights philosophy" (p. 664) had clear implications regarding integration of spiritual values and religious beliefs in service practices. Efforts were made across agencies to reduce client stigma by avoiding personal questions in assessments for service eligibility, making religious programming optional, and carefully assessing government restrictions in decisions related to program funding and/or service quality. Researchers rarely observed the strict morality and conservatism stereotypically linked to faith-based service providers, and such beliefs were more likely to be expressed by small agencies. Such inconsistency between the conservative political ideology framing faith-based services and actual agency service philosophies is interesting to consider, and highlights the need for recognition of diversity among faith-related providers.

Relevance of Spiritually Sensitive Practice Principles to Faith-Based Service Initiatives

Social work responses to faith-based service initiatives require consideration of competing professional priorities and attention to individual circumstances and service goals. Spiritual sensitivity is especially important, as faith, religion, and spirituality are frequently linked in practice with individuals, families, and communities. Canda & Furman (1999) describe five guiding principles for spiritually sensitive practice: value clarity, respect, client-centeredness, inclusivity, and creativity. Each of these principles is relevant to work involving faith-based service initiatives and possible collaborations with faith communities. Value clarity refers to worker self-awareness of ways their own beliefs and values influence practice. In regard to political dimensions of faith-based service initiatives, it is helpful for workers to examine ways political and religious beliefs and affiliations may affect professional commitments. In direct practice, workers may encounter clients desiring faith-based services and/or engage in collaborations with providers in faith communities. Self-awareness in these situations is vital for effective practice. Respect is the second principle for spiritually sensitive practice and refers to maintaining unconditional positive regard for every person, group, and community, and affirming values of dignity and worth in helping relationships. In regard to faith-based service initiatives, this principle involves extending respect to individuals and groups with different religious and political perspectives. Concerns about faith-based initiatives raised by NASW (2003) are important to consider and require challenges that maintain professional respect and integrity. In practice, respecting client religious beliefs may be difficult if the practitioner believes such beliefs are harmful. This situation relates to the third principle of spiritually sensitive practice, client-centeredness.

According to Canda and Furman (1999):

When we have disagreements, detect signs of delusion or deception, or feel a responsibility to intervene to protect the client or others, we still need to intervene in a way that respects the client. Proselytization or moralistic judging of clients based on religious, political, theoretical, or other ideological positions is not an appropriate activity for a professional social worker. (pp. 188-189)

The fourth principle, inclusivity, may be especially difficult when it requires the ability to include exclusive religious perspectives. Exclusivist beliefs may be expressed across levels of social work practice and have been of central concern in controversies surrounding faith-based service initiatives. As stated previously, it is helpful to recognize diversity among faith-related service providers. While some adhere to fundamentalist ideologies, others express appreciation of multiple spiritual and religious belief systems. Creativity is the fifth principle described by Canda and Furman (1999). Creative aspects of spiritually sensitive practice include awareness of "creative possibilities in every situation" (p. 191), flexibility, spontaneity, empathy, and a holistic practice orientation. Budget reductions are forcing greater creativity among many social workers attempting to provide effective services with limited resources. Creative collaborations between providers in secular and faith-based organizations are possible to meet certain social needs. Examples include projects funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Faith in Action program that organize interfaith volunteers to provide home-based services, resource referrals, and transportation for aging community members. Creativity is also necessary to challenge political processes responsible for decreased public funding of social services. Networks such as Call to Renewal and other faith-based efforts to end poverty reflect many social work values and goals and may offer significant opportunities for social change.

While faith-based service initiatives pose formidable challenges for social workers, adoption of a spiritually sensitive practice approach may facilitate effective practice and policy responses. For example, a collaboration between the North Philadelphia Cluster of United Methodist Churches (NPC-UMC) and the Philadelphia Department of Human Services generated the development of teen lounges at three congregational sites offering tutoring, counseling, and social programming. In order to energize the project and facilitate better understanding among the different agencies involved, NPC-UMC sponsored a 3-day conference to develop strategic plans for community improvement and youth development. The success of the teen lounges has been attributed to congregational volunteer and staff interests in providing community-based role models, experience, and support (Sinha, Cnaan, Jones & Dichter, 2003). Such efforts reflect principles of value clarity, respect, client-centeredness, inclusivity, and creativity that are congruent with the social work profession's code of ethics and commitments to clients and communities.

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All I Really Need to Know I Learned from J. R. R. Tolkien

Jim Raines, Ph.D., Illinois State University



I have always appreciated Robert Fulghum's *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, with its simple, but sublime truths such as: share everything, play fair, don't hit people, clean up your own mess, and flush! As the world grows more complex, humanity seems to need reminding that certain truths do not change with time. Joseph Campbell (1949) observed this in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Across centuries and across cultures certain themes seem to emerge as a type of universal grounded theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The popularity of Peter Jackson's film version of Tolkien's (1954) *Lord of the Rings* seems to affirm Campbell's assertion that humanity still struggles with the battle between good and evil and thus seeks to find some existential truths for guidance. Tolkien seems to offer seven that will be elaborated here.

The first truth is that the battle between good and evil is as much internal as external. We initially see this in Bilbo and Gollum. Both have possessed the ring of evil for a long time, Bilbo has managed to fight its influence whereas Gollum has succumbed to it. In Frodo, however, we vicariously experience his struggle with the ring and its influence. We learn that the battle is both psychologically and physically exhausting. No one can confront external evil without coming to terms with their own mixed motives. If only every president that declared war knew this truth!

The second truth is one that contradicts the typical American value of rugged individualism. It is that we must never underestimate the value of diverse teamwork. The fellowship of the ring includes hobbits, human beings, a dwarf, and an elf. While we might wish for more female representation, each race makes its own unique contribution to the final achievement. TEAM = Together Everyone Achieves More.

The third truth is that everyone deserves a second chance for redemption. Gollum is given repeated chances by Frodo to redeem his wretched existence, but ultimately fails to turn from his ways. Boromir attempts to take the ring by force and drives Frodo and Sam away from the group, but he is ultimately absolved by Aragorn and dies a hero. Everyone gets another chance, not everyone takes it.

This brings us to a fourth truth - that our destinies are not determined by fate, but freely chosen. This is not to say that we do not have biological proclivities or environmental constraints, but the essence of our character is a result of free will. This is most noticeable in Arwen, the elf princess, who must choose between immortality and true love. It is our decisions that define us.

The fifth truth seems a contradiction to the fourth - absolute power corrupts absolutely. We all need checks and balances in our lives just as much as we need them in our government. Just as Bilbo attempts to give the ring to Gandalf the wizard, Frodo attempts to give the ring to the Galadriel the elf queen. Both of them are old enough and wise enough to recognize that the ring would overwhelm them and reject the offer. Terrible power has the tendency to create tyranny.

The sixth truth is that outward appearances can be deceiving. It isn't the strongest (Aragorn) or the wisest (Gandalf) who turns the tide, it's the smallest and most pathetic (Gollum). Frodo rebukes Sam about his wish to rid of the miserable creature because he still has a pivotal role to play. Frodo empathizes with Gollum's attachment to his "precious" and refuses to give up on him. Ultimately, it is "the least of these" who affects the greatest change.

Finally, a repeated theme throughout the books/films is that a good death outweighs a bad life. Everyone is tempted at some point to turn away from their task. Merry and Pippin wish to return to the safety of the Shire, but ultimately risk their lives to face the evil wizard Sauron. The most tempting transgressions are not sins of commission, but sins of omission - of simply looking the other way rather than confronting injustice. Eventually every member of the fellowship puts his life on the line to serve a cause greater than himself.

Perhaps most people that see the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy will merely appreciate it as an action-adventure epic. For those of a more spiritual bent, it contains some universal truths that should make all of us pause and consider. Humanity and the world will be the better for it.

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Holy Moments Column

Paths

Mary Laabs, MSW, Walla Walla, WA

During most conversations with colleagues at the 2003 Spirituality Conference in Austin, Texas, I heard the question, "Have you walked the labyrinth?" Finally, I thought I should have a look. My purpose in attending any conference is new experiences.

The labyrinth lay in the center of the gymnasium. I had only seen pictures before. In fact, I'd only heard of them, couldn't spell the word, and had no idea what I would do with the 40 plus foot geometric design in front of me.

Quietness enveloped the room. A man stood to one side with his shoes off. Lights, uniformly placed around the labyrinth, gave a sense that one was entering a sacred place.

Because I did not know one was supposed to step *on* the canvas, I began a slow walk around the outside. I decided I would think about my dad during this time.

In many ways my childhood was not unlike many of my era—strong patriarchal order, obedience without questions demanded—but my relationship with my father had been filled with abuse. Emotional and sexual. I'd spent several adult years in therapy, and continued that journey through preparation for my MSW degree. The last time I had seen my father was in 1996—after 24 years of relatively few contacts via occasional letters and rare phone calls. Then, after a two-day visit in 1996, I knew finally that I was free of his power.

Tears filled my eyes as my husband and I drove away from his home that hot summer day. Len looked over at me. "Is it hard for you to leave your dad?" he asked. "No, not really," I responded. "My tears are for him and all he lost—his kids and incredible grandchildren, and great grandchildren. He really has nothing."

Years later, and a year and a half before I stood before the labyrinth, my brother called me to say, "I have some news. Today I was surfing the internet and went to a genealogy website. Up pops Dad's name and birth date followed by his date of his death." At that moment, I learned that our dad had been dead nearly 10 months, and we had had no knowledge of it. I felt numb. "What do we do with this information?" I asked my brother. Though I had felt free from childhood pain for sometime, I could not decide how to mourn or even who to mourn—my father, or a man whom I had yearned to know for so many years of my life, but who never could respond to those yearnings. My brother and I talked a short time, then both realized we needed time to think and to identify and process our feelings.

Over the next few weeks, we tried getting more information. We did not have names and addresses as Dad had remarried, so we used the internet, but to no avail. I also used this time to journal, reaching back into memories of times when I believe Dad wanted to make healthy connections with me.

Two months later, January 5, the one-year anniversary of his death came. How would I celebrate his life or memorialize his death? We still had no knowledge of where he

was buried or where he had lived since I'd last seen him. I came home from my office that evening knowing I needed to do something. But what? Finally, it came to me, and I smiled. My service of remembrance would be simple. I went upstairs and got out a deck of playing cards and sat down to play several games of solitaire. Dad had spent hours teaching me his skill at cards when I was a child. A good memory. I relived those times in remembrance of him.

And now I stood before the labyrinth. As I began the walk around the outside, I first remembered the little girl who so wanted to be her daddy's little princess. I hurried past memories of the abuse and then thought of the years of painful growth and healing. By the time I got back around to the entrance, I had reached the memory of my brother's phone call, and the question, "What do I do with this information?"

I knelt at the entrance and lowered my head until it touched the floor. Tears came. My first. Sobs. My body shook. Then I felt a relaxing peace. I had never cried about the abuse and lost childhood, and I had not cried over Dad's death. Now I felt free to express the grief. And it was cleansing.

I raised my head and my eyes saw a large white box in the far corner of the room. Long and white, sitting on a platform. It might have been the container for the labyrinth. But at that moment, it was a coffin—my dad's. As my eyes focused upon the white box, I saw my dad lying in his coffin, his hands folded across his chest. In my mind, I leaned down and gently kissed his cheek, and closed the casket. It was finished. I was free. A peace came over me as I had never felt before. A peace within, but also a new feeling of compassion towards my dad—an incredibly wounded man.

As I rose back to a standing position, I saw a woman on the labyrinth and realized that even after my own emotional experience of walking around it, I had not yet entered. I stepped into the labyrinth and sensed a "going forward"—my past was behind me.

In all honesty, I cannot recall any thoughts or recollections as I walked through the labyrinth but something significant has taken place since. Because I wanted to know more about labyrinths and the history and use of them I began reading. Upon returning home to the Pacific Northwest, I searched for more material and then to books that addressed other ancient spiritual and religious practices in prehistoric communities. From that, I have read feminist theology and other authors that have brought me to a new understanding and experience with my own spiritual identity.

It has been an exciting year of research. And as I look back over this past year, I realize that my walk *around* the labyrinth enabled me to find real closure on my childhood pain. The walk *within* the labyrinth opened up my soul to new opportunities that are deeply personal and continue my journey towards authenticity.



Outside the Gate

Cynthia Weaver, Ph.D., Marywood University



I can see the city from a distance! I am excited to finally arrive at my destination and hasten my steps forward. My research revealed that resources and supplies are in abundance within these city walls. Secure walls with an impressive and decorative gate provide safety to those residing within this city. As I approach the gate to the city the gatekeeper greets me. After checking my credentials against a list of requirements held in his hand, the gatekeeper appears satisfied that my social status, my social work license, letters of reference, and other documentation are sufficient for him to open the gate for me to enter.

The city is more beautiful than I imagined! I soon meet the people of the city, many with similar names and histories. Until entering the city I wasn't aware of the wealth or the numbers of people living inside. They are friendly and cordial. Their dress is different than mine, so I purchase the high fashion worn by those in the city in order to be in style. Their meals are richer than I am accustomed to eating, so I eat smaller portions in order to better digest the food. Each day I learn more of their heritage and listen to their beliefs. I soon realize that many of my beliefs are similar to those of the city people; such as a belief in a Higher Power, the mandate to love your neighbor, to live a peaceful existence, and to demonstrate compassion to others. Now accepted as one of them within the city I am offered a living space to rent. I am appreciative of their inclusion of me in their beautiful city and settle into my new environment.

Each morning after leaving the city I find a McDonald's and go inside to change my clothing. Those living outside the gate would never understand my new, stylish clothes; just like those living inside the gate would never understand my tattered, working clothes. I tell myself I am becoming "all things to all people", yet the McDonald's cashier tells his manager I am just strange.

The people outside the city gate are those The One called me to serve. Those outside the city gate are the people for whom I care, fight bureaucracies for their needs to be met, and weep for the injustices daily facing them. The people outside the city gate are the hungry, the sick, the dying, the imprisoned, the homeless, the stranger. Gates that provide safety, shelter and resources to those within often keep others at a distance, vulnerable and without resources.

Later that night while sleeping comfortably inside the city I hear the cries of those from outside the gate. Looking through a crack in the city wall I see those I daily care for struggling to keep warm, searching for food and a safe place for the night. Feeling their pain, I enlarge the crack in the wall and quietly bring inside those from without to live with me in my rented space within the beautiful city. During the next day my outside the walls companions stay close to me as I walk through the city to purchase extra food and clothing for their needs. Some of my inside the walls neighbors meet my outside the walls companions, learn their names and share their food and resources with them. I believe that once

others meet my outside the walls companions they will understand and support my work, for our beliefs are the same.

My prayers continue for both groups of people as I discover I am often pulled between the two groups, attempting to interpret each other's present behavior and past histories. I pray that soon there will not be walls of division to keep some in and others out. I pray that both sides will truly understand and accept each other, alleviating any need for walls and a locked gate.

While I meditate on these possibilities a problem arises as I become too comfortable, too self-assured that others inside the walls feel as I do towards those outside the walls. Maybe the problem came when I stopped changing my clothes at McDonald's, choosing to wear my tattered work clothes while within the walls. Maybe the problem came when I stopped bringing my outside the walls companions through the crack in the wall and instead brought them with me through the front gate. Maybe the problem came when I insisted upon a ramp to help those through the gate who couldn't climb the steep steps. Maybe the problem came when children outside the walls with AIDS were too old to be contained on their parent's laps, and I encouraged the children with AIDS to intermingle with the children inside the walls. Maybe the problem came when I publicly cried for my outside the walls brothers and sisters. Maybe the problem came when new leaders of the walled city were put in office. Maybe the problem came when those from outside the walls were too loud with excitement, too smelly from wearing tattered clothing, too sick from having no health coverage, and too unconventional from no formal education. Maybe I was the problem. Had I offended those within the walls? Had I disobeyed some unspoken rule? Had I misunderstood The One's message?

I know I have a big problem when I arrive at the gate late one night. The day had been long outside the gate, and I was weary from giving to others. I take out my key and attempt to open the beautiful gate before me, just as I had done many previous late nights. However, tonight the gate does not open! I double-check the key and try again but to no avail. I summon the gatekeeper, now asleep inside the gate. He recognizes me and sleepily opens the gate. He advises me to check with the landlord in the morning and secure a new key as the lock has changed.

The following morning I attempt to schedule an appointment for the new key. I am told the landlord is away on a trip, and I can schedule an appointment after he returns. Since the gatekeeper and I go way back, I decide I can still go in and out with him unlocking the gate each night for me. A few days pass, and I still am unable to schedule an appointment. And then, late one night a different gatekeeper meets me at the gate, someone unfamiliar to me. When I share my history, my years of living within the walls of the city and working with those outside the walls, the new gatekeeper is unimpressed. The gatekeeper will not permit me

entrance through the gate.

Confused and saddened, I walk away from the gate, deciding instead to squeeze through the crack in the wall near my rented apartment on the other side of the gate. How stunned I am to find all the cracks repaired with new bricks and fresh cement! Hurt and angry, I return to the gate and demand entrance. Out of sheer frustration with my persistence, and attempting to quiet me in order to keep his prestigious job, this new gatekeeper opens the gate and personally escorts me to the landlord. I show the landlord the appropriate credentials of a social work license, letters of reference and share with him my work with those outside the walls. I thank him for the support of those within the city and for resources provided on behalf of my outside the walls companions. I ask for my credentials to be renewed for work outside the walls or for any work they would have for me to do inside the walls. He explains to me that the time frame for my credentials has expired, excluding me from living within the walls. I ask for clarity about why I can no longer have credentials and apologize for any misunderstanding about my work. The landlord before is silent. I become bold and use the names of past leaders who supported my work and the name of the landlord that initially leased me space to live within the city. I share with him my education, research supporting my work, and my calling from The One to bring those outside the walls into the city where they can receive better care. With self-advocacy and passion I attempt to convince him to issue me another key. There is silence to my request.

I guess I never should have been so outspoken. I guess I should have remained quiet about the many injustices done to my outside the walls companions and just quietly went about my work outside the walls. I guess I should have continued to change my clothes at McDonald's. I guess I should have continued to bring those from outside the walls through the crack in the wall rather than encourage them to use my key and walk freely through the front gate. I guess I should have continued to carry those with disabilities up the steps instead of insisting upon a ramp to be built. I guess I should have permitted those with money to cover the cost of childcare for the children with AIDS so they could play sepa-

rate from the healthy children of the city. I guess I should have taught my outside the walls companions how to be more discrete when inside the wall. I guess I should have read more clearly the non-verbal messages directed my way.

Sadly, I leave the comfort and security of the city walls. I leave my inside the walls friends. Some say a quiet good-bye, but most are afraid to publicly speak to me for they don't want to loose their keys to the gate. I cry loudly as I am escorted outside the gate, loud at the injustice now done to me. I point out our shared beliefs of a Higher Power. I point out my adapted lifestyle. I attempted to obey the rules as best I could. Can I not ask a mediator to help us come to some agreement? As I make this last request there is a deep, cold silence, abruptly disrupted by the clang of the closed, locked gate behind me.

Outside the walls I am immediately embraced by my outside the walls companions. To those I cared for, they now care for me. I now realize that the vast resources they have cannot be measured in the clothes they wear or the homes in which they live. They freely share their food, their clothing, and their homes with me. Some show me keys they once had to the city gate, and I learn the lock has changed many times over the past years. As they care for me, I experience something very different from living inside the city. As they care for me, they speak not of beliefs, of budgets, of pedigree or protocol. They speak simply, plainly and clearly about a truth that cannot always be seen from within the walls of the city. They call this truth their Higher Power. They see this Power in places and events where I never looked. They share with me that although a Higher Power resides both inside and outside the walls of the city, most often this truth is hidden and misunderstood by those inside the city walls.

Those outside the walls speak of The One who cares daily for them apart from the wealth of the city; a Power that is real, alive and present in their everyday circumstances. As I sit and listen to them speak, as I watch them live outside the city walls, as I let them wipe my tears, soon, I too, see in a brand new way and recognize this Mighty One active and at work outside the walls of the city.



Reflections: An Australian Story

Sue Rice, Ph.D., Queensland, Australia



Have you ever had that sense of a 'perfect rightness of being', that notion that you are absolutely in the right place at the right time, and that things are just so good there must be other forces at work? Buddhists call it 'being in the here and now', for Taoists it's about 'being in the flow', the New Ages refer to it as 'connecting with the energy of the universe' and Christians describe it as 'experiencing the grace of God'. Well, that's how I felt at the Society for Spirituality and Social Work Conference at Binghamton this year. From the time I got there, walked into the foyer of the University Union Building and saw Andrea's face light up at the sound of my accent and Robin turned to greet me with a

huge smile, I knew 'yep, this is so where I'm meant to be'!

It was some trip from my little beachside community of Yeppoon in Central Queensland, Australia to Binghamton, New York. I was in the last months of my thesis researching social workers' experiences of spirituality in practice when I applied for a research travel scholarship to attend the conference. I'd been trying for three years to attend the conference. Fortunately, this year I was awarded the scholarship, and a few months later I made the 10-hour flight from Brisbane to Seoul, and the next day flew the 14 hours on to New York City. Admiring the lush New York State scenery from the bus window as it weaved its way toward

Binghamton felt like a fitting culmination to my journey.

The Binghamton campus is a beautiful setting, and up at 5:00 a.m. on the first morning (courtesy of jet lag), I chanced to see a deer grazing on the verge of the woodland and a beaver waddling around at its feet. In Australian Aboriginal spirituality, the appearance of animals and birds at significant times has important spiritual meanings. I wondered what significance the sighting of these animals had in Native American spirituality.

For me, there are so many highlights of the conference I hardly know where to start. Right from the beginning, when I entered the main conference session I immediately felt the warmth and positive energy of everyone there; it felt like coming home. The first workshop I attended was Janine and Lynne's Labyrinth session, where I was very impressed with their knowledge and history of the meaning of this symbolic practice. The discussion which Marilyn facilitated around spirituality and psychotherapy was fascinating, and I was inspired by the stories the 'trauma girls' told about their extraordinary and creative approaches to practice. Exploring the connection between different perspectives of spirituality is one of my pet interests, and Howard's presentation about social transformation and spiritual consciousness was a theoretical feast of wonderful information. Carlean's professional and practical seminar on boundaries directly related to issues raised by my own research, and since bodywork is a large part of my practice approach, Robert's 'audience participation' style was familiar and fun. I suppose it was fitting that on the last day I got to be part of Terry and Rick's workshop on hope, and to discuss an issue which for me is at the centre of both the social work profession and my personal spiritual framework.

There were many other special moments and connections for me. Talking to Dorothea about her practice, discussing ontology with Mary Katherine, learning about the philosophy of Yoga from Nora, meeting John and talking community, being introduced to Qigong by Douglas, connecting with my queer brothers and sisters, participating in the wonderful solstice circle and drumming night, getting to meet the totally fabulous student helpers, and a joyful bus ride back to NYC with Susan, are just a few snapshots of a smorgasbord of precious memories that are my dreaming. Not forgetting Bonnie's amazing ability to find a bar at 10:30 p.m. on a Sunday night in suburban Binghamton!

Here in Australia we do not have an organisation such as the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, and only two schools of social work offer electives on spirituality. Although there appears to be considerable interest in spirituality, particularly at the practice level, we only have pockets of ad hoc discussion rather than a continual, cohesive or organised community-wide discourse. We are perhaps at the same place that the United States was 10 years ago where the spiritual world-view was marginalised in favour of more 'scientific' and outcomes-based paradigms, and boundary and ethical concerns underpinned the debate. Additionally, since Australian's tend to identify as spiritual rather than religious, confusion between the terms spirituality and religion is a major sticking point in developing a secular/

spiritual convergence discourse (Tacey, 2003).

However, there is some evidence that this situation is changing. In the last few years the Australian Association of Social Worker's National Ethics Committee rewrote the Code of Ethics (1999) to include spirituality as a basis for conscientious objection (Section 5.1.3). The publication of a handful of articles in *Australian Social Work* have reflected the findings of an emerging research agenda that has explored the role of spirituality in social worker's practice and attitudes towards including spirituality in social work education (Edwards 2002; Lindsay 2002; Rice 2002). The presentation of seminars on spirituality at AASW Conferences, the emergence of state branch special interest groups, and the development of a Spirituality and Social Work listserv and networking group, have all provided a focus for the spirituality and social work movement in Australia in the last 2-3 years.

At this year's International Federation of Social Workers conference in Australia a panel of speakers presented an overview of the state of the spirituality and social work discourse in terms of the North American, Canadian, New Zealand, Australian and Indigenous experiences. Discussing spirituality and social work at such a large and mainstream forum was an important and eye-opening event for many social workers in Australia who had previously mused this issue in private. It is hoped that networks made at this forum will unify the emerging Australian and New Zealand interest and sow the seeds for the development of an Australasian spirituality and social work community.

Participating at the conference in Binghamton was a rich and moving experience for me. As I reflect back, I realise how much those experiences have fed my spirit, energised me to complete my own studies, and rekindled my excitement for teaching. In terms of community, it also helped me to galvanize a vision of where we in Australia can move to with our expressions and discussions of spirituality in social work. Many of you contributed to that vision, and will continue to be part of a bigger connection, which transcends difference and distance. I feel very blessed for participating in the conference and having become part of your community. It was the best fun, thank you all.

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Spirit Bridge

Greg Nooney, MSW, Sioux City, IA



My intention in this paper is to suggest some ways to bridge the philosophical and spiritual with the day-to-day healing work in which we engage. As social workers, there are times when we are able to foster a sense of curiosity and openness, and we may actually experience a sense of connection and beauty as we watch an individual step into a place where healing is possible. At other times, we experience frustrations when the most helpful way to proceed is unclear. Perhaps we will consult with our supervisors or our peers for clarity about what our next step or intervention ought to be in our work. Sometimes, we refer to our code of ethics for guidance. We consult with our clients about the effects that they may experience when we engage in this or that therapeutic practice. All these methods are essential and often helpful. However, I believe there are further steps that we could consider taking.

In the twenty plus years that I have been engaged in therapeutic work, I have observed some people slowly improve, others get worse, and still others heal dramatically. Much of this difference can be attributed to the quality of the therapeutic relationship developed, my skill level, the severity of the presenting problems, the motivation of the client, and many other factors. With certain people, however, things move so smoothly and effortlessly that we may experience a sense of awe and gratitude for the process. In speaking with others involved in the healing process over the years, it appears that most practitioners experience this phenomenon at least once in awhile and that for many of us, it is this experience that helps sustain us in our work. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could find a way to increase the frequency of these experiences?

We all come into this work with assumptions about ourselves and our fellow human beings. Some of these assumptions may be based on our religious or spiritual beliefs and practices. Our own life experiences and preferred ways of interacting with others will also tend to shape our assumptions. There are also many cultural influences that impact our work as practitioners, such as discourses of the dominant culture concerning gender roles, sexual practices, race relations, economic policies, etc. There are also prominent discourses within the profession of social work and within the culture of psychotherapy, which privilege certain models of practice, such as the medical model or the pathological classification system of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). We are, of course, also influenced by our own values and beliefs.

As social workers, we are taught the importance of self reflection to reduce the likelihood that our own prejudices and unresolved issues will not negatively influence our work with clients. It is my thesis that the content of our assumptions, whether conscious or not, whether examined or not, will significantly impact on our therapeutic or healing work. I believe that it will help us in our work to be more conscious of these assumptions and to examine them hon-

estly and lovingly. Such an examination, I believe, will give us an opportunity to fine tune those assumptions or perhaps to reshape them, if we so desire, in ways which will enhance our ability to create space for another to heal. I believe that if we are diligent in this practice, we will increase the likelihood of experiencing those graceful, effortless healing moments mentioned above.

The first step in this process is to become conscious of our assumptions. However, due to our "blind spots," many of our assumptions are hidden from us. I am offering seven ways of viewing ourselves and other human beings, seven assumptions which, I believe, enhance the possibility of being helpful in our work with others. These assumptions have been gleaned from numerous sources, and many will be familiar to the reader. (See for example Bach, Chopra, Gawain, Hillman, *Jerusalem Bible*, Redford, and Rother.) Most have been expressed in many different contexts, both from the metaphysical community, and from more traditional religious sources. I am not suggesting that these are the "right" or "essential" assumptions. Rather, I am hoping that by considering these assumptions, and "trying them on," we may discover if they fit for us and our work, or not. By doing so, it is my hope that some of our hidden assumptions may come to light. Once this occurs, I would invite the reader to compare and contrast those assumptions with the ones I am offering, and to consider the implications of each, in healing work.

I. Assumption One: No Limits

No matter what problem or condition is present, there are literally no limits on what may be accomplished.

II. Assumption Two: Empowerment

I cannot heal another, but can only help create the space for them to heal themselves.

III. Assumption Three: Non-Judgment

I have no place to stand in judgment of another person.

IV. Assumption Four: No Hierarchy

There is no fundamental difference in value among human beings.

V. Assumption Five: Interconnection

We are all connected to each other, and all sense of separateness or difference is an illusion.

VI. Assumption Six: Availability of Support

Each person has available all the support they need to heal.

VII. Assumption Seven: Abundance

There is enough of everything to go around. Any experience of lack is an illusion.

These assumptions are designed to create space rather than limit it, so they are far-reaching and expansive. I am not suggesting that our experiences will always or even frequently affirm these assumptions. For example, to suggest, as in Assumption one, that there are no limits to what may be accomplished, stands against our frequent experience of confronting limits in every direction. All of us experience limits of time, limits of skill, limits of energy, limits of per-

ception, limits of compassion, as well as ethical limits in our work. What I am suggesting is this: if I can successfully interact with a client while holding on to the assumption that there are no limits as to what can be accomplished, then there is less of a chance that I will be imposing unnecessary limits.

For example, if I diagnose a client with Borderline Personality Disorder, and then I assume that she will be unable to connect easily with me due to the limitations of this diagnosis, then I may close the door to the possibility of an effortless connection occurring anyway. If my experience with a client is that he has repeatedly been reluctant to make any changes in his addictive consumption of alcohol, and I assume that this pattern will continue, then my assumption very likely will reduce the likelihood that today will be the day that he decides to quit drinking, or enter treatment, or take some other important step toward changing his relationship with Addiction in his life. (Externalization of problems as briefly described here is one of many narrative therapy practices which have influenced my work and which are reflected in the examples in this paper. There is a wealth of literature describing these narrative therapy practices. For example, see Morgan.)

Occasionally in my work, I encounter a moment with a client when I don't have a clue as to what to say. None of my skills or insights steps forward to enlighten the situation. In the past, my mind would work quickly to come up with something valuable to say: a clever remark, a new strategic intervention, an insightful story. Recently, in experimenting with the above mentioned assumptions, I have been able to slow my mind down enough to resist stepping into these practices. Instead I have been able to remind myself of Assumption 6, and have focused my mind on the idea that this client sitting in front of me has available all the support needed at this moment. With this thought in mind, I have relaxed and allowed the silence to linger. What I have experienced occurring at these times is an important shift: she starts talking about something completely different and clearly more relevant to her concerns; he remembers something we talked about in a previous conversation that he had been thinking about; a significant new piece of information about an important relationship enters the conversation; or an important issue that the client and I have been successfully avoiding is brought forth into the conversation. A new door is opened, and resources become accessible which were previously unknown or underestimated.

Another example of how the above assumptions might be used would be the experience of a client who has stepped into abusive practices in his or her life which are destructive and harmful to others. In such a situation, especially if I or someone I love has experienced some of the negative effects of such practices, I could easily step into a judgmental stance. I could easily see the client as a bad person, or deserving of my condemnation.

If I am dealing with the above situation and I am able to step into assumption three, then I would have to question myself as to where I am standing when I am judging. I could argue to myself that I am standing in the place of righteousness, but if I am honest, I know that I cannot stand in

such a place, due to the many times in my own life that I have stepped away from my own strongly held convictions and values. Alternatively, I could argue to myself that I stand in the place of protecting those who were harmed. However, I can stand in a place of advocating for that protection without standing in judgment. In fact, as I stand in judgment, I am likely to become angry and condescending, which will probably reduce the chances of me being influential in creating the space for the perpetrator to come to terms with his or her responsibilities, thus limiting the effectiveness of my advocacy.

So, if I in fact "have no place to stand" in judgment, then I may be able to step away from such judgment. Alternatively, I can stand against the harmful practices being described, and perhaps I can invite the client to stand with me against these practices, which could possibly open the door for the client to face responsibility for those practices, and to explore possibilities of redress and significant change. The reader might also consider Assumptions Four and Five as relevant to this example.

As I mentioned earlier, by "trying on" these assumptions, the reader's own assumptions may be clarified, opening up the possibilities for alterations, if this is desired. If we are then able to view our clients and ourselves through these changed assumptions, will any new possibilities emerge for our therapeutic or healing work as social workers? Will any new doors open for those who come to consult with us? Will any new options for healing reveal themselves? How might we see ourselves differently? What sorts of possibilities for self love and self care might emerge? How might such a process protect us from burn-out? I will leave the reader with these questions and the hope that this paper will help to create the space for such questions to be asked and lovingly considered.

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Spirituality: Pathways to Personal and Social Transformation Tucson, Arizona June 24-26, 2005

Spirituality: Pathways To Personal and Social Transformation will draw on the unique resources of the Desert Southwest, with day long pre-conferences on June 24th which include a trip to the Mexican border and visits with those engaged in social justice work around immigration, and a local tour of sacred sites and healers who work in the tradition of curanderismo. The conference begins that evening with a celebration of Día de San Juan at the historic Mission San Xavier. These opening festivities will be followed by a day and a half of academic and professional presentations, concluding with an Ecumenical Celebration on Sunday morning. The whole conference will be headquartered in the air conditioned comfort of the InnSuites Hotel and Conference Center located in the heart of the Old Pueblo.

A conference presented by:
Arizona State University
College of Public Programs
School of Social Work

In association with:
National Association of Social Workers—
Arizona Chapter
Society for Spirituality in Social Work

Call for Papers

The Conference is seeking presentations 90 minutes to 3 hours in length. Presentations may be informational or experiential, or a combination of both.

An abstract describing the presentation and its learning objectives should be sent to Dr. Ann Nichols at the Tucson Component of the ASU School of Social Work, 340 N. Commerce Park Loop #250, Tucson AZ 85745, or e-mailed to her at ann.nichols@asu.edu by January 31, 2005. Final selection will be announced by March 15.



Chapter News

Buffalo, NY: We enjoyed our June meeting at a member's new home where we did a "house blessing" complete with water, fruit, mirrors and wine and a little Feng Shui thrown in for fun. We took the summer off this year, but for our first fall meeting included a guest speaker from Amitabha Foundation in Rochester speaking on The Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism. This was followed by a meeting where we learned about The Child's Count, an ancient teaching tool of the Mayans. Our first meeting of the new year will take place this month where we will create a ritual which will help us look ahead with the wisdom of the past. We call our gatherings the "Weaving Group" because we are exploring how to weave personal, spiritual practices into our work as Social Workers. Anyone interested in joining our group, please contact Bonnie Collins at collinsb@buffalo.edu.

New Hampshire: Elizabeth (Althea) Chadwick would like to begin a chapter for the Society in New Hampshire. Those in that area interested in forming a group, please contact Althea at 603-895-4530 or nhsanctuary@comcast.net.

Arizona: The Arizona chapter holds local retreats in the Spring and Fall. The chapter plans on hosting a summer conference June 24 - 26, 2005, in Tucson.

Understanding the JCAHO requirements for spiritual assessment

David Hodge, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, PA

Many social workers are employed in settings accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). JCAHO is the largest healthcare accrediting organization in the United States. It accredits close to 16,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, billing itself as "the nation's predominant standards-setting and accrediting body in health care" (JCAHO, 2004a). In addition to accrediting more than 4,700 hospitals, a number that represents most of the nation's hospitals, it also accredits numerous assisted living facilities, home care organizations, managed care plans, nursing homes, and behavioral health care organizations, including those that provide mental health and addiction services.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has a clear interest in JCAHO's mission of developing state-of-the-art standards that seek to continuously improve the safety and quality of care provided to consumers (JCAHO, 2004b). Consequently, NASW maintains an ongoing partnership with JCAHO. NASW, for instance, participates on JCAHO professional and technical advisory committees (NASW, 2004).

As the NASW partnership with JCAHO suggests, social workers have a direct interest in new JCAHO standards. Certainly, social workers employed in JCAHO accredited organizations are most immediately affected by any changes in standards. However, due to JCAHO's size, influence, and status, all social workers have some degree of investment in the implementation of standards designed to improve the quality of care provided to members of the public. Other organizations, for instance, may be inclined to adopt standards developed by JCAHO.

In 2001, JCAHO (2001) revised its accreditation standards to require the administration of a spiritual assessment. In light of this development, the purpose of this paper is to review the JCAHO standards on the topic of spiritual assessment. More specifically, I review the definition of spiritual orientation used by JCAHO, overview the content areas an assessment is required to explore, and discuss the purpose for conducting an assessment. I conclude by pointing readers to a number of resources that may be helpful in administering a spiritual assessment in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the JCAHO standards.

Definition of spiritual orientation

A spiritual assessment is directed toward assessing what JCAHO refers to as the client's "spiritual orientation" (JCAHO, 2001). In other words, the point of a spiritual assessment is to appraise the client's spiritual orientation. Consequently, while JCAHO does not provide definitions of spirituality or religion, as is common practice among social work authors addressing these topics (Canda & Furman, 1999; Carroll, 1998; Hodge, 2001a), a definition of "spiritual orientation" is provided.

JCAHO (2001) defines spiritual orientation as the client's attitudes and outlook about the non-physical or non-

material aspects of life or "the spirit." According to JCAHO, one's spiritual orientation is often reflected in religious terms. More specifically, a client's spiritual orientation is often manifested in belonging to a church, holding specific religious beliefs, or following a religion.

Content areas to be explored in a spiritual assessment

JCAHO requires spiritual assessments in a number of settings, including hospitals, home care, and certain behavioral health care settings, including those providing addiction services. JCAHO uses a single template for essentially all spiritual assessments, regardless of setting in which the assessment is conducted. This template requires that three content areas or domains must be explored during a spiritual assessment. Practitioners are free to explore additional areas. An exploration of the following three areas, however, represents the minimum requirements.

Specifically, an initial, brief assessment is conducted to determine: a) denomination or faith tradition, b) important spiritual beliefs, and c) important spiritual practices (JCAHO, 2001). As the JCAHO standards suggest, the assessment focuses upon the client's phenomenological reality. In other words, the assessment focuses upon spiritual beliefs and practices that are deemed to be important from the client's perspective.

The standards also implicitly acknowledge that, for at least some clients, one or more of the domains will be extraneous to their reality. In other words, some clients will not be affiliated with a particular denomination or faith tradition and will have no important spiritual beliefs and practices. Concurrently, it is also possible clients may be affiliated with a particular denomination, have important spiritual beliefs, but no important spiritual practices.

Purpose for conducting a spiritual assessment

The purpose for conducting the initial, brief assessment is two-fold (JCAHO, 2001). One of the rationales is to determine the impact of the client's spirituality on service provision. As is widely noted, clients' spirituality can affect attitudes and practices in a number of areas of significance to social workers, including views on animal care, child raising, communication norms, diet, family relations, gender interactions, marital relations, medical care, recreation, schooling, and understandings of metaphysical reality (Pellebon & Anderson, 1999; Rey, 1997). Accordingly, one reason for conducting a spiritual assessment is to ascertain what, if any, effect the client's spirituality has on the array of services that may be provided.

The impact or effect on service provision can take the form of either barriers or strengths. In terms of barriers, JCAHO (2003) suggests that the spirituality of some clients might entail problems in terms of affiliating with certain therapeutic self-help groups. Some Muslims, for instance, may be uncomfortable joining mixed gender groups, particularly if the discussion of intimate issues will occur in the presence of members of the opposite sex (Hodge, 2004).

JCAHO (2003) also notes that the information obtained during assessment can increase the effectiveness of the subsequent interventions. While effectiveness can be increased by eliminating barriers, it can also be enhanced by tapping into clients' spiritual strengths. Incorporating Buddhist' mindfulness or meditative practices, for instance, may be helpful in addressing depression with some Buddhist clients (Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2002).

The second rationale for conducting an initial brief spiritual assessment is to identify if a further, more comprehensive assessment is needed (JCAHO, 2001). As noted above, for some clients, spirituality will not be an operative dimension of their personal ontology. For others, spirituality may be important, but the initial brief assessment quickly reveals that the client's spirituality is unrelated to service provision. In such cases, a brief assessment may be all that is required.

In many other situations, however, the brief assessment suggests that a further, comprehensive assessment may be warranted. More specifically, the brief assessment may reveal a number of potential ways in which the client's spirituality may be related to service provision. In such situations, a comprehensive assessment is required to flesh out these potential relationships. In other words, further assessment is needed to ascertain the impact of the client's spirituality upon the array of services that may be provided.

Possible resources for administering a spiritual assessment

To help administer or operationalize an assessment, JCAHO (2001) provides a list of questions that might be asked in the course of conducting a spiritual assessment. It is important to note that JCAHO explicitly states that none of the questions are required. Rather, the point seems to be to provide practitioners with a list of plausible questions to familiarize practitioners with the type of questions that might be asked when conducting an assessment, an approach that has particular merit in the light of the fact that studies have repeatedly found that most practitioners received little, if any, training on spiritual assessment during their graduate education (Canda & Furman, 1999; Carlson, Kirkpatrick, Hecker & Killmer, 2002; Derezotes, 1995; Furman & Chandy, 1994; Furman, Benson, Grimwood & Franz, in press; Murdock, 2004; Prest, Russel & D'Souza, 1999; Sheridan & Amato-von Hemert, 1999).

A number of other resources also exist that readers may find helpful in terms of conducting assessments in accordance with JCAHO's requirements. JCAHO (2001) standards require organizations to document information in two areas. More specifically, organizations must a) delineate the qualifications of the individual(s) administering the assessment and b) define the scope and content of a spiritual assessment. In other words, organizations must delineate the specific framework used for conducting a spiritual assessment in the same manner that they are required to define the scope and content of other types of assessment (e.g., a functional assessment or a pain assessment).

A number of instruments have been developed which may be useful in terms of defining the scope and content of the spiritual assessment. For instance, a short, six-

item assessment instrument has been developed that is specifically designed to meet the JCAHO requirements (Hodge, 2004). In other words, this instrument was developed to operationalize the three content areas required in the spiritual assessment standards.

In addition, a number of comprehensive assessment instruments have also been developed, including spiritual histories (Hodge, 2001a), spiritual lifemaps (Hodge, in press-c), spiritual genograms (Hodge, 2001b), spiritual eco-maps (Hodge, 2000; Hodge & Williams, 2002), and spiritual ecograms (Hodge, in press-b). This complementary set of instruments was created to highlight differing segments of clients' spiritual narratives as well as tapping differing client interests. For instance, regarding the former, spiritual eco-maps tap clients' present, existential spiritual relationships, while spiritual genograms map the flow of spiritual patterns over three generations. Regarding the latter, spiritual lifemaps may tend to appeal to more artistically oriented clients while spiritual histories may appeal to more verbally oriented clients.

Thus, when the initial brief assessment suggests that a comprehensive assessment is warranted, practitioners can select from an array of assessment options. Practitioners can choose a particular approach that provides the best fit for each unique client/practitioner interface. A review of the strengths and limitations of each of the above instruments is also available (Hodge, in press-a). This review may help practitioners select the most appropriate assessment approach when the brief assessment indicates that a comprehensive assessment may be needed to optimize client care.

The effective administration of a spiritual assessment is closely linked with the practitioner's level of spiritual competency (Canda & Furman, 1999; Gilbert, 2000; Gotterer, 2001; Hodge, 2003). Spiritual competency has been defined as an ongoing process in which practitioners develop increasing levels of self-awareness and knowledge regarding 1) one's own worldview and biases, 2) the client's spiritual worldview and prejudices the practitioner may hold toward that worldview, 3) the ability to develop interventions that are congruent and resonate with the client's spiritual worldview (Hodge, 2004).

As observers have noted, the application of Enlightenment-based secular values that are commonly among practitioners can often accentuate problems among deeply spiritual individuals (Reddy & Hanna, 1998). Developing one's spiritual competency as defined above can help to mitigate this danger. To increase one's level of spiritual competence, readers may wish to obtain a number of the texts that have recently appeared, which are designed to familiarize readers with the worldviews of various denominations and faith traditions (Koenig, 1998; Richards & Bergin, 2000; Van Hook, Hugen & Aguilar, 2001).

Conclusion

Although most practitioners have received little training in spirituality and religion, research indicates that most practitioners endorse the concept of spiritual assessment (Canda & Furman, 1999; Carlson, et al., 2002; Prest, et al., 1999; Sheridan & Amato-von Hemert, 1999). Indeed,

many practitioners state that they are interested in learning more about spiritual assessment (Carlson, et al., 2002; Derezotes, 1995). This paper responds to this desire by reviewing the JCAHO standards on spiritual assessment and pointing readers toward a number of resources that may be helpful in conducting a spiritual assessment.

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The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30 per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15 per year. For those who wish to increase their contribution we have the following categories: Contributing membership \$45, Supporting Member \$60, and Sustaining Member \$100.

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The Spirituality and Social Work Forum

Volume 12, Issue 1

Fall 2005



Society for Spirituality and Social Work Forum

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Vol. 12 Issue 1

Kudos and Thanks for Fifteen Years Of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work

Edward R. Canda, PhD*
The University of Kansas

This year is the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. This issue of the Forum also marks transition from the long time leadership of Professor Robin Russel to a new director, Professor Ann Weaver Nichols. So this is a good time to pause for reflection and thanks.

In 1988 I established the Network for Spirituality and Social Work while a faculty member at the University of Iowa. This was a small informal group of social work educators of diverse religious and nonreligious perspectives who were committed to expanding the recognition of spirituality in social work. We built on the foundations laid by great pioneers in thinking about spirituality in social work, such as David Brandon, Robert Constable, Vincentia Joseph, Alan Keith-Lucas, Don Krill, Frank Loewenberg, Max Siporin, Charlotte Towle, and many others. But at that time, there were only about 250 publications on the topic in English and only a few courses around the country focused on the topic. In those days, many practitioners, educators, and researchers with this interest felt rather isolated and marginalized. So in 1990, I extended the network into the Society for Spirituality and Social Work at The University of Kansas in order to promote approaches to practice, teaching, and research that address spirituality in a manner respectful of diverse religious and nonreligious expressions.

With the generous help and advice of friends and colleagues, the Society published a newsletter and then journal, networked, engaged in advocacy, and encouraged mutual support and synergy. It was exciting to participate in the formation period of a movement full of enthusiasm and creativity.

By 1992, I felt that Society administration needs were expanding beyond the scale of a one person volunteer effort. I believed that the Society should be a more widespread and collective effort. If its mission was truly significant, the Society should not be dependent on one person. I felt that it should be self-sustaining both in terms of long-term collective interest among social workers and also in terms of organizational structure. So I searched for a new director who would have the skills, vision, and energy to continue and expand the Society. Most fortunately, I found Robin Russel.

Robin appeared like a godsend. She was then a faculty member at the University of Nebraska in Omaha and later moved to The University of Binghamton-SUNY. I still have a vivid memory of our first conversation about the possibility of her becoming director. Her enthusiasm and high energy were contagious. Her friendly manner and commitment to the subject engaged me immediately.

I felt an inner sense that this was the right person at the right time. And looking back, I am very thankful that she came into the life of the Society and that she breathed her life into it.

Under Robin's leadership from 1994 to 2005, the Society expanded greatly in membership and activities. Robin's widely embracing sociability, innovative ideas, bright personal energy, great networking skills, and passion for linking spirituality to social justice, helped the Society to grow. During her time as director, the Society continued publications, extended networking and advocacy, and held several national and international conferences.



The conferences in particular took large amounts of time and energy for Robin. They brought together social work innovators on spirituality in ways that had never been done before. The conferences showed creativity in terms of the many topics, the commitment to inclusion of differing views through respectful dialogue, the blending of academic and experiential styles, and friendly collaboration among students, practitioners, educators, and researchers.

Robin also encouraged significant growth of teaching about spirituality in social work through her own teaching and academic administration and through advocacy with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for changes to its accreditation standards, providing advice and examples of course syllabi to educators around the country, helping with development and continuation of the symposia on spirituality at annual CSWE Program Meetings, and through published research about the state of teaching about spirituality in social work. Now, in important ways due to her efforts, the topic of spirituality is met with much greater acceptance throughout the profession of social work. The social work programs around the country with related courses now number more than 70. There are more than 700 publications in English on spirituality and social work. And there is growing momentum of interest among social workers around the world.

Of course, Robin was assisted by many students, educators, and practitioners to make all this happen. There are too many to thank by name, but please know that you are appreciated. As I write this, I visualize many whom I've known and send my thanks.

We all owe a great expression of thanks to Robin for these tremendous efforts and achievements. Let's send our appreciation to Robin and wish her well on her continuing endeavors at The University of Binghamton-SUNY.

Finally, let's also thank Ann Weaver Nichols for offering her leadership to the Society. I trust that the mission and ideals of the Society will continue and also take new forms under her guidance. I am especially excited about her commitment to expand the Society's international collaborations. The international conference planned by her and Professor John Coates, director of the Canadian Society for Spirituality and Social Work, for summer 2006, is a harbinger of good things to come.

*Edward R. Canda, M.A., MSW, Ph.D. is Professor and Director of the Ph.D. Program in Social Work at The University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, 1545 Lilac Lane, Twente Hall, Lawrence, KS, USA, 66044-3184. He coordinates the virtual Spiritual Diversity and Social Work Resource Center via www.socwel.ku.edu/canda.



Sometimes forgiveness is Unwelcome

I've wronged another.

Expecting retaliation

I crawl into myself.

Stuck in my shame and pain

I crave the punishment I await.

I have been wronged

Expecting sympathy

I tell my story.

Reveling in my status as victim

I glow in the affirmation I'm given.

When forgiveness is offered, unbidden

I balk. No!

It's undeserved. Worse,

It demands that I change, repent

That I re-engage in relationship.

When forgiveness is asked, unbidden

I balk. No!

It's too hard. Worse,

It demands that I relinquish victimhood

That I re-engage in relationship.

How dare you disturb

My self-condemnation?

How dare you interrupt

My righteous suffering?



Spiritual Assessment:

An overview of its importance and six instruments for conducting assessments

David R. Hodge, Ph.D.
Arizona State University-West
&
Lana Sue Ka`opua, Ph.D.
University of Hawai`i

Author information: David R. Hodge, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at Arizona State University-West campus and a senior non-resident fellow at University of Pennsylvania's Program for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society. Correspondence can be addressed to the author at: Dept of Social Work, P. O. Box 37100, Phoenix, AZ 85069-7100.

Lana Sue Ka`opua, PhD, ACSW is associate professor at the University of Hawai`i, School of Social Work and affiliate faculty with the Cancer Research Center of Hawai`i. Correspondence may be addressed to the author at 1800 East-West Rd, Henke Hall/Honolulu, HI 96822 or by e-mail at: lskaopua@hawaii.edu.

Spiritual assessment:

An overview of its importance and six instruments for conducting assessments

Spiritual assessment can be understood as the process of gathering clinically relevant spiritual and religious information using a specific framework that gives direction to subsequent practice decisions. Conducting a spiritual assessment is important for several interrelated reasons. These rationales underscore the importance of spiritual assessment to the provision of effective services (Hodge, 2004b).

The importance of spiritual assessment

Assessment provides important insights into clients' worldview. For many clients, spirituality is the basis of their worldview (Richards & Bergin, 2005; Van Hook, Hugen & Aguilar, 2001). Spiritually informed worldviews can shape attitudes and behaviors in a number of areas that intersect with practice, including views on child birth and care, communication styles, death and dying, diet, marital relations, medical care, military participation, pets, recreation, and schooling (Hodge, 2004b). The NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice (2001) suggest that it is often critical to understand clients' spiritual worldviews if effective, culturally sensitive services are to be provided.

Secondly, spiritual assessment is an important means for identifying clients' spiritual and religious assets. A growing body of research indicates that spirituality and religion are often significant strengths (Koenig, Larson & Larson, 2001). Spirituality, for instance, may assist Native Hawaiian women in coping with breast cancer (Ka'opua, 2003). Spiritual assessment provides a vehicle for identifying and operationalizing these spiritual and religious assets.

Client autonomy is the third rationale. A number of studies suggest that many, if not most, clients want to have their spiritual beliefs and values integrated into service provision (Hodge, 2004b). Further, as suggested above, a small but growing body of evidence-based practice research suggests that respecting clients' autonomy by integrating their spiritual beliefs into therapy can help ameliorate problems (Hodge, in press-b). For those clients who wish to have their spiritual

values incorporated into the clinical dialogue, conducting a spiritual assessment can be a way of respecting clients' autonomy by providing a mechanism for this integration.

The profession's ethics, which are designed to guide practitioner conduct, also underscore the importance of assessment. The NASW Code of Ethics (1999) lists four standards that explicitly mention religion and at least two standards that implicitly refer to religion. These ethical standards call social workers to be sensitive to clients from diverse faith groups, to recognize the strengths that exist in various faith groups, and to demonstrate competence in their service provision to such groups. Conducting a spiritual assessment enables practitioners to gather the information that is necessary to meet these ethical standards.

Agency requirements may be a fifth reason for conducting a spiritual assessment. In a growing number of settings, spiritual assessments are required. Perhaps the most notable example of this trend is provided by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (2004), the largest and most influential healthcare accrediting organization in the United States. JCAHO has revised its accreditation standards to require the administration of a spiritual assessment (Hodge, in press-c). Spiritual assessments are now mandated in a number of settings, including hospitals, home care organizations, long term care facilities, and certain behavioral health care organizations such as those providing addiction services.



Assessment options

The above rationales highlight the important role that spiritual assessment plays in service provision. Reviews indicate that some, although relatively few, assessment options exist (Hodge, 2001a; Sherwood, 1998). For example, valuable spiritual assessment models have been developed by Canda and Furman (1999), Frame (2003), and Richards and Bergin (2005).

Assessment needs, however, often vary from case to case. As the JCAHO standards imply, different contexts require the use of different assessment instruments (Hodge, in press-c). In other words, no single assessment instrument will be applicable in all situations. Depending on the service setting, presenting problem of the client, and client's relational style, some instruments will be more useful than others.

Below, we review a recently created set of spiritual assessment instruments. As far as we are aware, this six-instrument collection is unique. This complementary family of spiritual assessment instruments was designed to give practitioners a number of options by, for example, accentuating different facets of clients' spirituality. Since no two instruments are exactly alike, the array of options assists practitioners in the process of providing more client-centered services.

In addition, this set of instruments is designed to be compatible with the JCAHO assessment requirements (Hodge, 2005b). While other spiritual assessment instruments exist, we know of no other complementary set of instruments that is designed to be congruent with the JCAHO spiritual assessment requirements.

Brief assessment

As discussed, clients' spiritual beliefs and practices often have to be taken into account to ensure that service provision is as effective as possible. In keeping with this understanding, JCAHO generally recommends that a brief, initial spiritual assessment be conducted to determine, at a minimum (Hodge, in press-c):

- clients' denomination
- important spiritual beliefs
- relevant spiritual practices

A short, concise question set has been developed to elicit the information stipulated in the JCAHO requirements (Hodge, 2004a). These questions emphasize the functional nature of spirituality in clients' lives, or how spirituality acts as a personal and environmental strength. The point of these questions is to identify the effect of clients' spirituality on service provision and to determine whether an additional, more comprehensive spiritual assessment is required (Hodge, in press-c).

Five comprehensive assessment options

If the brief assessment indicates that a comprehensive assessment is necessary, then a number of options exist. We review five, in brief, directly below.

Verbally based spiritual histories: This instrument consists of two question sets, and the process is similar to conducting a family history (Hodge, 2001a). The first set is designed to help clients relate their spiritual narratives. The second set is intended to elicit clinically salient information as clients tell their stories.

Spiritual lifemaps: This instrument represents a diagrammatic alternative to verbally-based spiritual histories (Hodge, 2005d). Spiritual lifemaps are a pictorial delineation of clients' spiritual journeys, an illustrated account of their relationships with God (or clients' perception of Ultimate Transcendence). In short, it is a map of the client's spiritual life. As is the case with the other diagrammatic instruments discussed below, drawing pencils and other media are used to depict various spiritually significant life events on paper.

Spiritual genograms: Using a modification of the traditional genogram structure, spiritual genograms portray spirituality across at least three generations (Hodge, 2001b). Spiritual genograms depict spiritual and religious information to help both practitioners and clients understand the flow of historically rooted patterns through or across time. Additionally, spiritual genograms provide a graphic blueprint of complex intergenerational spiritual interactions.

Spiritual eco-maps: Eco-maps focus on clients' current, existential spiritual relationships (Hodge, 2000; Hodge & Williams, 2002). While the spiritual genogram, life map, and verbally based spiritual history typically focus on clients' spiritual stories as they exist through time, spiritual eco-maps focus on that portion of clients' spiritual stories that exists in present space. In a manner analogous to traditional eco-maps, spiritual eco-maps emphasize clients' existing relationships to spiritual assets in their here-and-now environments.

Spiritual ecograms: This diagrammatic instrument combines the strengths of spiritual eco-maps and genograms (Hodge, 2005c). Ecograms depict historical information across three generations, as well as present relationships to current environmental strengths. Put differently, ecograms portray information that exists across time and in present space. Both historical and present dimensions are delineated on ecograms; thus, this instrument also depicts the connections between past and present functioning. Historical influences on current environmental systems can be seen as well as present existential relationships with historical influences.



Additional resources

Readers interested in the above assessment instruments may wish to obtain the original articles for further information about each approach. Other information has also been developed to assist practitioners in the use of these instruments. For instance, a discussion of the strengths and limitations of each of the five comprehensive instruments may aid understanding of the unique characteristics of each approach (Hodge, in press-a). Spiritual lifemaps, for instance, may be particularly useful with highly creative, artistically oriented clients. A methodological framework has also been developed to assist practitioners in selecting between various instruments based upon the time frame each instrument emphasizes (Hodge, 2005b). For example, spiritual genograms and ecomaps may be particularly useful with groups that tend to place a high value upon extended families, such as Muslims, (Hodge, 2005a; Nadir & Dziegielewski, 2001) and Hindus (Hodge, 2004c). Conversely, clients who have trouble making the connection between past events and current problems may be better served by spiritual eco-maps.

The six qualitative instruments reviewed in this article introduce readers to a family of complementary options that are congruent with the recent JCAHO requirements. As implied above, many other important resources on spiritual assessment also exist beyond what can be reviewed in this brief article (Canda & Furman, 1999; Frame, 2003; Koenig, 1998; Miller, 2003; Moss, 2005; Richards & Bergin, 2000; Richards & Bergin, 2005; Van Hook, et al., 2001; Walsh, 1999). In addition, a number of quantitative instruments also exist (Hodge, 2003; Hill & Hood, 1999). Practitioners may desire to familiarize themselves with a variety of resources, which will enhance their ability to provide more client-centered and culturally sensitive service provision.

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Abstracts for presentations are now being solicited. Contact the conference website at www.swh2006.com

CALL FOR PAPERS

"The Transforming Power of Spirituality:
Breaking Barriers and Creating Common Ground"

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This conference will bring together academics, practitioners, and educators to discuss the important role spirituality plays in social work practice and education. This joint conference provides an exciting opportunity for an exchange of scholarship and knowledge between American and Canadian scholars, practitioners and students (from various disciplines) to stimulate dialogue on research, professional education and social work practice. Just as the conference theme reflects an effort to remove barriers and create common ground for the international exchange across borders, proposals for papers and experiential workshops are invited that demonstrate the essential role that spirituality can play in transforming practice and educational processes.

Abstract submissions (200 words) for either an experiential workshop or an academic paper, are invited by **December 22, 2005**. The abstract page should include only the title of the presentation, type (paper or workshop), and the 200 word abstract. On a separate cover sheet, provide name(s) of presenter(s), contact information, and a 50-word biography for each presenter. Please submit proposals for either a workshop or academic paper to jcoates@stu.ca or Ann.Nichols@asu.edu. All submissions will be subjected to a double-blind peer review and notifications will be sent out as soon as possible and no later than March 1, 2006. Selected academic papers from the conference will be forwarded, with author's agreement, for double-blind peer review consideration for inclusion in a special issue of *Spirituality and Social Work Forum*, and/or for inclusion in conference proceedings.

Experiential workshops and papers can be on diverse topics related to the conference theme. Workshops are expected to engage participants in an activity and will demonstrate how spirituality is addressed in social work research, practice or education, and in efforts to promote personal and social transformation. The presentations should discuss research and practice issues concerning spirituality and its relationship to inclusion and transformation.

Visit <http://people.stu.ca/~jcoates/cnssw/> for a conference registration form and additional information, or contact John Coates (jcoates@stu.ca) or Ann Nichols (ann.nichols@asu.edu)

Note: Workshops and presentations may be in either English or French.



Message From the Editor


National Public Radio has been broadcasting "This I Believe" essays. I would like to invite readers to contribute essays on this theme to *The Forum*, as well as "Holy Moments" contributions as have appeared in *The Forum* in the past. Just to get it started, I offer my "This I Believe" comment:

I believe that all people belong to the human family. Fully. Without reservation. No exclusions. I believe, as do my Quaker friends, that there is "that of God" in every person. With some individuals, it shines through. It is manifested in their compassion and kindness. With others, it may be hidden or buried, so well covered by the residue of abuse, neglect, or oppression so that it's hard to see. But it is always there.

Once a German friend and I were attending the trial of another friend's son for support of the family. The young man had committed a violent crime. On the day when the evidence of the brutality was presented, we left the courtroom weeping. She told me of a saying she had learned, that we all had within us Hitler and Mother Teresa. Our job in life is to control the Hitler part and cultivate the Mother Teresa part of ourselves.

I thought about the report I had read of a hardened criminal, incarcerated with a long sentence, who experienced a dramatic transformation of attitude and behavior in the last few years of his life, through a relationship with a prison visitor. The visitor had chosen to work with this particular man. When asked why, she replied that she had never seen anyone with such cold eyes. She wanted to see if she could reach him with the Light. And she did.

There are some consequences of believing that there is a presence of the divine in each one of us. It means that I may not dehumanize members of another cultural or religious group by dismissing or discounting them or calling them names. I will not refer to someone who has behaved badly as a "monster" or a "scum-bag." I will not identify a person or a group as a category --by illness (schizophrenics) or a physical characteristic (midgets), a condition (the retarded) or a deed (sex offender). When I cannot connect with the force of love in the other person, I hope that someone else can, and I ask for more patience and understanding. This does not mean that I excuse violent or hurtful behavior. It does mean that I recognize that the person is more than this behavior. As a member of the human community, I expect the person to accept responsibility and to try to change, encouraged by the faith that there is good within. I will reach out for the better part of the other, in the conviction that light is always more powerful than darkness, love more powerful than evil, and that forgiveness of self and others is vital to our survival.



MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL BOARD SOCIETY FOR SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL WORK

The following people have volunteered to serve as a provisional board of directors in response to the request issued at the 2005 Spirituality Conference in Arizona and via an email message to all Society members during the summer. We have been meeting by email. Please feel free to contact any of us with your ideas or questions.

Gary Behrman (Missouri)
Behrman@slu.edu

Jan Shuman (Arizona)
shu1@mindspring.com

Tom Capshew (Iowa)
tom@innerspark.org

Marilyn Stickle (Virginia)
Mbstickle@aol.com

Bonnie Collins (New York)
collinsb@buffalo.edu

Don Streit (Arkansas)
djstreit@mindsouth.ualr.edu

Yvonne Farley (Iowa)
yvonne-farley@uiowa.edu

Ann Nichols, Director (Arizona)
ssw@asu.edu or ann.nichols@asu.edu

Christine Kessen (Pennsylvania)
kessen@es.marywood.edu

Spirituality and Social Work Forum-
Editorial Team
Anna Deligio, Ann Weaver Nichols, Theresa Ramirez

Renew Yourself in Arizona in January at a Spirituality Conference

The Arizona Project for Spirituality and Social Work is holding its third annual mid-winter conference January 26-27 2006 in Tucson. Speakers and workshops feature Ed Canda, Tom Capshew, David Hodge, Ann Nichols, Sr. Janet Sue Smith, and Don Streit, with music by Teri.

The theme is "The Soul of Healing: Restoring the Human Spirit in Human Services." Registration forms and information may be found at <http://ssw.asu.edu/spirituality/azpssw/> or contact Jan Shuman at azpssw@asu.edu

The conference will be held at the Tucson Community Resource Campus located at 340 N. Commerce Park Loop in the Sentinel Building (1block west of I-10; between Congress St. & St. Mary's Rd.)

Thursday, January 26, 2006 6:00 pm-9:00 pm
Friday, January 27, 2006 8:00 am-5:00 pm

Workshop Sessions

Session A/B 1: Ed Canda, PhD

Exploring Meditation, Music and Other Spiritual Practices for Renewal and Stress Management

Session A/B 2: Tom Capshew, JD, PhD

Divine Warrior Training: Transforming Your Relationship with Death

Session A 3: David R. Hodge, PhD

The JCAHO model for spiritual assessment: Conducting spiritual assessments in an ethically sensitive and spiritually competent manner

Session A/B 4: Ann Nichols, DSW

The Personal and Social Transformational Potential of Forgiveness

Session A/B 5: Don Streit, MSW, LCSW

Dream Codes: Wise Messages from Within



Special Offer!!!

We have multiple copies of past issues of *The Forum* available dating from 1994-2004. They are a rich resource for articles related to practice issues teaching spirituality courses, and research on aspects of spirituality and social work. If you would like to have a full set (20) of back issues of the *Society for Spirituality and Social Work Forum*, please send a check for \$10. made out to Arizona State University with "SSSW Forum Packet" noted in the memo line. Mail to the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, ASU School of Social Work, Tucson Component, 340 N. Commerce Park Loop, Ste. 250 Tucson, AZ 85745. Offer good while supplies last.



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Message from the Society's New Director
Ann Weaver Nichols, DSW
Associate Professor
ASU School of Social Work

I began thinking about spirituality and social work when I was a Master's student at Columbia University School of Social Work. It was in a class on diversity. When asked to write a paper describing our own culture, many of us incorporated our religious or spiritual identities and world views as a central aspect--yet none of our texts or other materials mentioned spirituality at all. Thankfully, nearly 40 years later, spirituality is increasingly accepted as an appropriate area for attention in social work practice and research.

My career has been as an activist on social justice and human rights issues and as a tenured associate professor teaching courses in macro practice, policy analysis and policy practice. During my last sabbatical leave, I studied forgiveness, especially from a macro perspective. After September 11, 2001, a group of us in Tucson began holding open sessions to share music, meditation, reflection and prayer in response to the tragedy. This group evolved into the Arizona Project for Spirituality and Social Work. We connected with the Society for Spirituality and Social Work. Some of our members attended the summer conferences in Austin and Binghamton, and we sponsored a national conference "Spirituality: Pathways to Personal and Social Transformation" in Tucson in June, 2005.

Robin Russel sent out a request for a university interested in becoming the new home for the Society earlier this year. ASU was accepted, and we began the transfer of records, funds, and materials during the summer and fall. My recent email communications to Society members and to all the schools of social work have resulted in new and renewed memberships, messages of support, and a number of submissions to *The Forum*. I asked for volunteers to form a Provisional Board, and eight persons are serving. Their names are listed elsewhere, along with the names of reviewers for this issue of *The Forum*. Our accomplishments so far:

- The Society has a new web page, <http://ssw.asu.edu/spirituality/sssw/>. It is a work in progress, so expect to see improvements, such as links to other web sites, by the new year. Please send suggestions.
- We accepted an invitation from the Canadian Society for Spirituality and Social Work to plan a joint conference for May 25-27, 2006. You will find a Call for Papers in this *Forum*. Further information about the conference is available at <http://people.stu.ca/~jcoates/cnssw/index.html>.
- There will be an opportunity at the next CSWE APM to gather and network. Watch the APM Program for the time. I have requested Friday late afternoon.
- Besides discussing ideas about the best structure for the Society, the other agenda item the Provisional Board will be addressing is how to make the Society a strong and effective network and resource. Please feel free to share your ideas with us, by e-mailing sssw@asu.edu.
- Finally, I would like to hear from local groups like to Arizona Project for Spirituality and Social Work so that we can publicize your existence and activities.

Please feel free to contact me or any member of the Provisional Board to share your ideas, concerns, hopes. We need each other in these hard times. We need, more than ever, to help ourselves, our colleagues and our clients to use the power of our spiritual resources to bring more love and compassion and kindness into the world.

Peace

BOOK CORNER

Is there a book with a spiritual dimension that you would recommend to your colleagues or clients? This column will run from time to time, as the Editor receives suggestions from readers of the Forum. The first set of books were recommended by Arizona Society members.

Augsburger, D.W. (2004). *Hate-work: working through the pain and pleasures of hate*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

After September 11, 2001, the author searched the shelves of his university library and found almost 4,000 titles on the subject of love and only 41 on hate. He writes, "Either we will come to new understandings of hate, hate's causes, hate resolution, or we will accelerate and perpetuate it. Either we will learn from the tragedies of unbridled hate—we did not learn enough from its most heinous event, the holocaust, to stop genocides—or we will continue to transmit it generation to generation." This book looks at hate from an individual, group, and societal perspective and offers hope for healing.



Coles, R. (1990) *The spiritual life of children*. London: HarperCollins.

Robert Coles, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard University, discusses his insights over thirty years of working with children and five years of specific research on children's spiritual beliefs and paths. He interviewed children from five regions of the world and diverse religious traditions.



Gobodo-Madikizela, P. (2004) *A human being died that night: a South African woman confronts the legacy of apartheid*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

This book, written by a psychologist from a black South African township, won two awards. The author served with Bishop Desmond Tutu on the Human Rights Committee of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She reflects on her extensive conversations with the commander of death squads, as she struggles to understand him and to confront issues of accountability and forgiveness.



Langer, E. (1989). *Mindfulness*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Not a new book, but its message is important. Dr. Ellen Langer, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, analyzes the impact of mindlessness on our decision-making and way of life and suggests practical ways to cultivate mindfulness and the creativity and growth which it generates.



Prannis, K., Stuart, B. & Wedge, M. (2003). *Peacemaking circles: from crime to community*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Living Justice Press.

This is an accessible and practical book on the circle process in restorative justice and conflict resolution.



Weingarten, K. (2003). *Common shock: witnessing violence every day, how we are harmed, how we can heal*. New York: Dutton.

Dr. Weingarten, on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard University, has written a well-researched yet readable book. It provides insight into the effects of violence on the lives of those who witness it as well as those who experience it. The author offers resources for transforming our shock by becoming "compassionate witnesses."



Wheatley, M. J. (2002). *Turning to one another: simple conversations to restore hope to the future*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

This simple book is designed to support honest and direct conversations about those things that mean the most to us. There are guiding questions, poetry, and reflections to stimulate the reader and offer resources for deeper discussions.



Williams, J. (2004) *My soul looks back in wonder: voices of the civil rights experience*. New York: Sterling Publishing Company.

These moving stories and reflections on the struggles and victories of the Civil Rights movement, first hand accounts, provide insight into the pain and the promise of this time of change.

...JOIN THE SOCIETY...JOIN SOCIETY...JOIN THE SOCIETY...JOIN THE SOCIETY...

The Society for Spirituality and Social Work was founded in 1990 as an organization of social workers and other helping professionals dedicated to support practitioners and scholars in social service that honors and encourages spiritual development and justice for all people of diverse religious and non-religious paths. The Society was established to advocate for spiritually-sensitive helping that honors the wide variety of religious and non-religious forms of spirituality through professional networking and the dissemination of innovative research, theory, and practice.

Membership benefits include subscription to the Society Newsletter and reduced rates for the Society's conference.

At this point in time, activities of the Society are totally supported by member dues and volunteer labor. Please support the continued activities and growth of the Society by joining the organization.

General membership dues are \$30. per year. Dues for full-time students and retired practitioners are \$15. per year. For those who wish to increase their contribution we have the following categories: Contributing membership \$45.00, supporting member \$60.00, and sustaining member \$100.00

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