Spiritual Diversity and Social Justice: The Second Annual Canadian Conference on Spirituality and Social Work

June 4-5, 2003 Dalhousie University Halifax, NS

PRESENTATIONS

Group 2: 10:45-12:15, Thursday, June 5

I Feel Safer With Atheists!!

Conflicts between and within churches and religions are, as we speak, resulting in death, dispossession, mutilation, wounding, rape, starvation and despair. To these victims we offer the consolations of religion.

The principal means of subordinating the lives of actual existing humans to some purpose "higher and more important" than life is the positing of the existence of supernatural forces or beings. This is the experience of "Alienation."

Those churches oriented toward social justice, a reverence for life and a rejection of revenge are declining in adherents. At the same time, new church members are disproportionately attracted to charismatic emotion, demonization, wealth and social status. Ethical and just behaviour is not dependant upon belief in supernatural beings, forces and causation. Religion is an impediment to taking just action in the world of the present because it orients aspiration to the hereafter.

It is now established that the subjective sensation of mystical experience has a location in the brain. Feelings of ecstasy, idealism, serenity and consolation are available though relationships in the human community, nature and collective action. The bravery of humans as the only beings who can communicate a knowledge that they will inevitably die, is diminished by religious escapism.

Social work should oppose all justifications for murder, brutalization and oppression. The profession should value community and an appreciation of the bravery of humans facing death from disease, accidents and old age with equanimity and without illusion.

David P. Williams, BA, MSW, PhD, RSW Retired Associate Professor, Maritime School of Social Work Assessor in Custody - Family Court, Private practice

Importance of Spiritual Experiences in First Nations Healing

The legacy of British and French colonial occupation and their traumatic impact on the native peoples of North America has left a profound imprint on First Nations culture and their peoples treatment needs. Historical researchers document First Nations' history as one of massive trauma, unresolved grief and a legacy of genocide (e.g., Legters, 1988; Braveheart-Jordan & DeBruyn, 1994; McDonald, 1990; Washburn, 1998). Jackson (1999) notes that "spiritual wounding" is of special note when treating First Nations individuals. LaFramboise, Trimble, and Mohhat (1990) note that First Nations healing often requires individuals to transcend the ego, rather than strengthening it as Western therapies aim to do.

This paper will focus on the healing potential of Spiritual or numinous experiences. I will examine my experiences in working with first nations clientele and my Heuristic research among individuals in native communities in which I worked. In conclusion, I will touch on how a social work practitioner can help a client process trauma through utilizing the clients spiritual/numinous experiences, or in some cases, help a client to generate their own numinous experiences.

Daria (Shewchuk) Dann, M.S.W., PhD, R.S.W., C.S.W Kamloops, British Columbia

Dr. Dann is the director of Shewchuk-Dann & Associates. Daria has been active in social work practice for 30 years and has experience in a broad variety of settings and with many populations including mental health, sexual abuse, child therapy, trauma work, child welfare, addictions, crisis intervention, forensics and family violence.

Daria has worked with children and adults, is a skilled workshop presenter, and has taught at colleges and universities.

ABORIGINAL THERAPISTS EXPLORING SPIRITUALITY WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

A qualitative grounded theory approach was used to increase understanding of spirituality based on the views of Aboriginal therapists working therapeutically with Aboriginal people. Data was gathered via semi-structured interviews and analysis was completed by the constant comparative method. The findings conclude that as each therapist was unique in her approach to therapy, so was each Aboriginal person unique in terms of his/her own spirituality. The data also revealed that each person involved in the therapeutic relationship was made to feel worthy, valuable and each had his/her own unique place in the Universe as a sacred being. The objectives of this proposal are to expand awareness of therapists and those in the helping profession to comprehend the need to include, if not verbally, then an unspoken belief that each person deserves the respect, trust, love and compassion of a genuine therapist. The overall intent is to acknowledge the benefits of including spirituality in the therapeutic relationship for all peoples.

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Traditional healing: Insight into social work knowledge from the Middle East

This paper – based on previous research published by Alean Al-Krenawi and John R. Graham - examines the significance to social work practice of traditional healing among Bedouin-Arab peoples in the Middle East. This community is predominantly Muslim, has historically been nomadic, and in the past generation has started to encounter helping professions such as social work. Among rituals common to this people are Zurah (saints' tomb visiting), Rahamah (memorial ritual for the dead), and Dhikr (invocating God's name). Healing rituals are fundamental to this community's cultural canon, are inextricably linked with its strongly Islamic basis of living, and are an un-stigmatizing and legitimised aspect of its natural helping systems and traditional forms of physical and mental healing. This case study analysis of one community's experience with traditional healing, in turn, provides insight into how social work epistemology may continue to cultivate a culturally appropriate stance to knowledge and skills.

John R. Graham, PhD Professor of Social Work, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Balancing Respect for Beliefs of a Religious Community and the Best Interests of the Client

In the Waterloo area of southern Ontario, a substantial community of Old Order Mennonites lives and practices a lifestyle that is tied directly to its religious beliefs. Their convictions regarding living apart from the world and caring for each other within the community underlie their limited utilization of social services. However, from time to time, they must interact with 'outside' professionals for human services.

This paper will describe some of the findings from interviews with members of the Old Order Mennonite community and human services professionals working with them. The study found a high level of cooperation between members of the Mennonite and professional communities with evidence of mutual respect, a sincere desire to understanding each others' concerns, and very creative resolutions to problems. The areas of greatest challenge were those in which there were potential conflicts between the beliefs and principles of the Old Order Mennonite community and the values and obligations of the social work profession. Examples such as counseling an individual member who was deliberating about leaving the faith community and dealing with an incident involving abuse illustrate how social workers can facilitate collaborative problem-solving processes that respect both the religious community's beliefs and their own professional ethics.

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FROM ECOLOGY TO SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Many social workers, and individuals from all walks of life, are deeply concerned about the environment and the problems created by pollution, habitat destruction, and the exploitation of renewable and non-renewable 'resources,' to name a few. The motivation to take part in action to protect the environment rests on many and varied factors including 'survivalist fears' or human-centred motivations, which arise from concern for local destruction and for our species' survival. However, for many people environmental awareness and action leads to a growing awareness of the interdependence of all things and an appreciation of the unfolding nature of Earth's evolutionary journey. This consciousness expands toward a deeper sense of our connectedness to Earth, and to everyone and everything on it. This sense of connectedness can lead to a new understanding of human/Earth relationships and of the role of the human on Earth, and provides a spiritual foundation for action in support of ecological and social justice.

What may have began as a concern for the environment expands toward a holistic conception of the relationship of people and nature; this new consciousness can be a spiritual foundation for action against all forms of exploitation. This presentation will review the spiritual transition from a modern to holistic world view, and the relevance of a 'deeply ecological spirituality' for social work.

John Coates, PhD Associate Professor Department of Social Work St. Thomas University Fredericton, NB, E3B 2P3 jcoates@stu.ca

Whale Watching, Spiritual Awakenings and Social Justice

The concept of Eco-feminism has provided us with an organizing framework for looking at the relationship between spirituality and social justice within an environmental context. This paper will explore the intense emotional reactions and deep feelings of connection that people report experiencing while whale watching in the North Atlantic. Many describe these experiences as highly spiritual. Examining the creation of a bridge between

this spiritual understanding/knowing and the development of a new understanding of social action toward the protection of these beings and ourselves in our mutually shared environment will be discussed.

Using various descriptions, people who encounter whales describe their experiences as humbling and transformative. When asked to elaborate they use words such as "awe struck", "mystical experience", "overwhelmed with emotions" and "it was the best day of my life" or "it changed my life". As observers and practitioners of social and personal changes these reports are noteworthy. This paper will describe the process of joining spirituality and social justice through an awareness of our own vulnerability and the paradoxical awareness of the vulnerability and power of the whales.

Helen Ball, JoAnne Zamparo and the Whales of the North Atlantic

Faculty of Social Work Memorial University of Newfoundland St. John's, NF

Group 3: 1:15 - 2:45, Thursday, June 5

Pedagogy for Transformation: Including Spirituality When Teaching about Oppression

Liberation Practice International (LPI) is an organization that works globally to provide education for transformative practice within the social services. LPI has visited countries around the world, working with practitioners from various contexts. LPI offers an educational program, which is rooted in Liberation Theology, Critical Pedagogy and the Wisdom Traditions. Spirituality is included in LPI discussion on race, class, sexual orientation and various other issues, regarding social justice and power relations.

LPI instructors report that including spirituality in their teaching helps to create a non-threatening learning environment, to examine social justice issues within social work practice. Instructors also report being able to foster a sense of connection, compassion, hope and agency among students. According to the literature, these dynamics are often named as necessary but lacking, when teaching about oppression in the university classroom (Aymer & Bryan, 1996; Chau, 1990; Davis, 1992; Garcia & VanSoest, 1997, 1999, 2000; Greenman & Kimmel, 1995; hooks, 2000; LeDoux & Montavlo, 1999; Razack, 1999; Ring, 2000; Romney, Tatum & Jones, 1992; Sevig & Etzkorn, 2001, Tatum, 1994; VanSoest, 1994, 1996).

This paper will explore some of the struggles presented in the literature, in relation to teaching about oppression, in a university classroom. It will then turn to the educational paradigm of Liberation Practice International to see what can be learned in order to address these struggles. The paper will provide concrete strategies for instructors to incorporate spirituality into their pedagogical practice, when teaching about oppression. The reader will gain tools to address the struggles that may deter students from wanting to learn about oppression, learning which is needed for a liberation practice.

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Dianne Prevatt-Hyles MSW, Adv. Dip. Contract faculty at York University, recently retired practitioner of 23 years at Toronto Catholic District School Board. Currently the Director of Liberation Practice International (LPI).

Social Work Pedagogy and Spirituality

This paper presentation examines and presents for consideration preliminary findings from a qualitative study exploring issues regarding the inclusion of spirituality in social work education. Both social work professors and students from six different Schools of Social Work in Ontario were individually interviewed using a semi-structured format, and the interviews were analyzed using a grounded theory approach. The research explored participants' ideas and concerns about incorporating spirituality in social work courses; how discussions about spirituality are a part of educational processes; the effects spiritual discussions and processes have on teaching and learning

experiences; and views on the implications of including spirituality in social work education. The initial findings are compared with an anti-oppressive pedagogical stance and goals of social justice.

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Ecology, Spirituality and Resilience in At-risk Children

The literature on childhood resilience has defined resilience as resulting from an individual constellation of characteristics and capacities, or as the result of interpersonal processes that mitigate the impact of biological, psychological and social factors that threaten a child's well-being. My purpose in this presentation is to broaden our understanding of resilience to address its spiritual aspects, specifically the role a deep and meaningful connection with the natural environment can play in protecting individuals against risk. Studies of resilience that make references to spirituality have left ambiguous its protective function, most often equating spirituality with regular attendance at religious services or self-identified participation in a religious community. Through a review of the literature on deep and social ecologies and discussion of two studies of exemplary programs that give atrisk children opportunities to experience their natural world, the links between spirituality, ecology and resilience will be explored. The first of these programs develops leadership in marginal youth populations through environmental awareness and promotion of healthy eco-systems. The second gives delinquents opportunities to appreciate natural woodlands and ocean environments through the building of boats and experience sailing. Specifically, it will be shown that outcomes from participation in a spiritual community are similar to those resulting from the connection that is made when children promote and participate interactively with their physical environment. These interactive experiences with both spiritual communities and natural environments bolsters a child's resilience by providing opportunities for self-efficacy, meaningful involvement in one's community, a sense of personal coherence, a powerful identity, social skills and experiences of social justice, each a previously noted outcome from studies of resilience. This presentation concludes with a discussion of the practical implications of linking spirituality, ecology and resilience in at-risk child populations.

Michael Ungar, PhD and Wanda MacDonald

Michael Ungar, PhD Wanda MacDonald Associate Professor Clinical Therapist and Team Leader Maritime School of Social Work Choices Adolescent Treatment Program Dalhousie University Addiction, Prevention and Treatment Services Halifax, Nova Scotia Nova Scotia Hospital Canada B3H 2A7 Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, B2Y 3Z6 michael.ungar@dal.ca

RADICAL ECOLOGISMS: REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATING SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SPIRITUALITY

Social work's conventional person/environment models have been guiding principles of professional practice for many decades. A major difficulty with these perspectives is their tendency to restrict the definition of environment to limited interpersonal realms. The concept of nature is generally ignored or becomes the benign backdrop for more fundamentally important personal processes. Social work's conventional environmental models thus fail to articulate a distinct description and explanation of the complex connection between humans and the natural environment. This presentation examines the importance of nature to human development in light of philosophical insights from radical ecologisms. It will suggest ways social work educators can utilize radical ecological thought as an organizing framework for teaching students about spirituality and issues of social justice.

Deep ecology and ecofeminism, philosophical contributors to a radical perspective, offer social work rich conceptual frameworks for constructing a more theoretically consistent and practically relevant language of

nature. These frameworks are consistent with the profession's ethical commitment to attend to a full range of environmental factors that can enhance well being as well as create problems in living, and to foster educational initiates and forms of practice which promote social justice and social change. Unfortunately, social work has had difficulty articulating the implications of a radical perspective on the natural environment even though the profession conceives of itself as uniquely situated at the interface of both person and environment.

Social work theorists Maria Hoff and John McNutt (1994) are among the first to explore the theoretical and practice link between a radical environmental perspective of nature and individual and social development. Though Hoff and McNutt's work expands personal and environmental constructs to include human transaction with the total planetary ecosystem there is a continued need to conceptually elaborate on their findings by exploring the spiritual and social justice dimensions of a radical environmental perspective. This presentation will engage the participants in a didactic and experiential encounter with important spiritual and social justice precepts of deep ecology and ecofeminism and address implications of a new nature conscious social work profession. Specific practice skills and theory include nature spirituality and human well-being, wilderness practice, and ecojustice, social justice and empowerment practice. At the beginning of this new millennium, society and the social work profession is in eminent transition suggesting that we can no longer ignore that humans are involved in a complex connection with the earth that extends beyond our mere instrumental association with it. Social work must conceptually reorient itself to recognize the powerful spiritual and social justice logic that inherently binds humans to the natural realm. In an effort to help social work educators integrate spiritual and social justice applications of a radical ecological perspective into the curriculum, this presentation will provide concrete techniques designed to involve teachers and students in this process. The first involves a journaling exercise that helps sensitize participants to the way personal ownership of property despoils our connection to wilderness by negating the idea of the commons. The second strategy involves a reflective approach referred to as a political genogram that helps participants recognize the relationship between personal political identity, power, and a social justice orientation. A third approach involves the utilization of a focusing exercise called the ecoconfessional to help participants identify those activities and ideas which increase a sense of ecological guilt and thus inhibit our ability to connect spiritually with the natural environment.

References

Hoff, M. D. & McNutt, J. G., (eds.) (1994). The global environmental crisis: Implications for social welfare and social work. Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing.

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Spirituality and The AfricentricWorld View: Implication for Social Work Practice With African Nova Scotians

Since the 1990's scholarship describing and articulating the Afrocentric worldview has increased. In commenting on the attractiveness of Africentrism, Mazama (2001) maintains that its appeal lies in both the disturbing conditions of African people and the remedy that Afrocentricity suggests. In describing Africentricity, Everett, Chipungu, and Leashore remark: "The Afrocentric perspective describes the ethos of African and African Americans and the values that guide the way African Americans interact with the world around the" (p.5).

In relation to human services, the philosophy underlying the Africentric worldview is serving as the blueprint guiding social work practice with individuals, groups, families and communities of African descent in the United States and parts of Canada such as Nova Scotia.

There are a number of philosophical principles that form the basis of Africentrism. This paper will focus on the role that spirituality plays in this worldview. The application of this aspect of Africentrism will be discussed in relation to social work practice with African Nova Scotians and their communities.

David Este, PhD Associate Professor Faculty of Social Work University of Calgary

Spirituality: Is it a Survival Strategy for Black Men?

Much of the social science literature and popular culture renders African Canadian men's experiences invisible, seriously compromised and/or marginalized. This presentation will critically examine the role of spirituality in the lives of Black men of African descent in the Diaspora. Using a reflective analysis of data gathered in a crossnational research project that explored survival strategies used by Black men in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Sheffield, England, this presentation will specifically focus on their discourse about spirituality as a survival strategy. The findings in this research challenge some of the social science literature, which pathologizes Black men who are not typically described as spiritual beings. My interest in this topic is both personal and professional. The professional interests emerged through the conduct of the research with Black men. The personal is embedded in my own understanding and experience of spirituality and its utility as a tool that can take African people beyond survival.

An African proverb reads..." If you want to know the end, look at the beginning". In this session, I will discuss traditional notions of spirituality, an Africentric view of spirituality, and through the men's voices explore their experiences of spirituality as a survival strategy and their reflections on its utility in future generations of Black men. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of implications for social work education and practice.

Wanda Thomas Bernard, PhD Maritime School of Social Work Dalhousie University Halifax, NS

T. Chalmers, C. S. Loch And M. Richmond's Development of Helping Methods, Client Change Processes and Social Contexts For Intervention

From the nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, T. Chalmers, Charles S. Loch and, M. Richmond influenced one another's development of increasingly systematic and socially oriented charitable and social work methods; conceptualized about reciprocal charitable and social work helping processes; and focused upon the purposeful formation and arrangement of persons, physical objects and social relations into "unities," a social life and a social situation. Chalmers defines collocation as Divine and secular persons reciprocal, adaptive and charitable responses fashioning and/or arranging individuals' social relations, bodily components and personalities into persons with physical objects into natural "contexts." Chalmers' charitable method encouraged collocative charities as the bases for four charitable fountains occurring between recipients and others developing community.

Loch states that his charitable method of "interventions" are based upon Chalmers' ideas of collocative charities and four charitable fountains. Loch adds that charitable "interventions" encourage Divine and secular persons caring activities fashioning an "organised charity" of "unities," persons social thoughts about physical objects, a "social life" and group relations. Richmond interpreted Chalmers and Loch's contributions as developing charitable methods fostering purposeful and mutual helpfulness between benefactors and recipients. Richmond progressed from a charitable to a social treatment method of social study, diagnosis and interventions encouraging mutual helping and improvement of client social relations and minds within social situations.

Joel Majonis, Ph.D. Renison College University of Waterloo Waterloo, ON

Group 4: 3:00 - 4:30, Thursday, June 5

Spirit at Work - Integrating Spirituality and Work

It seems that employees everywhere are questioning the relationship between spirituality and their work. They are seeking work that is inspiring and meaningful along with environments that nurture their creativity and personal growth. "Spirit at work" is a term that describes the experience of employees who are passionate about and find meaning in their work. It is reported to add meaning to one's life, enhance creativity, and increase commitment to one's work. Although the phenomenon is gaining interest in both the corporate and academic worlds, investigations into spirit at work are just beginning and the bulk of this research has focused on organizational spirit at work. We know less about individual spirit at work. This qualitative study provides a definition of spirit at work experienced at an individual level. Fourteen professionals, who not only experienced spirit at work, but whose work also involved researching or promoting spirit at work, participated through interviews or written surveys. Participants were asked about what is spirit at work and then they were asked to describe a personal experience of spirit at work. Although most people had difficulty providing a comprehensive definition for spirit at work, they found it very easy to recall and describe such an experience. These rich descriptions of their personal experiences of spirit at work revealed much consistency in experiences among individuals, regardless of differences in career, gender, or religious/spiritual beliefs. Participants' descriptions revealed that spirit at work is a distinct state that has physical, affective, cognitive, interpersonal, spiritual and mystical dimensions. This state involves positive physical sensations, profound well-being and joy, a belief that one's work makes a contribution, a sense of connection to others and common purpose, a sense of connection to something larger than self, and a sense of perfection and transcendence. Provision of a comprehensive definition of spirit at work should facilitate further research, for example, the development of a tool to measure spirit at work. It should also provide direction to individuals and organizations wanting to foster spirit at work at the individual level.

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Exploring the Experience of BSW Field Practica in Christian-Based Agencies

In the past few years increasing attention has been given to the role of religion and spirituality in social work practice and education. A brief review of social work literature (Sheridan & Amato-von Hemert, 1999; Drouin, 2002; Tuzi, 2002) and a growing number of professional conferences such as the Second Annual Canadian Conference on Spirituality and Social Work, provide evidence of this increased interest. Although practitioners and educators are beginning to inquire about role and place of spirituality within social work practice, empirical research in this area is still at a very beginning stage (Sheridan & Amato-von Hemert, 1999).

Field education has always been viewed as an important component of undergraduate social work education. It is in these experiences that students integrate foundational knowledge, theory, appropriate values and ethics, practice skills, and are exposed to a wide range of experiences to enhance their development as beginning social work professionals. CASSW accreditation standards emphasis the importance of diversity content in schools of social work and of preparing students "to practice in a range of geographical regions and with diverse ethnic, cultural and racial populations" (CASSW Board of Accreditation Manual, 2002). This would suggest that schools need to consider preparing students for practice in a number of religiously-based social service agencies. However, it is the experience of the authors that religiously-based social service agencies are often treated with caution and hesitancy as potential field placement sites for students.

This paper explores the experience of one school of social work in expanding its field placement sites by utilizing Christian-based social service agencies. This case study explores the experience of four BSW students who were placed in three different organizations. Interviews and a focus group with the participating students focused on their perceptions of the place of religion and spirituality in social work practice, and in the specific field placement agencies; on how the experience in these organizations was, or was not different than field placements in secular

organizations; on the identification of conflicts or issues (practice, theory, values, ethics) between the profession and the agency related to the religious context; on the congruence of the students' personal beliefs with those of the agency; and on students' perceptions of educational needs related to spirituality and social work practice.

The downsizing of public social services in many Canadian provinces may also have created an increased interest in religiously-based organizations providing service. In the past year, the authors' school has been approached a number of times to facilitate field placements within these organizations. Although this study is a beginning piece of inquiry, it is hoped that the findings may assist other schools in considering how to adequately prepare students for practice in this settings and to address the emerging issues.

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Feminist Community Organizing: The Spectre of the Sacred and the Secular

How does spirituality haunt the identities of secular feminist organizers? In a recent series of interviews and discussion groups, I explored how a group of friends and colleagues came to think of themselves as feminists and community organizers. These conversations occurred after a decade of working together to challenge poverty and homelessness. While their organizing was exclusively secular, stories of religion and spirituality often wove through their discussions. The sacred inflected their conversations in four ways: 1) as an oppressive institution, 2) as a space

in which feminist organizers, as children, were socialized to care for their communities and act against social injustice, 3) as a metaphor to explain how feminism informs community work, and 4) in reference to alternative spiritualities that sustain some feminist organizers. Though it is possible to identify four distinct ways in which the sacred was used in conversation, what is interesting is how they intertwine, often paradoxically, within and across similar narratives. In addition, I argue that these stories are shaped by a broader social discourse about social work and community organizing, which similarly negotiates spaces between secularity, religiosity and spirituality. In reflecting on these stories and the way we tell them, I suggest that taking into account how secular feminist organizing is constituted through notions of the sacred opens up new spaces for thinking about feminist community development.

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Spirituality and Grounded Practice

Understanding social justice as influencing relationships between individuals and groups, we wish to discuss within an academic paper format, the link between spirituality and socially just clinical practice.

For the past three years we have been examining our practices with one another, our colleagues and clients using a postmodern critical perspective. Using a Foucauldian approach, we have tried to make visible the circulation of power inherent within social work relationships, whether between supervisor and social worker or practitioner and client.

Our personal experiences led us to position these examinations within a spiritual context. We found we needed to articulate what we meant by spirituality and how this operated as a framework within which to understand power relations. We think of spirituality as impacting on our entire lives as understood, felt, imagined, and decided upon in relationship to a reality greater than ourselves, which then demands an ethical stance in relation to the other.

Using the insights of thinkers as diverse as Foucault, Levinas, Merton, Benedict and Nouwen we will discuss how they have helped us position ourselves so as to be able to respect the alterity of the staff and clients and to attempt to articulate social justice within a family service agency setting.

Laura Béres Denis Costello

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TALKING SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL WORK

In this paper, we distinguish between secular and religious spirituality. The presenters link concepts of social justice to spiritual dimensions of social work. Drawing from our own (different) spiritual traditions, we discuss how they inform our clinical and educational practice. For example social justice can be referenced from the Hebrew Scriptures where God intervenes in the lives of the underprivileged to save them from the injustices or through spiritual emergence where one is awakened to a view that all things are fundamental interconnected and interdependent. We discuss our experiences of gaining confidence in finding spirituality in social work and how as a result we have edited a book on the topic. One of us has studied spirituality and counseling, while the other teaches social work students, some of whom are indigenous and more comfortable when the spiritual dimensions of life are acknowledged. Diverse client groups have expectations about the place of spirituality in their lives. It is part of social justice that social workers recognize and meet these expectations appropriately. The paper concludes with examples of clinical practice and social work education in the emerging field of practice that is known as spirituality and social work.

Dr. Mary Nash, Senior Lecturer, Massey University, New Zealand Bruce Stewart, MSW, M. Phil, Clinical Social Worker

Narratives, Reflecting Teams and Spirituality in Social Work Education

With the resurgence of interest in spirituality in social work and counselling, new forms of adult learning have begun to emerge to assist students to bridge the gap between spirituality and practice. One learning format involves students exploring their own spiritual narratives in order to share them in a reflecting team setting, where other students witness and listen to these stories and accounts in the light of their own spiritual narratives and experiences.

These reflecting processes have originated in family therapy through the work of the Norwegian psychiatrist Tom Andersen, and were further developed for counsellor education by the Australian narrative therapist Michael White. Through her work with an elderly Jewish population in Venice, California, the American anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff explored the spirituality of sharing personal and collective stories in "re-membering conversations," combined with a form of sharing/ witnessing by the community which Myerhoff calls "definitional ceremonies."

Drawing on Myerhoff's work (as well as Andersen and White), a learning format has been developed as part of a graduate course on spirituality and counselling practice. Videotape responses of MSW and MA students through follow-up interviews provide descriptions of their experience of the spiritual narrative/reflecting team format as an holistic educational process with a spiritual dimension.

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