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## Spiritual Development and Baccalaureate Social Work Education: One Historic Program

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# Spiritual Development and Baccalaureate Social Work Education: One Historic Program

## Abstract

Religion has been a universal dynamic which has unified, divided, and motivated human beings from the beginning of time. The profession of social work was birthed from the momentum produced from the impact of religion on society in the United States, propelling volunteers to pursue societal change and to better humanity. Transforming historical trends in the political, psychological, and theological realms moved the profession of social work from the auspice of the religious to the secular and from the volunteer to the professional. Social work education developed out of religious motivation and soon divided into baccalaureate and masters level education with a very clear secular tone. In response, a historic Bible college in the evangelical Christian tradition pursues "Bible Social Work" and is the first school of its kind to gain baccalaureate social work accreditation. This study explores the motivation of students and alumni to choose a social work education that combines both Bible and social work. This study also explores the nature of difference between current social work students and alumni in their spiritual development. Findings, limitations, and areas for further study are discussed. The implications for this study seek to influence social work education to validate religious conviction as a legitimate strength and motivating factor in the pursuit of a social work education.

## Degree Type

Dissertation

## Degree Name

Doctor of Social Work (DSW)

## First Advisor

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## Third Advisor

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## Subject Categories

Social and Behavioral Sciences | Social Work

**Spiritual Development and Baccalaureate Social Work Education: One Historic  
Program**

**Lloyd Gestoso**

A DISSERTATION

in

Social Work

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Social Work

2015

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## ABSTRACT

### SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORK

#### EDUCATION: ONE HISTORIC PROGRAM

Lloyd Gestoso

Dr. Ram Cnaan

Religion has been a universal dynamic which has unified, divided, and motivated human beings from the beginning of time. The profession of social work was birthed from the momentum produced from the impact of religion on society in the United States, propelling volunteers to pursue societal change and to better humanity. Transforming historical trends in the political, psychological, and theological realms moved the profession of social work from the auspice of the religious to the secular and from the volunteer to the professional. Social work education developed out of religious motivation and soon divided into baccalaureate and masters level education with a very clear secular tone. In response, a historic Bible college in the evangelical Christian tradition pursues “Bible Social Work” and is the first school of its kind to gain baccalaureate social work accreditation. This study explores the motivation of students and alumni to choose a social work education that combines both Bible and social work. This study also explores the nature of difference between current social work students and alumni in their spiritual development. Findings, limitations, and areas for further study are discussed. The implications for this study seek to influence social work education to validate religious conviction as a legitimate strength and motivating factor in the pursuit of a social work education.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Social work and religion have been closely related from the inception of the social work profession. It is widely agreed upon that the origins of social work are rooted in a tradition of individuals who were empowered by religious faith and demonstrated compassion to those in need (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999). What started as religious motivation from the tenets of religion became more formal structures of helping in order to meet the needs of larger groups of people. Helping others from a religious context was seen as a “calling” which ultimately means vocation (Singletary, Harris, Myers, & Scales, 2006). However, how each culture and religious tradition operationalized their calling to love and care for those in need differs depending on their context. Some churches provided care from within their congregations, others established organizations to address a specific need such as orphans care or the disabled, and others provided training programs which are now established universities (Cnaan et al., 1999).

The journey of social work education in the United States starting from its religious roots has been a long and eventful one. Baccalaureate and master’s level social work education has evolved in its scope and in relation to each other. The historic conflicts are a distraction from what society desperately needs social workers to respond to. What has not been discussed is the additional dynamic of religion as a motivating factor in social work education. According to Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), 36.8% of all baccalaureate social work programs identify as private-religion affiliated (CSWE, 2012). The history of social work has demonstrated roots in religion. How does baccalaureate social work link so closely with religion and what are the

characteristics of the students that choose to study at these schools? How has religion played such a significant role in social work yet we know so little about the influence of religion and religiosity in the spiritual development in students?

Evangelical Christianity (EC) plays a significant role in the culture of the United States of America. Politically and culturally, conservative EC has been a source of influence and divide. Social work, historically founded by Christians, has attempted to move away from Christianity in search of a scientific “higher ground” in order to represent the diversity of the clients served and not to promote personal religious and spiritual beliefs. In doing so, the unintended consequence would be a perception of discrimination against EC in social work education years later. Along with this, the historical development of the social work profession faced not only divide from political and cultural values, but divide from within itself between baccalaureate and masters level programs, all in the pursuit of power, influence, and control. These divides have evolved over the years with limited research about baccalaureate social work programs or the impact EC has had on the spiritual development of social workers. Additionally, the evolution of social work accreditation has centered on secular and scientific values that dominate the activities of social work faculty attempting to meet accreditation standards in eight-year cycles. This has drawn attention away from the core values that motivate students to study social in the first place and the mandates that drive social work programs, particularly religious ones.

The following study will trace the history of social work education; particularly the divide between baccalaureate and master’s level education and the influence religion

has on the social work profession. This progress leads to the evolving of social work accreditation standards ultimately guiding the priorities of the profession.

Focus will then center on Evangelical Christian baccalaureate programs, particularly the historic one at Cairn University. What motivates students in an EC university to choose social work and how does this religiosity influence their spiritual development? What happens to the students in regards to their spiritual development, as they become alumni?

### The History of Social Work Education and the Influence of Christian Religion

Baccalaureate social work programs are now the foundation of the social work profession with at least 36.8% coming from private religion-affiliated programs that demonstrate an undeniable link between social work and religion (CSWE, 2012). As of June 2014 there are 500 baccalaureate social work programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2014) with 13 programs in candidacy. In contrast, there are 233 accredited master's social work programs (CSWE, 2014). With no historical context, some may assume that baccalaureate social work education birthed the master's social work programs and that a seamless and collaborative relationship between the two occurred in order to meet society's need for social workers. Certainly, collaboration exists more so now than ever between undergraduate and graduate social work programs; however, the journey has not been as smooth as it would appear. Alexander states, "Nothing in the social work profession has created the controversy, aroused emotions, and has been subjected to as much debate as the growth of the BSW degree and practitioner, with the possible exception of the practice-policy dichotomy" (Baer & Federico, 1978, p. 7). However, to understand the present day BSW education in the

United States, one needs to understand the history of social work as a profession and the evolution of social work education.

Loving your neighbor and pursuing justice are ancient ideas, which are firmly rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. These values, which later develop into the profession of social work, manifest in different ways throughout world history. From caring for the poor through the church during feudalism, through the reformation and the enlightenment to the breakdown of feudalism and mass economic shifts which result in mass poverty, leaders needed to respond to the human challenges. The slow shift from the church to a government response to human needs takes hold in 1536 with the Henrician Poor Law – The Act for the Punishment of Study Vagabonds and Beggars which later becomes the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601 (Barker, 2003). These laws attempt to categorize the poor to determine who was and was not worthy of assistance.

Although the government is now involved in managing the poor, religious leaders remain significant in their response. In 1819, Thomas Chalmers, a pastor and theologian in Scotland, sought to meet the needs of the disadvantaged in Glasgow. His model was based on a parish approach, which utilized the church deacons to distribute resources to those in need. Chalmers developed the methodology, which would later become the London Charity Organization Society (de Schweinitz, 1943). Reverend Joseph Tuckerman modeled Chalmers' work in Boston and later Reverend Steven H. Gurteen established the first Charity Organization Society (COS) in Buffalo, New York. Gurteen authored what some consider the first social work text, *A Handbook of Charity Organization* in 1882 (Barker, 2003). The Gurteen model of the COS began in churches, however, in response to the depression of 1893, expanded beyond the church and rather

than use deacons as in Chalmers' model, it utilized "friendly visitors" (Rauch, 1975). As friendly visitors were mobilized, it became clear to some that training is required to increase the effectiveness with those in need.

One of the most well-known members of the COS is Mary Richmond. Richmond was a high school graduate who started as a clerk in the COS and was promoted to the highest-ranking position in the organization general secretary (Franklin, 1986). Although Richmond was often credited for the secularization of social work, her religious convictions for the work were clearly related to her faith (Cnaan et al., 1999). In 1897, in a speech to the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, Richmond presented a plan for a national training center for charity workers (Austin, 1986). The momentum for training thrust Francis Peabody, who taught Social Ethics at Harvard, and Simon Patten, a professor of economics at the Wharton School, to teach in early social work programs. Practical field training of the charity workers also played a role with Mary Richmond teaching the inaugural lectures at the Philadelphia School as the director of the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity (Lloyd, 2008).

One of the earliest forms of baccalaureate social work was in 1904 at the Boston School for Social Workers that was directly linked to the charity organization, the Boston Associated Charities, which had an academic connection to Harvard University and Simmons College (Leighninger, 2000). The social work courses were integrated into the last year of a four-year B.A. program and were part of a double course in social ethics at Harvard (Brackett, 1906 & Leighninger, 2000).

In the midst of social movements stemming from the remnants of the end of slavery, the pursuit of women's suffrage and prohibition, and new opportunities for

women in particular to combine religious conviction with a new profession of social work, momentum was great for social work to establish itself. This momentum paused at the keynote address of Abraham Flexner at the 1915 Conference of Charities and Corrections on “Is Social Work a Profession?” Flexner, well known for evaluating professions and making recommendations, cited six criteria for “established” professions: “Professions involve essentially intellectual operations with large individual responsibility, derive their material from science and learning, this material they work up to a practical and definite end, possess and educationally communicable technique, tend to self-organization, and are increasingly altruistic” (Flexner, 1915; Pumphrey & Pumphrey, 1961). Flexner also called this new profession to humility and patience in its development. He recommended “critical care” as they move forward carefully considering the unintended consequences of the path chosen. Flexner also highlighted the “humanitarian and spiritual elements” to which social work appeals to and to consider this as the profession develops a “professional spirit.” Flexner’s speech had a tremendous impact on social work. Social workers, many of whom were professional women, became concerned with professional status and some were placed in a defensive posture. The “humanitarian and spiritual elements” which Flexner referred to were set aside for a medical model approach, ultimately to pursue professional acceptance. Curriculum standards were both debated and enforced with more emphasis on scientific approaches. Specialized courses in child welfare, medical social work, probation, and the like were offered with little that centered on settlement houses, which were mostly staffed by volunteers. Lubove (1968) addressed this directly and stated, “Social work’s emergence as a profession resulted not only in the devaluation of voluntarism but in the chronic

tension between public and private welfare” (Lubove, 1968). Voluntarism, which had been viewed as a duty of the citizen, became a privilege granted by philanthropic agencies to those who accepted their discipline (Lubove, 1968).

Mary Richmond published *Social Diagnosis* (1917) as an answer to the Flexner address. Richmond in the preface of *Social Diagnosis* stated the following;

With other practitioners--with physicians and lawyers, for example--there was always a basis of knowledge held in common. If a neurologist had occasion to confer with a surgeon, each could assume in the other a mastery of the elements of a whole group of basic sciences and of the formulated and transmitted experience of his own guild besides. But what common knowledge could social workers assume in like case? This was my query of fifteen years ago. It seemed to me then, and it is still my opinion, that the elements of social diagnosis, if formulated, should constitute a part of the ground which all social case workers could occupy in common, and that it should become possible in time to take for granted, in every social practitioner, a knowledge and mastery of those elements, and of the modifications in them which each decade of practice would surely bring (p.5).

Richmond’s (1917) original idea was to write a book on social work with families, yet she concluded that, “It soon became apparent, however; that no methods or aims were peculiarly and solely adapted to the treatment of the families that found their way to a charity organization society” (p. 5). Therefore, her vision was to attain a level of universality in skills as has been attained in medicine, so that if certain elements are mastered, a common ground could be shared as a profession. Her view was that social diagnosis would be the starting point. Although Richmond had clear religious roots, she identified with the biological sciences (Franklin, 1986). In seeking credibility, Richmond (1917) aligned social work with the prevailing professions of the era; medicine and law pursuing both diagnosis and evidence.

In the pursuit of a scientific base and what was closely linked to sociology and economics, social work moved toward psychological theory in order to better explain

behavior within social casework. Psychiatric social work and the response to shell shocked veterans of World War I prompted training programs to focus on Freudian and Rankian theories of developmental psychology, which were important in pursuing the scientific base. Community organization, group work, administration, social policy, and research have persisted to evolve as curriculum continues to adapt to the needs of what is presented by clients. However, in pursuit of the “scientific base” social work faculty adopted epistemological and empirical approaches abandoning theological approaches in order to gain acceptance in the academy (Cnaan et al., 1999). This pursuit of credibility also led to the preference for graduate school level training over the baccalaureate. It was perceived that the graduate degree was a confirmation of an individual’s professional status (Leighninger, 2000). The American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW) was established in 1919 and originally included baccalaureate programs yet soon it worked exclusively with graduate level education seeking to secure status for the social work profession (Stuart, 1993) in many ways modeling after the graduate level requirements of law and medicine. AASSW pursued accreditation standards and required all new member schools to have at least one year of coursework on the graduate level by 1932 and by 1939 two year graduate programs were required (Stuart, 1993). The social work professional organization of this era, the American Association of Social Workers, agreed that graduate level training is required for the practice of social work (Stuart, 1993)

Meanwhile, public colleges and universities in the Midwest and Southwest continued to respond to the demand for social workers often collaborating with sociology departments to establish programs. This was particularly the case in rural areas and

regions underserved by the existing graduate schools of social work (Stuart, 1993). Many of these tax supported universities in the Midwest were seeking to train people for public service employment and most of these opportunities were on the undergraduate level very much from the Populist movement providing services directly to citizens (Austin 1986). The very existence of these programs in the 1920s and 1930s caused controversy particularly when they approached AASSW for assistance (Austin, 1986; Stuart, 1993). At the annual meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association in 1942 undergraduate programs formed the National Association of Schools of Social Administration (NASSA). During its 11 years of existence, the NASSA was committed to undergraduate social work education, was declared the undergraduate social work education accrediting body, and was recognized by the national accrediting committee of state universities and land grant colleges and state welfare departments (Stuart, 1993). Rather than finding ways to collaborate with NASSA the AASSW pursued approaches to discredit undergraduate social work education.

The conflict between graduate and undergraduate programs was complex. In her book, in her book *Social Work and the Training of Social Workers*, Sydnor H. Walker (1928) states the following; “Some objections to undergraduate social work are that students in the undergraduate college are too immature to handle the subject matter of social work. The material is too complex for their comprehension. It is unfair to bring young persons into contact with the almost insoluble problems of the persons with whom social work deals. Social work involves assimilation of a body of material too large in quantity to be superimposed upon a liberal arts course. Others contend that vocational courses interfere with the necessary foundation courses. Field work can not be fitted into

the schedule of the undergraduate students without sacrificing college courses of the social agencies' interests" (p.149) Other areas of contention were whether undergraduate curriculum should be liberal arts based with only descriptive courses which would be categorized as "pre-professional" or whether it should also include teaching practice methods and be considered "professional." (Hollis & Taylor, 1951) Additionally to the conflict was the dilemma of if an individual completed undergraduate social work education should it be recognized and be granted some of the credit requirements in a two year graduate social work degree? Individuals who defined graduate social work education as the only legitimate professional social work training were the faculty of graduate programs and practicing social work professionals. They limited undergraduate social work education as "introductory material." Those advocating to define undergraduate social work education as professional, were college and university presidents and administrators of public social welfare agencies (Austin, 1986).

The introduction of new federal and state policy related to public assistance in the 1930's under the Social Security Act extended the discussion of the role of graduate and undergraduate social work education in equipping the staff necessary to meet the demand of new policy initiatives. Ultimately, interest on the part of graduate programs to train personnel for public assistance offices was minimal. Jane Hoey, administrator of the Federal Bureau of Public Assistance, who was responsible for the allocation of federal funds to support training programs for public assistance staff, ultimately chose undergraduate social work programs rather than the graduate programs (Leighninger, 1981). This further reinforced the elitist perceptions graduate programs had regarding undergraduate social work programs (Austin, 1986).

Negotiations between AASSW and NASSA resulted in joint committees to address the divide in social work education. A decision was made to conduct a comprehensive study of social work education, which resulted in the 1951 Hollis, and Taylor reported which reaffirmed graduate education as the only professional level in social work training (Hollis & Taylor, 1951). In 1952 AASSW and NASSA were united to form the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) yet undergraduate perspective continued to be underrepresented so much so that representatives of undergraduate programs were only permitted to participate if their undergraduate program was defined as pre-professional (Stuart et al., 1993). In 1952, approximately 50 undergraduate programs were granted constituent membership and by 1967, there it grew to 232. Yet within CSWE, they had little influence on policy.

External to CSWE, on a national level, political agendas were developed to address challenges in the United States and the Kennedy and Johnson Presidential administrations focused policy development to public social services. In 1961, Social Security Amendments were passed to address poverty, child welfare, and public assistance. Yet there was a significant shortage of social work manpower. In 1965 the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1965) published, "Closing the Gap in Social Work Manpower" which projected openings for thousands of new social workers including 100,000 new MSWs. It encouraged the differential use of staff including social workers with baccalaureate degrees. It stated the "critical need for advancement of undergraduate education in social welfare both for direct entry of graduates into practice and as preparation for graduate education" (Department of Health, Education, and Wealth, 1965 p.80-81). A commitment

was made for federal support for the advancement of undergraduate training and called for the recognition of undergraduate social work for eligibility of membership in professional associations and through access to state licensing. Another major milestone occurred in 1955, which began to address the void between undergraduate, and graduate education was in the establishment of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), which united seven social work organizations. The growth of NASW membership was significant especially when in 1969 they made a change in membership requirements to allow graduates from undergraduate social work programs to become full members.

In 1959, Boehm published a report sponsored by CSWE called “*Objectives for the Social Work Curriculum of the Future Vol. I.*” This comprehensive study identified three major curriculum areas: (1) theoretical content from the social sciences dealing with the individual, the small group and the social environment; (2) applied foundation content dealing with human growth and development and social welfare policy; and (3) practice methods content in casework, group work, community organization, administration and research. CSWE did not specifically adopt these recommendations; however, they did influence the council in their 1962 guide to accreditation process for graduate programs (CSWE, 1965). In 1962 a set of criteria was established for undergraduate programs to grant constituent membership based on “self-declared” compliance by a program with these criteria (Austin, 1986). An approval system was set in place as a first stage in developing an accreditation process for undergraduate programs. This had an immediate effect on the gate keeping process for these programs. For example in 1969, there were about 300 undergraduate programs in the CSWE. By 1973, because of this approval

process, the number of undergraduate programs in the CSWE had declined to approximately 200. In 1972 detailed criteria for undergraduate curriculum was adopted (CSWE, 1973) and in 1974 CSWE began formal accreditation of undergraduate programs. Through the Committee on Standards CSWE which was still dominated by graduate educators who had significant control over standard setting. This led to undergraduate educators longing for the old NASSA of the 1940's and initiated regional organizing of about 25 undergraduate leaders to establish the Southern Association of Baccalaureate Social Workers. Two years of regional organizing led to the decision to create a national organization representing undergraduate program interests thus creating the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD) in 1975.

Seeking equity for undergraduate social work education, BPD actively advocated within both NASW and CSWE. The concern with NASW was a perceived neglect of the BSW worker and with limited representation on the NASW board and committees, and the failure to consistently identify the BSW as the entry level of professional practice (Stuart et al., 1993). Advocacy with CSWE presented more complex challenges related to influence over accreditation processes and seeking to influence committee decision making. However, the remnants of the old AASSW remained with resentment of the increased presence and impact the BSW programs were having on CSWE. Two significant issues that were important to undergraduate educators included 1) the recommendations of the CSWE Task Force on Structure and Quality in Social Work Education regarding an educational continuum and 2) the potential initiative of Advanced Standing for BSW graduates in MSW programs. By 1975, a number of graduate schools were granting Advanced Standing with some graduate school deans still critical of the

initiative (Stuart et al., 1993). It was not until 1982 that CSWE implemented a unified curriculum policy statement, which addressed both undergraduate and graduate social work programs (CSWE 1982).

The 1982 Curriculum Policy Statement recognized both the undergraduate and graduate degrees as entry-level professional degrees (CSWE, 1982); however, there was a distinction made between the two. The undergraduate professional degree program was defined as encompassing “professional foundation content” with the objective of preparing beginning-level social workers for practice “with special emphasis on direct services and the organization and provision of resources on their behalf” (CSWE, 1982). In contrast, the graduate degree program was defined as including in addition to professional foundation content, “concentrations of specialized knowledge and practice skills in one or more areas relevant to the social work domain” (CSWE, 1982). The graduate of the Master’s degree program was expected to “demonstrate specialized knowledge and practice expertise consistent with the focus of an advanced concentration” (CSWE, 1982).

From the earliest times with the friendly visitors, curriculum was developed in response to the nature of the challenges seen in society both internal and external to the profession. Social work education was and is a reflection of the technology, political context, and philosophical assumptions of the day. Since the establishment of CSWE, the 1959 *Report of the Curriculum Study* and several policy statements served as the initial basis for shaping curriculum. The professional education curriculum was designed around professional foundation content, “direct” and “indirect” practice methods, field practice, and research. The theme of all the documents was that the professional

curriculum of all schools of social work should have a basic unity rather than being fragmented into a series of specialized, and separate, curriculums (Dinnerman & Geismar, 1984). The Curriculum study identified Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE), Social Welfare Policy and Services (SWPS), and the ethics and values of social work as an organized profession as content areas which should be part of the foundation education of all professional social workers.

The current CSWE standards are the “*2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*” (EPAS). These standards are unified across both the baccalaureate and masters level programs with some distinctive aspects between these two levels of practice. EPAS is divided into four areas which integrate the curriculum: (1) program mission and goals; (2) explicit curriculum; (3) implicit curriculum; and (4) assessment (CSWE, 2008). With this 2008 EPAS, CSWE moved to a competency-based education approach which transitioned from what content should be taught to what learning outcomes should be able to demonstrate and achieve. This is the direction for social work education for the present and foreseeable future.

The Educational Policy 1.0, Program Mission and Goals, centers on the foundation for the existence of a social work program. It explores the purpose of the program and how it integrates into the context and mission of the larger institution. Along with the purpose is a demonstration of commitment to professional social work values such as service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry (CSWE, 2008). Each program will need to demonstrate in a written self-study how they

operationalize and demonstrate how their program is consistent with these foundational statements.

The second section of the EPAS is 2.0, Explicit Curriculum. This section delves into the specific details of what is required for a social worker to be a competent professional. The BSW curriculum prepares graduates for generalist practice through the mastery of the core competencies. The MSW curriculum prepares its graduates for advanced practice through the mastery of the core competencies augmented by knowledge and practice behaviors specific to a concentration (CSWE, 2008). There are ten core competencies ranging from professional identity, to critical thinking, to social and economic justice. Included under each of the 10 core competencies are specific practice behaviors which each program seeks to have specific measures to demonstrate the competence of their graduates. In addition to these core competencies are additional requirements such as 2.3 Signature Pedagogy: Field Education. In this version of EPAS a priority is being revealed that field education is central to social work education and the implementation of classroom learning in the field is required. The Accreditation Standard 2.1.3 specifically requires 400 hours of field education for baccalaureate programs and 900 hours for master's programs. Additional standards, which specify details such as field instructor credentials and training requirements, are also included.

The third section of the EPAS is 3.0, Implicit Curriculum. This section refers to the educational environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented. It includes areas such as diversity, advisement, governance, faculty, and resources, just to name a few. When considering the historic challenges between baccalaureate and master's social work programs the statement, "BSW graduates entering MSW programs are not to repeat

what has been mastered in their BSW programs. MSW programs describe the policies and procedures used for awarding advanced standing.” (CSWE, 2008 p.11) Specific requirements are stated such as faculty who teach social work practice must have an MSW degree and at least two years of social work practice experience. Ratios for faculty full time equivalent faculty to student ratio are also described: 1:25 for baccalaureate programs and 1:12 for master’s programs (CSWE, 2008). In addition, baccalaureate social work programs require no fewer than two full-time faculty members with MSW degrees at least and doctoral degrees preferred. Master’s programs are required to have no less than six full-time faculty.

The fourth and final section of EPAS is 4.0, Assessment. In order to effectively implement a competency-based approach to social work education, a comprehensive approach to evaluation is necessary. This requires multiple measures of practice behaviors and benchmarks to determine if standards set are attained.

According to the CSWE 2012 Statistics on Social Work Education there are 52,798 full-time social work majors enrolled as of fall of 2012 in 453 programs that submitted data with an average of 116.6 students in each program. There were 7,279 part-time social work majors enrolled in the 207 programs that reported offering a part-time program with an average of 35.2 students in each program. In contrast, in the same report there are 34,484 full-time MSW students from 210 programs that submitted data and 19,351 part-time MSW students from 184 programs that submitted data.

The demographic characteristics unfold with 87.5% of all full-time BSW students being female with 61.7% being under 25 years old. Individuals identifying as White non-

Hispanic averaged 50.6% of the full-time students. The following chart is from the CSWE 2012 Statistics on Social Work Education (Table 30 p. 26).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Full-Time and Part-Time Baccalaureate Students

Demographic Category	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	Number	%	Number	%
Gender				
Male	6,358	12.5	938	13.0
Female	44,316	87.5	5,811	86.1
Unknown	2,124		530	
Age Group				
Under 25 years	32,553	61.7	1,683	23.1
25-34 years	7,390	14.0	1,923	26.4
35-44 years	4,248	8.0	1,349	18.5
45 years or older	2,733	5.2	1,077	14.8
Unknown	5,874	11.1	1,247	17.1
Racial/Ethnic Identification				
White (non-Hispanic)	26,731	50.6	3,049	41.9
African American/Other Black	12,836	24.3	2,193	30.1
Chicano/Mexican American	1,709	3.2	167	2.3
Puerto Rican	1,112	2.1	16	0.2
Other Latino/Hispanic	3,693	7.0	535	7.3
American Indian/Native American	495	0.9	68	0.9
Asian American/Other Asian	912	1.7	109	1.5
Pacific Islander	154	0.3	21	0.3
Other	296	0.6	42	0.6

Multiple Race/Ethnicity	874	1.7	80	1.1
Unknown	3,986	7.5	999	13.7
Number of programs reporting	453		453	

In contrast the MSW data shows White (non-Hispanic) at 56.6% of full-time students out of 210 programs submitting data.

The top baccalaureate field placements were in the child welfare areas with 16.8% with family services at second with 10.6% out of 442 programs reporting. In 2011-2012, 453 baccalaureate programs awarded 15,946 degrees. Of this number 5,901 (37.0%) were from historically underrepresented groups. In contrast, MSW programs graduated 22,441 from 213 programs that submitted data and 6,963 (31%) come from historically underrepresented groups.

Baccalaureate social work education has seen a tremendous transformation over the years. From its earliest days seeking to exist and respond to needs yet facing opposition from the master's level community who were pursuing professional credibility seeking to emulate the graduate level model of other professions. Nevertheless, baccalaureate social work education has continued to thrive in both rural and urban settings, responding to needs in the community and often motivated by religion.

In the midst of the development of professional social work education, evangelical Christians were entering into low-income communities to win souls and learned of the terrible living conditions and began developing social welfare programs. Evangelical leaders including Charles H. Spurgeon played a significant role in

establishing gospel missions, employments bureaus, orphanages, and other organizations to assist the poor (Moberg, 1972).

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Otto Rank, in his book *Beyond Psychology* (1941) writes, “We are born in pain, we die in pain, and we should accept life-pain as unavoidable, -indeed a necessary part of earthly existence, not merely the price we have to pay for pleasure.” (p.16) Rank continues, “Man is born beyond psychology and he dies beyond it but he can live beyond it only through vital experience of his own – in religious terms, through revelation, conversion or re-birth” (p. 16). Rank, former protégé of Sigmund Freud and inspiration for the historic social work practice theory the Functional Approach, alludes to the rationality of psychology, yet he highlights the limitations of rational thinking with the reality of the irrationality of human beings. This drives human beings to dynamics beyond self often found in religion and spirituality. Ronald L. Johnstone (2007), defines religion as the following:

Religion is a set of beliefs and rituals by which a group of people seeks to understand, explain, and deal with a world of complexity, uncertainty, and mystery, by identifying a sacred canopy of explanation and reassurance under which to live.

Canda (1999) who wrestles with the differences between religion and spirituality offers this definition of spirituality:

I conceptualize 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.

In this definition, spirituality is distinguished from *religion*: “Religion involves the patterning of spiritual beliefs and practices into social institutions, with community support and traditions maintained over time” (Canda & Furman, 1999, p. 173).

Although religion and spirituality are clearly distinct from each other often they interact together to form a whole. In fact, most of the founders of American universities were active Protestants and devout believers (Marsden, 1994). Through the years this religious foundation eroded from conservative to liberal and from devoutly religious to secular (Marsden, 1994). Thus the Bible college movement was in response to the changes in American Universities. Social work coming out of this context started as religious and depending on the institution remained religious or began to lean secular. Religion has historically been a motivator to study social work and social work has often been a motivator to develop spirituality.

Judeo-Christian Religion has motivated people to help others in need for generations. This desire to help others in need grows from the 18<sup>th</sup> century in significant ways in the United States stemming from the abolitionist movement, prohibition movements, and a deeply held belief in Post-millennial eschatology, that Jesus Christ would return if the world is healed of its ills. With the civil rights movement germinating and women’s suffrage empowering women to play a greater role in living out their faith, and in society the fledgling profession of social work was an ideal vehicle pious Christians and particularly women to extend their reach and influence. The movement being described occurred in the late 1800s and is called the social gospel movement. Broadly the social gospel was built on the assumption that the world would improve over

time. This was an intellectual movement which described and defined much of what was happening in society. However the act of defining a movement solidified its tenets which ultimately resulted in a conservative response to refocus on the Biblical and center on individual salvation rather than the broader social issues.

Cairn University, founded in 1913, the current institution is the result of a 1951 merger of two Philadelphia Bible schools, the Bible Institute of Pennsylvania and Philadelphia School of the Bible, into Philadelphia Bible Institute (PBI). PBI offered three-year diplomas focused primarily on the training of lay people for church-related vocations. In 1958, PBI became Philadelphia College of Bible (PCB) when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania granted approval to offer the four-year degree leading to the Bachelor of Science in Bible. Strengthening its educational program by developing an academically rigorous core of biblical studies and liberal arts courses, PCB attained regional accreditation in 1967 from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (now the Middle States Commission on Higher Education), one of only a few Bible colleges in the nation to receive such regional accreditation. PCB then added the Bachelor of Music (1967) and the Bachelor of Social Work (1974) degrees, which began the development of a series of programs in various professional fields, further distinguishing PCB from traditional Bible colleges in the nation as graduates were being prepared for careers in fields other than vocational ministry within the church (MSCHE Self Study, 2015).

In 2000, the Commonwealth granted university status to the institution and the name was changed from Philadelphia College of Bible to Philadelphia Biblical University. The latest name change occurred in 2012 when the University's Board of

Trustees voted to change the name to Cairn University in an effort to overcome the perception that the University's educational offerings were limited and had a narrow vocational focus. Dr. Todd Williams, president, proposed the name, which reflects the understanding of cairns as piles of stones used as memorials and trail-markers – they bear witness and point the way. Cairn remains true to its rich biblical heritage while it is positioned to prepare biblically minded, well-educated, professionally competent men and women of character to meet the challenges of life in the twenty-first century (MSCHE Self Study, 2015).

The origins of the Cairn University Department of Social Work are rooted in the Bible college movement coming out of the late nineteenth century, in many ways responding to the movement of the social gospel. Bible colleges trained church leaders for preaching, teaching, missions, and music ministries. Bible college faculty taught that society could only be transformed when individuals accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ and were saved from their sin. In contrast to the social gospel the mandate was to support the caring for people in need with always the goal of “witnessing” to them about the gospel (Furness, 2009).

Entering into the 1960's the United States was facing tremendous challenge with racial divide and urban disharmony. The U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson was responding with multiple initiatives including the Voting Rights Act for people of all races to be able to vote, and the “War on Poverty” which was the Economic Opportunity Act which he introduced in his State of the Union speech in 1964. Meanwhile in Philadelphia there were the 1964 Philadelphia Race Riots with clashes between the Philadelphia Police and African Americans living in North Philadelphia. During all this

the then Philadelphia College of Bible (PCB) was in the midst of this historic upheaval. A 1943 graduate of PCB William Freeland (later became the founder of Lakeside Educational Network) began advocating for the college to serve children and their families beyond Bible clubs which focused on Evangelism (Furness, 2009). He centered most of his advocacy on Dr. Clarence Mason who was Academic Dean of the college. Charles Furness a Baptist preacher who grew up in poverty in Philadelphia, had been on a life journey of education and pursuing ministry to the poor. After some extensive research on regional poverty and the church's opportunity to respond Furness saw an opportunity to build on his American history and seminary degrees and sought to add a Master of Social Work (MSW) from Rutgers University in New Brunswick New Jersey (Furness, 2009). Meanwhile Furness was also working at the Goodwill Home and Rescue Mission in Newark New Jersey. While completing his MSW in 1958 Furness began to write Bible schools, colleges, and seminaries encouraging them to add courses in social welfare and social work (Furness, 2009). The first contact Furness had with PCB came in 1960 when Dr. Mason recalls liking the idea but redirecting Furness to pursue the idea at other school like Moody Bible Institute in Chicago who he felt would more likely be able to implement it due to PCB facing financial challenges (Furness, 2009).

After pursuing the initiative with Moody president Dr. William Culbertson, Furness was informed Moody was not positioned to implement such an initiative. Furness continued to pursue the initiative with PCB and met with the then president Dr. Charles Ryrie in 1960 and 1962. They were processing the potential to integrate Christian Service activities with social work goals (Furness, 2009). Finally in 1963 when PCB was transitioning to a new president, Dr. MacCorkle, the idea was renewed. Dr. MacCorkle

and Dr. Mason initiated a meeting with Dr. Margaret E. Bishop the Director of Admissions at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. They were exploring undergraduate social work education and the courses needed to gain admission in social work masters programs. Academic faculty credentials were also explored and Dr. Bishop confirmed that Furness had the necessary credentials and training to teach undergraduate social work (Furness, 2009).

MacCorkle and Mason made a visit to Furness in December of 1963 at the Goodwill Home and Rescue Mission in Newark New Jersey to discuss in more detail the training of social workers. The mission was a 164 bed residential facility that focused on the rehabilitation of men who are homeless and struggling with alcohol addiction. Furness had also started a child welfare department there in 1961 which included an adoption program. MacCorkle and Mason envisioned PCB graduates working in similar programs which would care for physical and spiritual needs (Furness, 2009). Following this visit, MacCorkle and Mason had confirmed Furness as the qualified leader for the PCB social work initiative (Furness, 2009).

Furness had strong convictions related to Bible colleges, seminaries, Christian educational institutions, all Christian sectarian social service organizations. In 1965, Furness submitted a report to the President and Board of Trustees of PCB,

The first factor to emerge years ago is an increasingly urgent one. Born again Christians must be prepared to be administrators of Christian institutions. There is increasing insistence by State governments that staff workers and executives in such institutions have the Master of Social Work degree. The second major factor is that of the new admission by the Social Work profession that there will not be enough social workers in the foreseeable future to the meet the needs of an exploding population, even in part. With the concomitant multiplication of social problems, we are being asked to help, as long as we preform our services in an expert way. The third factor, is the one which particularly justifies the Philadelphia College of Bible in its adoption of a long range plan of intercity

evangelization. This is the use of social work methods to make more contact with the unreached than ever before, in conjunction with the Christian service and Mission Departments. This will be in Philadelphia in particular in the urban advance program and in other urban centers of the world (PCB Bulletin, 1966).

Furness clearly had to be sensitive to his audience and utilized terminology which could relate to the Evangelical leaders at PCB. To another constituency, the Health and Welfare Counsel of Philadelphia, Furness introduced the new social work program and its evangelical appropriate in this way,

Across denominational lines, there are many Christians who may be referred to as “Evangelicals”. They are not liberal, nor are they “radical right” or “fanatical fringe.” For much of the time during which the social work profession was developing, they were either glad to let the social workers handle increasing welfare demands, or felt social work was not needed within their own circles as long as they could handle the calls for help which came to them. Some opposed social work altogether as “too worldly.” Christians of this evangelical subculture, while heterogeneous in some ways, are united in other ways, including the viewing of man’s [sic] needs as spiritual and eternal as well as material and temporal (Furness, 2009, p 194).

In addressing the Social Gospel Movement, Furness articulated the Evangelical position in this way,

Evangelicals do not believe in the social gospel as it is so called because they do not believe the gospel needs to prefix of the word *social*...The gospel itself is an instrument used in social interaction and has powerful effects in both problematic and normal social institutions. Good social action starts with the individual Christian and his [sic] influence in the world (Furness, 1972).

In these initial phases of establishing the program, PCB was working in consultation with Miss Cordelia Cox, Consultant of Undergraduate Education for the Council on Social Work Education. The challenge before them was to balance evangelical theology and social work ideology. Seeking this balance was yet to be achieved in any context. However, the initial markers of success would be students enrolled in the program and successful accreditation in the future. The President of PCB,

MacCorkle, was seeking to navigate this complexity in balancing the college's commitment to God and professional standards and communicate with students in this way,

I am writing you this special letter because many PCB supports have asked about our new Bible Social Work program. And I am concerned that you understand the relationship between social work, and Bible Social Work at PCB. Yes, our students are receiving the best professional training – but combined with an evangelical concern for souls. This is a ministry based on the fundamental belief that a saving Faith [sic] in Jesus Christ is the only solution to man's [sic] problems (PCB correspondence, 1966).

At PCB all students majored in Bible and had the option of a ministry major in pursuing the Bachelor of Science in Bible. The other majors were Bible Pastoral Studies, Bible Music, Bible Mission, and Bible Christian Education. In 1965, the Bible Social Work major joined these other majors at PCB and soon gained popularity with the students. The social work department curriculum coincided with CSWE's development of guidelines for undergraduate social work programs (Furness, 2009). This collaboration with CSWE started in 1963 and produced the first Bible Social Work graduates in 1967. In 1968, following the completion of Middle States accreditation, PCB became a constituent member of CSWE which was an indication that the Bible Social program met CSWE's professional standards. PCB maintained this approval through CSWE's annual review process until undergraduate accreditation standards published in June 1973 became effective in 1974 (Furness, 2009).

In 1968, the *Constituent Members of the Council on Social Work Education listed six evangelical schools*: Taylor University, Eastern Nazarene College, Seattle Pacific College, Wheaton College, Baylor University, and Philadelphia College of Bible. Theologically conservative Protestant schools not generally included among evangelical

denomination were also listed. Among Mennonites: Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana; and Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Among Seventh-day Adventists: Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan; and Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California. Anderson College in Anderson, Indiana, under the aegis of the Church of God, and Pepperdine College in Malibu, California, under the Church of Christ, were also listed (CSWE brochure of constituent members, 1968).

What sets PCB apart from these other constituent members is the fact that PCB is the only institution which is a historic Bible college granting a Bible degree. The majority of the institutions above are philosophically grounded in Christian liberal arts. PCB is philosophically grounded in the intensive study of the Bible, which is clearly reflected in the curriculum. The program, initiated by Charles Furness, was distinctively designed to be a Bible Social Work program. PCB was the first qualified Bible College to gain CSWE accreditation.

The accreditation process between PCB and CSWE evolved over the years with the need to navigate the complexities of diversity and leadership. Even with doctrinal mandates from the evangelical tradition, balancing those with a secular discipline of social work was achieved. Even as the social work profession became more adversarial toward political conservatives and evangelicals, embracing scientific rationalism, school like PCB, now Cairn University continue to endure and thrive. It would be thirty years before another Bible College would be accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (Furness, 2009).

This historic uniqueness of Cairn University is what prompts the fascination with the spiritual development of its graduates. In a context of secular social work dominance,

Cairn remains steady in its 50 years of combining Bible curriculum, which is theologically grounded in evangelicalism, and Social Work curriculum, which has evolved since the undergraduate standards from CSWE were established in 1974.

Ralph Eckardt, a 1962 PCB graduate, University of Pennsylvania MSW and DSW graduate, and PCB Social Work faculty member from 1970-1979, describes evangelicalism in his 1974 dissertation (p. 60),

With this brief historical analysis as a background we turn our attention to the specific doctrines and beliefs which characterize evangelical Christianity. It has been previously mentioned that the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century in Europe was the first emergence of a recognizable entity which today adheres to the name evangelical. It was during that time that the great doctrines of evangelical Protestantism were enunciated. The reformers had their individual ways of saying what, the, were the essentials of the faith, but those points on which all agree were:

- A. Salvation by faith alone in the atoning death of Christ.
- B. The priesthood of all believers and the responsibility of all believers to judge regarding religious matters.
- C. Allegiance to the authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the source of faith and practice.

Theologically, the complexity of evangelical theology goes well beyond Eckardt's introduction. However, on the most basic level, this description describes the evangelical community. The intellectual pursuit of this kind of Biblical and theological education is meant to produce a deeper intellectual and spiritual allegiance to the tenants of Evangelical Christianity. The introduction of the social work profession to this Biblical and theological base puts what was originally and intellectual and spiritual exercise of religiosity into a professional context which takes Holy Scripture and puts it into action with real individuals and communities in need. The professional nature of social work demands accountability to its educational models. So much so that current accreditation standards insist on competency to specific mandates. However, the historical roots of the

social work profession remain rooted in religion with no formal study of religious or spiritual competency required. The demands of professional social work accreditation center on a secular ideology which, in turn, often overlooks the religious and spiritual motivation of the social workers themselves.

As social work accreditation standards measure professional competency, institutions like Cairn University have an opportunity to contrast professional competency with the spiritual development of their students as they simultaneously integrate Bible and theology curriculum with general education and social work. What inspires perspective students to choose this type of Bible-centered social work education? What effect does this integration of curriculum have on these unique social work graduates? Does the integration of social work increase their religiosity and directly impact their spiritual development? How does this integrated training impact these students as they become alumni? It is suspected that religiosity and a spiritual development that adheres to evangelical tradition would be strong during the integrated Bible and social work education. However, upon graduation, facing the realities of a very challenging profession and the dilemmas and contradictions, which come with more life experience, alumni will become less religious and their adherence to evangelical principles in their spiritual development will decline.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

To compare current Social Work students and alumni regarding spirituality and motivation to social work, a study was conducted in the Fall of 2014. This chapter outlines the procedures, instrumentation, samples, and analysis of this study.

#### Procedures

Questionnaire items were composed and discussed with relevant stakeholders in early October 2014. When all parts of the survey were agreed upon, the survey was examined for face validity.

Data was collected in the Fall of 2014. The survey was put into Survey Monkey Software and e-mailed to all current BSW students at Cairn University and to all BSW alumni from 2000-2014. Recipients were asked to complete the survey within two weeks, though responses were accepted through January 2015. It was clearly stated that responding is voluntarily and no sanctions will be held against non-respondents. It was also made clear that responses are anonymous and there will be no way to link any response to an individual student or alumni.

In the first round of sampling that went to the alumni, respondents were asked to indicate the 'primary reasons' they chose to major in social work at Cairn University. However, the statistician accidentally set up the item to accept only one response. When a number of the respondents emailed to say they had been unable to give multiple responses, an attempt was made to edit the question. Unfortunately, the software would no longer allow for multiple responses without deleting all current responses. Therefore, the survey item was edited to read the 'primary reason' (plural deleted). This edit occurred one day after the survey was originally published. When the student survey was

published, it allowed for multiple responses. In chapter 4, this methodological error will be discussed.

Responses were exported into SPSS Statistical Software (version 22) for analysis. A designated professional statistician assisted in data management and analysis.

### Instrumentation

The instrument used for this study, Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI), is comprised of three sections: 1) a previously published inventory, 2) researcher-designed questions on spirituality habits, and 3) background and demographic characteristics.

The SAI was first introduced in 1996, by Hall and Edwards, as a theoretically-based measure of spiritual maturity viewed from a Judeo-Christian perspective and designed for clinical use by pastoral counselors and psychotherapists, as well as researchers. The SAI is a relationally based measure designed to measure two dimensions of spiritual development: Awareness of God and Quality of Relationship with God (Hall & Edwards, 1996). The scale, however, is divided into six subscales: Awareness, Realistic Acceptance, Disappointment, Grandiosity, Instability, and Impression Management (Hall & Edwards, 1996). Human beings are relational, which confirms that relationships with others are a significant factor that combines both the biblical and psychological perspectives (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). Object relations theory provides a framework to describe aspects of spirituality (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). The following paragraphs explain each of the six sub-scales.

### Awareness

Awareness of God as a dimension of spiritual maturity is also supported by the tradition of contemplative spirituality (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). Becoming

increasingly aware of how God is intricately involved in every aspect of one's life (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). In growing, spiritually mature people will become more aware that life and religious experience are the same event woven together (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). This includes developing an awareness of God's responses, and ability to listen to God, to notice his presence, and to savor his responses (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002).

#### Realistic Acceptance (Healthy Ambivalence)

These individuals have a sense of resolving conflict within themselves and with others and of maintaining relationship continuity over time (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). God is valued in his own right and just for maintaining one's self-esteem (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002).

#### Disappointment (Defensiveness)

This area is based on the hypothesis that an individual who acknowledges very few or none of these difficulties may be exhibiting a degree of defensiveness that would raise questions about the validity of his or her profile (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002).

#### Grandiosity (Narcissism)

There is a preoccupation with grandiose fantasies, crave attention, and attempt to present themselves as better than others do (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). They expect others to function as regulators of their self-esteem since they are unable to do this for themselves (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). Pride and self-esteem are major issues in their relationships with God and God's personal protection and provision for their needs (Hall & Edwards, 1996 & 2002).

#### Instability (Splitting)

The inability to integrate good and bad internalized objects results in and reflects split internal all-good and all-bad self and other representations (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). There is difficulty with ambiguity in their spiritual lives (Hall & Edwards, (1996, 2002). Personal failures of disappointments based on God not fulfilling their expectations can lead to intense feelings of guilt and anger (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). There is a tendency to have problems trusting God and viewing him as loving (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002).

### Impression Management

In the newest edition of the SAI, the impression management scale seeks to measure the subject's test taking approach and to identify illusory spiritual health (Hall & Edwards, 2002).

The six subcomponents of the scale varied from adequate to superb reliability (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). Awareness and disappointment had very high reliability (Cronbach alpha = .959 and .920 respectively), followed by realistic acceptance (Cronbach alpha = .862) and instability (Cronbach alpha = .816) (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). The last two components, impression management and grandiosity, reported lower though satisfactory reliability scores (Cronbach alpha = .762 and .667 respectively) (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). Conducting a confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the six subscales are indeed different, although both awareness and realistic acceptance loaded on the same scale (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002). Regardless, and according to the Hall and Edwards (2002) formulation, they will be treated independently (Hall & Edwards, 1996, 2002).

When scores on each of the six subscales were correlated, some were found to be strongly correlated. For example, awareness and impression management are strongly correlated ( $r = .60, p < .001$ ). Similarly, disappointment and instability are also strongly correlated ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ). However, each of the subscales were uniquely and differently correlated with the other subscales indicating that they each subscale measure a different and unique aspect of spirituality. As such, the study will refer to each subscale separately.

In addition to the SAI, the questionnaire included questions about spiritual religious background (cf. How old were you when you first trusted in Christ as a savior?) and habit (cf. How often do you typically attend church?). These questions were followed by demographic information (cf. gender, marital status, age, region of residency, and so forth). Finally, there was a question regarding the primary reasons for choosing a social work major.

### Samples

The demographic characteristics of both populations were known from the university records. The sample demographics were compared with the populations to establish the degree to which the samples represented the populations.

The BSW students had a response rate of 67% and matched the BSW student population almost identically in gender, marital status, citizenship, and residence (see Table 2). For ethnicity, the student sample was somewhat over-represented in whites and under-represented in blacks.

Table 2: Comparison of Current BSW Student Population Characteristics with Sample

	Key Characteristics	Population (N <sub>S</sub> =88)	Sample (n <sub>s</sub> =59)
Gender	Female	82%	83%
	Male	18%	17%
Ethnicity	White	69%	80%
	Black	15%	7%
	Hispanic	8%	7%
	Asian	5%	3%
	Other	3%	3%
Marital Status	Single	93%	92%
	Married	6%	8%
Citizenship	United States	98%	98%
Current Residence	Mid-Atlantic region (DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	90%	88%
	Other US	9%	12%
	Outside US	1%	0%

Similarly, the BSW alumni had a response rate of 73% and matched the population almost identically in all areas of gender, ethnicity, marital status, citizenship, and residence (see Table 3).

Table 3: Comparison of BSW Alumni Population Characteristics with Sample Characteristics

	Key Characteristics	Population (N <sub>A</sub> =309)	Sample (n <sub>a</sub> =225)
Gender	Female	83%	82%
	Male	17%	18%
Ethnicity	White	83%	83%
	Black	7%	5%
	Hispanic	4%	4%
	Asian	4%	4%
	Other	2%	4%
Marital Status	Single	38%	32%
	Married	60%	64%
Citizenship	United States	96%	97%
Current Residence	Mid-Atlantic region (DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	83%	80%
	Other US	15%	17%
	Outside US	2%	3%

After establishing that both samples adequately represented their populations, the two samples were compared to determine whether any differences would require the use of covariates. Chi Square showed no significant differences in gender, ethnicity, citizenship, or region of current residence. Marital status differed significantly ( $\chi^2 = 66.1$ ,  $p = < 0.0001$ ) and the role of marital status will be examined. In general, both BSW students and alumni from this school tend to be female, white, US citizens, and currently residing in the mid-Atlantic region (Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of the Student Sample with the Alumni Sample.

	Key Characteristics	BSW sample (n <sub>s</sub> =59)	Alumni sample (n <sub>a</sub> =225)
Gender	Female	83%	82%
	Male	17%	18%
Ethnicity	White	80%	83%
	Black	7%	5%
	Hispanic	7%	4%
	Asian	3%	4%
	Other	3%	4%
Marital Status	Single	92%	32%
	Married	8%	64%
	Div., Sep., Widowed	0%	4%
Citizenship	United States	98%	97%
Current Residence	Mid-Atlantic region (DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA)	88%	80%
	Other US	12%	17%
	Outside US	0%	3%

### Analytical framework

For the purpose of this study, bivariate analysis was used to compare the two groups regarding their spirituality and motivation to social work. To assess the impact of various demographic characteristics on the various target variables, a multiple regression was applied.

## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter will detail the empirical findings of the study and will examine the difference between current students and alumni: 1) the Spiritual Assessment Inventory, 2) Current religious practices, 3) Influences of attending a Christian University, and 4) Motivations to select Social Work as a major.

As noted in Chapter 3, the SAI is composed of six sub-scales. This study seeks to observe whether current students and recent alumni would report similar responses on these six sub-scales. It was expected that alumni who are in constant struggle of finding suitable employment and who are facing real clients might score significantly lower than the current students on one or more of the six SAI sub-scales. ANOVA and t-tests for independent samples were used to test this hypothesis.

None of the differences on the six sub-scales were statistically significant (see Table 5). Contrary to the hypothesis, alumni and current students reported similar levels of spirituality. In one case, specifically Disappointment, students scored slightly better than alumni (2.75 vs. 2.47 respectively) did though the difference was not statistically significant.

Table 5: SAI Subscale Differences for Social Work Students and Alumni

Sub-scales, rated on a 5-point scale.	Social Work Student mean	Social Work Alumni mean	Mean Difference	F value	Significance (p-value)
Awareness	3.63	3.58	0.05	0.13	.718
Realistic acceptance	3.75	3.88	-0.10	0.54	.465
Disappointment	2.75	2.47	0.28	3.51	.062
Grandiosity	1.51	1.47	0.04	0.26	.608
Instability	2.17	2.01	0.15	2.15	.144
Impression management	2.67	2.52	0.14	1.40	.238

Various demographic traits were also tested for their compounding impact on the difference between students and alumni. Only one subscale, Instability, based on marital status, showed a significant difference. To assess the impact of marital status on these two groups (current students vs. alumni) regarding the six sub-scales of SAI, four groups were constructed: non-married current students, married current students, non-married alumni, and married alumni. Six ANOVA tests were conducted to determine whether the combination of student/alumni type compounded with marital status will explain variations in the SAI. Regarding four sub-scales, the differences were statistically not significant. However, in two cases, the differences were significant. Regarding Disappointment, the model reported significant differences ( $F = 3.50$ ,  $p = 0.16$ ) but when the Scheffe test was applied, no one group was found to be significantly different from the other. Regarding Instability, the model was significant ( $F = 3.36$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). In all cases, the married group reported lower scores (1.91 for students and 1.86 for alumni) while the single groups reported higher levels of disappointment (2.18 for students and 2.30 for alumni). In this instance, being out of the university, compounded with marital status, made a significant difference.

#### Primary Influences in Selecting a BSW Program

All subjects received a questionnaire consisting of six reasons per question and were asked to choose reasons that were primary influences in their personal decision to major in Social Work. Subjects were allowed to select multiple reasons, so each is considered independently. In this respect, there was a technical error in the alumni questionnaire. A large number of the alumni (180 out of the 225 who completed this part; 80%) were asked to select only one choice – the primary reason to selecting social work

as their baccalaureate major. As such, a comparison of the 59 current BSW students and the 45 alumni who were asked to “select all that apply” and later I will report on the alumni who were asked to choose one primary motivator.

When comparing the two groups combined, the reason selected most often was “Concern for people in need” was a primary influence for 153 respondents (54%). This was followed by “A desire to work with people” (42%). These two options are not necessarily spiritual in nature and may be similar to non-religious motivators to study social work. The first religious option chosen by the respondents was “God’s leading/calling” was the third most chosen option by respondents (35%). The other religious option, “Obedience to scripture”, was the least to be selected by the respondents (15%). Additional items not selected were “Influence of a specific person” (21%) and “A life experience” (18%). 42% of participants selected a religious option or included it in their comment. Twenty-five respondents also added a personal comment that was not included in this analysis.

When analyzing the 180 alumni who were asked to select only the primary reason for choosing social work as a major, a similar picture emerged. More subjects selected “Concern for people in need” as their primary reason (78 people; 43.3%), followed by “A desire to work with people” (41 people 22.8%), and “God’s leading/calling” as a close third (39 people; 21.7%). In other words, although this group of alumni answered this question in a different mode (select only the primary reason) the order of importance is identical to those who were allowed to select all that statements that applied.

Emerging from this research is that religion may not directly be the greater motivator to study social work. Even among students in a religious university, the

concern for the needs and quality of life of others is a required motivator to study social work. In other words, being religious alone is not enough to motivate people to study social work. There must also be a concern for the welfare of others. It is important to note, however, that not all students come from strong religious backgrounds and not all religious people are alike. In this respect religious motivation brought subjects to a religious university (Cairn University) but selecting social work as a major was also motivated by the desire to do good for others. The desire to study social work and later employment in social work is similar to that which was reported by non-religious social workers. The difference is then not by religious orientation, but by the combination of serving others through a religious education and religious orientation.

Interestingly, when current students were compared to the alumni who were given the option to list as many motivators as they see fit, regarding each of the six options, significantly more students reported to be motivated by them to study social work than alumni do. As can be seen in Table 5, regarding “Concern for people in need” and “Obedience to scripture”, these differences were significant. It is possible that the alumni are less enthusiastic about changing the world and are motivated by their values in the face of the demands of practicing social work and the financial challenges attached to it. It is also important to note that as many of the alumni are married, the demands of everyday life are more daunting, the desire to be religiously obedient, and concern for others are starting to erode. This suggestion, and the change from student life to work life, should be studied in non-religious BSW programs. If findings are universal, it poses a special challenge to the future of social work as a profession.

Table 6: Comparing Students and Alumni Regarding Reason to Undertake BSW

Reason to undertake BSW program at Cairn	% of students reporting it	% of alumni reporting it	X <sup>2</sup> result	Significance
Concern for people in need	84.7%	55.6%	10.82	.001
A desire to work with people	78%	71.1%	0.64	NS
God's leading/calling	71.2%	44.4%	0.89	.NS
Obedience to scripture	30.5%	22.2%	14.60	.001
Influence of a specific person	44.1%	31.1%	1.81	.NS
A life experience	49.2%	35.6%	1.92	NS

When background variables and their associations with reasons to undertake BSW education were tested, differences were small and often, insignificant. For example, regarding gender, all six options/motivators were insignificant. Similarly, region of residence made no significant difference on any of the six possible motivators to study BSW at Cairn. As such, it is clear that regarding motivators to study social work at Cairn, the key difference is between current students and alumni. While the nature of a cross-sectional survey prevent us from understanding the source of this difference, it is logical to assume that alumni were once as motivated as today's students are. However, it is likely that the realities of life, including financial responsibilities and the challenges of the field of social work, may have impacted their current perceptions.

However, the concern for people in need and a desire to work with people could still be directly related to religious motivation, particularly in the protestant tradition. Although the obedience to scripture would be arguably a significant priority for a person

of faith, the overall ethos and tone of protestant Christianity leans toward the model of Jesus Christ and his commands- not necessarily specific proof texts in scripture. For future research, a question exploring whether “following Christ’s example” or being inspired by Jesus could be an interesting approach to see if the results would be different.

### Current religious practices

The final part of the empirical analysis focused on the extent to which the respondents are engaged in various practices. As suggested in chapter 2, it was anticipated that alumni with the responsibility with caring for the family and maintaining employment will be less engaged in active acts of religiosity. The first variable studied was “How often do you typically attend church?” and the differences between alumni and current students were borderline significant ( $p = .59$ ). One notable difference was regarding those who no longer attend church. While none of the current students reported it as the case, 12 of the alumni (4.8%) reported that they no longer go to church. Similarly, 20 alumni (9%) and only one current student (1.7%) reported that they go to church only a few times a year. While the differences are not statistically significant, alumni seem to practice religion at a lower intensity as compared with students.

The next variable was “How often do you typically have devotions?” In this case, differences were statistically significant ( $X^2 = 11.38$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $p < .05$ ). More alumni reported not doing devotions (43 people; 19.5%) than current students (7 people; 12.1%). As expected, more students reported doing devotions on a daily basis. As such, devotions are more common among current students than among alumni.

Regarding reading the bible (apart from church), differences were significant ( $X^2 = 12.09$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Approximately a fifth of the alumni (40 people; 17%) reported

they do not read the bible at all, while only a small group of current students do not read the bible (4 people; 7%). Similarly, current students reported more daily devotions (19.3%) than alumni (13.6%).

Furthermore, subjects were asked, “How often do you talk to others about God or spiritual issues?” In this respect, there were no statistical differences between the alumni and current students. About a quarter in both groups reported to do so daily (27.3%) and almost half do so weekly (46%). Subjects were then asked “Have you ever led someone to a saving knowledge of Christ?” Although more alumni responded affirmatively (53.2% as compared with 39%), differences were not statistically significant. Given age and more life experiences, it is reasonable that more alumni would report this item affirmatively.

Finally, when asked, “Which of the following statements best represents your current spiritual situation?” differences were not statistically significant. In both groups, the most frequent answer was “Maturing believer – I consistently seek to be faithful in applying God’s truth to my life” (60.4% of alumni and 66.7% of current students). While not a statistically significant difference, more alumni (20.7%) reported to be “Leading believer – I have reached a high level of maturity in my faith and help others to grow” than the current students (12.3%). The findings from this variable confirm the results reported above (the six sub-scales of spirituality) that concerning spirituality, there are very few differences between alumni and current students.

### Cairn influence

The final analysis carried out was to assess effects of studying social work at a religious university on the person’s spiritual life. There was no statistical association between students/alumni and the impact of studying social work at Cairn University. The

most frequent answer was “helped greatly” (54.1%) followed by “helped slightly” (29.7%). As such, 83.8% of all respondents reported that studying social work at Cairn University, and being a Cairn University student/alumni supported their spiritual life. Only a fraction of the students and alumni (3.6%) reported that their Cairn University experience greatly hindered their spirituality. This is a small percentage that may have experienced a spiritual or personal crisis. It would be interesting to conduct a qualitative study to understand their experiences and to determine what events or experiences led subjects to feel that their spirituality was greatly hindered while at a religious university.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations**

According to the Cairn University mission statement (MSCHE Self Study, 2015), “Cairn University exists to educate students to serve Christ in the church, society, and the world as biblically minded, well-educated, and professionally competent men and women of character”

The university has had several iterations of its mission statement. The latest version above is the most succinct. The initial focus of the mission is to educate students to serve Christ in the church, society, and the world. The first priority is to serve Christ, which has been the original mandate of the institution from its earliest beginnings over 100 years ago. The church, which Evangelicals believe to be the central institution of their faith, is the significant “home base” for operationalizing beliefs. Society and the world speak to the responsibility Evangelicals believe that they are commanded to love. This occurs through a belief system of interpreting the world through the Bible, thus biblically minded. The origins of Cairn are founded on this commitment to return to the Bible. The establishment of social work at Cairn could only be accomplished by a symbiotic connection of Bible and Social Work, thus creating a unique entity of dynamics that were rarely put in harmony in such an intentional way. In order to achieve this, educational standards set by accrediting bodies, Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the Council on Social Work Education, must be negotiated with and adhered to. These organizations set the university on their course to pursue the mission of having its graduates be well educated and professionally competent. Finally, believing that a foundation built on Holy Scripture, the Bible, and sound curriculum, grounded in an ethos of service ultimately and always through Christ in the church,

society, and the world will result in a transformational change to produce men and women of character. These theological assumptions in the mission are tested continually in the fulfillment of the mission, which ultimately are its graduates. Social Work at Cairn has its own mission statement,

The Department of Social Work at Cairn University prepares students for entry into generalist social work practice by equipping them with professional knowledge, values and skills understood within the context of a biblical worldview. The purpose of its holistic education is to equip students to demonstrate competency, excellence and wisdom as they lead in their service to all those in need with empathy, expertise, and integrity and to advocate for social change within the Christian church, society and the world.

This Cairn Social Work mission statement is an extension of the university mission unfolding the specifics of undergraduate social work curriculum. Generalist social work practice is the goal; however the worldview of this practice is distinctively biblical. The application of this approach is one that is beyond intellectual, but includes the pursuit of the whole person, biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual. This holistic approach seeks to equip students to demonstrate the character dynamics of the university mission. Social Work accreditation standards require demonstration of competency, doing all things in commitment to Christ requires the pursuit of excellence and submitting to an all-powerful God, Scripture says will produce wisdom. Evangelical Christianity is grounded in the belief of grace, which is undeserved. This is to propel the Evangelical Christian to initiate serving all those in need. With an authenticity of emotion and empathy, legitimate professional and evidenced based skill, which is expertise, and with character based in truth, which is integrity. All this acknowledging that the world is not as it should be due to the pervasive nature of oppression and evil. Thus, the continual need for advocacy and the pursuit of social change in the church first

where Cairn graduates are uniquely skilled to serve and then the society and world, which all Evangelicals Christians are commanded to love.

In considering Cairn's mission statements in the context of the findings, the comparison of social work students and alumni has ultimately resulted in the majority of scales not being statistically significant. Contrary to the hypothesis, current students and alumni reported similar levels of spirituality. This lack of statistical significance confirms and overall fulfillment of Cairn's mission. Cairn social work students and alumni maintain a consistent level of spiritual development. This has presented a rare opportunity to study the spiritual competency dynamics which have been a part of the institution from its inception. The characteristics that attract students to Cairn University are reinforced while they are students and perpetuated into the alumni. The lack of statistical significance could also relate to the consistent character development which holds steady from student to alumni status. It would be interesting to compare, in future research, the spiritual development of students versus alumni in a secular social work institution.

When considering the primary influences in selecting a BSW program, the findings reveal that the most selected item is "concern for people in need". As mentioned in Chapter 4, "concern for people in need" and "a desire to work with people" is closely followed by "God's leading/calling". When Jesus was asked in Mark 12:28-31 (ESV),

Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord with all your soul and with all you mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.

Most Evangelical Christians understand these verses as the bedrock of their faith. The command to love your neighbor as yourself is inextricably linked to love for God. Therefore, perhaps when students and alumni choose “concern for people in need” as their primary influence for selecting the BSW program, consciously and subconsciously, as Evangelical Christians, they would associate “concern for others” as love for God. Further study in non-religious programs should be considered to develop a comparison of the motivational factors to choose a BSW program.

When considering current religious practices, there is a notable difference regarding those who no longer attend church. Alumni seem to attend church at a lower intensity when compared to current students. While the differences are not statistically significant, it does confirm the hypothesis that religiosity in alumni will decrease. In reality, churches that operationalize the commands of Scripture to care for the poor in a consistent way are rare. Finding a congregation which balances a commitment to Scripture and Biblical social work values can be a challenge. These realities, along with inconsistencies and contradictions often mixed with political agendas and a lack of diversity, make alliances with traditional Evangelical churches difficult. Evangelical Christian social workers often find themselves in a constant state of advocacy and pursuit of social change. Naturally, this could potentially discourage Cairn social work alumni from attending church with regularity. Development of specialized evangelical Christian social work support systems and networks may be necessary to avoid isolation and spiritual and professional resentment.

Along with this, the variables “how often do you typically have devotions” and “reading the Bible apart from church” also follow the pattern of confirming the

hypothesis as students have devotions and read their Bibles more than alumni. Although students often feel their schedules are pushed to the limit, we all learn through life experience that schedule demands only increase after graduation. With the demands of family, financial responsibilities, and professional career paths, personal spiritual time will often be lower in priority. Also, with the advent of perpetual technology use, modern life tends to have limited quiet time. Curriculum development in the area of self-care and spiritual disciplines may be necessary to teach future social work professionals how to develop longevity and a higher quality of life in this profession. These concerns may warrant further research in order to preserve a balanced human life.

When exploring current student and alumni's "current spiritual situation", differences were not statistically significant. The most frequent answer was "maturing believer – I consistently seek to be faithful in applying God's truth in my life". This is a confirmation that both alumni and current students share a similar self-perception of their spiritual situation. More alumni tended to report being "leading believer – I have reached a high level of maturity in my faith and help others to grow", which does speak to some further spiritual development of alumni in their personal spiritual growth and community involvement spiritually. This does challenge the hypothesis slightly and is encouraging that alumni are developing in their spiritual leadership.

The final area of analysis was to assess effects of studying social work at a religious university on the person's spiritual life. There was no statistical significance between students and alumni. However, the most frequent answer was "helped greatly" followed by "helped slightly". The majority of all respondents reported that studying social work at Cairn University, and being a Cairn University student/alumni supported

their spiritual life. This potentially can contribute to our understanding of the significance of religious social work programs and their existence. It has been discussed that Evangelical Christian social work students have struggled in secular social work educational settings (Hodge, 2002). Social work education may need to consider how to better support social work students in their motivation for choosing social work as their profession and their potential underlying spiritual motivation. Individuals enter into the social work field with a multitude of motivating factors. These motivating factors which may find themselves in conflict with each other often result in a shared goal of caring for the dignity and worth of human beings. Valuing difference as polarizing as the difference can be builds bridges to discover what is in common. The transformation of the dialogue of difference is what can bring a synthesis of harmony and creativity, ultimately resulting in change. Social work education must pursue valuing difference even if that difference is religious and/or conservative. The implications for this study seek to influence social work education to validate religious conviction as a legitimate strength and motivating factor in the pursuit of a social work education. The challenge remains in how to operationalize these values in social work classroom.

Baccalaureate social work has a clear dominance in social work education today. Although it may not carry with it the prestige of graduate social work education, the developmental stage of traditionally aged undergraduate students makes for a significant formative impact on the values and growth of baccalaureate social work students. This is particularly true in the areas of belief systems and spiritual development. In the future, specific focus on values and spiritual development should be considered in the broader

social work education community to affirm existing spiritual motivations and to expand value systems and increase understanding.

This research has significant limitations considering that the author is administratively responsible for the program studied and that the study is limited to only one school. Further research will need to expand the study to additional Evangelical social work institutions and comparison with similar sized secular institutions would also broaden the research findings. However, the historical significance of Cairn University Social Work and the uniqueness of its population does legitimize this initial study of social work and spiritual development. Social work education needs to continually evaluate how it honors its historical roots and current day spiritual diversity. The complexity of humanity demands for something beyond scientific rationalism to fully capture the depth and mystery of the human experience.

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