An Exploration of the Relationship between Spirituality and Social Justice Work of Counselors and Counselor Educators

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Tiffany Ayn Hawkins Gunnells
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by

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ABSTRACT

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The counseling profession recognizes spirituality as a focus of research, education, and practice (Miranti & Burke, 1998). Recently, social justice has been defined as the Fifth Force within the counseling profession (Ratts, D’Andrea, & Arredondo, 2005). The purpose of this study is to examine the role of spirituality in the social justice work of counselors and counselor educators. This study has been informed by literature from a variety of areas: (a) descriptions of spirituality with similarities and distinctions from religion, (b) spirituality in counseling, (c) multicultural issues within counseling, (d) social justice in counseling, (e) intersection of social justice and religion in history, (f) contemporary intersections of social justice and religion, (g) role of spirituality in female adult educators involved with social action education, and (h) ego-transcendence in leadership.

The following research questions informed this research:

1. What is the intersection between spirituality and social justice in the work and lives of counselors and counselor educators?
2. How do participants describe/make meaning of spirituality?
3. How do participants describe/make meaning of social justice?

A qualitative methodology framed through a phenomenological inquiry was employed to explore in greater depth the meanings and experiences of spirituality for counseling
professionals involved in social justice activities. A combination of a structured
demographic questionnaire and semi-structured interviews was used to gather data.
Sampling was done through purposive and snowball sampling from Counselors for Social
Justice and the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling,
divisions within the American Counseling Association. The use of multiple sources
increased the credibility and trustworthiness of the data.

Results elicited five major themes: Connections, Relationship and Kinships,
Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness”, Transformation and Evolution, and
Challenges. The majority of co-researchers shared that spirituality is intertwined with all
they do and for some it informs their social justice work. Others found their spirituality
was not a necessary prerequisite for social justice work. The descriptions of spirituality
and social justice varied for each co-researcher. Implications for counseling practice,
counselor education pedagogy, supervision, and outreach will be presented.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Dana Heller Levitt

Associate Professor of Counseling and Higher Education
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“There is not justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.”

Micah 6:8

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The landscape of American society is changing at a rapid pace. There is evidence of the expression of both organized religion and other expressions of faith in the daily lives of Americans (Gallup, 2007). Within the American culture a system of privilege and oppression exists and influences the health, education, housing, employment, and mental health of many citizens. It is important that counselors be aware of the factors that impact clients, counseling practice, their communities, and society. Counselors have become more aware of societal inequality (Herr, 1999) and are getting involved in systemic change in order to assist clients’ well-being (Kiselica, 2004).

Throughout history, groups involved in social justice have acted to change the systems of privilege and oppression (McCormick, 2003). Within the counseling profession, the recent interest in social justice has emerged in large part due to the progress of the multicultural movement within counseling (Ratts, D’Andrea, & Arredondo, 2005). Counselor preparation programs now include courses that focus on the impact of culture and society on clients and how to address these issues (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2001). By receiving training in multicultural counseling, students become practitioners who incorporate culturally sensitive treatment interventions and work as advocates for change (Arredondo, 1999). Historically, social justice has been linked to many religious movements. In the recent past, spirituality has been seen as existing separate from religion (Wiggins-Frame, 2005; Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott, & Kadar, 1997) and social justice may be connected to spirituality today as it
was to religion in the past. Many humanistic organizations, such as counseling, are recognizing and acting on the need to be involved with social justice (McCormick).

Background of the Study

The counseling profession strives to help clients meet personal goals, live well, and develop the skills to confront life’s challenges (Gladding, 2004). Counselors are not professionals who are disconnected experts, but act as relational models of well-being and change (Corey, 2005). Additionally, counselors look at the entire person in context in order to assist him or her; this includes spirituality, religion, gender, race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and experiences of oppression. For the counselor to be sensitive to, and competent in addressing these issues, the counselor as role model is aware of these various contexts in his or her own life. For counselor educators this is also the case; context informs their practice as educators.

Spirituality in Counseling

The counseling profession has recognized the need to be sensitive to spirituality and religion and incorporate these phenomena into counseling practice (Association of Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling [ASERVIC], 1995). Spirituality has been described as a personal experience of meaning and the transcendent that may be separate from or linked with religion (ASERVIC, 1995; Wiggins-Frame, 2005). ASERVIC, a division of the American Counseling Association, regards self-exploration of one’s spirituality as vital to service delivery. Miranti and Burke (1998) acknowledge the intersection of faith and service, “If spirituality…moves individuals toward knowledge, love, meaning, hope, connectedness, compassion, wellness, and wholeness, then persons who accept spirituality in their lives will feel compelled to respond
proactively to societal needs” (p. 162). The spirituality of a counselor can be a catalyst for societal change and inspiration for clients in their search for meaning.

*Social Justice in Counseling*

Spirituality can act as an inspiration for change. Similarly, counseling can act as a catalyst toward change. At its inception, the counseling profession sought equality and reform for those who experienced oppressive treatment due to mental illness and psychological distress (Gladding, 2004; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). Recently published literature demonstrates how human service professions have tackled issues of oppression, injustice, and poverty to influence positive change in society (Kiselica & Robinson; McCormick, 2003; Toperek, Gernstein, Fouad, Roysircar, & Israel, 2006). Generally, within the human services (i.e., social work, counseling, psychology, and psychiatry), social justice is concerned with confronting the societal realities of oppression, injustice, racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism that impact clients and their environments (Chen-Hayes, 1999; Speight & Vera, 2004).

*Statement of the Problem*

Much of the literature written about social justice in counseling and psychology has been theoretical, offering suggestions for the incorporation of social justice in counseling practice and training (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Lee, 2007; Speight & Vera, 2004; Toporek et al., 2006). Lee’s (2007) book, *Counseling for Social Justice*, presents various approaches to infusing social justice within the counseling profession. Like Lee, Toporek et al. provide several examples of ways in which counseling psychologists can incorporate and have incorporated social justice advocacy in their work with various populations. Both books are primarily theoretical in nature. Upon searching PsychINFO,
few studies were found that focused on the personal experiences of counseling professionals engaged in social justice who also discussed their spirituality. Qualitative research focused on the experiences of professionals involved in social justice will provide them a voice and inform their leadership within the profession. This current study will also provide additional research information for the counseling profession to draw upon in future research endeavors. A goal of a qualitative study is to find depth to a topic; therefore this study will offer the counseling profession more depth of understanding of the experiences of counseling professionals and the meaning placed on spirituality and social justice.

Additionally, there has been limited empirical research in the counseling profession focused on social justice and counselor trainees, counselors, and counselor educators. Ratts (2006) evaluated the inclusion of social justice in the curriculum of counselor training programs. Similarly, Nilsson and Schmidt (2005) studied the variables that contribute to student involvement and interest in social justice advocacy through a quantitative analysis. Nilsson and Schmidt found that “political interest” was the only variable that predicted advocacy. In their study, Nilsson and Schmidt used religious affiliation as a variable, but this was not found to be a significant predictor for desire for and engagement in social justice. One recommendation made by Nilsson and Schmidt for further research included the exploration of spirituality in social justice advocacy of counseling students. These studies address a limited section of the counseling profession: counselors in training. Studies have not been found that explore contributing variables for counselors and counselor educators involved in social justice. Furthermore, the
relationship between spirituality and social justice in counselors and counselor educators has not been addressed and will therefore be explored in this study.

There has been a recent rise in published literature and research focused on spirituality and social justice respectively within the counseling profession. While there has been a broad range of conceptual and empirical literature published on spirituality in counseling, much of the recent literature regarding social justice and counseling has been theoretical in nature. Much of the research has addressed training of counseling students and characteristics of counseling students and no studies found examined both spirituality and social justice of counselors or counselor educators. In spite of this rise in related literature, information regarding the relationship between spirituality and social justice in counselors and counselor educators has been absent. There is evidence that the counseling profession is moving toward a more holistic approach to counseling (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000). By studying both spirituality and social justice in counselors and counselor educators, the counseling profession will have a deeper awareness of professionals in the context where they are working with clients, students, and in training programs. Likewise, there have been few biographical studies found that explore the experience of social justice advocacy in the lives of counseling professionals (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Romero & Chan, 2005). Other research has been limited to the study of counselor training and social justice (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005; Ratts, 2006). Much of the literature has been conceptual or anecdotal, providing suggestions for counselors to integrate social justice advocacy into practice. To date, qualitative analyses of counselors’ and counselor educators’ experiences of social justice advocacy have been
limited. In addition, little is known about the experience of spirituality and social justice in the counseling profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship of spirituality and social justice in the lives of counselors and counselor educators within the American Counseling Association (ACA). This study aimed to gain an in-depth description of the personal experiences and meaning of spirituality and social justice in the lives of counselors and counselor educators. The information gathered will add to the existing biographical descriptions in the literature; and, will add breadth to the existing literature. A secondary purpose of this study is to let the voices of the participants speak about spirituality and social justice in their lives. In order to better understand the role that spirituality plays in the social justice work of counselors and counselor educators, the following question guided the exploration of the phenomenon:

What is the intersection between spirituality and social justice in the work and lives of counselors and counselor educators?

Significance of the Study

To date, little research was found that addressed the emergence of social justice in the lives and professional development of counselors and counselor educators, although much theoretical and historical literature has been published. The studies conducted by Nilsson and Schmidt (2005) and Ratts (2006) focused on counseling students and on counselor training and issues of social justice. No research was found exploring the spiritual factors that influence counselors and counselor educators to become involved in social justice and social action (a search was conducted of the PsychINFO, ERIC,
Proquest Dissertation and Theses, OhioLINK Electronic Journal Center, and Academic Search Premier databases). This is significant; counselors are on the front lines working directly with clients without adequate guidance from empirical research about spirituality and social justice. Also, counselor educators are working to guide counselor trainees through mentoring, pedagogy, and research. Their participation in social justice has implications for practice and change in the lives of clients, students, and communities, and for counselor educators, an impact on the lives of students; this may include an increased awareness of oppression (Romero & Chan, 2005), social activism (Rodriguez, 2004), taking into account the role of oppression in mental illness (Armstrong, 2007), and examples of leadership (Parameshwar, 2005).

It is important to the profession of counseling that the factors influencing social justice advocacy are better understood. Understanding these factors can inform the development of counselor training in social justice advocacy and supervision practices for professional counselors in the field. By training counselors to become active in social justice advocacy, trainees can address oppressive systems within society to influence change. Furthermore, this study can impact the professional development of counselors working in school, rehabilitation, and community counseling settings. Some counseling students and counselors may not know how to become involved in social justice work or recognize the impact a focus on social justice may make on their practice; this study may shed some light on reasons to become involved, avenues for action, and the possible impact of social justice. It is possible that the results of this study could encourage, inspire, and empower others to envision a changed society in which the work of counselors and counselor educators can make a societal difference. Additionally, the
findings of this study will contribute information to the theory of social justice by addressing the spiritual link in such work.

Many within the counseling profession have recognized the importance of spirituality in the counseling process (ASERVIC, 1995). By exploring spirituality in counselors and counselor educators who are interested in, and working from, a social justice framework, this study will gather more information about how spiritual awareness and competence can contribute to building a social justice emphasis in counseling. This information may inspire others to pursue social justice activities or to provide them with a greater appreciation for social justice advocacy. In addition, this knowledge can provide guidance for counselor educators when addressing spiritual issues in training and in practice and the link to societal change. Learning about the common spiritual threads among counselors and counselor educators involved in social justice work may lead to stronger alliances for collaboration with others in their communities, particularly spiritual leaders and clergy.

This study is also significant to this researcher. As a professional counselor and an emerging counselor educator who is interested in learning more about how to become a better social justice advocate, this study may provide ideas and information that will assist me in the pursuit of social justice advocacy. In addition, I recognize the value of incorporating spirituality into counseling with clients and the importance of being aware of my spiritual beliefs. By researching the intersection of spirituality and social justice advocacy in the lives of counselors and counselor educators, I hope to gain information and inspiration as I continue my professional career.
Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The lack of comprehensive and concise definitions of spirituality and social justice advocacy may be a limitation of this study. However, the lack of a definitive construct allows the participants to conceptualize these terms and describe them in their own words. As co-researchers were interviewed and the data analyzed, descriptions of spirituality and social justice emerged and will be presented in Chapter Four.

Due to the nature of this study, the exploration of the relationship between spirituality and social justice, a qualitative methodology was employed. This study utilized purposeful sampling of co-researchers who reported that they are spiritual and involved in social justice. Co-researchers shared their stories of this intersection in their lives. Self-reporting is a limitation to this study and the co-researchers were not observed while doing social justice work. Therefore, as the researcher I was only given a small picture of the work that the co-researchers do. Additionally, the sample size was small, as is common with many qualitative research samples. Also, the qualitative nature of the study limits the generalizability of the findings within the counseling profession.

Another limitation of this study is the time constraints placed on the researcher. The researcher spent limited time in the field due to a lack of resources and the nature of this research; findings were being used for a dissertation which is time sensitive. An interview protocol was used to gather information from co-researchers and documents relevant to the study were examined. This provided the researcher with information about the co-researchers.

A delimitation of this study is the focus on spirituality and social justice. The focus of this study is rather broad in that it does not propose to explore and identify one
aspect of spirituality and one aspect of social justice, but rather many facets of both that connect within the co-researchers’ experiences. By maintaining broad categories, participants’ experiences could be expressed freely without guiding the data to a specific area of either category. This led to a large amount of data, many themes, and an involved analysis. However, the variety of information gathered did enrich the outcome of themes and justifies the boundaries of the current study. An additional delimitation was the choice of the co-researchers and the number of the sample. Those who are knowledgeable about the areas of spirituality and social justice were chosen to provide rich description (Patton, 2002), this included Ohana award winners from the Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) division of ACA and members of ASERVIC. Furthermore, additional co-researchers were chosen from one regional area in the United States. Further information regarding the methodology and design of this study will be addressed in chapter three.

Conclusion

In spite of the growing interest in social justice within counseling, there is a lack of information regarding a relationship to spirituality in the lives of counselors and counselor educators. To date, much of the research conducted has evaluated curricula (Ratts, 2006) and counselor trainees (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005). It is hoped that this study will add depth to the discussion of what variables contribute to counselors and counselor educators becoming involved in social justice and what role spirituality plays. Therefore, this research hopes to build on the existing research in social justice advocacy. Information gained from this study can inspire practicing counselors to become more involved, empower counselor educators to incorporate both spirituality and social justice
into instruction of students, and contribute new information to the existing social justice advocacy frameworks being used in the counseling profession.

The following chapters will provide a more detailed exploration of the relationship between spirituality and social justice. In Chapter Two, a review of literature in the areas of spirituality and religion, social justice in the helping fields, and the history of social justice and spirituality will be provided. The methodology chosen for this study will be explained in detail in Chapter Three, including rationale for the methodology, a description of the researcher, participant selection, and the procedures for data collection and analysis. Chapter Four will present the results from the information collected in the interviews and the themes that emerged. A discussion and implications of the findings of this study will be presented in Chapter Five.

Defining and Describing Terms

Many of the terms used throughout this study have different meanings in different contexts. This list is intended to assist the reader to gain more insight into the main ideas as they are used in this study.

*America (n)/United States* – these terms will be used interchangeably to refer to the United States of America and those living within this society.

*Counseling*

*Counselor* – a professional who has received a Master’s level degree in counseling and works with individuals, families, groups, and the community to address issues of mental health, wellness, problems of living, and relationship issues; they are trained in human development, helping skills, diagnosis and treatment, ethics, and
theories of counseling and work in a variety of settings (CACREP, 2001; Gladding, 2004).

*Counseling* – the activities conducted by a counselor to assist clients and communities to bring about change. Activities include: psychotherapy, advocacy, prevention and intervention, diagnosis, and empowerment (Gladding, 2004).

*Counselor Educator* – a professional who has received a doctoral degree in counselor education and works with individuals, families, groups, students, and the community and may be employed in a variety of settings; they are trained in counselor education and supervision, advanced counseling theory, in-depth research methodologies, and a variety of other specialized topics related to the counseling profession (Gladding, 2004).

*Counselor Trainee* – graduate students enrolled in courses required to obtain a master’s level degree in counseling.

*Multicultural competence* – the awareness, knowledge, and skills to understand the impact of contextual and cultural factors (race, ethnicity, class, sociopolitical factors, physicality, religion, sexual orientation) on the counseling relationship taking into consideration the counselor’s experience and the client’s experience (Arredondo, 1999; CACREP, 2001).

*Spirituality in Counseling*

*Faith* – a term often used by Christians to refer to a belief in God (Cunningham & Kelsay, 2002); how one represents “life meaning and value” (Miller, 2003, p. 142); the “hope” or belief in God or a higher power (Faiver, Ingersoll, O’Brien, & McNally, 2001, p. 21).
Religion – this term “relates to thought, feeling, and action; to concerns of individual and social existence; and to the expression and recognition of values” (Cunningham & Kelsay, 2002, p. 13). It is typically expressed in a community that shares a set of guiding teachings, rituals, beliefs, and experiences focusing on a specific God, deity, or higher power (ASERVIC, 1995; Wiggins-Frame, 2005; Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

Religious – an individual’s involvement with a religion or their identification with the practices of a particular religion.

Sacred – based on the Latin word sanctus, meaning something separate, may be used to refer to places, things, activities; can also be used to refer to what is “real” and is different from the ordinary experiences of life (Cunningham & Kelsay, 2002, p. 29).

Spiritual – derived from the word spiritus, meaning breath; can refer to the intangible or immaterial that impacts the soul or the relation to God or a deity (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000a); “the animating life force, represented by images such as breath, wind, vigor, and courage” and can be “experienced as an active or passive process” (ASERVIC, 1995).

Spirituality – the innate tendency in all people to seek out meaning, purpose, and otherness in their life which can move them toward greater living and experience in life through, but not limited to, transcendence, connectedness, love, meaning, and wellness. It can include “experiences, beliefs, and practices” and can be experienced through religion but is not limited to religion or culture (ASERVIC, 1995, p. 5; Cashwell & Young, 2005; Wiggins-Frame, 2005).

Transcendence – a “sacred reality as ‘going beyond’ or ‘standing over’ ordinary existence” (Cunningham & Kelsay, 2002, p. 29).
Wellness – this term is defined as “a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community” (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000, p. 252).

Social Justice in Counseling

Advocacy – the role that counselors play when they speak out and/or act in the name of a “cause” (p. 8) or for individuals who are impacted by systemic barriers (Lee, 1998).

Oppression – “Oppression entails domination, the ability for one social group to systematically control, manipulate, and use other people for its own ends.” (Goodman, 2001, p. 13) Various forms of oppression exist including: racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and classism (Goodman). The people in groups being dominated have limited access to certain benefits and privileges within society.

Privilege – the possession of power by individuals and groups within a society (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2002).

Social Justice – the equitable distribution of advantages for all within a society, working to see that those who experience oppression, disadvantage, and discrimination gain equal treatment and assistance to overcome systemic and societal barriers to equitable treatment (Fouad, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006); “equitable distribution of power and resources so that people can live with dignity, self-determination and physical and psychological safety” (Ratts, D’Andrea, & Arredondo, 2005, ¶ 1).

Social Action – a counselor’s “professional and moral responsibility…to address the significant social, cultural, and economic challenges that have the potential to impact
negatively upon psychosocial development”; this can be done be taking a stand and acting against societal and systemic barriers (Lee, 1998, p. 5).

*Systems (micro-, meso-, macro-)* – the units of relational human experience; “micro (individual and family), meso (community and organization), and macro (ideological and policy)” (Kiselica, 2004, p. 839).
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Within the changing U.S. demographics, all individuals do not have equal access to the opportunities and resources that promote well-being and meet basic needs (Mancionis & Gagne, 2002). This chapter will present literature that addresses how the counseling and helping professions have responded to these changes, looking first at issues of spirituality, then social justice, and concluding with literature that addresses the intersection of spirituality or religion and social justice. First, I will present an overview of the differing positions on spirituality and religion within the counseling profession followed by an examination of how the counseling profession has responded to issues of spirituality and religion in counseling. Next, I will present various descriptions of social justice in the helping fields and the response of the counseling profession to issues of social justice. This chapter will conclude with a presentation of the historical, contemporary intersections of spirituality and religion and social justice.

Spirituality and Religion: One in the Same or Different?

Until recently, the terms spirituality and religion were virtually inseparable in the vernacular of people in the United States. There has been a secularization of the term spirituality resulting in a differentiation between the terms spiritual and religious (Hill, Pargament, Hood, McCullough, Swyers, Larson, & Zinnbauer, 2000). Taylor (1999) outlines the progression of western culture from domination by religious thought to the philosophical influences against religious thought by Neitzche, Marx, and Freud, to a “new awakening” in culture. From this “new awakening” emerged individual spirituality, transcendence, and meaning, with little connection to organized religion. According to Taylor, this influence of spirituality can be seen in the progression of psychology from
the thought of Freud to that of encounter groups which incorporated eastern spiritual thoughts and practices. Many have attempted to define and distinguish religion and spirituality. The following will present several understandings of these two concepts.

*Religion Described*

According to Frame (2006), religion and spirituality are difficult terms to define, but their characteristics can be described. Religion has been defined as adherence to a set of collective teachings, rituals, and beliefs in a communal setting (Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling [ASERVIC], 1995). Some have described religiousness as personal beliefs in a divine power, institutions, and membership in a religious organization such as a church (Zinnbauer, Pargament, Cole, Rye, Butter, Belavich, Hipp, Scott, & Kadar, 1997). Religious ideas and ritual may be passed along through culture. It represents a shared experience among groups in which they can encounter the divine or absolute. Those who participate in religion may or may not experience this practice as spiritual (Cashwell & Young, 2005).

*Spirituality Described*

Spirituality is derived from the term *spiritus*, meaning breath (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000a). Spirituality can be described as an “active or passive process” (ASERVIC, 1995, ¶ 3) that involves experiences of transcendence, meaning, connectedness, love, and courage. Spirituality may or may not involve a belief in God or a higher power (ASERVIC; Wiggins-Frame, 2005). Richards and Bergin (2005) define “*spirituality* as a state of being attuned with God or the Divine Intelligence that governs or harmonizes the universe” (p. 22). According to Burke, Chauvin, and Miranti (2005) “Spirituality can also be viewed as the highest level of any line of development” (p. 4).
Spirituality may be, for some, the highest achievement in life. Many people may find expressions of spirituality within culture or religion, while others may experience spirituality outside of culture and religion. Spirituality in the United States transformed in the 1960s and 1970s and was greatly influenced by eastern thought and emerging secular movements (Taylor, 1999; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999). Psychology and other humanistic movements were also impacted by this change in spiritual climate. Centers for spiritual growth emerged such as Esalen which merged various religious and philosophical ideas with psychology. Other influences in the evolution of spirituality in psychology were Jung, Rogers, and Maslow (Taylor). These influences have impacted the view of spirituality as distinct from religion in U.S. culture.

Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000) view spirituality as central to human wellness. Myers et al. developed a model to conceptualize the whole person and the areas that make up wellness. They called this the Wheel of Wellness. For a person to maximize wellness, spirituality is essential. Myers et al. contend that it is essential to the person that they place spirituality at the center of the Wheel of Wellness. They define spirituality as “an awareness of a being or force that transcends the material aspects of life and gives a deep sense of wholeness or connectedness to the universe” (p. 253). Surrounding spirituality are other life tasks and personal contexts (i.e., relationships, community, and the world). Spirituality is difficult to define and describe because it is unique to the individual and may consist of multiple experiences.

In a qualitative study, Grafanaki, Pearson, Cini, Godula, McKenzie, Nason, and Anderegg (2005) explored the leisure activities and experiences of ten counselors and psychologists. Leisure has been recognized as a component of wellness and, as such, is
related to spirituality (Myers et al., 2000). In the Grafanki et al. study, several themes emerged that identified spirituality as a part of leisure: “leisure space” (p. 34), “connection” (p. 35), and “rewards” (p. 35). Some participants reported they spend time outdoors and by doing so, feel connected to something larger than themselves. Furthermore, participants reported connectedness to others and with themselves contributed to a deeper spirituality. Lastly, rewards led to more meaning and assisted with a renewal of the self. Engagement in leisure activities, many that include a strengthening of spirituality, have assisted the counselors and psychologists in this study to continue with their work. The themes in Grafanaki et al. are consistent with what Ingersoll (1994) identified as aspects of spirituality.

Ingersoll (1994) developed a framework that assists in understanding spirituality, particularly in counseling settings. By exploring components of spirituality from a variety of sources, he developed seven dimensions of spirituality: (a) a conception of the divine, absolute, or greater force, (b) a sense of meaning and what is beautiful, (c) a relationship with otherness or the divine, (d) tolerance for mystery and ambiguity, (e) experiences in ordinary life or on the mountain top (f) play for the sake of play, and (g) an integration of all of the above dimensions. Ingersoll (1998) later revised these seven “dimensions of spiritual wellness” (¶ 1) using interviews with 12 spiritual leaders from various spiritual traditions. A Delphi approach was used to evaluate the responses of the leaders. His findings led to a revision and expansion of the original seven dimensions. The ten dimensions that emerged from this study were: (a) conception of the absolute or divine, (b) meaning, (c) connectedness, (d) mystery, (e) sense of freedom, (f) experience-ritual-practice, (g) forgiveness, (h) hope, (i) knowledge-learning, and (j) present-centeredness.
These results indicate that spirituality and wellness are multifaceted and unique to each individual. Ingersoll’s (1998) study was limited to interviews with spiritual leaders and not counselors or clients. However, these frameworks can assist counselors to gain a better awareness of their own spirituality as well as provide assistance in understanding the spiritual issues presented by clients.

Religion and Spirituality - Intersections

To address the seeming differences between the definitions of religion and spirituality, Zinnbauer and colleagues (1997) conducted a quantitative study with various groups of people, including mental health workers, members of a New Age group, and people from various Christian denominations. Participants’ definitions and comparisons of religion and spirituality were examined, and comparisons were made between groups and their description of themselves as spiritual and/or religious. Most of those in the study defined spirituality in terms of a personal experience of something greater than oneself. Religion was defined by personal belief, as well as activities or organizations. Zinnbauer and colleagues’ (1997) study illuminates the changing meanings of the terms religiousness and spirituality, “Currently, religiousness is increasingly characterized as ‘narrow and institutional’ and spirituality is increasingly characterized as ‘personal and subjective’” (p. 563). Zinnbauer et al. (1997) found the strongest correlations between self-reported religiosity and church attendance (.45, p < .01), prayer outside of church (.38, p < .01), religious orthodoxy (.40, p < .01), positive evaluation of religiousness (.54, p < .01) and right-wing authoritarianism (.27, p < .01). Whereas self-reported spirituality was correlated with intrinsic religiosity (.41, p < .01), prayer outside of church (.35, p < .01), group experiences related to spiritual growth (.27, p < .01), new age beliefs and
practices (.24, \( p < .01 \)), mystical experiences (.27, \( p < .01 \)), and individual competiveness (.21, \( p < .01 \)). Those who self-identified as spiritual had higher correlations with education (.15, \( p < .01 \)) and income (.12, \( p < .05 \)) than those who self-reported as religious.

Many participants in the Zinnbauer et al. (1997) study identified themselves as “spiritual and religious” (p. 558). Most relevant to the present study are the responses of mental health workers. According to Zinnbauer et al., 52% of mental health workers identified as “spiritual and religious” while 44% identified as “spiritual but not religious”; 96% of mental health workers identified themselves as spiritual. Researchers reported that both mental health workers (44%) and those in the New Age group (47%) “rated themselves as highly spiritual, but not very religious” (New Age was not defined by researchers) (p. 562). The Zinnbauer et al. study does not make a distinction between counselors, psychologists, social workers, or case managers involved in mental health; however the findings provide evidence that some people who work in the mental health profession are spiritual and may or may not be religious. Some counselors provide services within the mental health field. The findings in Zinnbauer et al. provide evidence that there are some within the mental health profession who have spiritual experiences that can be explored further. The present study will explore spiritual experiences of counselors and counselor educators.

\textit{Wilber on Spirituality}

A framework for explaining religion/spirituality is provided by Wilber (n.d.). He addresses the concept of religion by dividing it into two components: translative and transformative. Translative religion is necessary for making sense of perceptions and
experiences of the world, a more cognitive activity. Translative religion is also characterized by the practices found throughout mainstream religion. Wilber writes, “With translation, the self is simply given a new way to think or feel about reality” (p. 1). Conversely, transformative religion is “vertical” and may lead a person to a “death of the believer” (p. 2). This form of religion can be “revolutionary,” leading to greater transformation in the world. This description of transformative religion sounds remarkably like what others have described as spirituality (ASERVIC, 1995). There is a sense that translative religion maintains the status quo and safety. Transformative religion leads to something more substantial, more radical with far reaching implications for society. These two approaches to the description of religion depart from others who describe religion in terms similar to what Wilber calls translative religion. Wilber’s approach to describing religion is relevant to the current study because the experience of a person’s religion and spirituality have deep implications for their lived experience and personal transformation.

*Mestiza Religion and Spirituality*

In her article, Rodriguez (2004) expounds on the experiences of Mestiza women in the United States. Rodriguez writes, “Historically the term mestiza referred to the biological bringing together of Spanish and Indian blood. Today, this term further entails an intrapsychic, interpersonal epistemological synthesis” (p. 319). Rodriguez pays particular attention to mestiza spiritual experiences and the interconnectedness of identity with the community, ritual, and justice. She states that the Mestiza identity raises one’s consciousness about oppression and influences the spirituality in one’s life, a liberation theology. Rodriguez distributed a survey to college-aged women who identified as
Latina/Mestiza, bilingual, bicultural, and Roman Catholic. She asked them about their lived experiences and the role faith plays in their lives. Rodriguez received 39 surveys that met the outlined criteria. Of the 39 who responded, 72% stated that they attend mass weekly and pray regularly, and 69% reported they participate in religious rituals in their faith community (i.e., Dia de los Muertos). The surveys indicated that many younger second generation Latinas have worked to integrate tradition with their current experiences. They reported valuing community from which they experience meaning and belongingness. Rodriguez writes, “In Latino/a culture, everything is interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent, and people identify themselves through their relationships to others...[that] also appl[ies] to the relationship between people and the Divine” (p. 335). Furthermore, Rodriguez identifies that ritual is important to the lived experiences of the Latina women in the survey. She writes, “Ritual is not just an activity with no purpose but rather is the way in which human beings construct their worlds” (p. 334). The women in the survey shared examples of their participation in syncretistic and indigenous practices as well as rituals within their Catholic faith that led to transformation and increased knowledge. Finally, Rodriguez addresses the role of ritual in justice pointing to the interconnectedness that many Mestizas feel with those around them and the Divine. Ritual becomes a connection with those who have gone before and those who have yet to be realized. Additionally, participating in rituals with others in their faith communities can unite people across economic, gender, and ethnic lines, making justice for all a realized possibility. In the experiences of the Mestiza women in Rodriguez’s article, spirituality and religion oftentimes overlap. This may be the case for others in the world.
This examination between the commonalities of spirituality and religion provide

evidence that the two may overlap in experience or be distinct. Literature about the
differences and similarities between these two concepts is helpful to the exploration of
spiritual experiences of counselors and counselor educators.

*African American Spirituality and Religion*

Cavendish (2000) was interested in exploring the activity of Black Catholic
congregations in social action and social justice within their communities. Additionally,
Cavendish wanted to know if the Catholic parishes that were predominately Black would
be more involved in the community and reaching out for justice. He conducted a
regression analysis of data collected by a Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life from
1984. Of the 1,883 parishes in the study, 29 identified as a Black parish. The respondents
in the study were the clergy of the parish.

Cavendish (2000) conducted a logistic regression analysis of the data provided by
the Notre Dame study. The analysis identified that social action involvement was
significantly linked to the racial composition of the parish when other variables had been
controlled for (i.e., socioeconomic status, urban or rural, regional location, parish size,
and parish structure. Furthermore, parishes that offered a leadership training course for
members were significantly more likely to be involved in social action activities.

In another quantitative study of Black church culture and community
involvement, Barnes (2005) sought to examine the relationship between cultural variables
identified in qualitative studies focused on the Black church. With the use of binary
logistic regression analysis, Barnes examined data from a survey of seven denominations
identified as Black protestant churches \(N = 1,863\). Barnes identified seven dependent
variables of social outreach (community service, food pantry, youth program, substance abuse program, voter registration, prison ministry, and social advocacy). Barnes was interested in knowing how cultural variables or “frames” within Black church culture would relate to various social action.

Barnes (2005) found that prayer groups and sermons about Black Liberation theology were significant in terms of community service involvement. Social advocacy and voter registration were significantly related to prayer groups, sermons about social justice, sermons about Black Liberation theology, sermons about race, and gospel music. Those congregations with prayer groups (92.68%) were most likely to be involved in all the areas of social outreach. The study controlled for the demographics of the congregation and pastoral characteristics. Though the results of Barnes’ study found that scripture was not significant in social outreach, she makes the argument that the communication of scripture through sermons may lead to social outreach. Scripture and the reinterpretation of scripture is a powerful resource in African American spirituality (Wiggins-Frame & Williams, 1996) and the Black church (Barnes).

Scripture is one of many resources that have influenced African American spirituality in the United States. According to Wiggins-Frame and Williams (1996) the institution of the Black church and the historical oppression of the African American people have been important in the development of African American spirituality. The use of metaphor, art, music, and community are aspects of African American spirituality. Mother Mary Ann Wright, one of many African American women involved in social justice, was compelled by her spirituality and sense of community to reach out and better her community environment (Guthrie, 1995). These aspects of spirituality are tied to the
fight for justice, liberation, and solidarity among the African American community (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999; Guthrie; Wiggins-Frame & Williams). Wiggins-Frame and Williams posit that spirituality is useful in counseling with African American clients.

Emergence of spirituality in Counseling

As the climate of American culture changes, counselors are seeking more ways to assist clients and communities. By addressing a client holistically and incorporating spiritual interventions, there is a belief that the whole person can benefit from counseling (Faiver, Ingersoll, O’Brien, & McNally, 2001). The number of clergy in many mainstream Christian denominations is dwindling and counselors may find themselves filling in these gaps (Menigat & Hawkins, 2005). Counselors who choose to incorporate spirituality and religion in counseling have a responsibility to be competent in this area of integration (ASERVIC, 1995). An area of competence and ethical practice is that counselors who incorporate spirituality in counseling need to be aware of their own personal spirituality and that of their clients (ACA, 2005; ASERVIC; Young, Cashwell, Wiggins-Frame, & Belaire, 2002).

The counseling profession has recognized the significance of incorporating spiritual and religious values into counseling. As the needs of society have changed, the counseling profession has also responded to these needs in the areas of counselor training (CACREP, 2001; Kelly, 1994; Prest, Russel, & D’Souza, 1999), counselor supervision (Aten & Hernandez, 2004; Polanski, 2003), counselor education pedagogy (Curtis & Glass, 2002; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997; Ingersoll, 1997), and clinical counseling (Cashwell, 2001; Helminiak, 2001; Holt, Houg, & Romano, 1999). Historically, the counseling profession has sought to assist people in society through prevention and
intervention (Gladding, 2004). To address some of these changing needs, competencies for practice were developed for spiritual and religious issues in counseling (ASERVIC, 1995) and multicultural counseling (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). How the counseling profession has evolved in addressing the spiritual needs of clients will now be examined.

*Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling*

In 1951, the Catholic Guidance Council within the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA, now called the American Counseling Association) was created as a means of support for guidance counselors working in parochial school settings. Years later, this division was named the National Catholic Guidance Conference (NCGC). As changes occurred within counseling and APGA, the NCGC was renamed the Association for Religious Values Issues in Counseling (ARVIC). Later, in 1993, ARVIC was renamed the Association of Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC), incorporating spirituality into the name. What began as a division within the ACA with strong religious ties has evolved to include many people with various religious and spiritual beliefs (Miranti, 2006).

According to their mission statement, ASERVIC is “an organization of counselors and human development professionals who believe spiritual, ethical, and religious values are essential to the overall development of the person and are committed to integrating these values into the counseling process” (www.aservic.org, 2007). In 1995, ASERVIC outlined competencies for the incorporation of spirituality and religion in counseling that serves to assist counselors in working with those from a variety of faith backgrounds. They continue to provide resources of self-exploration and professional development for
counselors in the counseling profession. As the needs of society have changed, the counseling field has also changed to meet these needs (Miranti, 2006).

*Spirituality and Counselor Training*

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) was established in 1981 and has provided guiding principles for training in the counseling profession (Sweeney, 1992). These guidelines provide eight core areas of training: (a) human growth and development, (b) social and cultural foundations, (c) helping relationships, (d) group work, (e) career and lifestyle development, (f) appraisal, (g) research and program evaluation, and (h) professional orientation. These core areas provide a foundation for counselors-in-training to become competent practitioners. Throughout the years, CACREP has revised their standards to address the changing needs of society and counselor training. Religion and spirituality have been identified as important areas for the training of counselors interested in addressing spiritual and religious issues with clients (ASERVIC, 1995).

Kelly (1994) surveyed 343 counseling programs (75% CACREP accredited) regarding how religious and spiritual issues are addressed in counselor training programs. Kelly found that many programs had no courses that addressed religion or spirituality (N = 287), or little opportunity for training in these areas. Additionally, Kelly found that less than 50% of the programs surveyed provided supervisory guidance during internships regarding religion and spirituality. Results from Kelly’s study indicated that program affiliation did have a relationship with training in religious and spiritual issues in counseling. State-affiliated programs had fewer courses with spiritual content (z = 3.55, p < .01) than religiously-affiliated programs (z = 3.25, p < .01). Kelly’s results suggest it is
possible that many practicing counselors and counselor educators were not trained in religious or spiritual issues in their course work. It may be that some counselors are seeking training in areas of religion and spirituality at conferences, by reading books, or attending workshops.

In a similar study, Brawer, Handal, Fabricatore, Roberts, and Wajda-Johnston (2002) conducted a survey of 197 directors of training programs accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA). They found that 61% of the directors indicated that religion and spirituality were addressed as part of existing programs and not as a course, while 13% reported a course on religion and spirituality. Others stated that the topic of religion and spirituality was likely addressed as part of supervision (77%). The results of the Brawer et al. study indicated that issues of religion and spirituality are being addressed in APA programs, but some programs may not be addressing these topics in training. This may limit the ability of graduating students to address the religious and spiritual needs of those with whom they work.

There are many views about the incorporation of spirituality in the counseling profession (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2000). Individuals within the counseling profession have suggested more emphasis should be placed on the incorporation of religion and spiritual training in counselor preparation. Burke, Hackney, Hudson, Miranti, Watts, and Epp (1999) provided suggestions for the infusion of spirituality and religion into CACREP standards. They proposed that spirituality and religion not only be addressed in the Social and Cultural Foundations core, but also be addressed in other core areas. One suggestion is to address vocational issues in light of the spiritual values the client holds. The 2001 CACREP standards identify religion and spirituality in the Social and Cultural
Foundations core, but little is mentioned in other core areas regarding religious and spiritual issues.

Currently, CACREP is revising its standards to meet the current needs of society and counselor training. In draft three, religion and spirituality have been infused throughout the eight core training areas. For example, in Social and Cultural Diversity, core spirituality is addressed, as counselors need to address the whole person for “optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body” (II.F.2.e., 2007). Other core areas also indicate the infusion of religion and spirituality as a component of multicultural issues throughout core areas. One example is “HELPING RELATIONSHIPS – studies that provide an understanding of the counseling process in a multicultural society” (II.F.5., 2007). By incorporating information about a multicultural society in the core areas, it may be assumed that religion and spirituality will be included. Though these terms are not used explicitly throughout the eight core areas, religion and spirituality are included in the definition of multicultural counseling.

It is clear that CACREP (2007) is responding to the call to include religion and spirituality into counselor training. Others have explored how the religion and spiritual competencies outlined by ASERVIC (http://www.aservic.org/Competencies.html, 1995) have been infused into CACREP accredited training programs. Incorporation of these competencies goes beyond the explicit requirements of the CACREP standards in addressing religion and spirituality. Young, Cashwell, Wiggins-Frame, and Belaire (2002) conducted a survey of 94 CACREP program liaisons about the use of the competencies in training. Results indicated that overall there was “moderate strong agreement” (p. 26) with regard to the importance of the competencies (3.83 on a likert
scale ranging from 1 - 5 on a likert scale). Additionally, the authors found participants rated themselves as moderately prepared to address the competencies in a training setting (3.3), while they rated their colleagues as less adequate (2.93). This study provides information about the view of CACREP liaisons regarding the competencies in practice and how capable counselor educators are in providing training in these areas. A limitation to Young et al.’s study is that, although CACREP liaisons were surveyed, other faculty members in the departments were not surveyed. This sample was a random sample of volunteers, but in a convenience sample, the subjects were program liaisons. Additionally, students were not surveyed about their perspective of the competencies. Young et al.’s article suggests that awareness of spirituality and competency in addressing such issues is a topic of interest to the counseling profession.

Young, Wiggins-Frame, and Cashwell (2007) conducted a similar study in which they surveyed 505 ACA members. Young et al. were interested in how participants rated the importance of the competencies, how prepared they were to address religious and spiritual issues, and if they believed they needed more training in religious and spiritual issues. The sample consisted of mostly Caucasian women who held a master’s degree. According to the results, 82% indicated they were more spiritual than religious. More than half (68%) indicated they felt prepared to work with clients’ religious and spiritual issues. The majority of respondents indicated they had some training to address religious or spiritual issues (47% had a course, 40% attended a workshop, 50% read literature). Researchers found a significant correlation (p < .05) between high spirituality ratings and ratings in seven competency areas. Similarly a correlation (p < .05) was found between being a religious person and four competency areas (self-exploration, explain relationship
between religion and spirituality, describe own belief system and describe other views, and describe religion and spirituality in cultural terms). Young et al. speculate these correlational differences may be due to the language of the competency areas.

The findings of Young et al.’s (2007) study are relevant to the exploration of spirituality of counselors and counselor educators and can be helpful in looking at the relationship of spirituality and social justice in the lives of counseling professionals. The number of respondents that indicated they are more spiritual (82%) than religious (48%) may indicate that others within ACA may have similar views and are therefore able to share their experience of spirituality. Furthermore, the indication that only some participants received training may be relevant to exploring the influences of spiritual and social justice experiences of participants in the current study. A limitation to the Young et al. study is the lack of ethnic and gender diversity in the sample. The current study on spirituality and social justice seeks for both ethnic and gender diversity in order to gather rich information. Training programs and accreditation bodies have addressed religion and spirituality as they have evolved to meet the needs of society. Other factors, such as values, may be instrumental in addressing a multicultural society.

*Spirituality/Values and Counseling*

Dugan (2002) explored the impact of professional organization affiliation on counseling values. The 129 participants were recruited from the American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC), the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), and the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA); 43 from each association. The majority of respondents were Caucasian, with
a master’s level degree or above. The majority indicated some affiliation with a Christian religious tradition while 16 indicated an affiliation with another religion or no religion. In his study, Dugan (2002) measured values regarding counseling (autonomy, self-awareness, and religiosity/spirituality), religious commitment, and multicultural competency. According to the results, counselors across organizations showed no significant differences on measures for the values of autonomy and self-growth, but AACC members had a higher mean score on religiosity as measured by a religious commitment inventory ($\bar{x} = 15.40$) than those who were members of AMCD or AMHCA. Significant results were found for the value counselors placed on spirituality and multicultural competence and awareness. Dugan found that counselors who considered themselves religiously liberal scored higher on various measures of multicultural competence ($\bar{x} = 134.40$) and awareness ($\bar{x} = 31.57$) than those who considered themselves more religiously conservative ($\bar{x} = 124.09$, $\bar{x} = 26.26$). Dugan found that members of AMCD had the highest scores on multicultural competence ($\bar{x} = 136.42$) as compared to AACC ($\bar{x} = 124.77$) and AMHCA ($\bar{x} = 125.18$). Results of this study also found that those who did not receive training in multicultural counseling scored higher on religiosity ($\bar{x} = 14.68$, $N = 22$). Conversely, those trained in multicultural counseling scored higher on multicultural competence ($\bar{x} = 130.72$, $N = 107$). This study provides insight into the values of counselors and is helpful to this study. It may be that counselors who are spiritually liberal are more multiculturally competent, or they may value multicultural competency and seek out training to address this value. Therefore, they may be more vested in social justice, an element of multicultural counseling within the counseling profession (CACREP, II.2.c.).
Dugan’s (2002) study found significant differences in religiosity among the participants from the three counseling divisions. However, Dugan did not compare AACC with a counseling division comprised of Jewish or Muslim counselors or with ASERVIC. Had these comparisons been made, different results may have emerged. Dugan limited his study to the measure of competency and Christian religiosity using valid assessments which did not measure actions of how values are expressed in the counseling relationship. The results of Dugan’s study provide some insight into the commonalities of values found in some counseling organizations. Participants in the current study of spirituality and social justice may report experiences that are similar to others who belong to the same division (i.e., CSJ and ASERVIC).

Social Justice

Social justice is concerned with the marginalization of various communities within the U.S. and throughout the world who experience unequal treatment through discrimination, stereotypes, and societal policy (Israel, 2006). The oppressive experiences of each group differs, however, the impact may be similar. Marginalized groups include, but are not limited to: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals (Chen-Hayes, 1999; Lassiter & Barret, 2007; Whitcomb & Loewy, 2006), immigrants (Goodman, Liang, Helms, Latta, Sparks, & Weintraub, 2004), people of color (Sheppard, 2002), persons with disabilities (D’Andrea, Skouge, & Daniels, 2006; Fabian, 2007; Palombi & Mundt, 2006), older persons (Myers, 2007), persons from a lower socioeconomic position in society (Armstrong, 2007; Cosgrove, 2006), religious and spiritual groups (Hodge, 2007), and historically, women (Bell & Goodman, 2006, Lewis, 2007). Professionals concerned with social justice advocacy recognize the need to address these
various forms of inequality within a professional context (Goodman et al., 2004; Herr, 1999; Israel, 2006; Lee, 1998; Lee & Hipolito-Delgado, 2007; Speight & Vera, 2004).

Social justice has been defined in several ways. Speight and Vera (2004) define social justice as going “beyond the mere distribution of benefits (i.e., income and wealth) among the members of a society to the examination of institutional and social relations… [and] involves the degree to which a society supports the elements necessary for the good life” (p. 111). Fouad, Gernstein, and Toporek (2006) define social justice within counseling psychology as a focus “on helping to ensure that opportunities and resources are distributed fairly and helping to ensure equity when resources are distributed unfairly or unequally” (p. 1).

Many people outside the counseling profession have worked in the past as well as the present to confront social oppression. César Chávez, a leader in the Chicano rights movement; Martin Luther King, Jr., a prominent figure in the modern Civil Rights Movement, who chose to employ peaceful resistance in order to protest racism and oppression of African Americans in the United States (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Chen-Hayes, 2001); and W.E.B. DuBois who fought racism in the early 1900s. For each of the above people, the particulars of social justice were dependent on the social and personal context in which it is or was addressed. For example, César Chávez was the son of migrant workers in the western United States. He fought for the rights of migrant workers, many of whom were Mexican American (Hammerback & Jensen, 2003). In the recent past, humanistic groups have re-emerged to tackle issues of oppression, injustice, and poverty; acting in ways that would bring about positive change in society (Kiselica & Robinson; McCormick, 2003). Generally, within the human services, social justice is
concerned with confronting the societal realities of oppression, injustice, racism, classism, sexism, and heterosexism (Chen-Hayes; Speight & Vera, 2004). These examples of social justice advocacy can be a model for counselors who desire to make an impact on society.

Within the counseling profession, social justice counseling “seeks to establish a more equitable distribution of power and resources so that people can live with dignity, self-determination and physical and psychological safety” (Ratts, D’Andrea, & Arredondo, 2005, ¶ 1). Throughout the literature, the concept of social justice has been used interchangeably with social action and advocacy (Arredondo & Toporek, 2004; Chen-Hayes, 1999; Kiselica, 2004; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Lee, 1998). This paper will primarily address counseling for social justice as defined by Ratts et al., “equitable distribution of power and resources” (¶ 1). As the helping professions (i.e., social work, counseling, psychology, and psychiatry) work to maintain relevance within a constantly changing society, an understanding of social justice is valuable.

Social Justice within Counseling

At its inception, the counseling profession sought equality and reform for those who experienced oppressive treatment due to mental illness and psychological distress (Gladding, 2004; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). One person who confronted society’s view of mental illness was John Beers, who in the early 1900s began a movement known as the Mental Hygiene Movement. This movement was directed at changing society’s perceptions of mental illness (Kiselica, 2004). This change in the perception of mental illness within the U.S. impacts the work that counselors do today (Gladding, 2004; Kiselica). Others within the counseling profession have also worked on behalf of social
justice: Lawrence Gernstein championed the rights of the Tibetan people (Kiselica & Robinson) and Frank Parsons spoke up about the need for career counseling and was instrumental in the foundation of the counseling profession (Gladding, 2004; Kiselica & Robinson; Lee, 1998). Frank Parsons was an educator in Boston who had a desire to help young people explore career opportunities through vocational counseling. This later developed into the guidance counseling movement (Gladding, 2004).

The counseling profession has for many years been involved in activism and rights for others (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001). Some have challenged the use of standardized testing with people of color, while others have written about issues of racism and oppression (Kiselica & Robinson). Many skills used by counselors can be expanded and utilized to advocate for clients’ rights. Kiselica and Robinson have broadened the basic skill-set of a counselor to address large systemic issues. By expanding these skills in application to advocacy, the realization that a counselor can influence change may not seem so daunting or specialized. These skills can be particularly helpful in confronting issues of various types of oppression, including cultural or racial oppression.

As the counseling profession evolved to address multicultural aspects within counseling, guidelines were developed to address these needs, the Multicultural Counseling Competencies (Arredondo, Toporek, Brown, Jones, Locke, Sanchez, and Stadler, 1996, see http://www.amcdaca.org/amcd/competencies.pdf). As a progression of multiculturalism in counseling, social justice in counseling recognizes the need to do more than counseling to assist clients (Arredondo & Toporek, 2004; Ratts et al., 2004). Through research conducted in the area of multicultural counseling, a greater
understanding of the oppression clients face has become apparent (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Arredondo & Toporek, 2004; Chen-Hayes, 1999; Romero & Chan, 2005). Ratts et al. suggest that social justice in counseling be considered as the fifth force of counseling. The other forces in counseling include: psychoanalysis, behaviorism, humanism, and multicultural counseling (Gladding, 2006).

For some counseling psychologists, social justice falls under the realm of multicultural counseling (Constantine, Melincoff, Barakett, Torino, & Warren, 2004). In a qualitative exploration of the “experiences of multicultural counselling [sic] scholars” (p. 375), Constantine et al. interviewed 12 counseling psychologists about their experiences. The participants in the study were from diverse ethnic backgrounds, had doctoral degrees, and worked in academic settings. Elicited from the interviews were 10 domains, some with sub-themes. Several sub-themes emerged relevant to social justice. Participants indicated that to be a multicultural counselor it is necessary to address social justice. Additionally, many responded that their own life experiences with oppression and injustice influenced their awareness of cultural issues. “All participants noted past and current feelings associated with cultural insensitivity by others,” (p. 384) according to Constantine and colleagues. All participants shared their experiences of training students in multicultural counseling. Through their training of students, these participants are involved in social justice by raising awareness of these issues (Goodman et al., 2004; Kiselica, 2004).

Constantine and colleagues (2005) provide some insight into the relationship and progression of multicultural counseling and social justice counseling. For the study participants, social justice counseling was intertwined in various domains. In their view,
to address issues of culture and diversity is to address issues of injustice and oppression. Approaching the topic of multicultural counseling experiences qualitatively adds depth and richness to the topic. The results of the Constantine et al. research are applicable to the current study by providing evidence that people practicing multicultural counseling do experience social justice as part of their work. The current study will build on the Constantine et al. study by focusing on counselors and counselor educators and will examine spirituality. The interest of combining social justice and counseling seems a natural progression in helping clients and their communities.

Many authors in the counseling profession have written about the need for social justice awareness within the counseling psychology and counseling professions. In the counseling psychology profession, the *Handbook for Social Justice in Counseling Psychology: Leadership, Vision, and Action* (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar, & Israel, 2006) presents various topics focusing on the infusion of social justice in contexts where counseling psychologists are trained, work, and live. This handbook is exhaustive, taking into account domestic and international issues (Gernstein, 2006), marginalization (Israel, 2006), schools and education (Roysircar, 2006), and public policy (Toporek et al., 2006). In their perennial work, *Social Action: A Mandate for Counselors*, Lee and Walz (1998) compiled articles that provide practical ways to incorporate social action in counselor training, practice, and research. More recently, a follow-up publication, *Counseling for Social Justice* (Lee, 2007), presents chapters on various topics of social justice inclusion in the counseling profession.
Counselors for Social Justice

This progression within counseling is reflected in the American Counseling Association’s (ACA) development of the division of Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) in 1999. According to Kiselica and Robinson (2004), CSJ was created to promote “individual and collective responsibility and the eradication of oppressive systems of power and privilege through the development and implementation of social action strategies” (p. 391). The division of CSJ focuses on issues of oppression and privilege that impact the well-being of individuals and their environments.

According to CSJ:

Counselors for Social Justice is a community of counselors, counselor educators, graduate students, and school and community leaders who seek equity and an end to oppression and injustice affecting clients, students, counselors, families, communities, schools, workplaces, governments, and other social and institutional systems. (2004, ¶ 1)

This mission is achieved by educating counselors in training about advocacy competencies, through social activism, by hosting a Day of Action at the ACA convention and the conference for the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), and through the use of their website to provide information regarding social justice issues. The inception of this division and a greater emphasis placed on social justice within the counseling profession can help guide counselors toward action in bringing about greater social change.
Social Justice and CACREP

Additionally, Kiselica (2004) suggests that changes be made to acknowledge social justice in academic training and advancement. In the 2001 CACREP standards, social justice is considered part of the Social and Cultural Diversity core (II.K.2.d). In the 2007 CACREP revisions draft, social justice is explicitly recognized as part of Social and Cultural Diversity. Other core areas contain information regarding the need for advocacy and considerations of multicultural issues in various areas of counseling. Both advocacy and multicultural considerations can be indirectly or directly related to social justice. Social justice is not explicitly included in more content areas than the previous standards.

Ratts (2006) conducted a study to evaluate how social justice counseling has been incorporated into CACREP accredited counseling programs. Ratts surveyed 108 instructors of social and cultural courses. The respondents were primarily European American/White (N = 49, 46%) and African American/Black (N = 29, 27%), female (N = 61, 57%), and heterosexual (N = 85, 81%). Most respondents were between the ages of 51 - 60. Ratts also inquired about religion. Respondents self-identified as Christian (N = 71, 68%) and other (N = 11, 10%) while other categories (Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Pagan) had ten or fewer respondents. Most respondents were faculty with tenure.

Ratts (2006) found that most respondents (N = 101) in the study incorporated social justice into courses that address the social, multicultural, and diversity aspects of counseling. Most respondents in the study indicated they addressed specific topics in social justice such as: “concept of power and privilege, and oppression” (94%), “exploring counselor’s stereotypes, beliefs, and values” (94%), “ACA’s multicultural
counseling competencies” (90%), “connecting client problems to oppression” (80%), and “building on client’s strengths” (80%) (p. 91). The areas least likely to be incorporated were “ACA’s advocacy guidelines” (40%) and “AGLBIC’s GLBT competencies” (38%) (p. 91). According to Ratts’ results, counselor awareness and an awareness of client contexts was identified as important to address in counselor training. Conversely, the lack of use of the guidelines and competencies may be due to a lack of awareness of resources. It may also be due to the lack of perceived relevance of their content to social and cultural issues in counseling. Ratts suggests further exploration of the use of the competencies or the development of “social justice counseling competencies” (p.128).

Several t-tests were conducted to measure the relationship between respondent demographics with oppression topics (i.e., classism, racism, sexism). Ratts (2006) found several significant results. Gender was significant in addressing ableism \( t(102) = 3.85, p \leq .000 \), ageism \( t(102) = 2.00, p \leq \), and classism \( t(102) = 2.38, p \leq .019 \). In Ratts’ study, 57% were female and 43% were male. Furthermore, sexism was less likely to be addressed by White faculty \( t(102) = 2.07, p \leq .041 \). This result may indicate that faculty of color may be able to relate their experiences to that of sexism. In contrast, Balkin, Schlosser, and Levitt (in press) found that an openly religious attitude was related to sexist attitudes among counseling professionals and graduate students. Respondents in Ratts’ study who identified as a religion other than Christian were more likely to address issues of heterosexism \( t(100) = 3.17, p \leq .002 \) than those who identified as Christian. This result may be due to the theological beliefs regarding sexual orientation held by many Christians (Grenz, 1998). Christian respondents may not see heterosexism as such,
but as a religious issue. Consistent with Ratts’ (2006) findings, Balkin et al. found that an authoritarian religious perspective was related to homophobia.

Finally, Ratts (2006) surveyed participants about other courses in which participants have integrated social justice. The highest ratings were: Helping Relationships ($M = 3.3457$), Professional Identity ($M = 3.2750$), and Assessment ($M = 3.1587$). These core areas address the interaction a counselor has with clients and the values that guide those interactions. It could be that clients’ experiences of oppression may impact their ability to trust a counselor. Furthermore, those experiences may lead to differences in assessment outcomes. It is important for counselors to be trained to respond to these possibilities.

The findings of Ratts’ (2006) study illuminate some of the factors that impact the inclusion of social justice in counselor-training curricula. This quantitative examination illustrates relationships that exist between the faculty demographics and addressing topics of oppression. It did not examine the influences that led to differences. Ratts’ study provides a foundation for the deeper, qualitative exploration of counselor educators’ experiences of social justice. It provides some indication that religion is a factor in addressing issues of heterosexism. Religion also appears to be a factor in sexism and homophobic attitudes in counseling professionals (Balkin et al., in press). In the qualitative interview for the present research project the issue of addressing heterosexism and spirituality may emerge during interviews with co-researchers.

Ratts’ (2006) study provides more specific information about counselor preparation and social justice from the perspective of educators. This is in contrast to the factors that influence students to engage in social justice (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005).
Training programs are the arena where counselors learn the skills necessary to competently practice in the counseling profession. Many training programs have begun to incorporate social justice through experiential learning and professional clinical internships (Goodman et al., 2004; O’Brien, Patel, Hensler-McGinnis, & Kaplan, 2006; Talleyrand, Chung, & Bemak, 2006). In their conceptual article, Goodman et al. highlight the feminist and multicultural contributions to social justice and address the need for counseling psychologists to receive social justice training in graduate programs. The authors make the case that the counseling psychology profession has limited its attention to the individual, family, or group. Arguing on behalf of social justice, the authors believe an awareness of larger societal systems informs the interventions used by counseling psychologists to assist clients. The Goodman et al. article offers several dimensions of social justice training: “(a) ongoing self-examination, (b) sharing power, (c) giving voice, (d) facilitating consciousness raising, (e) building on strengths, and (f) giving clients the tools to work toward social change” (p. 798). The feminist foundations for a social justice approach are clear. Feminist counseling theory seeks to provide the client with tools for change, to equalize power, and to raise awareness of gender socialization (Corey, 2005). By equalizing power with the client or in a social justice context, the counselor is getting closer to realizing social justice. Goodman et al. also provide personal examples and reflections on the use of the dimensions of social justice training in a service learning context. This article is largely conceptual in nature and empirical evidence is still limited.

Although the Goodman et al. (2004) article provides guidelines and suggestions for integrating social justice into counseling psychology, Watts (2004) believes more
could be done to train students to address social justice. He agrees with Goodman et al. on the need for social justice, however he argues there are more ways to address oppression and that the skills used in individual and family therapy can also be used at the societal level. Accordingly, the transformation of therapeutic terminology may be required to inform counselors and to produce change in larger systems. Watts suggests the use of liberation psychology and Black psychology to inform the transformation of individual counseling concepts to concepts that represent the communal context of people. For example, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy may be transformed to Critical Consciousness Raising (Watts), thus placing an emphasis on the social nature of change. These guidelines assist the counselor in supplementing multicultural counseling and social justice approaches in counseling, and as Watts emphasizes, the client can become engaged as an advocate in “work for the liberation of their own [community]” (p. 863).

Nilsson and Schmidt (2005) researched social justice advocacy among counseling psychology graduate students. Their sample consisted of 134 students, primarily female (N = 112), ages 21-59 and the majority indicated they were White (84%), Christian (66%), and Democrat (58%). Their goal was to determine initial predictors for social justice advocacy. Results indicated the majority of students had an optimistic worldview (N = 124), and that they seek harmony, peace, and goodness. A regression analysis was used to explore predictors for social justice advocacy. Nilsson and Schmidt found that “age, number of courses, political interest, concern for others, problem solving skills” (p. 273), and an optimistic worldview were predictors of a desire to become involved with, and active in social justice advocacy. Furthermore, they found that those with a desire to be involved in social justice advocacy had an interest in politics (t = 6.67, p < .01) and
those already engaged in social justice advocacy had both a desire ($t = 5.16, p < .01$) to
do such work accompanied with an interest in politics ($t = 2.85, p < .01$). A one-way
analysis of variance of subgroups indicated men had a significantly higher desire to
advocate for social justice than women, and those who identified as LGB had a
significantly higher desire to advocate for social justice those who identified as
heterosexual. Nilsson and Schmidt’s study found that political interest is a strong
predictor for interest in and involvement with social justice advocacy. Their study
focused on students and did not examine predictors in practicing clinicians or counselor
educators. Furthermore, the sample had a small number of participants from diverse
backgrounds (ethnic, religious, and sexual orientation). The limited diversity of the
sample may have impacted the results of the study. Furthermore, religion was not found
to have an impact on desire or involvement with social justice advocacy, though 66% of
respondents identified themselves as Christian. The results may have indicated religions
as significant had more of the participants been from a non-dominant religious group.
This study failed to measure spirituality as a factor. Nilsson and Schmidt report that the
large number of students who scored high on optimistic worldview is consistent with the
values of counseling. The desire to help others may be a catalyst for actual involvement
in social justice advocacy in the lives of clients, in communities, and in the world.

Counseling has largely focused on the individual, family, or group level. The
literature concentrating on social justice in counseling calls for counselors to be aware of
the societal contexts of clients’ lives and act to bring about change. Simply providing the
tools to help clients cope with oppression is inadequate for addressing oppressive systems
(Watts, 2004); counselors must advocate (Chen-Hayes, 1999; Kiselica & Robinson,
partner with clients (Goodman et al., 2004), and become social activists (Lewis & Arnold, 1998). By becoming more active in societal change, counselors may assist in the transformation of the contexts in which they work (West, Osborn, & Bubenzer, 2003).

Change Agents: Counseling Leaders and Social Justice

Kiselica and Robinson (2001) present biographical accounts of social justice advocates within the counseling profession. They also provide suggestions for social justice advocacy in counseling based on the lives of advocates. Kiselica and Robinson provide the reader with ideas and suggestions for incorporating components of social justice advocacy into practice. Other biographical accounts of social justice and advocacy leadership within the counseling profession appear in Leaders and Legacies (West et al., 2003). Courtland Lee, past-president of ACA, co-edited Social Action: A Mandate for Counselors (1998) and has written much more about multicultural and international issues in counseling. During his professional career, he has worked in a variety of settings with people who have been marginalized. As a faculty member, he has also been a mentor to, and model for students interested in multicultural issues. Mary Thomas Burke was both a nun and a counselor. She was devoted to direct service to the poor and the marginalized and was an advocate through her writings. Mary Thomas Burke worked to assist organizations that helped people with HIV/AIDS, domestic violence survivors, and those with addictions. Her leadership incorporated both religious/spiritual values and social justice. Loretta Bradley published many works on multicultural issues and advocacy. During her time as ACA president, she focused on advocacy in the profession, which she exemplified in her professional career. Another influential leader is Derald Wing Sue who has impacted the development of multicultural practice in counseling and
counseling psychology as well as social justice issues within the profession (Romero & Chan, 2005). Through publishing on multicultural issues and oppression, he has raised awareness of these factors in counseling. Countless others have influenced the counseling profession through their leadership and will continue to influence the profession.

Parra-Cardona, Holtrop, and Córdova (2005) share their personal experiences of social justice in clinical work. These doctoral students share how personal life experiences, training, and clinical supervision have furthered their desire to address social justice. Each person writes of the challenges and struggles of social justice in clinical practice. For the authors, their experiences in the field increased their awareness of the resistance to social justice. Parra-Cardona et al. encourage training programs to address the potential pitfalls of addressing social justice in counseling, to help students increase their knowledge of themselves, and to create a network of support when addressing social justice. The Parra-Cardona et al. article illuminates the struggles and rewards of working for social justice from a student perspective. Though several authors wrote about their childhood experiences of discrimination, none addressed the role of religion or spirituality.

Spirituality and Social Justice

Many involved in the work of social justice have been influenced by their development, culture, and surroundings (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Parra-Cardona et al., 2005; West et al., 2003). Two factors that may be influential in working to eradicate oppression are religion and spirituality. Several studies have shown that religion is not significant in addressing social justice (Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005; Ratts, 2006). However, these studies did not address spirituality as a consideration. According to Abels (2000),
spirituality and social justice are intertwined. He writes, “I consider spirituality to be a belief in the search for social justice, the desire to further the practice of respect for all persons. Respect means equality, autonomy, privacy, and human development” (p. 4). This section will address the historical and contemporary intersections of spirituality and social justice.

**Historical Intersections**

Throughout the centuries, social and religious groups have been concerned with oppressed and marginalized persons within their societies (Irani & Silver, 1995; McCormick, 2003). In the past and today, many religions throughout the world have addressed oppression and encouraged followers to be involved in charity (Hoveyda, 1995; Shelley, 1995), social activism (Bullock, 2005), and social justice (Dorr, 1991; Pilarczyk, 1997; Prasad, 1995). Furthermore, there is recognition of the relationship of spirituality and feminism in contemporary America (Fall, 2002; Rodriguez, 2004; Spretnak, 1982; Wilkey, 1997). Arredondo and Perez (2003) point out that several social activists in the past have held strong spiritual or religious convictions. The intersections between religion and spirituality and activism provide some indication that a relationship between spirituality and social justice may exist in other contexts, including the counseling profession. Activism may be an extension of an interest in social justice for some counselors (Kiselica & Robinson, 2001).

In ancient Greece, Socrates debated issues of justice and their role in *The Republic* (Plato, trans. 1984). Those involved in the debate had difficulty coming to a consensus about the definition of justice and its role. Religions in the ancient world often had a concept of charity and justice (Irani & Silver). In earlier societies, a distinction
between religion and spirituality was not made; therefore, early religious expressions of social justice may be helpful in exploring contemporary relationships between spirituality and social justice. The meanings and definitions of spirituality have changed and evolved over the last century (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). In the past, religion was seen as a means of reaching the spiritual, whereas in the recent past, these terms have been viewed as separate. Spirituality is seen by many to be a personalized search for meaning, transcendent experiences, and countercultural. Understanding the evolution of the cultural distinction provides evidence that in the past there was little distinction between terms. Therefore, the relationship between religion and social justice may provide insight for the current study.

There has been an emphasis throughout the Judeo-Christian tradition to provide for the poor, orphaned, widowed, and oppressed (Exodus 22: 21-27). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught about the role of the poor in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:1-7:29). Moreover, members of the early church sold their belongings to provide for others within their community and lived communally (Acts 4:32-35). The early church took the teachings of the bible to heart providing food and shelter for orphans, widows, and the sick (Shelley, 1995). Centuries later, amid a corrupt and greedy papacy, St. Francis of Assisi renounced his wealth to serve the poor and to challenge the church’s excess of wealth. Eventually the Franciscan community was established with a concern for the poor as a primary focus (Shelley).

Ancient Indian Hindu social justice was also guided by higher law and sacred writings (Prasad, 1995). The laws of justice were intertwined with Vedic teaching and dharma, a system of rules that guide one’s life. Early Islamic law provided by the Koran
offered some form of social justice by providing “recommendations to the believers…concerning almsgiving and related matters” (Hoveyda, 1995, p. 116). As the centuries have progressed and religion has become deemphasized or the values have changed for religion, others have taken on the cause of the oppressed, but some have maintained a sense of the spiritual in social justice work.

**Contemporary Intersections**

Theoretical works have been written to address the relationship between spirituality and social justice in counseling. According to Miranti and Burke (1998), spirituality in counseling can be a force that leads to greater change in society. Consedine (2002) writes, “Linking spirituality and social justice is an integral part of any truly human movement for social change” (p. 31). There are theoretical suggestions about the impact of spirituality on social justice and research that examines the existence of a relationship between spirituality and social change in women educators (Tisdell, 2002).

Some social activists in the past have held to strong spiritual or religious convictions (Arredondo & Perez, 2003). An individual’s interest in social justice may be impacted by his or her religious affiliation (Hunt, 2002) or spirituality. Some churches or spiritual movements may be involved with social justice by virtue of shared experiences of oppression.

Fukuyama and Sevig (1999) point out that social justice and liberation are a large part of existing expression of spirituality in diverse communities. For example, deeply embedded in Black churches in the United States are the values of community and confronting injustice. Fukuyama and Sevig write, “The role of the African American church has been identified as important to community, social justice, and family life” (p.
Similarly, Fukuyama and Sevig see themes of fighting injustices in women’s spirituality. The experience of women’s spirituality is guided by a heightening of awareness to an embracing of the lived experience of women and of the self as a woman. According to Fukuyama and Sevig there is a response to oppression in women’s spirituality which “emphasizes personal experience, empowerment, and liberation in the context of patriarchal values” (p. 39). The spirituality of many African Americans and women integrates values of social justice.

Several studies have evaluated how religious affiliation is related to attitudes about oppression and privilege. In a study conducted by Hunt (2002), a significant relationship was found between religious affiliation and race, which were correlated with attitudes about the causes of poverty. Alternatively, Curry, Koch and Chalfant (2003) found no significant relationship between one’s religious affiliation and attitude toward economic justice. However, Curry et al. did find a significant relationship between race and attitudes toward economic justice. These studies focused on religion and did not mention spirituality.

Liberation Theology

A modern movement within the Christian religious community to address social injustice is that of Liberation Theology. Liberation Theology was developed in Latin America in response to years of oppression by many within religious communities and in governments (many developing from a religious foundation) (Ferm, 1986). This theology was more than an ideology; it became a movement within Latin America, Africa, Asia (Ferm), and in some African American communities of the United States (Vashum, 2005). Movements in East Asia and Africa combined Christian liberation theology with
local religious theologies like Buddhism (Ferm). Leaders in this movement came to believe that sin was not an individual experience, but also a communal experience that can happen within larger systems (Vashum). Liberation theology brought hope and grace to communal, systemic sin and provided a hope for a future. Rodes (1994) writes, “our faith, as liberationist doctrine reminds us, is that the pursuit of social justice is validated not historically, but eschatologically” (¶ 6). This is to say that the driving force behind liberation theology is what has happened in the past illuminates the work toward a better future. Being driven by a faith in a future where all are equal is the motivation for people to act now to change the world around them. The perspective of a not-yet-realized future places the liberation theologian outside of himself or herself into a bigger story of hope for all.

*Liberation Social Psychology*

Influenced by the ideas of Liberation Theology, Liberation Social Psychology has blossomed (Burton & Kagan, 2004). In Latin American social psychology, the psychologist acts as a community liaison to link people to the larger systems and has a much less clinical approach to helping the community (Burton & Kagan). According to Burton and Kagan,

Community social psychology is taught at universities and/or practised [sic] in Venezuela, Mexico, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Costa Rica, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Argentina. A variety of social issues is tackled, including for example health promotion, economic development and anti-poverty programmes [sic], housing, leadership development at the community level, community
development, as well as the development of community intervention and support in the fields of disability, domestic violence, mental health and drug use. (p. 71)

*Spirituality and Social Justice Leadership*

Tisdell (2002) conducted a qualitative study of the spiritual development and religious heritage of female social justice educators. There were 16 participants from diverse backgrounds with the majority in their forties and fifties. Additionally, participants were chosen based on their roles as adult educators either in the community or in higher education, having been raised in a religious community and the role of spirituality in their social justice work. Several themes emerged in Tisdell’s study: (a) moving away-spiraling back, (b) a deepening awareness and honoring of the Lifeforce, (c) the development of authentic identity, and (d) the requirement of social action. Overall, many of the women in this study reported an appreciation for the religious affiliation of their youth, but spirituality was a greater influence in their participation in social justice. Tisdell writes of the participants in her study that “At this point in their lives (all are at various stages of midlife) they see their spirituality and their social justice efforts as integrated into an entire way of living and being in the world” (p. 137). Accordingly, those in Tisdell’s study had come to an integration of their experiences and how they channeled this into the communities around them. This study provides a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants and does not claim a cause and effect relationship between spirituality and social justice.

The results of Tisdell’s (2002) study have implications for the current research project. Her findings indicate that indeed there is a relationship between spiritual development and social justice in some individuals, in particular female, midlife, social
justice educators. Though Tisdell’s study focused on female educators from various backgrounds of education, similar themes may emerge when discussing spirituality and social justice with counselor educators. A limited application of Tisdell’s study for this research project is that her sample consisted of women who were in midlife; the results may have been different if the participants were from various age groups and genders.

Leadership in social action can be a difficult yet rewarding experience. In a desire to better understand the experiences of social leaders who have greatly impacted the world, Parameshwar (2005) conducted a qualitative study of the biographical accounts of leaders’ lives. Additionally, his purpose was to explore the role of spirituality in their leadership styles and to then apply this knowledge to advance leadership in the workplace. Parameshwar’s study consisted of 10 leaders from various global and historical contexts: Karl Marx, Victor Frankl, Nawal El Saadawi, Paulo Friere, Mahatma Ghandi, Helen Keller, Rigoberta Menchu, Kwame Nkrumah, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Mother Teresa. Parameshwar’s findings indicate that throughout the study, “ego-transcendence…permeates all eight processes” (p. 695) indicating the leaders were motivated by something greater than themselves. Ego-transcendence is defined as, “non-violent responses that demonstrate identification with a higher purpose” (p. 713).

Parameshwar (2006) identified eight processes in this study: (a) demonstrating perspective agility, (b) uncovering thick nexuses among institutional structures, (c) invoking transcendental epistemologies (i.e., Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Atheism), (d) choosing a “higher purpose” over societal norms, (e) bridging challenges with a “higher purpose” and taking action, (f) defusing ego-threats and deepening commitment to a “higher purpose”, (g) inspiring others through ego-transcendence, and
(h) drawing from the ego-transcendence of others. The processes that Parameshwar identifies reveal the role of selflessness and belief in something bigger than oneself to bring about change and to address oppression and injustice in the world. According to Ingersoll, (1994) belief in something bigger than oneself is a dimension of spirituality. These leaders led and inspired many toward change and yet, according to Parameshwar, were inspired by others’ acts of ego-transcendence which suggests these leaders were socially connected while engaged in social action.

Though Parameshwar’s (2005) study is distinct in approaching leadership, it has some limitations. One limitation is the notoriety and diversity of professions of the people in Parameshwar’s study. This current study on spirituality and social justice will explore the experiences of those belonging to one profession, counseling, which will include counselors and counselor educators. Also, Parameshwar did not seek to develop a theory of ego-transcendent leadership, but to better glean experiential information about the leaders. The last possible limitation to Parameshwar’s study is the analysis was conducted by one researcher; however it was done so by rigorously following the guidelines for a phenomenographical analysis. Parameshwar’s study was conducted to provide examples and implications for managerial work, and may be translated to the work of counselors and counselor educators. Many within the counseling profession act as leaders in agencies, communities, professional organizations, and academic institutions. By evaluating the role of the eight processes (agility, uncovering institutional structures, belief in epistemologies, choosing a “higher purpose”, bridging “higher purpose” and taking action, deepening commitment to a “higher purpose”, inspiring others, and drawing from the ego-transcendence of others) in their work as leaders,
counseling professionals may be able to enrich their leadership abilities and impact. These eight processes will provide an additional framework for better understanding social justice leadership.

Sanchez (personal communication, 2007) conducted a qualitative study to explore spirituality and social justice in the practice and lives of those who work in community mental health, from various professional backgrounds (counseling, psychology, social work, and psychiatry), around the United States. Sanchez found that many participants reported feeling limited by their positions to influence greater change for those with whom they work.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of existing literature regarding spirituality and social justice. Most of what has been written about these topics has been conceptual or theoretical. Some of the studies provide some framework to better understand the concepts being studied, but do not address the topic directly. To date, much of the literature regarding social justice has appeared in the counseling psychology profession. Recently, there has been a movement in the counseling profession to address social justice. Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) provide an online peer-reviewed journal addressing social justice in counseling (CSJ, 2007). Furthermore, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) hosted a national conference in 2007 titled: “Vanguards for Change: ACES and Social Justice.” Though the counseling profession has been publishing literature focused on spirituality, it is recently that they have focused more on social justice. To date, there have been no studies exploring the role of spirituality in the social justice work of counselors or counselor educators who are
members of the ACA. The next chapter will provide an overview of the methodology chosen and the research design for this study.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

To better understand the lived experience of others, the researcher joins with the participant on a journey toward discovery (Kvale, 1996). For the remainder of this study, the term co-researcher will be used to refer to the individuals that participated in this study, as this study would not have been possible without their words. Others have also used this term or co-investigator in qualitative research to refer to those with whom they took their research journeys (Worthen, 2002). This chapter will provide a rationale for a qualitative, phenomenological research design. I will then provide information about the methodology chosen including: the self-as-researcher, research design, choice of co-researchers, and data analysis procedures. The steps that were taken to ensure trustworthiness, quality, co-researcher well-being, and ethical research practice will also be addressed.

Overview

This qualitative study aimed to better understand how counselors and counselor educators who are members of the American Counseling Association (ACA) experience spirituality and social justice. Guiding the questions of this exploration were several assumptions based on: my work as a counselor, the training I have received in counselor education, and the literature. The first assumption is that spirituality is a common experience for many people. A second assumption is that issues of social justice readily emerge in many counseling contexts. The third assumption is that some people who are spiritual are involved with social justice. From these assumptions and a review of the literature, the central research question (CRQ) that guided this study was:
What is the intersection between spirituality and social justice in the work and lives of counselors and counselor educators?

The following additional questions assisted in answering the CRQ:

1. How do co-researchers define/make meaning of spirituality?
2. How do co-researchers define/make meaning of social justice?
3. What life experiences have impacted co-researchers’ spirituality and desire to do social justice work?
4. How have co-researchers experienced oppression and privilege and how has this shaped their spirituality and social justice work?

The above questions were explored through in-depth interviews with counselors and counselor educators. Additional information was extrapolated from documents relevant to the research questions.

*A Constructivist Framework*

Spirituality is a phenomenon that is difficult to define and describe (Frame, 2005); it is difficult to measure with accuracy the depth of one’s experience through a positivist vantage point. Additionally, an individual’s definition and understanding of social justice may be subjective to his or her experience, and therefore difficult to define in all situations. Therefore a qualitative, constructivist framework was chosen for the present study. Glesne (1999) writes, “qualitative methods are generally supported by the interpretivist (also referred to as constructivist) paradigm, which portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing.” (p. 4) Choosing to use a qualitative approach allows the terms, meaning, and experiences of individuals to emerge through interviews with co-researchers.
A qualitative research methodology was chosen based on the research question and the goal of the researcher to better understand the experience of co-researchers. Creswell (1998) wrote “select a qualitative study because of the nature of the question.” (p. 17) Other research regarding spirituality have used qualitative methods to explore religious expression (Cunningham & Kelsay, 2002; Zablocki, 2001) and particularly to study spirituality in the work of student affairs personnel (Hansen, 2005), the impact of spirituality in the lives of black women (Fall, 2002), the role of feminist spirituality in the U.S. women’s movement (Wilkey, 1997), and the spiritual development and cultural contexts that influence adult women educators involved in social change (Tisdell, 2002). Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been used in the exploration of client spirituality.

*Approaches to the Assessment of Spirituality and Religion in Counseling*

Spirituality is a phenomenon that is difficult to define and describe; therefore it is difficult to operationalize in a positivist framework. Many within the counseling field have developed assessments to assist in understanding the spiritual aspects of a client (Ingersoll, 2001). Considerations for language, experience, and assumptions must be taken when assessing the spiritual life of clients (Harper & Gill, 2005). Though Harper and Gill focus on the spiritual assessment of clients, these same assessments could be used when assessing the spirituality and spiritual dimensions of counselors and counselor educators.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have limitations when studying spirituality. Harper and Gill (2005) outline the limitations and strengths of each approach with clients. Quantitative assessments of spirituality may be useful when a counselor
hopes to understand aspects of a client’s spirituality (beliefs, values, and experiences). The results are quantifiable and provide results that can be compared to other populations and a glimpse of the spiritual experience of the client. However, some instruments are limited by the use of predetermined language, specific focus, and application with diverse populations. Perhaps the greatest limitation is the lack of comprehensive depth of the client’s spiritual experiences.

A qualitative assessment provides for more flexibility in language and places the client at the center of the discussion and exploration (Harper & Gill, 2005). Furthermore it can provide depth of understanding within the counselor-client relationship. Conversely, qualitative assessments are time-intensive and cannot be quantifiable or comparable. Time intensity is required in qualitative research as a means of eliciting rich descriptive data. For the current study, I took measures to ensure trustworthiness and to account for intersubjectivity (Patton, 2002). These steps will be addressed later in this chapter. Harper and Gill focused on the use of assessments with clients whereas this research will be focusing on counselors and counselor educators.

Methodology

Qualitative methodology is used to better understand people, phenomena, and historical events on a deeper level, learning about “what is important to those being studied.” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 15) Qualitative methodology elicited deep and rich information about the question guiding this study. The advantage of qualitative research, according to Patton (2002), is the ability to inquire “into selected issues in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance; that data collection need not be constrained by predetermined analytical categories.” (p. 227) Spirituality is an experience
that is unique to each individual (ASERVIC, 1995). Additionally, the specific social justice work that a person chooses is also different from others who would consider themselves involved in social justice. Due to the unique nature of these experiences, a qualitative, phenomenological approach was used to understand the nature, relationship, and essence of this experience. It also sought to describe the meanings attributed to these experiences (Morrissette, 1999).

A phenomenological approach to research seeks to understand the “essence of experience about a phenomenon.” (Creswell, 1998, p. 65) Furthermore, people’s experiences of the world influence how they interpret the world and interact with the world and others (Patton, 2002). “Phenomenology, step by step, attempts to eliminate everything that represents a prejudgment, setting aside presuppositions, and reaching a transcendental state of freshness and openness, a readiness to see in an unfettered way, not threatened by customs, beliefs, and prejudices of normal science, by the habits of the natural world or by knowledge based on unreflected everyday experience.” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 41) By approaching the study of essence, the researcher becomes part of the research. This is done by reflecting on the meanings and presuppositions, while being in the moment. Through being present, it was my hope to understand the experience of the co-researchers. Not only was reflection vital to this endeavor, but empathy was essential when interacting with others throughout the data collection process.

Phenomenology makes the assumption that the essence or essences of a phenomenon may be shared by others who also experience that phenomenon. This study examined the social justice advocacy and spiritual experiences of individual counselors and counselor educators. It began by analyzing and describing the unique experience of
the co-researchers followed by a description of the overall themes (Moustakas, 1994). This was accomplished through semi-structured interviews with counselors and counselor educators who are members of Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) and the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC). Interviews sought to elicit information that would help in understanding how co-researchers define spirituality and the role that spirituality plays in their work (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

**Naturalistic Inquiry**

Qualitative research intends to collect data from the context in which it is derived, its natural setting. This is referred to by Patton (2002) as Naturalistic Inquiry (p. 39). In this approach to research, the researcher enters the context and environment where the data exist without intent of not disrupting the context. Naturalistic inquiry is not guided by a hypothesis, but rather a question to be answered or a phenomenon to observe. Patton writes, “One of the strengths of qualitative methods is the inductive, naturalistic inquiry strategy of approaching a setting without predetermined hypotheses” (p. 129). I interviewed co-researchers in their work place or communities when possible. This provided me with more information regarding their contexts.

In spite of careful preparation and planning, my plans changed due to unforeseen factors such as time constraints and inconveniences at the interview locations. These changes required that I be flexible (Patton, 2002). I spoke with several people interested in the study, but upon further discussion, they realized that they could not speak to the focus of this study. Due to time constraints for some co-researchers, I had to reschedule their interviews. Some of the interviews were shorter than expected, while others were longer. As changes in the research design occurred, they were documented in my field
journal and will be shared in Chapter Five (Discussion and Summary) of the present study. My experiences throughout the study are relevant to the discussion of the findings, as I am the research instrument in this study. Keeping a field journal also helped me increase awareness of intersubjectivity (Glesne, 1999).

**Self as Researcher**

Unlike positivist research which often uses assessment tools, in qualitative research the researcher is the instrument (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Furthermore, Kvale (1996) characterizes the researcher as a *miner or traveler*. Either of the above interpretations of the researcher places him/her in an intimate position with the topic being studied and the co-researchers encountered along the way. Creswell (2006) identifies the roles the researcher takes as *researcher* and *learner* which guide him/her throughout the interview process. Therefore, it is paramount in qualitative research, particularly in this study, that my voice and position be presented.

My interest in spirituality and social justice has developed over the course of my lifetime and professional career. This interest in social justice has been fueled by my experiences: volunteering at a homeless shelter, working with street youth, as a counselor at a residential treatment center for adolescent girls, work with people with persistent mental illness, as a community counselor in Appalachia, and currently as an addictions counselor. In these various roles, I was confronted with the reality of oppression, discrimination, and poverty in the lives of those with whom I worked. In my current position as substance abuse counselor, I hear stories daily of the oppression, injustice, and struggles of women (many single mothers) who are working to overcome substance abuse or substance dependence. Many of the stories speak about maneuvering through
systems, having loved ones deported, and the difficulties of managing life without
dependence on drugs or alcohol.

Much of my professional experience has paralleled my spiritual experience.
Growing up, my family was spiritual, but not religious. My parents had a charismatic
Christian background, but had stopped attending church when I was very young. We
attended church sporadically, on Mother’s Day and Easter. I was aware of the faith that
my parents had, however, we were not involved in a community of others with the same
faith. As a college student, I minored in philosophy in hopes of finding meaning and
purpose for my life.

As I embark on this study, my life position as a European American woman
having grown up in the Western U.S. in a lower middle-class family. Currently, my
religious affiliation is Methodist, having attended a variety of other denominations
throughout the years including: Southern Baptist, Baptist General Conference, and
Anglican. My spiritual journey has evolved from theologically conservative to moderate
with influences from mindfulness, contemplative prayer, and traditional spiritual
disciplines. I am married to a European American man who is Roman Catholic which
continues to enrich my spirituality. While participating with him in Mass I have had
transcendent and unexplainable experiences. Exposure to Mary and the women saints has
helped me to connect with the feminine aspects of my faith. I am currently attending a
Protestant church that values social justice, connection with the community, worship
through art, and dialogue with people from various faith and spiritual backgrounds.

Professionally, I identify myself as a counselor and as a counselor educator in
training. I am currently a member of the American Counseling Association. Additionally,
I hold memberships in CSJ, ASERVIC, and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES). As a member in these divisions, my position places me close to the phenomenon in this study (Patton, 2002). Co-researchers were given information regarding my current position as a student at Ohio University prior to consent.

**Co-researchers**

Purposeful sampling was used to elicit co-researchers due to the specific nature of this study. This approach sought out co-researchers who added greater understanding to the topic being studied (Patton, 2002). This approach to sampling sought to elicit “information-rich cases” (Patton, p. 230) that contributed depth to the study. Furthermore, the purposeful sample for the present study was a criterion sample: co-researchers were chosen based on their experience of spirituality and social justice. According to Creswell (1996) it is vitally important in a phenomenological study that the co-researchers be familiar with the experience being studied. It was vital to this study that the counselors and counselor educators being interviewed were actively involved in social justice work and could speak to their experience of these activities. It was also important that the co-researchers could speak about the role of spirituality in their lives.

The sample for this study was drawn from CSJ and ASERVIC, divisions within the American Counseling Association (ACA), through purposeful snowball sampling. I began the process by contacting my professional colleagues to inquire about connections they had with professionals who might be interested in participating in this study. This avenue of recruitment elicited two co-researchers. I also contacted someone I had known of through reading literature in this area, and he agreed to participate. I then contacted the presidents of Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) and the Association for Spiritual,
Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) about posting the study on their listservs. I received a response from CSJ and an email summarizing the study and requesting participation was posted on their listserv eliciting many interested individuals, two people fit the criteria of the study and responded to further requests for participation. Eventually I contacted state level divisions of ASERVIC and CSJ. A summary of the study was sent to members via email and advertised in their newsletter. This round of recruitment elicited many interested people with three meeting the criteria for the study. Following the collection of data for this study, several others responded to participate in the study but were not included because saturation had been met. Follow-up was done by sending a packet via email or U.S. postal service that included a letter detailing the study, consent of participation, and a demographic questionnaire to elicit information to provide context about the co-researchers. An also sent via listserv to members of CSJ and members of the regional counseling organization.

It was my goal to engage co-researchers currently residing in various geographic areas within the U.S., eliciting them first from the Western United States where the researcher was residing, then from the rest of the U.S. Every attempt was made to find co-researchers from diverse backgrounds and experiences. This was important to the gathering of rich data. Sample size in a qualitative study is dependent upon the research question and methodology (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002). In this study, the sample that I attempted to reach was ten co-researchers; however, I remained flexible in the number of co-researchers interviewed until saturation had been reached (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The final number of co-researchers was eight. All co-researchers selected for this study were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, participate in a one hour to one hour and
half semi-structured interview, and to complete member checks at two points in the data analysis process. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

*Demographic Questionnaire*

Initially, co-researchers were sent a structured demographic questionnaire (Appendix A). This was used to gather demographic and factual data about co-researchers. The information provided by co-researchers was clarified at the outset of the interview.

*Co-researcher Demographics*

Co-researchers were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire as part of this study (Appendix A). This was conducted to provide context about the co-researchers beyond the semi-structured interviews. This questionnaire was open-ended to allow the co-researchers to elaborate on how they identified themselves. A multiple choice questionnaire was not used due to the limitations that may be present in not having enough options or appropriate options for the co-researchers. The questionnaire inquired about their professional training, years in the field, professional memberships, age, sexual orientation, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and religious backgrounds. Two co-researchers added their own categories to the questionnaire. One co-researcher added “affectional” to the inquiry about sexual orientation. It is assumed this redefinition broadens the term to include expressions of affection, not just expressions limited to sex, however this was not clarified with the co-researcher. Another co-researcher provided all 12 of his cultural identities and elaborated about each of them prior to asking the semi-structured interview questions. The demographic information is presented in Table 1.
All co-researchers self-identified as counselors or counselor educators. Their years of experience ranged from eight years to 33 years. Two of the co-researchers indicated that they are currently employed as counselors, one in private practice and the other in community mental health counseling. Four co-researchers reported that they are currently employed in higher education as counselor educators. The remaining two participants indicated that they are retired, one from a private career counseling practice and the other from a counseling position within a governmental agency. Both indicated that they continue to remain connected within the profession through their affiliation and activities with professional organizations. All were members of a national or state-level division of CSJ or the ASERVIC. Several members indicated membership in other divisions within the American Counseling Association (ACA) or a state branch of the ACA including, but not limited to: American School Counselors Association (ASCA), Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling (ALGBTIC), Association for Specialists in Group Work (ASGW), and Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES). One co-researcher reported membership in both ASERVIC and CSJ at the national level, while two co-researchers indicated membership in the state level of both ASERVIC and CSJ. One co-researcher reported membership in the national ASERVIC division and the American Psychological Association (APA), while another reported membership in the state level ASERVIC division only.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics of Co-researchers</th>
<th>Gregory</th>
<th>Vivian</th>
<th>Paul</th>
<th>Owen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Years in the Field</strong></td>
<td>25(counseling)</td>
<td>15(professor)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Education</strong></td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>M.Ed. Plus</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupation</strong></td>
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<td>Retired, now</td>
<td>School Counselor</td>
<td>Professor/ Clinical Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education Professor</td>
<td>volunteers with various groups</td>
<td>Education Professor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender/Sex</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual/Affectional</strong></td>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Straight</td>
<td>Poly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural/Ethnic</strong></td>
<td>White,</td>
<td>Mixed Breed Native</td>
<td>European American,</td>
<td>Irish, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background</strong></td>
<td>English/Scottish, provided 12 cultural identities</td>
<td>American, Euro-American, and African American</td>
<td>Mexican American, Native American</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious</strong></td>
<td>Earth-centered</td>
<td>Raised Catholic, is a Spiritualist (indigenous spirituality), occasionally attends religious ceremonies</td>
<td>Moralist/ Unitarian Universalist</td>
<td>Anglican (20 yrs.), Wiccan (10 yrs.), yoga and meditation (25 yrs.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (cont.)

**Demographics of Co-researchers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beth</th>
<th>Tamera</th>
<th>Mary</th>
<th>Michelle</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the Field</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
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<td>M.S.</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
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<td>Professional</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education Professor</td>
<td>Counselor in Career Counselor</td>
<td>Counselor in Private Practice</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Gender/Sex</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual/Affectional Orientation</td>
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<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Straight</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural/Ethnic Background</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>White, German</td>
<td>Anglo, Midwestern</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American, Middle Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Background</td>
<td>Christian/ Protestant</td>
<td>Raised Catholic, now practices own spirituality</td>
<td>Protestant, Unitarian, Center for Spiritual Living</td>
<td>Mormon until age 14, now Conscious Evolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Co-researchers ranged in age from 36 to 73. Of the eight co-researchers, five were female and three were male. One indicated his sexual/affectional orientation to be gay, another indicated “poly,” while the remainder of the co-researchers indicated that they are “straight” or heterosexual. To the question inquiring about cultural and ethnic background, the majority of co-researchers reported that they are Caucasian. One co-researcher identified herself to be White. One co-researcher reported that she is “Mixed Breed Native American, Euro-American, and African American”. While one co-researcher indicated that he is “European American, Mexican American, Native American”. One co-researcher shared all of his 12 cultural identities both dominant and non-dominant. For the sake of anonymity of the co-researcher, those identities will not be expounded upon in this dissertation.

Co-researchers were asked about their religious backgrounds as part of the demographic questionnaire. This question was asked to explore if any of the co-researchers were affiliated with a religious organization in the past or currently and how that relates to spirituality for them. Some co-researchers provided an elaboration of their religious background, while others focused more on their current experience of spirituality. This will be presented in their interview summaries in chapter four.

Procedures

Data Collection

Interviewing was the primary means of data collection for this study. Rubin and Rubin (2005) write, “Qualitative interviews are conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion” (p. 4). Interviewing can be used to gain more understanding and information about a topic. According to Creswell
(1998), in-depth interviews are recommended for a phenomenological study to illicit meaning and to create an image of the essence of experience for co-researchers. Through interviews, co-researchers can describe their perceptions, meanings, and experiences (Kvale, 1996).

Multiple interview formats were used to gather data beginning with a closed-question demographic questionnaire, followed by an interview utilizing open-ended questions, any follow-up questions to help clarify meanings and transcripts with co-researchers. Additionally, my experiences as the researcher were also used as a data source. The following data collection documents are provided in the Appendices. The interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed. Interviews were done face-to-face when possible and phone interviews were conducted in the case that a co-researcher could not meet with the interviewer. Details about the confidentiality and other ethical concerns of data collection are discussed later in this chapter.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study can be helpful in the initial steps of qualitative research (Patton, 2002). For the present study, the interview protocol was conducted with two co-researchers. This illuminated any changes that needed to be made to the procedures prior to gathering further data from other co-researchers. The questions were re-evaluated and modified as needed to maximize the probability that data about the essence of the experience were gathered. Upon the completion of the first two interviews, no major changes were needed. The semi-structured interview protocol was still used to give interviews some structure, but the flexibility of follow up probes and questions were adapted to fit with each co-researcher’s unique experiences.
Semi-structured Interview

The majority of data was collected through semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview was prepared in advance to address topics of interest, but was flexible depending upon the situation and the conversation between researcher and co-researcher (Kvale, 1996). I prepared an interview protocol (Appendix B) prior to meeting with co-researchers. A semi-structured approach provided the co-researcher and researcher the freedom to explore additional information relevant to the study. Patton (2002) identifies this form of interview as an interview guide approach. This interview structure allowed for flexibility in the interview while obtaining responses pertinent to the study from each co-researcher. I anticipated that each co-researcher would have different experiences and responses during the interview that would require immediate and present response, probing, and follow-up.

Interviewing requires specific skills of the researcher in order to put the co-researchers at ease. Therefore, it was important that I create an environment of trust, and maintain the role of both researcher and learner, gathering new information to illuminate the topic. Additionally, active listening, empathy, and open-ended questions were useful throughout the interviewing process (Glesne, 1999; Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The skills that I gained from experiences as a mental health worker and counselor as well as my training as a counselor educator provided me with a foundation as a qualitative interviewer. Reflection of my experiences as a researcher through journaling assisted in maintaining the role of the researcher interviewer rather than a counselor.

Data regarding spirituality and social justice experiences was collected via semi-structured interviews. All interviews were conducted by the researcher. All interviews
were recorded using a digital voice recorder. Interviewing co-researchers from across the U.S. provided a more diverse collection of narratives from co-researchers. Therefore, six of the interviews were conducted by phone. Two interviews were conducted in person, as the location of the co-researchers was convenient for the researcher. These interviews were conducted in a Southwestern state during a regional conference. All interviews were conducted between February 27, 2008 and March 10, 2008. The length of the interviews varied from 45 minutes to 90 minutes.

*Documents*

Documents can act to enrich the data collected from the interviews (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002). Using documents provides a means of collecting information in a way that is not intrusive to the co-researchers or organizations being studied (Merriam, 2002). In this study I analyzed newsletters found on the CSJ website for themes that may have enhanced the interviews of co-researchers. Additionally, topics discussed on the CSJ listserv were analyzed to provide additional information regarding the shared values of the members of CSJ who responded on the listserv (Creswell, 1998). In addition, newsletters from ASERVIC and information from their website were analyzed for themes used to corroborate the information gathered in the interviews. These documents were used as collateral information, but were not used as a triangulation to increase trustworthiness as there was not an analysis of the publications of the co-researchers.

*Reflexivity*

As I journeyed alongside the co-researchers in this study, it was vital that I reflect on my experiences, thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and observations throughout data collection. According to Patton (2002) *reflexivity* is “a way of emphasizing the
importance of self-awareness, political/cultural consciousness, and ownership of one’s perspective.” (p. 64). Throughout the research process I kept a field log or journal of my impressions and experiences as well as my thoughts on spirituality in social justice work (Creswell, 1998). The role of self-reflection as utilized in data analysis will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Analysis and Presentation of Data**

Throughout the data collection process, analysis occurs (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). From the beginning, the researcher keeps in mind the final analysis and presentation of the data. According to Morrissette (1999), analysis of data is a complex process. It is a “multidimensional structure consisting of many parts that make up the whole” (¶ 13). For this study, a phenomenological, narrative analysis of the data was employed. Data analysis was guided by the work of Moustakas (1994) and Morrissette (1999).

In phenomenological inquiry, the researcher’s experience is used as a data source. According to Morrissette (1999) the researcher is “integral y entwined” in the “research dialogue” (¶ 11). The researcher remains present and is analytical and critical of the phenomenon being studied (Moustakas, 1994). Reflection was recorded in the research field log.

Morrissette’s (1999) framework for phenomenological inquiry in the counseling profession was used to guide my data analysis. According to Morrissette, a phenomenological inquiry evolves throughout the interaction with the researcher and co-researchers. The goal of phenomenological research is to uncover the meaning co-researchers make of experiences of the phenomenon being studied. Morrissette provides a step-by-step guide to data analysis. The first step was for me to listen to the interview
recording soon after the interview had ended. This provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the interview, listen for emerging themes, intonation, and to compare them to my field notes.

The second step of the data analysis process was to transcribe the interview. Morrissette suggests that this be done by the researcher. Due to the limitations of time and resources, a transcriptionist was used in this research project to transcribe three of the interviews. The remaining interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The use of a transcriptionist decreased the amount of time I spent with the data. However, when the transcriptions in this study were completed, I spent time reading the transcriptions while listening to interviews to correct for any inaccuracies in the two (Patton, 2002). Transcriptions were then sent to the co-researchers for member checks. Seven co-researchers returned their corrections prior to further analysis; one co-researcher did not return corrections prior to continued analysis. The researcher continued the analysis process without this member check because the data from this interview was consistent with the other interviews conducted.

Next, major statements made by co-researchers were summarized and reduced to paraphrases (Morrissette, 1999). These paraphrases were numbered to assist in the analysis process. These were done by paraphrasing each co-researcher’s significant statements. Significant statements were compared grouped into a table of clusters based on meanings and might be called “meaningful clusters” (Patton, 2002, p. 486) or “meaning units” (Creswell, 1998, p. 150). The data was organized using Microsoft Excel. Meaning clusters provided the researcher insight into the essence shared by the co-
researchers and helped in the development of descriptions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). There were 39 meaning clusters.

Clusters were then condensed into five themes that represented various aspects of the experience of spirituality and social justice: connections and disconnections that they have experienced or seen in their work and lives, relationships that have been enriching to their growth and the work that they do, the meaning in what they do and how they live, how they have experienced or witnessed growth, and finally the barriers to change and challenges that they have faced personally and professionally. These themes have been identified as Connections, Relationships and Kinships, Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness,” Transformation and Evolution, and Challenges. Following this stage of the analysis process, I discovered that I had inadvertently cross-analyzed the data. (Patton, 2002). In retrospect, I would analyze co-researcher #1 through all of the steps, then co-researcher #2 through all the steps, and so forth. This would bring more clarity to the individual voices of each co-researcher throughout the process.

According to Morrissette (1999), the next step is to summarize each co-researcher’s significant experiences and connect them with the meaning clusters that have been developed. The summary was connected with the cluster themes, with each paragraph representing a major theme. By analyzing each co-researcher’s summary, the researcher connected each individual voice with the bigger story of the co-researchers. These interviews summaries will be presented in Chapter Four. Following this step, I reflected on the co-researcher summaries and meaning clusters and developed a description of the phenomenon that are intertwined with existing research and are presented in Chapter 5. Finally, the experiences of each co-researcher were compared in a
grid to provide an overall picture of the data and story. This assisted in bringing the meanings of the co-researchers together to provide an overall picture of the experiences of spirituality and social justice work in counselors and counselor educators.

*Ethical Considerations*

Ethical guidelines ensure the protection of the co-researchers. Additionally, they guide the process of research. This study adhered to ethical guidelines set forth by the American Counseling Association and was in compliance with the Institutional Review Board of Ohio University (see Appendix C for application and Appendix D for IRB approval letter). Co-researchers were provided with a summary of the study and informed consent (Appendix E) to participate. The informed consent form provided information about the researcher, the potential benefits and risks involved in participating, how confidentiality would be maintained, and intention of the results. Specific information regarding the ethical guidelines of this study can be seen in Appendix E.

In this study, there may have been no direct benefit to the co-researchers. However, it is my hope that co-researchers benefited from sharing their stories and making a contribution to the counseling profession. Hopefully the results of this study will contribute to the counseling profession and professional growth of other counselors and counselor educators by expanding their knowledge of the experiences of spirituality and social justice in the counseling profession. Potential risks of this study were minimal and included the risk that the information being shared by the co-researcher may have been emotionally troubling for him or her. Had this occurred, a referral for help would have been made.
The relationship of the researcher and co-researcher were vital to the collection of data. Co-researchers were compensated for their commitment and time to this study through reciprocity. They were also provided a $10 gift from Ten Thousand Villages, an organization that provides fair trade goods and gifts from around the world (2007), or a $10 donation to an organization of their choice. Co-researchers were given compensation following the completion of the second member checks which were conducted over email due to geographical distance.

**Trustworthiness**

Positivist research methods identify validity, reliability, and generalizability as measures for the relevance and application of a study. In qualitative research, validity is replaced with credibility and trustworthiness, reliability with dependability and generalizability with transferability (Patton, 2002). Quality of this study was ensured by member checks (co-researchers’ verification of accuracy of transcription) (Creswell, 1998). Additionally, the process of self-as-researcher has been described in detail, including qualifications as an interviewer. This transparency increased the credibility, trustworthiness, dependability, and authenticity (Creswell; Patton, 2002). Furthermore, this research was guided by the ethical standards to minimize the risk to the co-researchers.

Trustworthiness (Patton, 2002) of the analysis process was done intentionally through member checks, document triangulation, and bracketing of self-as-researcher throughout the study. The following outlines the steps taken to increase trustworthiness of results.
**Member Checks**

According to Patton (2002) and Glesne (1999), member checks will increase the reliability of results of the study and increases the likelihood that the meaning conveyed by the co-researchers is accurate to their intention. Upon the completion of each transcript, a copy was sent to the co-researchers in this study. They then looked over the transcript, making any changes or corrections that would bring clarity to the results. A second member check was done at the completion of the analysis. Co-researchers were sent a copy of the summary of the interview through the lens of the five themes. Co-researchers were offered opportunities to continue to participate in this study through the checking of the transcripts of their interviews and of the summaries of the interviews.

**Self-As-Researcher**

Throughout a qualitative study, the researcher is intricately involved in the process (Creswell, 1996; Patton, 2002). Prior to the study I engaged in Epoche to set aside my own beliefs and experiences of spirituality and social justice (Moustakas, 1994). During the study I set aside assumptions by bracketing them in a field journal. This was done in order to maximize my awareness of the words of the co-researchers and to be able to analyze the data with limited influence from my assumptions or previous frameworks. Additionally, I contacted my advisor and methodologist at several stages throughout the data collection and analysis process as an additional support as well as to assist me in bracketing any unexamined assumptions.

**Personal Lessons Learned in Qualitative Research**

This is the first qualitative study conducted by this researcher. This was a steep and often confusing learning curve. Throughout this study, I struggled with the
methodology that I had chosen, while maintaining my belief that the best way to answer my research question was via a qualitative inquiry. Upon researching qualitative methodologies (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002), I found that a phenomenological study would enlighten the experience of the relationship between social justice and spirituality. Throughout this study I have wrestled with the philosophy and the pragmatic application of this theory. During the analysis stage I read various articles, books, and chapters in hopes that it would clarify the process. In reading about others’ experiences, I realized that I was not alone in feeling confused and overwhelmed by this process. Others shared about their struggles to truly understand the philosophical foundation of phenomenology and how to apply that to their topic, as well as conducting the analysis to find the essence of an experience and feeling that they were able to get to some of the essence, but not truly to the core of the essence (Hansen, 2005). All of this helped me to continue to move forward in analyzing the data and continuing on.

The crux of a phenomenological study is for the researcher to bracket his or her own ideas and experiences from that of the co-researchers in order to see the essence of the experience for each co-researcher (Moustakas, 1994). Throughout this study, I have worked hard to identify my pre-existing assumptions about spirituality and social justice. In spite of my every effort to bracket my own assumptions, I feel as though I was unable to do so to the degree that the literature recommends (Moustakas). There undoubtedly were times when I struggled with the desire to view the co-researchers’ words through ideas and concepts from the literature gathered for the literature review. This was perhaps the greatest challenge. At times, I felt myself tempted to look at the experiences of the co-researchers through the lens of the spiritual dimensions outlined by Ingersoll (1998) as
well as other spiritual development models. Additionally, I often reflected on the role of CSJ in the counseling profession and the current debates about the inclusion of social justice within the profession that have appeared on CESNET, in *Counseling Today*, and on the CSJ website. During analysis, I wrote these thoughts down, reflected on them, and attempted to set them aside. Additionally, I made every effort to bracket my own thoughts about spirituality and religion that have been influenced by my Christian education, spirituality, and religious beliefs. With every attempt to bracket my own experience, I realized that I could not, though I attempted to minimize their influence. The words of the co-researchers brought to mind my own journey as a counselor and the formation of my desire to be social justice aware.

According to Moustakas (1994), the best way to do a phenomenological study is to do the literature review after collecting the data. Due to the nature of this study as a requirement for an educational program, the guidelines set forth by the College of Education of Ohio University required that I conduct a literature review prior to gathering data. This was also important in gaining approval from the IRB of Ohio University to conduct this study. It may have been helpful to gain access to the essence of the experience of social justice and spirituality had the interviews been conducted and data analyzed prior to the literature review.

To increase the credibility of this study, member checks were done by the co-researchers. Efforts were made to include all the co-researchers in the member check process. Those who participated checked the transcripts and made changes to clarify meanings. Summaries of their experiences of the essence of spirituality and social justice were also sent for them to check. According to Giorgi (2007) a true phenomenological
study would be done without member checks. The researcher would analyze the data for the essence and become the only research tool in the study. Limiting the work of analysis to one researcher decreases the likelihood of several views of the meaning and essence of the data. Giorgi contends that the researcher has the ability through self-reflection and the reflection on the data to be able to extract the essence of a phenomenon without feedback from others. He also contends that the essence of a phenomenon can be generalized beyond the individuals interviewed for a study. However, it is the belief of this researcher that a small number of people, in this study, eight, represent a fraction of those who would meet criteria for this study and therefore the results of this study may not be applicable to others in the counseling profession. Furthermore, the feedback received from the co-researchers about their transcripts and summaries was helpful in confirming their meanings and the themes that were developed.

The process of conducting a qualitative research study was taxing and rewarding. I had not realized how the transition from counselor to researcher would produce emotional, pragmatic, and spiritual challenges. Throughout the interviews and the analysis process, I found myself drawing from the skills I have learned as a counselor, while working to ensure that I would not overstep my boundary as a researcher (Etherington, 1996). When I had difficulty managing emotions or questioning the research process, I would contact my advisor or a fellow student, or write in my field log to help me gain clarity and refocus my attention on the research process.

I learned so much about the co-researchers in this study. Throughout the analysis stage, I felt as though I was having an ongoing dialogue with the words they shared, their stories became alive. In my daily life I have found myself returning to their words and
reflecting on their impact in the lives of the co-researchers. I have begun to look for opportunities where I can apply the themes of this study in the work that I am currently doing as a counselor. This study transformed me both professionally and personally, as I evolve to understand the connection of spirituality and social justice in my own life and how to integrate them daily. While reflecting on the stories shared by the co-researchers I also reflected on my journey. I have been reminded of those who have guided me in my process to understand myself and the world around me. In my work I have tried to be more intentional in recognizing where issues of social justice arise in the lives of my clients. This study has also inspired me to become more involved in professional organizations so that I can join in the dialogue that is occurring within the profession. This experience has been so enriching and I feel so privileged to have met each of the co-researchers and honored by their willingness to share their stories with me in hopes that it may impact the counseling profession.

Summary

Following the approval of the initial research proposal, revisions were made to chapters one through three. Upon final approval of the proposal by my dissertation committee chair, I began data collection. Findings of the data and analysis are presented in Chapter Four of this study. One of the distinguishing characteristics of qualitative inquiry is rich, thick description of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 1998, p. 203; Patton, 2002). This study seeks to describe the experiences and meaning of spirituality and social justice of counselors and counselor educators and the meaning they placed on these experiences. The voices of the co-researchers will be interwoven throughout the text in the form of quotations describing the essence of the phenomenon.
In Chapter Five, comparisons of findings with existing literature will be discussed.

Additionally, implications and relevance to the counseling profession will be presented.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introduction

Information from this study has been gathered and presented here. A summary of the interviews has been presented in order to note the commonalities and distinctions of co-researchers’ experiences. Furthermore, the information gathered has been organized into overall themes. Two secondary research questions will be answered: How do co-researchers define/make meaning of spirituality?, How do co-researchers define/make meaning of social justice? Additionally a presentation of words of advice for those who are training to enter the counseling profession will be provided at the end of this chapter.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol. The results of the interviews were summarized and will be presented in the next section. During the presentation of the results of this study, pseudonyms will be used for all co-researchers to increase anonymity of their identity. Each quote will be identified with the pseudonym of the co-researcher.

Co-Researcher Synthesis: Interview Summaries

Gregory – Interview One

Throughout his life, Gregory has seen disconnections in life and sought to resolve these and heal these. This awareness was influential in his personal and professional career paths. His desire to resolve the disconnections and integrate them leads him to invest in himself through counseling, ultimately joining together his sexuality and spirituality as a gay man of earth-centered beliefs. He said, “there is a giant split in western culture between the spiritual and the sexual. And my life story after my twenties
has been one of integrating the two successfully.” Now he teaches sex counselor courses. Pursuing a degree in counselor education was an attempt to make sense of the harm and oppressions experienced by him and others and gain tools to help others to address these challenges and bring healing. Of his own experience of oppression he said,

> Words have always been my friends and I’ve always enjoyed the power of how words can be used for healing purposes and for educational purposes. Actually I can go back further; I was certainly the target of words growing up…words that were extremely hateful. I was emotionally and physically abused by other kids as a clearly gender non-conforming child in elementary school and no adults came to my rescue. I internalized the oppression, I shut down, I was a classic “victim.” I am definitely a survivor now. [today Gregory writes as a portion of his professional role]

Another experience early in his career was formative in his pursuit of counseling and in finding tools to address issues of oppression,

> I had an African American resident assistant who was assaulted by a white student. I was really angry because she and I were quite close. I could figure out the systemic racism and sexism, yet – I just did not have the skills to deal with…I felt that [the university] just did not handle it well and I felt that I didn’t handle it well. That really spurred me to say that I really need more training in this, and I really need to get skills that I don’t have.

For Gregory, spirituality and social justice are intricately connected and cannot be split, “they [spiritual and social justice] are certainly linked, there is no question about that…” There is an intertwining that for him cannot be unwound.
While on this path to connection, Gregory met several people who spoke into his life, “held his hand”, and guided him, “Reese was there to hold my hand every step of the way as I began the change process in transforming schools.” These friendships and relationships and professional mentors and faculty have transcended professional networking and have become formative in his work. His kindred spirits provide support, encouragement, share vision, and put words to action. He has found others who are like-minded in his pursuit of social justice, “I found such progressive voices within counseling and family, and I have been with them and stirring up trouble ever since.” His professors and professional equity guides have influenced him professionally and personally, becoming extended family, “These two women of African descent [Mary Smith Arnold and Anita Jackson] were the best teachers I have had in any subject and both really learned this white man well in terms of racism and other oppressions and how to handle them effectively.” Through his work with counseling students, he shares their legacy and pays tribute those who began the difficult work of transforming school counseling programs for equity.

All that Gregory does is intentional, from driving a Prius, to teaching all counselor education courses with personal transparency and a commitment to equity. Believing that all is connected drives his pursuit for social justice and meaning in the struggle for equitable education for all children and an equitable society. Reading stories of courage and change throughout US history/herstory is alive in his work (i.e., the work of Howard Zinn) and speaks to the pursuits for justice today.

…it’s about history and about looking at multiple world views and multiple issues of oppression. It especially looks at the story of prior to the United States and the
formation of the United States from the voices of the experiences of everyone who wasn’t in power. It’s the voices of laborers and poor and working class folks, the voices of people of color; primarily indigenous persons, persons of African descent, some Asian and Native American experiences, and the stories of women and girls. So, it looks at multiple non-dominant voices throughout 4 or 5 centuries and what the book does is show that there has always been a spirit of progressivism and challenging oppressions in US history and herstory.

Furthermore, he has mottos that guide him and the hope that the future will be different, it has to be as we are all connected and we all impact the earth and all creatures who inhabit it. A motto that he uses as a school counselor education professor are, “we want them [school counselors] to be to be dream makers not the old guidance model dream breakers.” Awareness of who he is, what he brings to the table, and how he can continue to grow has been essential in his work with students and K-16 schools and communities.

His life has been an evolution of experience, knowledge, and practice. Through self-exploration and gaining knowledge, he has become who he is today, and he continues to evolve. Transformation has been a theme that has been represented his professional endeavors, collaborations, and relationships. He has been intricately involved in helping schools to make a change that will increase the equity for all.

Everything we do [in the program where I teach] is focused on equity and social justice…closing the gaps – the achievement gaps, the opportunity gaps, the funding gaps, and the attainment gaps. In our county, certainly, poor and working class kids who are overwhelmingly of African descent, Latino/Latina, almost exclusively second/third language learners; many of them have disabilities or are
inappropriately misdiagnosed as having disabilities and the old “guidance” model was a miserable failure because all of our kids were not getting the resources they needed to succeed academically and to be career and college ready in large part because school counselors and their supervisors had not been trained in how to do so.

He said that his favorite schools to work with are those that others would deem the most challenging. In working with schools he has had some transformational experiences that have linked him with something bigger than himself and the transcendent.

We see the underlying issue of racism, classism, ableism, and linguicism in this country. What we’re doing is finding ways to transform how counselor educators teach school counseling and how school counselors practice… The successes we have had, have been extraordinary and we have completely shifted a profession.

Gregory has faced many challenges on his journey and continues to face these challenges in his personal and professional life. Others’ actions or lack thereof is a challenge for him. He has been witness to others who have not evolved and progressed and as such pose harm to those around them in terms of equity in schools, in particular.

He shared about a challenge for him as he prepares school counselor is “Impaired professionals who dig in their heals and absolutely do not want to change…” He shared that other professions would not allow professionals to continue to practice without continued training. He also shared that he would not want to visit a physician or other professional who had not kept up with their training and expressed a concern about why the school counseling profession would allow impaired counselors to practice. Additional
challenges have been the forces of status quo in schools and the counselor education profession and the influence of Mangled care in the profession.

Mangled care, as I refer to it, is only getting stronger, and because this country is so focused on spending money on militarism and war, I don’t see that changing for a very long time. So, the job market is lousy out there for counselor educators who do not have a background in school counseling.

His love and care for people is exhibited in his desire to see students be gainfully employed, see counselors free from the constraints of oppressive systems of delivery, and for everyone to have access to become all that they can in academic, career, college, emotional/personal, and socio/cultural skills (access).

Vivian – Interview Two

Vivian indicated on the questionnaire that she was raised Catholic, and later connected with her Native American heritage and indigenous spirituality which she sees as the center of all of life.

…and the lakes, and the trees, and the rocks, and the bees, the two-legged, and the four leg-eds [sic] and the wing-eds [sic]…all of life…we truly understand when we say all my relations…we are all included and rather than that being aspiritual, areligious, and opposite to Christianity, which is what we have been labeled…it runs to the core of the belief systems, that created is at the beginning of all of it and if you really follow the explanations of the universe and creation stories and all of that, they parallel through all of the cultures of the world.

For Vivian, the spiritual is connected with everything. Her upbringing intertwined spirituality, multicultural, and social justice which has guided her ever since. She shared,
“So I was raised in a way that multiculturalism, social justice, and advocacy are all just a natural part of the fabric.” She did not distinguish her role as a counselor from that of her personal journey, “for me, they [personal and professional] run a parallel path and they do because from an indigenous perspective one is not separate from one’s journey…”

She has been troubled by the disconnections she has seen and has worked to find ways of reconnecting those. She has connected these personally through counseling and with the help of her family. She shared about the “dismantling” in her own life,

The biggest difficulty is getting beyond one’s self and one’s own blind spots. To learn to be differently gifted and with those different gifts dismantle your own dysfunction because we are all products of that sexist, racist privileged class upbringing...and in my case I was raised in a world that had that privilege. The fact that I didn’t fit it and kept getting threatened with leaving it because I wasn’t following the rules of the game, helped me to learn intimately about that privilege and the difference between privilege and citizenship rights.

Professionally, she has fought to shine light on the discrepancies she has experienced and advocated for herself and others. Some of these actions have occurred in her activities as a member of Counselors for Social Justice and the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development. She writes about the tasks of counselors,

…we’re tasked with deconstructing the maze that we force people through based of our own personal agendas. The processes that we take them through because we self-identify with that. We are tasked with constructing systems of delivery that live beyond our own cultural boundaries. Now we are tasked for changing those structures of the organization of the profession that bind it to be western.
And open it up to become wiser, more respectful of non-western ways and more collaborative with other helping professionals, and spiritual guides and healers for those multitude of clients who would now benefit greatly by that partnership between counselors and their own spirit guides and healers and other helping professionals.

She speaks of the need for counselors to expand their understanding of clients’ cultural and phenomenological experiences while collaborate with resources within the communities to increase the benefit to clients.

Relationships with others, her family and colleagues have been vital on her path. From early on she was aware of her different path. She shared that at the age of 10 she read *The Pilgrim’s Progress* which was one of many “gifts” from the “creator”, “The story was given to me when I was struggling to understand what I was in the middle of.” Along the way, authors, music, ancestors, friends, and family have joined her on this journey. Paying honor to the legacy of her ancestors has been meaningful for her. In her professional path,

I was in an inter-racial marriage and I have an adopted brother who is African American and I was in a marriage with an African American and my Native American heritage…as I told you form the beginning, that if you came from the Northeast you were hidden underneath the fabric of the other cultural mixes in your family tree, for survival purposes. My heart was native from the beginning but it wasn’t labeled that way. That is why I felt out of step, I didn’t know I was native…I knew I had native ancestry but it was a secret, no one was supposed to talk about it. So, as I traveled the world at other times and places and began to
watch rituals and customs and beliefs and things carried out under the name of
native that rang true in my soul I began to understand that…mine had been
mislabeled to be hidden…so I learned to replace the labels and put them back
where they belong and I felt at peace in my soul for the first time in my life…I
wasn’t out of step any more…I knew who I was…

She found kindred spirits who were likeminded and worked to address the oppressions
within the counseling profession. Together they were able to make some difference, “I set
about to share what I knew, and collaborate with others who were of like mindset and…it
is hard to work to help change our profession within the world in which we are all a part
of.” She recognizes that there is still more to do.

With her life guided by her spirituality, “I have had the spiritual; it has always
been at the center of what I have done.” Vivian sees herself in everyone and everything
she encounters. She is guided by the reality that we are all similar and share in this life.
With that view, she holds the bigger picture, the bigger whole as vitally important, more
honoring than the western view of individuation and domination.

For those who stem from a purely western mindset don’t get “it”, they always
look for the question of strictly what’s in it for you. I. Individuation. They don’t
get that when you come from a totally, a path that is centered in the spiritual the
“we” and “me” is always more important than the “I”. “I” is part of the “we” and
the “we” defines the “I”. So, it is an intermingling, it is a blending together of
oneness of spirit. Westerners tend to call that dysfunctional…it (western culture)
even labels deviance and diminishes those who are in and among the world
they’re a part of, in a way that blends the “I” into the “we” and sees what I refer to
as the “we in me” as some focus or the most important part of my evolution, as a spirit here.

She admires those who live a life of integrity and consistence with creation.

Throughout her career and life she has been witness to transformation within the profession and personally. She has taken part in efforts to change the counseling profession and to evolve the efforts toward more healing and inclusive ways of service delivery.

There have been many challenges that she has faced on her path. Early in her life she was aware that she was not in step with those around her. The “social fabric” has been a challenge to her, running contrary to her deeply held beliefs which emerge from her spirituality. Her observations of domination, consumerism, and financial caste within the US continue to be deeply painful for her. She sees these existent in the profession also and is working with others to challenge these viewpoints. Perhaps the biggest challenge is those who would destroy the work that she and kindred spirits have done.

What I find that is, that, we continue to walk among those who build the bridges… continually find those alongside us, in front of us, and behind us trying to tear us down to hold steady, to minimize change and to promote the individuation that their own personal history has lead them on the path of. And that’s not always exclusive to those people over there, ya know.

In these challenges, she seeks the spiritual and acknowledgement that we are all apart of one another.
Paul’s professional journey began because of a conversation with a mentor where his values connected with the goals of counseling psychology. Throughout his professional development he was guided by a connection of ideas and connection with people. Seeing how the knowledge in the profession seemed disconnected with the action, he worked to reconcile that. He shared about his experience of the disconnection between the academic and practice,

…so I show up to my doctoral program and I look at the ways that our field does disservice to people…doesn’t reach out to meet them where they are…build relationships of real trust and so forth…The more I read, the more I saw, the more I wanted to try to change that. It became a spiritual mission for me. And it isn’t about that what we’ve traditionally done, that the people who’ve done it are bad people or are unethical and should be taken up on ethical charges, as so much that we need to change the way we think and treat people with the love and care that brought us into this field in the first place.

He ultimately found school counseling which provided a good fit with his mission to best serve and help others, and how better than to work toward prevention of problems.

I found school counseling to be like the prevention edge of counseling, and I had wished I had learned about, I didn’t even hear of it in the field when I was younger…what pulled me there was the serve all students and the access to people before they are ever a thought of as a diagnosis for anyone. So it is like working with people before people label them in some way.
As he has participated in the profession he has encountered others who have sought to connect knowledge to practical action. For him, he views that there are times when the needs of the whole are more important than the needs of the individual, but ultimately come back to benefit the individual,

Taking into affect both levels, what you need and what all of us need and realizing that sometimes the needs of an individual need to be, go by the wayside temporarily to serve the whole which will eventually serve the needs of the individual.

He believes that a socially-just society is based on a balance between the needs of individuals and those of all members of society collectively.

On his journey he has been influenced by relationships with mentors, clients, colleagues, and students. Many of his ideas and beliefs about serving people have resonated with others in the profession. He set out to meet those who have influenced his development as a counselor educator and has met several, working on presentations, publications and various forms of service with them. He seeks to live out the legacy of those whom he admires, “when I was young,…I read a lot of the writings of Mohandas Gandhi and due to those I learned of other related people…Thoreau, and Emerson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. – people who were willing to take risks to make a difference for people that they didn’t have to.” He has also been guided by the legacies of those within the counseling profession such as Patricia Arredondo and Jane Goodman, to name a few. He shared of his experience at a conference when Jane Goodman was the president of ACA,
she was so fabulous because during her conference she spent the whole time walking around the thing and grabbing her friends and making sure we were talking, because “I want everyone talking about nothing but ‘so what?’”

Everything you’re in should be the “so what” of this…what she is getting at is these are all nice thoughts but “so what, who does it affect, how does it change things, how does it make the world better?

Many of those he has developed relationships with have become part of his “extended family”, supporting and encouraging his journey. A particularly touching story that he shared was about leaving the clients he worked with at his first job in the mental health field,

when I left, when I got into my doctoral program, they [clients] threw a farewell party for me…this is a community that I found very difficult to get into not just the homeless folks, but everybody was poor, at the farewell party these people somehow all pulled their money together and bought me [a gift] its like a spiritual symbol its supposed to ward off evil meanings, its supposed to protect you. So they gave me this thing…and I couldn’t not take it and these people didn’t have money. So here I am crying with all these people – see it’s hard to talk about, sorry…”just know you always have family.”

This story has guided his work and is a reminder of the he “mission” in the counseling profession.

In his work he attempts to live with cultural intentionality, realizing that he may not accomplish all of his goals all of the time, but that he strives to constantly improve. He said,
I try to thread it [mission to serve others]. I don’t know if what I talk is as much a reality of what I do. I have to be a little humble in saying…but I try and I believe in it and it’s what gets me up in the morning. I don’t know if any of us ever really achieve all of the things we set out to achieve but I certainly try.

He sees his work as a counselor educator, helping people, schools, and the profession of counseling as a mission. Many guiding mottos and principles describe what he hopes to accomplish in his work and in his life including: “unto the least of these, you have done to me”, “students are more important than the system” (Reese House). He also uses constructs of social justice which he feels are connected to the spiritual,

I define social justice with a few constructs…are issues of equity, that’s equitable treatment, not just equal rights, equitable treatment of people…issues of equitable access…that’s to resources, to knowledge, to education, and equitable participation, an ability to have a choice in things that control you and your life and those around you. Finally, the last concept I talk about is harmony…as defined by the needs of the individual being balanced with the needs of the whole.

He has evolved over his career in counseling ultimately working to change schools, while maintaining grounding in his desire to serve people. He has experienced transformation personally and professionally. He is aware that though transformation has occurred in some areas of the profession, there are still other areas that have yet to evolve and continue to experience inequitable treatment.

Paul has overcome challenges to thinking outside the box. For Paul, there are still barriers and challenges to overcome. When asked about barriers and challenges, he shared one barrier that women and those with families face in the counseling profession,
…we are not marginally family friendly as a field…and in that we do a disservice to women who do want to procreate… So, if you’re a woman, and you’re a professional wanting to become a professor and you want to, or already do have children, you will find it hard to move to the center of leadership because we do not have a system set up that serves people who have families, unless they have a spouse who cares for their family. And I use the word spouse instead of partner here because it is still geared that way. If this was one issue that we wanted to change, we would start discussing how to create a family friendly environment at every one of our conferences so that there would be child care woven in, into the cost of all of us, not to the specific people...If you look at the women who have made it to higher areas of leadership in our field in ACA, a lot of them did it either after their kids were out in college or didn’t ever have any. And that’s kind of tragic…so that means there are some brilliant women who don’t even get to partake. And why should someone be punished because they want to have a family? That is just one example, but we have long had issues with racial/ethnic inequities in our field…

He has been witness to how the profession of counseling has done a disservice to many people that they serve and others within the profession. He has a desire to for the profession to be one of healing, not harming, for empowering, not ignoring. Ultimately he would like to see consistency of the mission and action within the profession to be inclusive and comprehensive.
Owen – Interview Four

In Owen’s life, he has experienced connection with ideas, people, and the spiritual. The philosophy of Ken Wilber has brought all things together and helped him to make sense of the world while providing a framework with which to help people. In helping people, Owen believes that connection is essential through understanding the person holistically. He works to be intentional in connecting with himself and others. He wants to help to connect people with the aspects of themselves that will help them do what they feel they want to do. His view of spirituality is that it is interconnected with life and is the “awareness” at the core of living. He sees spirituality as involving an energy, maybe a higher “being” (which may just be the source of oneself), or something that transcends and includes himself. It is connected with all of a person and isn’t simply a cultural expression – as a matter of fact culture is ultimately baggage that is ‘jettisoned’ at a point in one’s growth.

Owen has also experienced disconnections in the organizations that he has been involved with. He recalled an experience that occurred while he was involved with the Anglican Church,

Well I can tell you my first kind of, real awakening to the gap that exists, many times. At the time I was serving as a delegate to the convention of the Anglican Church, this was the 1st Gulf war, or what they called Desert Storm. And he had introduced a motion that we condemn violence as the first avenue of resolving conflict. It seemed pretty basic to me, especially within a church body…people got up and they gave these, just, incredibly emotional speeches about how they would have no part of any kind of resolution that would aid and abet their enemy,
and I was like, their, basically their nationalism, or their own sense of patriotism, far outstripped anything that was, you know, taught in theological seminaries they had gone to. Most of these people were clerics. And it really astonished me that people who claimed to believe in, well what we would call miracles, couldn’t even see their way to considering that there might be nonviolent approaches to international conflict.

On his professional path, Owen has encountered many teachers and guides who have been influential. They have questioned his passions in an effort to guide him and to push him toward his “growing edge”. They have seen within him possibilities and potentialities and have cared about him enough to help him get there. While he was involved with the Anglican Church, a mentor helped to guide him,

My mentor thought I would be far better at the spirituality aspects than the institutional aspects. So he thought I would do better in psychology, and uh, counseling than I would in the institution of the church, and I think he was right…At that time I think that my mentor was…trying to help me channel my enthusiasm for helping people cultivate spiritual experiences that might have an impact on their lives.

They have exhibited qualities of questioning, guiding, caring, compassion, were contagious, and deeply loving in a “non-possessive” way. Further guides on the path have been the Anglican Church, religious canons, Wiccan initiation and Ken Wilber. All have helped him in making meaning and contribute to others. He has found within ASERVIC a place where he can connect with kindred spirits and the voices of all within the organization can be heard.
Dissent is probably one of the main ingredients of a healthy organization…

Or basically saying “well, I know I’m right and you’re wrong” but I’ll give you a chance to speak your piece. Yeah, you go into an encounter, to go into an encounter courageously means to go into it with the possibility of being transformed by that. So that’s been the type of atmosphere that folks have created [in ASERVIC] and I hope that would continue but apply to a broader spectrum.

This has been a place of enriching relationship for him a place, “you feel like you come home when you got to the meetings [at ASERVIC].”

His “mission” has been to serve others when they want served, push others when they want pushed, and leave others alone when they want to be left alone. He first explored religion as an avenue for this, ultimately being guided toward counseling/psychotherapy as a channel for working with others. Early on in his career he was guided by Christian ideas to serve the poor.

…at that time I identified as Christian, a lot of the Christian canon was very helpful in terms of some of Jesus’ sayings about helping the poor, you know, and trying to not judge other people and see them of as an aspect of yourself. So, those things were very motivating to me at the time, and my own contemplative practice sort of supported that, but again it was partial.

Looking for other guiding philosophies, he was disappointed by their partial contribution as well as the partial contribution of the Christian canon, but nothing fulfilled what he was looking for, until Integral theory. Integral theory has provided a framework for understanding the worlds of the people he serves and to help explain life.
…what it [Integral Theory] is, is really a theory of everything. It’s sort of the existential equivalent of string theory in physics...And, basically, Ken Wilber tried to address, not just the human mind, but the multiple professions that spring out of human intellectual exploration. But he was basically saying all of those fit together, what’s the bare minimum you need to look at in terms of helping a person…

He seeks to see others become who they are through tools that they use including spirituality and coaching. He encourages them to be guided by their own sense of meaning.

Meaning-making has been behind his evolutionary path as a professional and personally. In ASERVIC he has experienced healing and transformation through dialogue and acceptance of varying voices,

…we do have these different perspectives and different approaches to those things that are of ultimate value, but we believe in trying to engage them for the purpose of healing, for the purpose of growth, and I really see that in so many people affiliated there, that it’s just a wonderful…

Professionally he has worked to transform the profession through collaboration and implementation of knowledge based on experience in the creation of a training program to address chemical dependency. At times he is discouraged by the lack of awareness of options within the profession and academia.

The greatest challenges he faces are to stay interested and motivated in the work that he is doing. He also sees the rigidity and stagnation of the organizations around him
as challenging. He has found avenues where he can expend his energy in a productive fashion while helping others in the process.

_Beth – Interview Five_

Beth shared that her parents converted to Protestantism when she was 4 years old. She stated that her mother had been Catholic and her father was Jewish, but did not practice Judaism. She shared that she was raised protestant and went to Christian schools until she attended college. Today, Beth and her family are involved in a protestant church and she is employed at a religiously affiliated institution.

Beth sees connections between social justice and multicultural competence. Her social justice work has developed from her involvement in multicultural competence. These connections are evident in her intentional choice to attend a church that is diverse and “social justice minded”. She describes the connections that students make between the things they experience and how to make sense of these. She experienced deep connections with others in the profession.

Many have become friends through her involvement in professional organizations. These friends have challenged her to look at “privilege” and the way that services are delivered,

…[they] really challenged me and said let's talk about privilege, let's talk about distribution of resources and what its like to need services and not have access to them or have access but that they're not services that are going to be helpful to me because you don't understand me.

She was influenced by faculty and is impacted by her relationships and interactions with her students.
Her motivation for what she does is her desire to help others. Her professional work is guided by her training in multicultural counseling competence and incorporating social justice in counseling. Though her faith is an important part of her life, she sees that the work she does comes from the gifts she has been given, not so much from a higher calling that she has received from God. She shared,

…if you're wondering if God wants me to be a counselor to help people. I think that the God I believe in gives us all unique gifts. I think I do have, I think this is part of maybe one way I can be of service. But, I may have been just as an effective attorney, I don't know. But, I don't think that I feel called to this profession but I don't think God would say ‘this is where I want you’. I just think that I really believe that, you will be used where you are if you're open to it and I'm open to being here. I just think that I really believe that, you will be used where you are if you're open to it and I'm open to being here.

Additionally, her interactions with students are affirmation of her spirituality,

I think [interactions with students is] just an affirmation that I, that there is something greater out there, and seeing students, and seeing kinda the challenges that they go through and the hope and the support and the miracles, just really amazing situations where you just have to believe that there is something greater in play here. And just affirming that, I love working with students that have different faith perspectives…

Beth’s professional path has evolved over time through experiences in various counseling settings, ultimately becoming a school counseling educator with a focus on prevention. She has been witness to the transformation of others’ lives, particularly those
involved with recovery programs like Alcoholics Anonymous. She spoke of the transformational experience of children/students who try to make meaning from their experiences, becoming “survivors”. She participates in helping counseling students evolve and know themselves deeper in order to have knowledge of what they “bring to the table” and to think about the reasons they make the choices that they do about counseling.

There are several challenges that Beth cited in the work that she does. One challenge is those who hold rigid beliefs and their counseling practice is guided by their faith and limit where they want to advocate,

I think my biggest challenge is that folks that really link their ability to be a counselor to a certain group or individual based on a life experience is dictated by their faith. You know, "I can't counsel gay people because I'm a Christian.” "I can't counsel men because I'm this faith" or "I can't counsel..". I want to be respectful, you know there are, faiths, practices, there are some faiths where, religious practices where single women don't talk to married men. Who am I to say to this single female student "well you have to, if a father comes in and wants to talk to a student, you have to be able to sit down and..." That's tough for me, what do I say? I want to be respectful of that counselor's faith, but I also want to be respectful of this poor dad that wants to know if his kid's gonna pass math.

But, then, you know, how do I work with the student that says "I just, I could not work with a ninth grader that wanted to have an abortion because I'm a Christian or I'm this or I'm that."
Tamera – Interview Six

Tamera shared that she was raised Catholic and attended Catholic schools throughout her life. She stated that she began to look for a different path when she was in college. She has studied asana, yoga, and is a yoga instructor. She shared that she feels very connected to the divine feminine and nature.

Tamera sees a connection between the spiritual and issues of social justice. For her spirituality is woven through all she does. When she meets with someone, she attempts to connect with their “humanity” and “divinity” in the room or in the advocacy work that she does. In her work as a mental health counselor she believes that connection and spirituality is essential for change. She does this through helping the clients through validation, respect, genuineness, and transparency. Various experiences in her work have reinforced her belief the need to bring her humanity/divinity to what she does. As a counselor, she assists people in making connections, and in a sense re-storying their life story to find empowerment. In her spiritual life, she practices disconnection of the senses to enrich her spiritually.

Relationships have been renewing and inspirational for Tamera. She has made lifelong influential friendships with “the women in my consciousness raising group in the 70’s” who share her passion to see change in the world. These friendships were born in during a time of political change and the feminist movement. She has grown by learning and connecting with a variety of people: her family, professor from undergrad, and books
that she has read. Today she is connected with a professional organization where she has
felt a deep connection with others and resonated with the commitment that she has seen
in others,

…To grow themselves [those in the Regional ASERVIC], to, for self-growth as
well as, you know serving the community in a spiritual way. Which doesn’t mean
to make everybody little spiritual beings, but to bring a quality of equanimity and
a quality of hope, a quality of spaciousness. And it seemed to really be pervasive
in the organization...I made a couple of friends there that I still have.

These relationships with others have led her into new and other interests.

Tamera lives her life guided by her spirituality and her awareness of the
connection of the self to others. She sees that each person is a reflection of the others that
they encounter. Compassion from a Buddhist position has also been meaningful for her.
This compassion takes one outside of oneself and interacts with the other. In attempts to
make sense of social justice issues, she recognizes that the oppressor and the oppressed
share similarities,

the way I think about the injustices I see have matured, so that I can see the
humanity in both sides. I can see that the oppressor is suffering as equally as the
oppressed in that,…in order to make change, the only thing, the only way one can
help to make, or help to make change is to open up both people’s hearts so that
the divinity of one party is talking, or speaking to the divinity in the other party.

In her life, Tamera has been active in speaking to the transformation of those
around her; beginning in the 1960s and 1970s. Her spirituality has been an evolution as
she has sought out ways of connecting with the spiritual through her interactions with
nature and through her spiritual practices in yoga. In her work as a counselor, she is
witness and participant in the transformative process of her clients. She recounted a
particular experience with a client who had an intense past,

there was that initial moment of feeling threatened. But as soon as he started to
talk I was able to, I was able to kind of override that initial, that initial feeling of
being threatened. I really heard the suffering that he had around this history of his
and how it had shaded his whole life, cause he spent years in prison. And so, I
just, I just opened myself up to, for to have that, my humanity meet his humanity
in the middle of the room. I actually almost visualized it, cause I knew that I
wouldn’t be able to be of any help to this person if I stayed in that, you know,
scared mode, that threatened mode.

As she continues to learn more and be expanded in her professional work through
leadership and participation in professional organizations, there is a sense that she is
continuing to evolve in her work and in her life.

The challenges that Tamera faces include self and the profession. She has learned
how to regularly care for herself. This is borne out of her awareness that this will help her
to overcome challenges of maintaining her energy in the work that she does, “the
challenge that I think I face is having, is keeping my energy up. That is my biggest
challenge...I think its physical first. And, cause that’s where I see it come first. I really
have to be vigilant”. Another challenge that she feels is present in her professional work
is the involvement of the corporate mindset in the mental health field. She sees this as a
larger systemic challenge more than she sees this as a barrier with her co-workers and
immediate supervisors.
Mary grew up in a Presbyterian church; in high school she began attending the Methodist church because she felt more connected with the meaning of the sermons. In college she became involved with the Wesley Club, a Methodist student group, where she learned more about putting faith into action. Later she would go to a spiritual gathering or organization if she felt the things being taught were meaningful to her. She spent some time at the Unitarian Church and has now found a home at the Spiritual, but will occasionally attend Catholic Mass.

For Mary, spirituality and social justice are connected and pervades her life. Mary enjoys the process of connecting things together. She saw this connection in CSJ and ASERVIC,

its just amazing to find the process part [in ASERVIC and CSJ], the spirituality and social justice, those elements, so I think I really saw that that is paying attention to the process of counseling more than the venue of it…I could sit and watch the process and be fascinated.

She sees connections in ideas and has various connections with people from a variety of places in her world. For her, meaning is connected to the service work that she does. She sees that there are disconnections within communities and the counseling profession. Disconnections she has observed in the counseling profession are the lack of diversity and compartmentalization based on different focus of counseling.

Her involvement in a variety of communities is enriching for her. Though she is retired, she continues to be involved in serving others while staying connected to advocates. Her involvement ranges from counseling professional organizations to
community advocacy groups. In her neighborhood she has developed relationships with her neighbors who give and share regularly with one another. She connects with others in her spiritual community and others around the world by participating in giving projects,

I began going to the Church of Religious Science here, which is a very strong part of the community…, we take on projects. We do, we have collaboration with orphan… AIDS orphanages in Africa, and medical clinics in Guatemala, so it’s very worldwide.

Others who interact with Mary are taken by her integrity and active pursuit of meaningful activities.

It is essential for Mary that she knows the reason that she is serving where she is serving. She shared about the role of her faith in the work that she does,

I want to bring my faith into what I do. If I’m working with [community organization], I want my faith as part of the reason I’m doing it… I don’t need to articulate it to other people, but I want to know why I, I’m working really hard for a particular organization doing a particular project.

She determines where to place her energies by evaluating whether she is skilled to do it, if an opportunity is available, and whether others are committed to participating in change. Meaning is the guiding force for what she does. This becomes a challenge because Mary sees meaning a variety of places and therefore requires selectivity about where she becomes involved. For Mary, her intentionality and self-reflection are important to her continued work in the world.

Mary is an advocate for many people working for more equity for many. She has participated in the evolution of profession in her region. Additionally, Mary has
experienced transformation in her life through interactions with others, particularly through an experience with a client whose life mirrored her experience in several ways. She has been involved in her community to create change and challenge social injustices. She is a lifelong learner, looking for opportunities to continue to grow and learn more, a constant evolution. She talked about self-examination as part of this process,

I’ve looked around recently at, you know, where are my friendships? Are they inclusive enough? Are they, whatever? From a social justice perspective, you know, do I have all races in my friendships? Do I have different political positions? The answer to the first is yes, the answer to the second, is no. And so that’s drawn me to look more at interconnecting with more conservative political people. And that was deliberate from, you know, kind of doing an assessment.

The challenges that Mary has experienced are others, systems, and self. Others who are not committed to participate in the organizations they are a part of or people who think differently from her are a challenge. She has experience opposition from systems when doing advocacy work. Another challenge that she faces is where to place her energies and having balance in her life, “I think my greatest challenge is measuring my own level of…involvement. And another way to look at that would be, appropriate boundary setting…”

Following the completion of the member check of her interview summary, Mary sent me an addition to this summary. She shared that she has been exploring what her life means to her, as she has been able to identify what others would say her life has meant to her.
Michelle – Interview Eight

Michelle attended the Mormon Church when she was a child and at 14 left the church when her mother left. As a teenager she began studying with a Christian mystic from Lebanon. For most of her adult life she was not connected with any religious or spiritual group; she focused on her career. Toward the late 1990s she had a “reawakening” and began to explore her spirituality,

I went to a symposium that Deepak Chopra, Susan Jeffers and Wayne Dyer that was put on in Albuquerque. Deepak Chopra started talking about quantum physics. There was a, like a light bulb went on, like a switch got switched on inside, I went through, I had a spiritual awakening experience through that…

She eventually began to study with indigenous spiritual teachers “and worked with them and everything that they had to offer.” She now works in private practice incorporating various spiritual practices into her work with clients.

Michelle sees all things as interconnected. The spiritual is integrated in all the she does,

…well my whole life, my whole life focus, my whole life beingness the integration its sort of like I don’t have a spiritual path now, its more of, it’s an integrative way of being and acting out of that integrated place.

Daily she seeks to live intentionally and consciously every moment, remaining true to her spirituality. For her, social justice has not been a focus of her work or her life, however she hopes to help the world by living consciously, as she sees that what is done to the earth and those in it is all intertwined. For her “disconnection” is the source of
unhealthiness in people’s lives and the things that people struggle with, She believes that to heal, we must become connected again.

Throughout her spiritual journey, Michelle has had various teachers and mentors who have helped her to evolve. These teachers have also affirmed in her the gifts that she has been given. She is connected to others in the counseling profession by her desire to help guide those who experience “spiritual awakenings”.

Living in an integrated way is at the core of how Michelle lives. A vision of the hope for the future where the earth is renewed has been a source of inspiration for her. She shared about a meditation she had that has been a guide for her,

…in one of my meditations, I had a vision experience of what I called the “new earth” and I felt that there was a new earth that was actually present for us, although hidden and I understood from that experience where we were, what we were moving towards. And it was a very beautiful experience, the consciousness of that planet earth was vibrant and alive and potent and beautiful. Many of the animals that we have here were there, but some were not, some were already extinct. The species, we had species on that new earth that we don’t have here. And it was a very beautiful place of really high consciousness and there were no humans. And I understood from that experience at the time that humans had not yet made the decision about how they were going, or if they were going to participate.

Additionally, she has a framework for being in the world: altruism, humility, and reality. This framework helps remind her of her connection with something bigger than herself as well as her temptations to “sweep things under the rug”.
Michelle herself has evolved in her journey. Her vision for the future is transformative and she views the counseling profession as integral to the assistance in the renewal of this earth by supporting and guiding those who have spiritual experiences. She would like to see the profession of counseling transform to frame things in a more healthy and holistic way, no longer ignoring or mislabeling people’s experiences. In her work as a counselor, she accompanies clients on their evolutionary paths and uses creative and spiritual interventions to help them in their process. In her vision of the “new earth”, the structures and oppressive systems will be transformed and healing will take place,

I feel that in moving to this new place of consciousness, the shift of the ages, in order for that to occur, things have to appear, things have to break a part or they appear to be breaking apart… so what’s going to happen is people who have not yet looked at themselves, people who have been stuck, people who haven’t been moving forward, or people who just need a little bit of a boost are going to go through spiritual crisis. And counselors need to be ready to address those needs because I feel that we are moving into a time of tremendous spiritual growth and a new age on the planet. That counselors are going to need to understand how to address that aspect of the person because it no longer will be just go to church on Sunday and live the way I want to live the rest of the week. That structure is not gonna work. So I feel that ASERVIC, and the things and activities that we’re doing in ASERVIC, is really important now to build a foundation, and support for counselors, because they’re really going to really be called on, especially when, as
people start to wake up spirituality, more and more people are going to be waking up spirituality.

She shared that social justice work or “cooperative engagement” will play a major role in bringing about this “new consciousness.”

The challenges that Michelle faces are her self-care in helping others. She acknowledges that working in an integrated way can be draining and requires regular refueling. She also sees the way that the counseling professions have addressed spirituality in the past and still today has been a challenge for people who have had spirituality significant, often unexplainable experiences. The framework that others use to bring about change is sometimes troubling for Michelle,

Social justice, even when you use those words, the hair on my neck just kindda raises because there still is such an againstness with that word. I think that there ought to be a different word that’s more evolved a more evolved definition…

She would like for people to work to bring about change through mutually respectful and peaceful ways.

Themes

In addition to the interview summaries presented, analysis of the data, the transcriptions of the interviews, produced five overriding themes that illuminate the experience of social justice and spirituality in counselors and counselor educators: Connections, Relationships and Kinships, Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness”, Transformation and Evolution, and Challenges. These themes were derived by utilizing Morrissette’s (1999) guidelines for analysis within a phenomenological inquiry. The first
Step of analysis was to listen to interviews, then to read the transcriptions of the interviews and identify significant statements. These significant statements were then paraphrased and placed into a “first order thematic” cluster. “Second order clusters” were identified by further narrowing the statements and placing them into clusters with similar essence, there were 39 second order clusters. The next step taken was to further narrow the 39 clusters into the five themes. Each co-researcher’s interview was summarized through the lens of these themes. In this section, each theme will be introduced with quotes found in the CSJ Activist, the newsletter for CSJ and one of the documents used for triangulation in this study. These quotes describe the theme and introduce the words of the participants. Within each theme, several categories arose. An elaboration of these categories and the words of the co-researchers will be presented. Within the data, there were several themes that overlapped with one another; I have made an attempt to present the words of the co-researchers ways that best illustrate the theme, keeping in mind that it could represent more than one theme.

**Theme One – Connections**

“...it seems obvious to me that the personal is political. This has always seemed obvious to me. Conversely, once you understand yourself to be connected to all other living things, and the earth beneath your feet, you respond to the oppression of people and the destruction of the environment by governments by taking it personally.”

(Ani DiFranco quoted in CSJ Newsletter, 2003)

All of the co-researchers in this study spoke about the Connections within their lives and work. They have experienced connections with ideas, with people, with themselves, and with something greater than themselves. Three clusters emerged to
create the theme Connections: *interconnections, disconnections, and deconstruction/construction*. Many described their lives as lived in an integrated and connected way where spirituality is *interconnected*. The connections and disconnections they spoke of have impacted them spiritually, personally and professionally. For some to reconcile the disconnections, they have *deconstructed* and *constructed* new meaning or visions for the disconnections in hopes of bringing “healing”. Other examples of *deconstruction/construction* include the “unraveling” of the positions that they hold in life and seeking different ways of being.

*Interconnections*

Co-researchers saw many *interconnections* within their personal and professional lives. When discussing the relationship between spirituality and social justice, some identified that they see them as interconnected and inseparable. *Interconnections* were conceptualized as the acknowledgement of the ties, similarities, and intertwining of ideas, relationships or experiences. Most often, the co-researchers described the spiritual as *interconnected* in their lives. Co-researcher’s descriptions of spirituality and making meaning of spirituality will be discussed later in this chapter. Some of the interconnections the co-researchers were between various areas and activities within their professional lives and overlapping with their personal experiences. The following are examples of *interconnections*:

Paul - [multicultural counseling as related to social justice and spirituality] to me they totally run together where I don’t differentiate.

For Owen many of the helping modalities are interconnected and help others in their understanding of themselves,
And in some cases psychotherapy and counseling and other cases like coaching, which I also do, to help people broaden and deepen their sense of self because I believe that that increased the probability that they will have an experience of other people that is more connected than seeing the differences.

Mary shared that her professional evolution has been about connections and interconnections, “all three fields [library science, Adult Educator, and Career Counselor] have been connecting ideas and people, and people and people.”

For the co-researchers, interconnections were understood as actions, relationships, but sometimes the interplay of experience. For those who saw interconnections in their life many also experienced disconnections.

Disconnections

Disconnections in this study have been conceptualized in some cases as the incongruence of behaviors and thoughts observed in others or culture by the co-researchers. The following are some examples of disconnections:

Mary - I live the multicultural more than I serve the multicultural. I mean that, I didn’t have much; I didn’t have many clients that came to me and said, “this cultural conflict is happening.” Now, I know that in the counseling I would help with things like questions of assimilation and acculturation and things of that nature. But, you, you look around even in the, the conferences down there, and I’m sorry, but it’s mostly Anglos, and almost all women.

The area that Mary has seen disconnections is in the counseling field and the demographics of counselors working in the profession. Paul also sees a disconnection in the profession providing an example of the areas of service ignored by the profession in
the past, particularly child abuse and neglect centers, “Why were we ignoring that? What are we ignoring now?” This illustrates a disconnection of the profession from the needs of the people and the importance of paying attention to the communities we serve to see what is being overlooked or ignored.

For Michelle disconnection is viewed as a root to the ills people face, … my viewpoint is that the greatest health tragedy of our time is disconnection. We’re disconnected from ourselves; we’re disconnected from our world, disconnected from each other

The co-researchers experienced several disconnections in their experience; however, these are to be distinguished from deconstruction and construction.

**Deconstruction and Construction**

*Deconstruction and construction* have been conceptualized as the taking apart ideas, experiences, or cultural messages that exist and putting it back together to be more empowering and healing. The terms used for this meaning cluster were influenced by postmodern thought. Constructivism and social constructivism have been ideas explored by the counseling profession and represented as concepts in Postmodern therapy (Corey, 2005). The crux of the postmodern therapies is helping clients reframing their stories of living. Corey writes, “For some social constructionists, the process of ‘knowing’ includes a distrust of the dominant culture positions that permeate families and society today, and change begins by deconstructing the power of cultural narrative and then proceeds to the co-construction of a new life of meaning” (White & Epston, as cited in Corey, 2005, p. 386). For some new meaning was made through using different language to transform the meanings implicit in words or phrases,
Michelle - Social justice … there still is such an againstness with that word. I think that there ought to be a different word that’s more evolved a more evolved definition for how we view social justice. Because we still are doing it from an against-them place or from against the establishment. This is a time where what’s going to work is collaboration, cooperation. I would call it something like cooperative engagement, cooperative decision-making…

For others it is an embracing of an experience or idea and using it to the good of others and themselves. Beth shared about her observations of others making meaning of their circumstances, *deconstructing/constructing,*

…in our schools, students just sharing their experiences about, you know, "I don't understand this, but I have hope and I believe in something greater" you know, "I don't know why my dad forces sex on me", "I don't know why my mom prostitutes me for drugs", "I don't know why my parents beat me every night or withholds food". But, this is, I'm a survivor…There's just that internal spirit in people. It reminds me of Victor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning; that existential perspective. If we don't have that, if we don't have that hope, that will, then what's left? I think that that's tied to someone's spiritual orientation.

Vivian deconstructed the meaning of privilege to mean a deep connectedness with loved one recounting the time she and her children spent with her grandmother,

It was really a very significant gift to us…that’s my definition of privilege, for me, when I say “I feel privileged” that is what I feel privileged for. I think that when we can turn around the meaning of that word, so we can all feel privileged,
we’ll successfully dismantle the system of privilege which is the opposite of what that is.

Some talked about the practical deconstruction/construction of existing structures while others spoke about visions of renewal that are possible. The following are examples of the deconstruction/construction of structures:

Gregory -… [in working with people] there is not this artificial separation of mental health’s over here, physical health’s over here, and the spirit you go to church for once a week. So, what I try to do in teaching world view models is to get students looking at you need to step out of the modern USA culture, modern business culture where everything is a commodity in being sold, and instead look at, for almost everybody’s traditional world view – spirituality was not separated or divorced out from everything else.

The interconnections, disconnections, and deconstruction/construction in the lives of the co-researchers has provided them opportunities for overcoming challenges and to vision a hopeful future that is more empowering and healing. All co-researchers shared about relationships have been vital to their development spiritually and in the work they do.

Theme Two – Relationships and Kinships

"With all beings and all things we should be as relatives" (Lakota Saying quoted from CSJ Newsletter, 2005)

“You [contributors to the newsletter] help me and many others in our spiritual journeys to write a line in the poem of life.” (Crethar, 2004)
Relationships and Kinships emerged as a theme that was threaded throughout the stories and experience of the co-researchers. Throughout their journeys professionally, personally, and spiritually, people have come alongside them and influenced their lives. Furthermore, the ideas of other have challenged them to grow and pursue spiritual or social justice in their lives. This theme consisted of four clusters represented relationships: *guides and mentors in the profession, kindred spirits, honoring legacies/remembering ancestors*, and *family*.

**Guides, Mentors, and Teachers**

Guides, Mentors, and Teachers have been people who have come alongside the co-researchers on their journeys in life, impacting their personal and professional evolution. Mentors have been those who have challenged them and been role models for them, whereas guides and teachers have been those who have spoken into their lives, mentored them in some ways, but have been influential in a more informal way. The mentors, guides, and teachers on their journeys have come in the form of writings, education, organizations, and through relationships. These guides have been spiritual, introducing them to new lines of thought through writings.

Tamera – Gandhi, I think of Ram Dass, Krishna Murdi. So those are kind of the classics, the classics that I’ve read that kind of molded me early on and continue to.

Mary - …I just finished Shock Doctrine by Naomi Klein and that was pretty startling. Now I’m reading The Power of Now, on tape actually.

Others spoke of the spiritual influences of mentors and guides with whom they interacted in their lives.
Mary – I was very active on campus and that particular Wesley club was a very, kind of social action, this is before the 60s...And so, I kind of really got that flavor of religion where it is a practical application to daily life for the community or the world or whatever.

Owen also shared about a spiritual mentor who recognized his passions and guided him toward a non-religious setting where he could work with others.

At one point I was going into the priesthood. My mentor thought I would be far better at the spirituality aspects than the institutional aspects. So he thought I would do better in psychology, and uh, counseling than I would in the institution of the church, and I think he was right.

Other guides have been formal or professional mentors or teachers, many of whom were instrumental in the fields of counseling development and social justice. These included people who have been active within the counseling profession through service in ACA and some of their divisions: Jane Goodman, Anita Jackson, Mary Smith Arnold, Sandra Lopez-Baez, Judy Lewis, Michael Lambert, Reese House, Pat Martin, Michael D’Andrea, Patricia Arredondo, Paul Pederson, Tom Sweeney, Mel Witmer, and Jane Myers. Others were pioneers in the profession of counseling and psychology theory: Viktor Frankl, Carl Rogers, and Albert Ellis. Another guide that was influential for Owen was Ken Wilber, the creator of Integral Theory. Some professional mentors helped increase awareness in the lives of the co-researchers.

Paul shared that his relationships with others in the profession raised his awareness about the inequities of those within the counseling profession, “I think I
learned a lot about this from Mary Arnold and Judy Daniels…we [the counseling profession] are not marginally family friendly as a field…”

Both Tamera and Beth shared about the influences of the wellness perspective on their careers. Beth shared,

I think one way of being culturally competent is being aware of spirituality as one of the factors. I really believe, I was influenced by Tom Sweeney and Mel Witmer, as you probably have been, you know of a wellness perspective, Jane Myers.

Some of the guidance from professionals has come in the form of writings that have been influential in creating a better understanding of multicultural issues in counseling, the practice of counseling, and how people make meaning. Guides also came in the form of professional literature for some:

Gregory - Judy Daniels, Michael D’Andrea, MAKSS instrument and Judy and Michael’s writing has been quite important for me. The other article that completely blew my mind was in ’91, same journal issue of The Journal of Counseling and Development, a special issue on multiculturalism as the 4th Force in counseling. The MAKSS was in it and Rachelle Pope and Amy Reynolds wrote on the complexities of multiple oppressions…that article on multiple oppressions having no hierarchy did that for me, it was an entire set of light bulbs.

Some guides have been the people that the co-researchers have served and helped, including students and clients. Beth has learned a lot from her students and the resilience they have to overcome adversity. Mary spoke of an encounter with a client she was
working with where she was witness to the perseverance of the client’s spirit to take a
difficult experience head on. Tamera has also learned from her clients:

I learn all the time, I learn all the time about the Hispanic culture that’s here, the
Native American culture that’s here…um back East where I lived, I learned about
ageism. I worked with a, I worked in a shelter for homeless seniors. And learned
about the, that culture and their stigmas and problems and, most of the people
were obviously in shelters so they were homeless. So I learned a lot about the
social and economic stratas and the difficulties that they face.

Kindred Spirits

In their professional work as counselors and in their communities, many of the co-
researchers have found likeminded individuals who share their same passions, *kindred
spirits*. These have been people who resonate with them spiritually or those who are
actively involve in changing the profession. These kindred spirits provide the co-
researchers with opportunities for open dialogue, collaboration, and continued growth.
Beth talked about the friends she has made in professional organizations and their
influence in her life,

They're good friends, I mean I can call [one of these friends] and say "I need some
help, let me run this by you". These were my mentors, my support…It’s just such
a blessing to me to be encouraged and challenged in a way that, I know that they
care,....my influences have been friends within organizations that have identified
with the counseling profession.

For many, *kindred spirits* are those that they can collaborate with on advocacy
issues, professional activities, or in their spiritual communities. Many have found *kindred*
spirits within the professional organizations they are members of. Mary talked about the people involved in the regional CSJ and their support of one another,

several people who have been active members in that have had justice as one of their, as one of their main things. And one person had a neighbor, one person who is on our board actually, had a neighbor who committed a crime and owned up to it and she was neighbor to his parents and it was, you know, here’s this young man in total integrity said, “I did this, I want to pay”. And, she was friends of the parents and she used our board to help her figure out how best to offer them support. And, there’s that. And then we have another person on our board, who is our treasurer actually, and she works with the elderly and she has been talking recently of how abuse of the elderly is so critical. And so it comes in, in the advocates group…

The role of kindred spirits in the lives of the co-researchers is nourishing, encouraging, and helps to raise awareness in their lives.

Honoring Legacies/Remembering Ancestors

Honoring Legacies/Remembering Ancestors emerged as a category not as much from the words shared, but from the affect with which the co-researchers talked about their work and those how have been inspirational to them. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. emerged as guides in this study due to their influence on the development of two co-researchers in their work and lives. Their lives have also been a legacy which has served to inspire the work the co-researchers do, acknowledging the work of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. by going beyond themselves to serve others. Some talked about their own heritage as a legacy.
Several co-researchers talked about professors and colleagues who have made inroads in the profession and have been “trailblazers” in school counseling and multicultural counseling competence. Some of the co-researchers spoke to their continued work as inspired by these “trailblazers,” including, Mary Arnold Smith, Anita Jackson, Reese House and Jane Goodman.

These influential people have been people that have inspired the work the co-researchers continue to this day. The majority described these people as part of a larger connection, one where they were honoring them through the work they continue to do. For some, they are working to carry on the legacies their mentors and teachers have left, honoring them through what they do.

Family

For this study, *family* represented the co-researchers’ direct family as well as a bigger network of people with whom co-researchers feel connected. In some cases, family has been influential to them as they grew up as well as today. For many, their family was a model of the spiritual, while others’ families were encouraging them on their path. The following are examples of *family*:

Tamera - My mother had a wonderful spiritual connection through her faith. And my dad also was very spiritual in a way that was more in tune with nature. So, I had a really, as far as my parents were concerned, I had a really good foundation for spirituality…

Mary shared that she was “raised Protestant; Presbyterian.” Her family allowed her to experience different expressions of her faith she shared this story,
...at an early age, I was in high school, I decided, no I really wanted to go to the Methodist church because I found the message more meaningful, the creed was more interesting. So, I broke away from my family and the two churches were only a block apart. So we would go to church together, but I would go to one and they would go to one and that was ok with them and it was ok with me.

The influence of Paul’s family’s religious expression has been influential in the work he does today and in his “mission” to help others live in a more equitable society. He shared, “I actually grew up in a Christian household where there was a missionary zeal to the people who were around me and a lot it was service oriented.”

For Gregory, his family provided him with the skills to think about the world around him. “My family gave me many intellectual resources, but they were not at all strong with emotional resources... I learned very quickly to challenge inappropriate uses of wealth and power in the family that I grew up in.”

Vivian talked about her own journey and her brother as companion,

...dismantling the privilege and becoming aware of the shame and the horrible sense of guilt and shame and rejection of self that I felt. Because of what I witnessed in the world around me and because of what I was being taught what I rejected. The brother that I took this journey with that was African American, and he took his journey into his blackness...this was a young man, we were in our 20s and this was a fellow who was a Franciscan and who had to leave the Franciscanhood to follow his path and ran some of the first Black heritage camps
in the northeast and was central to that whole racial development of black pride and turning around the label to build pride into them.

For some, family continues to be a vital part of where they get their energy. Several talked about their family’s involvement in their lives today and how that intertwines with their spirituality and social justice work.

Gregory - I decided that the best way I could practice spiritual beliefs was to take care of the earth. My partner and I drive two Priuses, we are about to put solar panels on our house. We are into organic foods, we support the slow food movement.

Tamera – [Who have been other influences on your journey?] My son. My first husband, my second husband, my present husband.

Others have been influenced by others who have become like family to them. Paul shared about Native American and Latino/a culture where he lives that, “Defining family is something much broader than the people that you are biologically related to, to me those are spiritual values.” Several in this study expressed a feeling of membership to a bigger family. Within CSJ, there is recognition of the extended family:

Counselors for Social Justice award several counselors with the Ohana award yearly. The Ohana award is “to honor individuals in counseling who affirm diversity and advocate for social justice in the spirit of nine elements of the indigenous Hawai'ian concept of 'ohana or extended family: Malama: Caring, Ha'aha'a: Humility, Na'auuo: Intelligence, Lokomaika'i: Generosity, Kupono: Integrity, Honesty, Aloha: Unconditional Love, Mana: Spiritual Power, 'Olu'olu: Courtesy, Koa: Courage”. This award has its roots in the spiritual, but represents
that the people involved in CSJ are a part of more than an organization, but that “extended family” is important to the work that is being done. (CSJ, 2008)

Both Gregory and Paul shared of their experiences with others that would be described as extended family. For Paul, when he left his clients prior to entering a doctoral program, they reminded him “just know you always have family.” Gregory described the role of his mentor in his commitment ceremony,

…her words (Audre Lorde) were so powerful that two of her writings my partner and I used in our sacred commitment ceremony and [a mentor] was actually a reader in our ceremony – she was the mistress of ceremonies and it was really cool.

For all of the co-researchers, relationships and kinships were a vital part of their personal and professional growth, and in many ways were spiritual and transcendent for them. These relationships have also been a place from which to gain energy and inspiration.

Theme Three – Meaning: Living/“Beingness” Frameworks

“To live content with small means; to seek elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable, and wealthy, not rich; to study hard, think quietly, talk gently, act frankly; to listen to stars and birds, to babes and sages, with open heart; to bear all cheerfully, do all bravely, await occasions, hurry never. In a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common. This is to be my symphony.” (Channing quoted in CSJ Newsletter, 2003)

The third theme to emerge from the data analysis is that of Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness“. This theme has been described this way as many people talked
about the ideas that guide what they do, who they are, and their “being” in the world.

These guiding principles appeared to derive from a place of meaning. The term “beingness” emerged from the interview with Michelle who said that she lives in such a way that her “being” is integrated with the spiritual and there is no separation. This theme was developed from several meaning clusters: values, mission/purpose/guiding ideals, and professional intertwined with self. To best illustrate this theme further, it has been arranged using slightly different language for conceptualization: values, principles and frameworks, and mottos and quotes.

Values

Values can be conceptualized as those deeply held beliefs that guide what a person does in his or her life. These values may not always be known by others; however, the product may be seen by others. For some, their values were essential to the work they do in the counseling profession and in their communities. The following illustrate values:

Vivian - When someone comes from a spiritual path, it is an injustice to them for a counselor to attempt to move them into individuation. As a matter of fact, it is probably parallel to the efforts of reparative therapy to move those who are genuinely self-identified and born in a bi-sexual or gay or lesbian, or transgender person-hood – to attempt to go to quote, “reparative therapy” to bring them back to being heterogeneous - heterosexual. What’s the expression? You can’t make a pig’s eye out of a sow’s ear.
Tamera - It is, it’s not unsafe to kinda connect with people. In fact, that’s really an important part of spirituality! And social justice, because you’re saying, we’re all the same here. I ride a motorcycle, you ride a motorcycle, there is no difference.

Michelle - It’s a constant practice in living as consciously as I can live.

Principles and Frameworks

While values are at the core of what the co-researchers do, principles and frameworks are articulations and ways of organizing those values and making sense of the world. Some used these principles to help them channel their energies, while others shared frameworks they use in their work and pass on to others. First principles will be presented. The following are a few examples:

Gregory - So, the spiritual and meaning-making piece, I think, comes in a lot, in looking at how we talk about world views. Because the majority of world views for people of color, and even if you go to traditionally the European world view, we’re rooted in spirituality…

Michelle - I have some guiding principles. The first is altruism. And this is altruism from a universal perspective rather than a personal perspective…the way the universe might look at altruism…what’s good for everyone and everything concerned, including oneself…In decisions I make or in how I treat other people and my interactions with other people I work towards doing it as altruistically as possible, and with the greatest of humility. Humility to me is one of the greater spiritual assets that, that there is. And humility from a universal viewpoint is that
everyone and everything is supported by the universe equally and no one is
greater than or less than anything or anyone else…Realistic, reality is also a
principle and that’s not reality from a human perspective as much as it is from a
universal perspective. And that, that includes really owning the parts of myself
that, you know I’d like to sweep under the rug, or it’s a reality check.

Mary - [in determining what service to choose] Perhaps the biggest thing is, do I
have the skills to do that? ...So that’s one criteria, do I have the skills or the
resources to do it...The other thing would be, you know, how opportunities
sometimes comes and sometimes doesn’t? And opportunity just kind of opens up
and I’ll say, “oh, there’s a really useful thing”. And I think a third thing would be:
are they interesting people to work with? I mean its really an uphill struggle to
work with an organization where nobody steps forward to say “I’ll do that!”.
That’s really discouraging.

Vivian - My personal mission has always been that of a bridge builder and a path-
finder, a path-finder and a bridge builder…that’s been a lot of my role within the
ACA and its divisions and continues to be that.

Tamera - There’s gotta be a quality of equanimity, of acceptance, of total non-
judgmental acceptance. That genuine, genuine authenticity, I don’t know, it’s
called many, many things. But unless a client can feel that and trust that in you,
they’re not gonna, they’re not gonna make, you know, you’re just another
whatever, they’re just gettin’ more of the same that they’ve gotten from their parents or their family, or whatever. Its not gonna create an atmosphere where they feel safe enough to try something new.

The other sources of Meaning and channeling the Meaning for the co-researchers came in the form of frameworks. These frameworks guide their daily living, or are ideas presented from organizations they are involved with. Some of the co-researchers shared that these frameworks can help them to better understand others, also. A few examples of frameworks are:

Owen - When I was exposed to Integral Theory, it all kind of fell together for me…Integral Theory has five elements. The first one is called ‘perspectives” and it’s laid out in a, basically it’s a four square grid…the inside of the individual, so that’s the person’s own subjective, phenomenological narrative…the outside of the individual…the insides of the group is what we call shared belief, and that’s particularly where culture comes in…the outsides of the group which is everything from languages to socioeconomic modes of production. Now you can start to see where social justice, how it could be understood through this… these are perspectives, these are all aspects of your being right now, and so to do psychotherapy or counseling effectively, I cannot ignore any one of these four quadrants…

Paul - first of all even within the ASCA National model, I focus on the (if you’re familiar with the model) there’s a ring around the outside of it – there are 4 words that are considered like the…they are the concepts that are supposed to be woven
through everything we do and they are: advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and systemic change.

These frameworks assist the co-researchers in making meaning of their world and their work in it.

Mottos and Quotes

Many of the co-researchers shared *mottos or quotes* that have been inspiration for them in their work and lives. Others shared mottos that they use to inspire others. The following are examples of these *mottos and quotes*:

Paul - : goes back to the whole Christian thing, “unto the least of these,” that whole think of…in the bible there’s a piece where I think Christ says, I don’t remember who said it now, “when we serve the least, we’re serving him” – well that value stayed with me that if I’m not then ultimately then I’m actually doing the opposite of everything that I should be doing.”

Gregory shared a motto that he developed that he uses in his work,

I’ve learned that there are no barriers that cannot be gone over, under, or around and that includes human barriers. So, I may attempt change at the top, at the bottom, or in the middle, and I teach my students how to do balance doing all three.

These Frameworks help to guide the co-researchers in the work that they do and in overcoming challenges they face. Their words and values are also passed on to others, in Gregory’s case, school counselors and school counselor trainees as a piece of wisdom that they may also use in their work.
“Likewise, I no longer arrogantly judge those who view issues of social justice differently from me; instead, I see the individual’s views as the valid product of their experience and reality.”(Walton, 2003)

The theme of Transformation and Evolution emerged from the experiences that co-researchers described had been Transformative for them personally and had helped them to Evolve in a deeper understanding of self or professionally. Others spoke of their participation in or witness of the Transformation of others with whom they interact. One co-researcher shared a vision of Transformation that has helped in her evolution. This theme emerged from the clusters: transformation/evolution, harming and healing, and personal intertwined with professional. To best illustrate this theme, it will be divided into personal transformation and witness of transformation. The following illustrate personal transformation:

Beth - It's [CSJ] huge, it has really created an awareness of my own issues and the challenges that the counseling profession faces with regards to social justice issues, both for the students and clients that we serve.

Gregory - My partner will say now that I am much more go-with-the-flow on racism now than when we first met in terms of challenging myself and other white people. It’s not that I don’t still notice and deal with it, but I deal with it in a way that there’s a different level of emotion on my part...
Mary - I have to do something other than jump up and down and get excited and angry. And it, it’s a constructive use of your energy, I think.

Witnessing Transformation has been at times positive and encouraging for some of co-researchers, however, some have also witnessed how actions may be counter to Transformation. Others shared about the actions that they participate in that may lead a witness of transformation.

Gregory - As we look at a lot of the multicultural literature now, the many authors have shifted to a focus on multiple cultural identities because to simply look at ethnicity and race alone is not enough. That you have to be able to have schemas that are broad, so that you can then go in and do your work with people who are really different within various cultural groups let alone across different groups.

Paul recalled an experience where he witnessed someone being “called out publicly as not transformative,

I don’t think that is a productive way to create change… I don’t, that seems spiritually related, to me but it is, because it’s hurting, it’s hurting the spirit of what and who we are. Are we about healing or are we about something else? Are we about not just remediating problems but actually finding ways to make them exist less. If we don’t do that latter part, then who’s gonna do it?

He is drawing attention to the purpose of counseling and the desire for “harmony” in bringing about change.

For Tamera change or Transformation happens in the connections she makes with her clients,
…in order to make change, the only thing, the only way one can help to make, or help to make change is to open up both people’s hearts so that the divinity of one party is talking, or speaking to the divinity in the other party.

By stepping outside of oneself and recognizing the shared experience of being “human and divine” change is possible and transformation can be witnessed. Is experiencing transformation, many of the co-researchers also experienced challenges in their lives.

**Theme Five – Challenges**

“Inevitably, a student will ask, ‘How much training is enough?’ Recognizing the work that meaningful awareness requires and how the best of intentions do not replace true cultural competency, I have to reply, ‘It’s never enough. This work has no end.’”

(Ingelman, 2005)

One of the final questions asked to the co-researchers in this study was, “what are some of the challenges that you face in the work that you do?” The rationale for this question was that many people confront challenges in their lives and work and I was interested in hearing from the co-researchers what some of those challenges might be, particularly when working with spiritual and social justice issues. The clusters used to develop this theme were: barriers to change, the profession and organizations as challenging, social fabric, corporate/non-corporate/managed care, professional identity, and self-care. To best illustrate this theme, the words and information of the co-researchers will be presented by looking at the Challenges the co-researchers discussed in their different contexts professional, with others, and self. This theme will be presented within this structure due to the overlap of the meaning clusters. Organizing them as
professional, with others, and self also illustrates the Challenges within these arenas and how these have been approached by the co-researchers.

Professional

Several co-researchers discussed some of the challenges they have encountered within the counseling profession. Some they have overcome, while some talked about the challenges they continue to encounter. The following is an illustration of professional challenges:

Vivian - there were many of us who believed that the organizational structure of ACA was entrenched in this structure that I have described that was sort of debilitating within the western mindset. So we wanted to set about to dismantle the racism and sexism and all of the things that were inherent in the fabric of this association because we are all doing that no matter what else we did as professionals we could never move our profession where it needed to go.

Beth - A lot of times, only, it seems to me that it's unusual that folks of low socioeconomic status go to a counselor because they just want to do some soul searching or work. You know it's usually court referred or because they're in crisis. It's a very white, high socioeconomic status thing, to say "you know I'm gonna see someone to work through some stuff"...You know families in crisis or financially drained just don't have the resources.

Owen - And what I've seen happen, many of ACA’s political positions are an incredible turn-off to a large number of people who consider themselves spiritual
or religious. And again in touting diversity ACA has actually produced the inverse, they’ve produced a an elite minority of intolerant people who have hijacked the organization to the point where the school counselors have left, the mental health counselors have left, and diversity can only be what they say it means, it does not mean including traditional Christians, traditional Muslims, Orthodox Jews, and their belief systems, because they’re inherently sexist and racist and blah, blah, blah.

In spite of the challenges that these co-researchers have faced within the counseling profession, they continue to work within its structures to help institute change. Many talked about the need for continued dialogue and an increased awareness in order to help transform the profession.

Others

Several co-researchers shared that their biggest Challenge is other people. These others may be people they interact with professionally or those within the community, or anyone they might encounter. Sometimes the other may be adversarial and at times they may be apathetic.

Paul - People just kind of go along. It’s like we have those of us who are stuck in the middle of all of the politics of trying to move ACA in a different direction see these things and wonder why people don’t…I think its because there’s another issue, we have significant issues…gosh this is not just in ACA…with transparency. Significant issues with how decisions are being made…
Mary shared that she is driven by her sense of meaning in what she does. She talked about all of the areas that she sees meaning and has been active. She is very involved within her community and the profession and is discouraged when others do not work in the organizations she is a part of. She shared that her real challenges is boundary setting around where she places her energies. While the co-researchers experienced others as a challenge, many also saw self as a challenge.

*Self*

Some of the co-researchers shared that they themselves are a great challenge to overcome. Two shared they have to be intentional about *self*-care, while another thought about evaluating where her energies are going. The following illustrate *self* as a Challenge:

Tamera —...Keeping prepared, I think, is the biggest. Which has to do with self-care.

Michelle - The biggest challenge I’ve faced?…Staying out of my own way. Keeping out, keeping myself out of it. Which is kind of funny because we have to have ourselves in it, but keeping myself out of it. Keeping myself, continuing to keep myself clear, to be as neutral as I can be...Just my own self-care and self-maintenance is, continues to be challenging because the more people I see the more self-care I have to do. Spiritual counseling, not that other counseling you don’t have to do self-care, but spiritual counseling adds another component or dimension of self-care that is much more challenging and demanding. So self-care just continues to be challenging…and a priority.
Conclusion of Themes

The themes presented, illustrate the lived experiences of the co-researchers and where spirituality and social justice play a role. The themes have presented various aspects of the experiences where spirituality and social justice may intertwine through: Connections, Relationships and Kinships, Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness”, Transformation and Evolution, and Challenges (see Figures 1-5). For some spirituality and social justice are interconnected with all that they do, for others, they are not sure where spirituality and social justice may be connected. The following section will elaborate on the research questions that guided this study with the words of the co-researchers to elaborate.

Research Questions

The central research question that guided this study was: What is the intersection between spirituality and social justice in the work and lives of counselors and counselor educators? This question was further expounded upon and other questions were also asked: How do co-researchers define/make meaning of spirituality? How do they define/make meaning of social justice? These questions will be explored in this section. This exploration will add more information about the essence of the experience of spirituality and social justice and the way these are conceptualized by the co-researchers.
Figure 1. Theme One – Connections

Figure 1. Meaning clusters used to develop the Connections theme.
Figure 2. Theme Two – Relationships and Kinships

Figure 2. Meaning clusters used to develop the Relationships and Kinships theme.
Figure 3. Meaning clusters used to develop the Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness” theme.
Figure 4. Meaning clusters used to develop the Transformation and Evolution theme.
Figure 5. Meaning clusters used to develop the Challenges theme.
What is the Relationship between Spirituality and Social Justice?

For several of the co-researchers these two concepts were intricately interwoven. Those who felt them to be interconnected also shared that the spiritual is something that is integrated into all that they do, not just social justice.

Owen - [do you see a relationship between your spiritual expression and social justice?] I think the extent to which my practices are, I don’t know, doing any good, is the extent to which every moment of my day is informed by them, and in that sense I see or experience a connectedness between myself and other people.

Mary - So, here, the spirituality is in me and it comes over here and has to be, doesn’t have to be evident to other people, but I have to see the, what’s here is real and viable and healthy. And if it isn’t socially just it isn’t healthy. I mean if it is inequitable access or whatever. And so the circle or cycle would be when it comes back to me, I can say “I’m doing this..” or “I have done this…”

Owen - the other thing that really struck me with both the phrase social justice and spirituality. They rest inherently in the way a person differentiates self and other which is what we call ego identity. And we have, we know there are, based on thousands of protocols, we know that there are at least 9 levels of ego identity, each one transcending and including the previous ones. And so you’ve got at least 9 different descriptions of what social justice or spirituality would be.
Beth - I think that to be culturally competent, which I think is an important piece of social justice, because it’s not just creating accessibility to services its services that meet the needs of diverse clients or students. So, I think one way of being culturally competent is being aware of spirituality as one of the factors. I really believe, I was influenced by Tom Sweeney and Mel Witmer…you know of a wellness perspective, Jane Myers.

Gregory - If we look at the rest of the cycle of the creatures on our planet, there’s a wonderful balance, there’s supposed to be a wonderful balance, and we humans have gone so far out of that balance that we now restrict that balance to only a certain set of privileged humans, and so, I see it as not only taking care of the planet and the creatures and the trees but lets also take care of the humans and get the humans all back in balance so that we don’t do such harm to each other. Because the more harm we do to humans then the more harm we do to the planet. So, it really is all connected.

Mary - So, here, the spirituality is in me and it comes over here and has to be, doesn’t have to be evident to other people, but I have to see the, what’s here is real and viable and healthy. And if it isn’t socially just it isn’t healthy. I mean if it is inequitable access or whatever. And so the circle or cycle would be when it comes back to me, I can say “I’m doing this..” or “I have done this…” or that kind of thing to myself. Then I feel, you know, my kind of my work in the world.
That’s my work in the world; is to contribute the kind of talents that I’ve been given.

Vivian - we create barriers in this western world to separate those who we judge to be more important than, more valued than, more intelligent than, more privileged than…and, so, from early on I understood this journey on a privileged road versus a less privileged road and the price tag that people have to pay…the tolls if you will, that we pay to walk a path of privilege, and the barriers to some not being allowed to go there at all and others only going for the right price tags…how all of this sets up a game of life that runs contrary to peace and contrary to the helpfulness, runs contrary to centering one’s life on this spiritual path.

Beth shared that she does not believe her faith is the reason that she is interested in social justice, but that her work affirms her social justice and multicultural focus in counseling.

Owen - Its [spirituality] really inexplicable and there’s no way to guarantee that a pursuit of spiritual experience is gonna be in anyway related to what we would call social justice. So, in a way that was liberating because it was like I’ve gotta make my own meaning out of this and I’ve got to decide, well where do I want to put my energies.

Michelle - I’ve really, for me I’ve felt that the greatest way I contribute is to continue work on myself and through the practice that I do. My, the work that I
focus on, which indirectly would, I would say impacts social justice, but not from a sort of advocate way, or an active way would be, I work in the realm of conscious evolution.

*Definitions/Making Meaning of Spirituality*

Another inquiry in this study was to illuminate how co-researchers defined or made meaning of spirituality. Many of them described it as something greater than oneself; while others shared they have a belief in God or a faith that plays out in their lives. The following are some of the descriptions of spirituality shared by the co-researchers.

Gregory - My way of doing spiritual practice is taking care of the Earth. I do believe that there is a greater force in the world. So, my way of a spiritual practice is ensuring that I have a light footprint on the planet and that we do what we can to take care of the planet because if we don’t we won’t exist...but for this point in time the best thing I can do is take care of the planet...for me, that’s spiritual, and earth-centered.

Owen - That’s the other movement in counseling “Oh yeah, spirituality, the creator of the universe, the divine source of awareness is just a subset of culture.” It’s just the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever heard...wait a minute, you’re trying to tell me that the very source of the awareness that you and I share is this subset of culture. That’s the most fucked up thing that I’ve ever heard.
Paul - To me, that’s the spiritual piece…What are you responsible to? I feel personally responsible to everybody in the world because we’re all interconnected we are all one big family.

Vivian - in the metaphysical view we begin from the circle…and the oval of whole that we are a part of.

Mary - Well the spirituality has to be so much of me that when I do something in, let me just call it for the time being, the public arena; I have to be doing it out of conviction and I want to be able to fulfill my commitment to doing this public arena thing. Because if I don’t, I feel incomplete in the spirituality.

Owen - my experience is that you can pick and choose from any religious canon, and basically, you’re priming your own mind, your priming your mind with a software package based on a political agenda. You can prime your mind to say, “well social justice is equal distribution of resources” and you can, like a liberation theologian, you can say, “well that’s the true meaning of the gospel” and so that becomes the reality tunnel that you look through. But, when it comes right down to it, spiritual experience in and of itself is not, its, its, a ineffable, you cannot break it down to words, you cannot break it down to a formula based on a political agenda.
Definitions/Making Meaning of Social Justice

It was also of interest in this study to explore how co-researchers defined or made meaning of social justice. The literature has provided various definitions of social justice, with some similarities. Several co-researchers shared descriptions similar to those found in the literature (this is discussed further in Chapter five), while others proposed that social justice be understood from each individual’s perspective. The following quotes illustrate these differing views:

Paul - I define social justice with a few constructs, I don’t know if you’ve ever seen that. Issues that we need to focus on…not just ACA, period; are issues of equity, that’s equitable treatment, not just equal rights, equitable treatment of people…issues of equitable access…that’s to resources, to knowledge, to education, and equitable participation, an ability to have a choice in things that control you and your life and those around you. Finally, the last concept I talk about is harmony…and harmony as defined by the needs of the individual being balanced with the needs of the whole.

Michelle - you know the reason that I think we’ve got so much trouble and chaos and angry people and all that, is because we live in a culture that pushes it all under the rug. And it fuels consumerism. So, we try to find fulfillment through purchasing stuff. We ignore the shadow; this is a culture in general that ignores the shadow. The value of social justice to me is showing the shadow, of shining the light on the shadow. And bringing out the things that are there, not…not to act
violently against them, but to love them out of the shadow. And to bring them into a place of acknowledging and then finding functional ways to support and help.

Michelle - Cooperation, collaboration, and compromise. We have to work within that triad. I look at that kinda as the holy triad. The triangle holy triad. Because anything else is, what we have here isn’t working and we have change the way we do things to include how we view what social justice is.

According to Michelle, social justice work will be an active part of bringing the “new earth” into being as they challenge the systems that have been active in our culture, patriarchy.

Michelle - social justice I think needs to cast its eye on how we do things through mutually beneficial and supportive ways, rather than how am I gonna fight and make this right. It doesn’t mean you don’t show up at the nuclear arms protest, it doesn’t mean that its not passive, but its not a passive approach at all. But it is one that is more holistic, more inclusive.

Words to Burgeoning Counselors and Counselor Educators

During the interviewing process, an additional question was added to the protocol, asking what the co-researchers would say to a student in counseling programs training to be counselors (master level) or counselor educators (doctoral level) about spiritual and social justice. This was asked due to the large amount of information several of them sheared about working with students. Additionally, it is the hope of the researcher that students will find this study to be of value to them as they explore spirituality and social justice in their own work. Here is what some of the co-researchers said:
Owen - … it’s about finding who you are and being that. That’s it. So, it’s the same think I would say about spirituality, find out who you are, maybe there’s a tradition that you have been given that works for you, maybe you’re not sure, … whatever transcends and concludes the things that you identify with to the point that you’re willing to give your life, you know, not just in lay down your life, but to give your life in a way of how am I gonna work with people. So identify where you’re at spiritually, and then ask yourself, how does this relate to working with other people? That’s where I think the person begins the realization of their own mission of social justice and they must have their own mission of this, it must come from within them, and they must persist in it, even if those around them say, “oh no, this is what it really means”. No, if you really believe in it, and feel that good work can be done, you must follow that. And I think that’s the hardest thing, that you know, life is always like hitting the surprise button, we just don’t know what’s going to blossom in us. And when that blossom unfolds, just revel in its beauty and go with it.

Paul - If we really get down to the base value that bring people into our field then I remind them to stay attached to that, stay attached to why you are here and then look at what the field offers and what you are supposed to be doing and make it happen. Everything is geared around, everything I do is geared around helping them come up strategies to be effective…to be leaders…to create systemic change when needed…to advocate for those who don’t have advocates and to do it in a teaming and collaborating fashion…ultimately as you continue to move into the
leadership type positions, which faculty is really, of this field…you have to speak with yourself on these things. Do you regurgitate something someone else wrote which is based on somewhat on the truth or do you help make truth more clear? To me, that’s the spiritual piece…What are you responsible to? I feel personally responsible to everybody in the world because we’re all interconnected we are all one big family.

Tamera - I think another important thing to bring to the process is your own experience. You know, I think that’s also really important.

Michelle - I would emphasize the importance of continuing to unfold and uncover their own personal gifts and talents. I would… I would tell them to be guided by what their own personal sense of justice is. I would invite them to be clear about what they value and approach their life and their profession by what they value. And I would tell them that they are doing one of the very most, highest forms of service.

Mary - for the person that I already know, would bring in what I already know about them to ask the questions of “how do you, how do you bring your own value and attitude toward this that I know about into your work?” It would be that aspect, something that I already know about them, say, “you know, how do you do this in working with a client who might be this kind of person?” I would base
it differently, and the connection, the ongoing connection or link would already be built in. Well it would be a more relaxed kind of thing, sitting on a couch…

Beth - You know there's this article, I forget what the title was or even who wrote it, but it was in the title or right in the main abstract, it said "Counselor Know Thyself" and its from that saying Physician Heal Thyself. You know counselor know thyself. I think that that would be the, if I could say one quick thing that would be it, just know what you bring to the table, because our stuff can impact the counseling relationship whether it’s in the school or a community setting positively or negatively. Knowing what you bring to the table is going to, create an awareness around what I need to change or what do I need to do something differently here? Is this profession for me?

The co-researchers’ words to counselors in training encourage the searching of self and the reasons for being in this profession. They stress that this is the thing that will be most helpful in this profession.

Conclusion

During the exploration of spirituality and social justice in the lives and work of counselors and counselor educators, five themes emerged: Connections, Relationships and Kinships, Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness”, Transformation and Evolution, and Challenges. These themes have been illustrated by the words of the co-researchers and will be elaborated on and discussed in the next chapter. Furthermore, descriptions and making meaning of spirituality and social justice were also presented in the co-researcher’s words. In Chapter five I will present how these descriptions can be
understood within the existing literature. Chapter five will also present limitations of this
study, implications for the counseling profession, and recommendations for future
research.
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This study has focused on exploring the experiences of spirituality and social justice in the lives and work of counselors and counselor educators. Eight co-researchers were interviewed via phone interviews and face-to-face interviews about their experiences of spirituality and social justice. This study was guided by a phenomenological method and the statements provided by the co-researchers were analyzed through a phenomenological process guided by Morrissette (1996). The focus of a phenomenological inquiry is to gain a deeper understanding of an experience and the meaning derived from such an experience (Creswell, 1998). As such, this study does not intend to develop a theory of understanding about this phenomenon. It is the hope that this will illuminate the experiences of counselors and counselor educators in a way that will be helpful and inspirational to others. This chapter will elucidate the experiences of social justice and spirituality and will evaluate the findings of the essence of this experience with existing literature. Furthermore, implications for the counseling profession and future recommendations for research will be presented also.

According to Kvale (1996) and Marshall and Rossman (2006), the researcher is the research instrument of a study. As such, the researcher is required to bring awareness and introspection to the work of a qualitative study. Furthermore, Moustakas (1994) recommends the researcher conduct an Epoche prior to data gathering as a means of limiting the researcher’s pre-existing assumptions that could interfere with the collection of data. Due to the nature of a qualitative inquiry as a meaning-making process where the
researcher is intricately involved, a presentation on the lessons I learned as a researcher as well as limitations to this study is also presented.

Discussion of Co-Researchers Experiences of Spirituality and Social Justice

Relationship of Spirituality and Social Justice

At the outset of this study, it was my desire to learn more about the experience of social justice and spirituality in the lives and work of counselors and counselor educators. I had the assumption that there would be a connection between these two constructs; however, it was unclear as to what that relationship might look like. This assumption was derived from observations of leaders who advocated for the equal treatment of others while exemplifying a commitment to the spiritual, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, and Mother Teresa. This assumption was further guided by the interconnections between altruism for just treatment of others and religious commitment as seen in Liberation Theology (Ferm, 1986) and Catholicism (Ferree, 1997).

All of the co-researchers shared that they see a connection between the spiritual and social justice in a way that is intricately intertwined. For the co-researchers, there is no division of the spiritual and other areas of life. Some shared that they see spirituality as an integral part of their everyday life, their “beingness”. This concept is illustrated in Figure 6.
Figure 6. A representation of spirituality in the lives of co-researchers.

Various roles in their lives overlap and spirituality is intertwined with all areas.
According to Wilber (1993), the “Spirit” is something that is in everything and cannot be separated from being. He addresses the disconnections within some frames of spiritual reference where the “spirit” is seen as a separate entity. He acknowledges that though this “spirit” may be a reality outside of oneself, it is also the “essence of each and every thing that exists” (p. 58). This being the case, according to Wilber, spirituality would be a part of any social justice work in which a person becomes involved.

Additionally, as Owen mentioned in his interview, Wilber (2005) provides a framework by which people can understand the role of systems in the lives of individuals by assessing the person’s position within the quadrants of Integral Theory: inside the person (personal experience), outside the person (observations about behavior and external characteristics), inside the group (culture), and outside the group (“modes of production”). It could be argued that Wilber may see spirituality as interconnected.

Several co-researchers shared that their spirituality is tied to indigenous expressions of the spiritual. Indigenous wisdom views all things as part of the circle of life. According to Fukuyama and Sevig (1999), Native American spirituality holds “the belief that all of life is sacred and human beings have a responsibility for caring for the Earth” (p. 32). Furthermore, life is seen in cycles and the values of “balance, harmony, and connectedness” are deeply held. Vivian shared candidly about her discovery of her native heritage and walking the “Red Path” as she holds dear her connection with nature and all of her “relations” within nature. Michelle shared that through work with indigenous teachers she has reached a place where she lives a life of “integration” where the spiritual is part of all for her. Like both Michelle and Vivian, Gregory expressed his commitment to the earth and leaving a “light footprint” for future generations. He views
his lifestyle of living in balance with the earth as a move toward balance in the world which impacts the way humanity lives. He sees this as a “circle.”

Some have identified spirituality to be at the core of human existence, particularly wellness (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000). Beth shared that she has been greatly influenced by the Myers, Sweeney and Witmer wellness model which has increased her awareness of spirituality in the lives of people she serves. Tamera also spoke about the wellness model and her conceptualization of the spiritual at the center of wellness.

The co-researchers identified a connection between the spiritual and social justice. Some expounded on how they see these connected. Owen shared he has a framework that helps in understanding others and may help to understand social justice and its impact on people, but he shared that a pursuit of the spiritual may not lead to social justice work. Additionally, Michelle shared that her spirituality is vitally important to her; she hopes that living “consciously” is making an impact on the world, but does not see herself as directly involved with social justice work.

From the data collected, there is a relationship between the spiritual and social justice in the lives of the co-researchers which manifests differently for each. To better understand this connection, it is important to look at the ways the concepts of social justice and spirituality were described and defined by the co-researchers.

Definitions/Making Meaning of Spirituality

Spirituality is a difficult concept to define, as the experience of the spiritual is unique to each individual. Some of the issues with defining spirituality were discussed in Chapter 2. Several frameworks for understanding the spiritual were provided (Ingersoll, 1994; Ingersoll, 1998; Wilber, n.d.). According to ASERVIC (1995), spirituality is
something that one experiences that is connected with or separate from participation in a faith community or religion. Spirituality may be described as the experience of something bigger than oneself, a transcendent experience, meaning and purpose, or courageousness, just to name a few.

All of the co-researchers acknowledged that spirituality is a part of their experience. Beth shared that she experiences the spiritual through the Protestant Christian faith. Others shared that Buddhism is a philosophy they have explored to help them gain a better understanding of the world and themselves. It appeared implicit in the conversations with co-researchers that they view themselves as spiritual, and not religious. The responses of the co-researchers in this study are similar to those found by Zinnbauer et al. (1997), that 44% of mental health workers identified themselves as “spiritual but not religious,” while 96% identified as spiritual. In a study of 505 ACA members, Young, Wiggins-Frame, and Cashwell (2007) found that 82% of the people in the study indicated they were more spiritual than religious. This study does not seek to quantify the results found, however it appeared that the majority, viewed themselves as spiritual and not religious, while all viewed themselves as spiritual. None in this study viewed themselves as religious but not spiritual. This appears to be consistent with previous studies done addressing spirituality and counselors.

It is unclear as to the reason that more co-researchers did not identify as religious or that co-researchers who identify as more religious did not participate in this study. One reason may be the focus of the study on spirituality. Several co-researchers shared that they were drawn to participate in this study because of the focus on spirituality and not religion. Conceptual discussions occurred about the similarities and dissimilarities of
religion and spirituality. Some co-researchers talked about being spiritual, but attend religious ceremonies on occasion or feel comfortable with religious activities that are consistent with their spiritual beliefs. According to ASERVIC (1995), religion is communal and involves shared rituals and beliefs. For many of the co-researchers, they have found a communal setting within their professional organizations and many practice rituals that can be expressed independent from a religious setting.

For the co-researchers, spirituality is something that is intertwined throughout their lives; it is much more than a set of doctrines or rituals. Some described feeling connected with other people as a “spiritual” experience. Paul shared that his belief in “harmony” as an essential part of social justice comes from eastern thought and his cultural background that is rooted in indigenous spirituality associated with balance. He additionally shared about the extended family in some cultures is a very spiritual thing. Vivian used words like “connection”, “circle”, and “oneness” sharing that, “the western separates spirit from other components of oneness and sees it as…and talks about religion more than spirit which for me is a prescription for living.” She sees that religion is more than the spiritual, but rather guidelines. Michelle described her spirituality as “integrated”, “conscious evolution”, or “being”, illustrating the interconnection of spirituality in her life. Tamera used the words “enlightenment” and “connection.”

Many of the co-researchers talked about their belief in something greater than themselves, a “Spirit”, God, and divine feminine. Beth shared she has a belief that God equips people with gifts to be used. Others also talked about the gifts they have received from the Spirit that have guided them on their path or been significant for them.
According to Ingersoll (1998), an aspect of spirituality is the “conception of the absolute or divine.”

Others shared they have had transcendent experiences where they have realized they are part of something greater, either a mirror of someone else, or great transformation in their life. Gregory, for example, described the transcendent experience of being involved with his work in changing the way that school counseling has been done. Tamera talked about visualizing meeting with her clients’ “humanity and divinity” in the middle of the counseling room, recognizing herself in them. Vivian talked in great detail about the “I” in “we” where there is recognition of connection with another and the focus is taken off of the individual and the individual is seen in the context of the whole. Ingersoll (1998) wrote that “connectedness can occur with other people, with God, or that considered divine, and with elements in the environment” (p. 4). Connection emerged as a theme in this study and will be expounded upon later in this chapter.

Many co-researchers shared they participate in spiritual practices regularly. Ingersoll (1998) identifies “experience-ritual-practice” as a dimension of spirituality, where a person is doing something active to enrich his or her spirituality. According to Wilber (n.d.), spiritual practices may lead a person to a “transformative” spirituality. Tamera shared that she connects with the spiritual through the spiritual practices of yoga and being in nature. She shared that she connects spiritually by “disconnecting from the senses” to “reach enlightenment.” Owen shared that he meditates and does yoga regularly. For Beth, prayer has been an important part of her daily life and connection with God. Mary shared that she attends a spiritual community on a regular basis and participates in their “generosity Sunday” by giving back to others. At times she will
attend mass and enjoys the ritual of it. For Gregory, living a life from an earth-centered spirituality and participates in spiritual practices such as: participation in the slow food movement, driving a Prius, and installing solar panels on his home.

For all the co-researchers, spirituality plays some role in their lives and they express it through varied avenues. Another concept that will be explored is the definition/description of social justice.

Definitions/Making Meaning of Social Justice

Within the profession of counseling there continues to be discussion about the concept social justice and how to define it in a unified way (Odegard, 2007). It has been described by some in CSJ as “basic rights, evolved rights, and freedom from oppression. It includes providing access to goods and services for all facets of our populations and expecting acceptance of differences” (McCollum, 2006, p. 3). Lopez-Baez (2005) wrote the following about social justice: “

The term ‘Social Justice’ has become a very popular “buzz” word used by many. In it simplest form, social justice involves the good of others, it implies defeating oppression, oppressors and oppressive systems so all individuals are afforded the opportunity to thrive. Thus, social justice is an action verb not a mere concept or philosophy. Social Justice is ideologically neutral, open to people on the left as well as on the right, and in the center. (p. 2).

Within CSJ there are agreements that social justice involves action and is not merely an ideal; that it addresses equity and justice for those who have experienced various forms of oppression. Implications for social justice work vary based on the specifics of the oppression and the context of the work. This is echoed by Lee (2007).
Several of the co-researchers described their development in the interest of social justice work and areas where they continue to contribute. Those who shared the most comprehensive descriptions of social justice and whose descriptions were congruent with the descriptions in the literature were those who hold memberships in CSJ on the national and state levels. Several expressed that being involved in social justice has been a natural evolution from their interest and work in multicultural counseling. Gregory shared that his students discuss issues of social justice throughout their coursework in a very deliberate way. This is illuminated particularly in how he has framed the way that he teaches multicultural counseling. He shared that he utilizes Howard Zinn’s (2005) *A People’s History of the United States* as his core text for teaching and that he teaches his students from a “worldviews” perspective. He shared that he was greatly inspired to view multicultural counseling from this perspective when he read an article on “multiple oppressions.” A text that greatly influenced Gregory, Reynolds and Pope (1991), provides a framework from which a counselor can work with a client who may experience life from different dominant and non-dominant identifications of himself or herself. By addressing the client’s experience through this lens, issues may arise that the counselor may not have been aware of.

Beth shared that much of her interest in social justice was influenced by her involvement with a state division of the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) and conversations with other members about the interplay of privilege, oppression, and multicultural issues. Paul shared that he grew up in a multiculturally diverse community. This increased his awareness of the variety of people’s experiences as well as the oppressions they faced. Vivian shared her own
exploration of her cultural identities throughout her path. She described the ways that she “dismantled” the privilege in her life and took the journey with her brother who is African American. Further, she shared that she was confronted with the need to understand a client’s experience early on in her career and to be respectful to work within cultural frames of reference.

Co-researchers shared about their perceptions of the societal values that have influenced the inequity of those within the United States. Michelle discussed her experience of being in the corporate world and the patriarchal undertones that have led to the harm of men and women in this culture. Vivian discussed the “western mindset” of “compartmentalization” and “individuation” has caused disconnections and harm to many people as they “climb up the ladder” and are driven by the belief of “scarcity”. She shared that this can be seen in various oppressions of others. An example of this oppression is the check cashing stores where interest is excessive and lenders decide to whom to lend. Mary shared that anything that does not increase the health of people is unjust.

Several co-researchers work in settings where they are training school counselors or have worked in a school counseling setting. Beth also saw school counseling as an opportunity to prevent some of the issues that people face in life from ever happening.

From the conversations with co-researchers about spirituality and social justice these descriptions emerged. Furthermore, themes that described the experiences of the co-researchers also developed and will be presented in the following section.
Discussion of Themes

Several authors and researchers have looked at issues of spirituality in leadership (Parameshwar, 2005), spirituality in adult education (Tisdell, 2002), and in the lives of outpatient mental health providers (Sanchez, 2007). Parks-Daloz, Keen, Keen, and Daloz-Parks (1996) examined the characteristics of those involved in transformational action. They developed seven themes from a qualitative study with 100 participants who exhibited lives of service to others. The seven themes that arose from their study were: Connection and Complexity, Community, Compassion, Conviction, Courage, Confession, and Commitment. These themes illustrated the areas of experience when working in transformative ways. Several of the themes of this study overlap with those found in previous studies, including the ones just mentioned. Those studies will be explored along with the themes from this study.

The conversations with the co-researchers were vibrant, passionate, and heartfelt. Some of them shared life transforming stories, some cried; some became openly frustrated when talking about the injustices they have witnessed or experienced. The co-researchers’ “humanity” met with mine to create meaningful and expressively rich conversations that produced the data for this study. From these conversations several significant statements were identified, from those statements multiple meaning clusters arose, and from those meaning clusters five themes developed (Morrissette, 1996). The five themes found in this study are: Connections, Relationships and Kinships, Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness”, Transformation and Evolution, and Challenges. These themes are illustrated in Figure 7 and the interconnections that appeared.
Figure 7. Representation of the five themes the lives of the co-researchers

Figure 7. The arrows illustrate the interconnections and relationships between themes
Connections

The co-researchers talked multiple times about the connections and disconnections they have experienced or observed. The interconnections were interconnections with ideas, interconnections with others, and interconnections with one’s multiple cultural identities (Reynolds & Pope, 1991), including spirituality. The disconnections described were those of disconnection of self, disconnection with that outside of self, and disconnections observed in the outside world. These connections and disconnection were seen throughout the conversations. This is a theme that has emerged in other qualitative studies examining spirituality or social justice (Menigat, 2007; Parks-Daloz et al., 1996). Ingersoll (1998) included “connectedness” as a dimension of spirituality.

Interconnection was mostly discussed as an explanation of spirituality in the lives of the co-researchers. Many described spirituality as intertwined, integrated, interconnected, and inseparable from their experiences and actions. Others talked about the interconnections that they have felt with their career choice and their development as counselors and counselor educators.

Co-researchers spoke of the steps taken in their lives to re-connect the disconnections. Michelle shared that she feels disconnection is the greatest health problem in the United States.

Others talked more about the disconnections and incongruence they see within the counseling profession. These include the focus on issues of professional identity as a distraction from helping others, the involvement of managed care in the diagnosis and
service delivery within counseling, and the discrepancy between wanting to see those in
the profession excel, but not always providing them with resources to do so.

According to Hannush (2007), people within cultures live in a tension between
values that are at either end to the spectrum of values. These values may be held about a
variety of things within one’s life. He elaborates on the use of phenomenological
procedures to understand where a person may be on this spectrum. He refers to this as
cultural tilt. An example he provides is: “Some cultures, therefore, are overly committed
to connection; the cultural tilt is toward the connectedness pole. Other cultures are overly
committed to differentiation; the cultural tilt is toward individuation” (Hannush, 2007, p.
13). From this example, one can see that the tilt for an individual may be too much one
direction. In this study, Vivian discussed the tilt that exists in much of western culture
toward individuation and how this has impacted social justice. She has done a great deal
of her own work to broaden her understanding of culture and has embraced a more
inclusive and collectivist view of connectedness. For Vivian, there is a sense that her
existence is not separate from that of others, the “I” in “we.” Tamera spoke about
meeting with the “humanity” and “divinity” of the other. To acknowledge oneself in
another may serve to heal the disconnections. “A loving logos bridges the gap between
the I and the Other and allows for seeing the Other in the I and the I in the Other”
(Hannush, 2007, p. 21). Approaching others with compassion and love may increase
one’s awareness of the other and provided openness for understanding and dialogue.

Another meaning cluster that emerged was deconstruction/construction which
was described as both an idea and an action. The idea that meaning can be made through
the taking apart and renaming experiences or messages one has been given is the
description of this meaning cluster. It falls within the theme Connections because it is the
taking apart something that is connected and may be harmful, unhealthy, or
disempowering, and then putting it together in a way that creates meaning for the person
in an empowering, healing, and useful way.

Of the co-researchers, Vivian’s explanation of “dismantling” her experiences of
“whiteness” and then looking at that through a transformed lens illustrates the
decomposition and construction of her experience of privilege. Looking at one’s position
of privilege may be a difficult task (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2002), for Vivian it was essential
on her path to a deeper understanding of herself and her relation to the world. She also
talked about how she and others worked together to do this on a more systemic level.

Gregory shared about words being used as weapons when he was a child and then later
becoming friends with words and writing as a vital part of his professional activities. For
Michelle, the words social justice would be reframed to mean something that best
represents a “collaborative” and “cooperative” nature. She shared that when she hears the
term social justice she thinks of the “againstness” of the term. In the CSJ Activist,
Michael Hutchins writes, “When we use language which separates one from another, it is
our responsibility to collaboratively reframe, to create healing in our world. We must not
lose sight of our healing responsibility” (2007, p. 17). Reframing and construction can be
a difficult task, but may produce enriching results. For the co-researchers relationships
have also been enriching.

Relationships and Kinships

All of the co-researchers talked about the role of Relationships in their lives.
Others in their lives provided feedback, partnership in professional collaboration, and
many were impacted through an indirect “relationship” with the ideas and written words of others. Parameshwar (2006) identified the influence of others and their ego-transcendence as a process in the lives of social leaders. These relational influences aided the leaders in their work. Parks-Daloz et al. (1996) identifies community as an element in the committed life. In their study, community is understood in terms of common shared spaces where people are able to relate to one another. In this study, Relationships and Kinships emerged from several meaning clusters: guides, mentors, and teachers, kindred spirits, honoring legacies/remembering ancestors, and family. Each of these clusters represented a meaningful relationship for the co-researchers.

In their decisions to pursue careers in the counseling profession, several talked about the role of mentors in their decisions. These mentors helped them in making decisions about their career path. Owen shared that his mentor reflected to him the strengths that he saw and suggested a possible avenue for those strengths. Others spoke of guides on their journeys. Guides were people who taught them new things and illuminated understanding. For both Michelle and Owen, guides were those who joined with them on their spiritual journeys.

Within professional settings, some co-researchers experienced teachers who shared with them new information to help them make sense of what they were learning. Some expressed that some of the teacher they have had, have been the authors of the books they have read. Both Paul and Tamera shared about learning from Mohandas Gandhi.

Kindred spirits emerged as a meaning cluster and can be conceptualized as the people with whom the co-researchers felt they had a deep understanding and shared
passion with. Many of the co-researchers talked about founding these *kindred spirits* within the professional organizations of which they are members, while other shared that *kindred spirits* were relationships that they have held prior to entering the profession of counseling. Some co-researchers shared they have collaborated with several of their *kindred spirits* on projects, presentations, and articles. The state social justice organization of which some co-researchers are members does not limit membership to counselors, but is also inclusive of community members, expanding the *kindred spirits* that the co-researchers have found. Gregory’s words perhaps best illustrate this concept of *kindred spirits*: “I found such progressive voices within counseling and family, and I have been with them and stirring up trouble ever since.”

*Honoring legacies/remembering ancestors* developed as a meaning cluster in this study. This cluster illustrates the co-researchers’ continuation of the work of those who have come before them. Additionally, this cluster included words of memorial for those within the profession who have passed away and their influential lives. These legacies and ancestors represent a continuation of hope and are evidence of the impact of influential leaders in lives of the co-researchers.

Within this study, *family* was conceptualized as both immediate relations with biological family, relationships with those who have accepted the co-researchers as family, and “all relations” on the earth.

The theme of Relationships and Kinships has been conceptualized to be the relationships with those who have been influential with the co-researchers. For some of the co-researchers, the words and guidance from these relationships have been meaningful to them and provided frameworks for understanding.
Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness”

The co-researchers in this study shared about their guidelines for living and the words that have been influential in helping them as change agents in the world and also as motivating forces to act for change. Parameshwar (2006) found that many of the lives of the social leaders were influenced by “transcendental epistemologies.” Parameshwar writes, “In responding to challenging circumstances, the leaders involve transcendental epistemologies as guides to actualizing their higher purpose” (p. 699). The third theme of this study, Meaning: Frameworks for Living/“Beingness,” was derived from the meaning clusters: values, guiding principles, and mottos and quotes. These clusters illustrated the ways in which the co-researcher’s work in the world has been guided. These frameworks also assisted in making meaning for some. According to Ingersoll (1998), meaning is the “individual sense that life is worth living” (p. 4).

Like those in Parameshwar’s (2006) study, some of the co-researchers found guidance in the form of Judeo-Christian concepts of mission, service, and “unto the least of these, you have done to me.” In some cases, these concepts became the values by which the co-researcher lived. Paul shared that he was influenced by a “missionary zeal” that he observed as a child and feels that his work of serving others is a “mission.”

Other co-researchers shared that they try to follow principles and frameworks in their lives and work. Some talked about sharing these frameworks with students to assist them in their work. Gregory shared that he uses worldviews as a framework when teaching school counseling students. Vivian sees herself as a “pathfinder and a bridge-builder” in her work as a counselor and in professional organizations.
Additional frameworks were discovered as the co-researchers explored sources of meaning. Owen shared that the discovery of Integral Theory and his further exploration of this theory has provided him with a way to understand clients that he works with. Within the counseling field, Integral Theory is gaining exposure. *Counseling and Values* devoted their April, 2007 issue to Integral Theory and its application to a variety of counseling issues. Marquis (2007) writes, “Applying integral theory to counseling guides the ‘real world’ practices of our theory and research so that counselors may better serve their clients and profession” (p. 164). With the increased interest in Integral Theory within the profession, it is possible that many others will discover this framework to be useful in their practice also.

Another co-researcher shared how the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) National Model has been helpful for him when he teaches students about counseling. This model provides areas where school counselors can become involved to bring about change within the schools where they work.

Many of the co-researchers shared *mottos and quotes* that continue to inspire them in their work. Gregory shared that he wants the school counselors that he trains to be “dream-makers.” House and Martin (1999) shared their vision of the future of school counseling in advocating students, where they use the term “dream-makers.” Paul also quoted House and Martin, “students are more important than the system.” Further, Gregory shared a motto that he developed about the barriers in life.

Meaning was understood in this study to be derived from the values and guiding principles that the co-researchers held. These *frameworks* may have been helpful for the co-researchers in the work they have done where change has occurred.
Transformation and Evolution

Transformation and Evolution is conceptualized as active and progressive. Transformation describes the personal experiences of the co-researchers as well as their part in or witness to another’s transformation. Evolution, a similar concept is to be understood as the progression of an already existing foundation within oneself or in the world surrounding the co-researcher. This theme emerged from the following meaning clusters: transformation/evolution, harming and healing, and the personal intertwined with the professional. This theme was illustrated by looking at personal transformation and witness to transformation.

Wilber (n.d.) identifies transformational spirituality as a powerful and life altering experience, “transformation is not a matter of belief but of the death of the believer…not a matter of finding solace but of finding infinity on the other side of death…the self is made toast” (p. 2). While few co-researchers described a transformational experience that lead to a “death of self” several identified deeply meaningful experiences that changed their lives. For Michelle, the vision of a “new earth” has changed her perspective on the world and her role in it, calling her to act to equip counselors for the coming spiritual awakening of many. Tamera shared an encounter with a client that required her to become deeply authentic. She describes this situation as one that was career altering and life changing, as she visualized herself “humanity” in the middle of the room. This experience challenged what she had learned as a student about not sharing oneself in counseling, but focusing on the client. Others explored ways in which their lives might evolve to be more inclusive.
The actions that the co-researchers engage in were also identified as Transformation and Evolution. These actions can be understood through the lens of the ACA Advocacy Competencies (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003, see http://www.counseling.org/Publications) which have been applied to school counseling as a framework for advocacy (Ratts, DeKuyf, & Chen-Hayes, 2007).

A counselor is witness and companion on the journey of change with a client. Michelle, Tamera, and Mary all shared about their work with clients where they saw transformation occur. All shared about various counseling interventions they used to help them in this work. Mary shared that her work with one client was also transformational for her. In Mary’s work with this client, she was working as an advocate to empower the client.

Some co-researchers shared that they have seen transformation happen in their communities or professional programs. Mary shared that she is recognized in her community for the work that she does, she shared a story of a friend introducing her as the lady in the paper. With her faith community, Mary participates regularly in service projects and giving opportunities. Owen shared about his involvement in the creation of a chemical dependency training program and the possibilities for collaboration throughout the project. Both Mary and Owen are involved with “community collaboration” to assist their communities. Gregory was intricately involved in the transformation of the program where he works. He talked about his participation in the transformation of the school districts in this area and the participation of his students in that change. This would fit into the “systems advocacy” category of the advocacy competencies.
Some of the co-researchers shared about their involvement in larger scale change. Mary shared that she regularly writes op-eds for her local newspaper, providing “public information” to those within her community. She shared that she also participates regularly in lobbying about issues that she finds meaningful, “political advocacy”.

The advocacy competencies help to provide a framework for the work of counselors and counselor educators in an intentional way. Other tools are available that may be helpful. The Academic, Career/College, and Emotional/Social Skills (ACCESS) questionnaire (Chen-Hayes, 2007) provides a school counselor with a list of questions to evaluate the services of a school. Assessing schools results in illuminating any gaps that may exist and increases the services to address those gaps. When working with clients who express that spirituality is important to them, the Spiritual Wellness Inventory (Ingersoll, 2001) may be used to bring light to areas of growth for the client or to help the counselor better understand the client to provide appropriate services.

Co-researchers experienced Transformation and Evolution which increased hope for the future work that they do. However, many face Challenges in the work that they do.

Challenges

The counselors and counselor educators in this study shared about the Challenges they face in the work that they do. This theme emerged out of a direct question about the challenges they experienced. It was also found interwoven throughout my conversations with the co-researchers. In Parameshwar’s study (2006), many of the leaders faced obstacles to their work. According to Parameshwar, “In responding to challenging circumstances, the leaders interpret the presenting challenge in terms of their higher
purpose, and assume personal responsibility for action” (p. 702). While the co-
researchers talked about a variety of challenges, some added recommendations for
resolution of these challenges. This theme emerged from several meaning clusters but
will be presented in contexts. The meaning clusters were: barriers to change, the
profession and organizations as challenging, social fabric, corporate/non-
corporate/managed care, professional identity, and self care. The contexts in which this
theme occurred were: professional, others, and self and the discussion will be presented
in that light.

Several people talked about the Challenges within the profession they have
addressed and others Challenges they feel require attention. These issues included the
professional identity of counselors, the lack of services provided for families at
professional conferences, the ideology of professional organizations, and the influence of
managed care. In a study exploring spirituality and social justice in the work of outpatient
mental health providers, Sanchez (2007) found many of them faced “systemic
dilemmas”, these included “ethical dilemmas.” Within the “systemic dilemmas” the
participants in his study discussed the challenges they faced when wanting to collaborate
with others, but unable to do so because of the requirements of their jobs.

In this study, some co-researchers identified others to be a challenge for them.
Gregory shared one of his greatest challenges are school counselors who are in the
profession and have not kept up on current trends, who are “impaired”. House and Martin
(1999) see the current state of the position of the school counselor as problematic. They
discuss the challenges of school counselors without training in school counseling or
schools placing school counselors in positions where they are not being utilized in the
most efficient and helpful way to the students. For Paul, it is the perception of indifference from those within the profession. For Beth a challenge is working with others who guide their counseling practice by their “faith” and will not work with certain clients or issues because of their faith, however she seeks to understand that both the counselor and the client bring values to the table which a times may be in contrast to one another. Goodman et al. (2004) and Kiselica (2004) recognize that the response of others to the social justice activities of a counselor may be challenging as they may not understand the work that the counselor is doing.

Another challenge the co-researchers discussed in their conversations were self. This was most often described as self-care. Tamera shared that she has learned when she needs time for herself to refresh herself. She is involved in spiritual practices and gets manicures and massages. Michelle shared that self-care is also a challenge for her. She emphasized that she has to be very mindful of her need for self-care because of the heavy spiritual involvement in the counseling work she does. She shared that she will take sabbaticals and does spiritual practices throughout her day. Mary shared that she has difficulty saying no to projects that she is drawn to. She shared that she was inspired to look at what she does to care for herself, as she feels that she could probably do a better job of that. She shared that she skis when she is able and enjoys her time in nature.

The participants in Sanchez’ (2007) study shared that self-care is also Challenge for them. A theme that arose in his study was burnout and illustrated that counseling is taxing for some. Those in his study worked to prevent burnout or to treat burnout through utilizing their spirituality. Both Goodman et al. (2004) and Kiselica and Robinson (2001)
address the challenges that social justice advocates can face professionally and personally.

Challenges appeared to be a very real and often unsettling experience for the co-researchers. Those who viewed their challenges as self-care appeared to have immediate hope by rattling off several activities they could engage in to increase their personal well-being. Those who experience others and the profession presented ideas for hope and change and possible actions that could be taken to confront these challenges.

*Words for Counselors-In-Training and Counselor Educators-In-Training*

The final question asked in the semi-structured interviews was: What would you say to a counselor in training or a counselor educator in training about spiritual and social justice as they embark on their career? This question was asked because one hopeful implication of this study is to inspire and influence counseling students and professionals to become involved in spiritual and social justice work. Furthermore, this was also asked out of the researcher’s interest in this area as I evolve in my professional identity.

The co-researchers shared that a counseling student should seek to find their own meaning and expressions of spirituality and social justice. Others encouraged the student to “know thyself” to be aware of what they bring to the counseling field. Staying grounded in the reason that the counseling student became involved in the counseling profession was also discussed. Finally, some encouraged students to think critically about what they are learning and not merely regurgitate the information given.

*Limitations*

The co-researchers interviewed for this study represented a wide range of ages, life experiences, employment settings, and interests. Several co-researchers in this study
expressed that they had some contact with Judeo-Christian beliefs or regular attendance at a Christian church while growing up. Both Gregory and Michelle discussed their mothers exploring different religious and spiritual expressions. None of the participants indicated being raised in a non-dominant religious setting, which is one limitation of this study. The results of this study may have varied had more or all participants been raised in a non-dominant religious or spiritual setting.

Another limitation of this study is the small number of face-to-face interviews due to monetary constraints. Conducting interviews in person would have added other collaborative information about the co-researchers’ environments which may have contributed to the depth of information gathered for this study. A further limitation of this study is the findings are not generalizable, and as such cannot be assumed to represent the experiences of spirituality and social justice in the lives of all counselors and counselor educators.

The demographic questionnaire that was used was also a limitation. The inquiry was designed in an open-ended format. This allowed the co-researchers to identify how they view themselves and their place in the world. The results may have been different had a multiple choice questionnaire been used, however, this may have stifled the voices of the co-researchers and limited the depth of information gathered. The terms that co-researchers used to identify their contexts were varied leading to limited generalizability of definitions of terms to the other co-researchers.
Implications

Dialogue and Outreach

The counseling profession continues the discussion of the inclusion of social justice in counseling (Hunsaker, 2008). Much of the discussion has been to include social justice (Lee, 2007; Ratts, D’Andrea, and Arredondo, 2005) or not to include social justice in the counseling profession (Hunsaker). This study expands the discussion to more than an inclusion or exclusion argument, but presents a continuum of possibilities for addressing social justice and spirituality. Some co-researchers discussed their strong involvement in social justice work, while others discussed how their work and the way they live may indirectly address social injustices. The voices of the co-researchers in this study provides evidence that social justice in the counseling profession does not have to be either or, but can be included on a variety of levels. The ACA advocacy competencies (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003) confirm this possibility by providing counselors with suggestions for advocacy on the multiple levels within society.

Furthermore, the focus of this study on spirituality and social justice produced little discussion of politics. Though some co-researchers mentioned politics, this did not remain the focus and emphasis of the conversation. This may be evidence that issues of social justice are not limited to the political, but that they are also issues of the spiritual for some.

This study has looked at the relationship between spirituality and social justice and found that for all of the co-researchers who are actively involved in social justice work, spirituality was noted as connected. This connection may continue the dialogue between the ASERVIC and CSJ divisions and other divisions to find a common ground
that may be helpful to the profession. This study continues the discussion of social justice in the counseling profession. Many of the co-researchers talked about working with other divisions within the ACA. This dialogue and collaboration can continue to build unification within the profession toward providing services that meet the needs of all the people and community we serve.

Several co-researchers talked about collaboration with others in the profession, including people of faith and indigenous healers. With a decline in the number of clergy, here are opportunities for counselors to provide spiritual direction and guidance to clients (Menigat & Hawkins, 2005). The interconnection of spirituality in the lives and work of the co-researchers provides a glimpse into the skills and resources that could be provided to spiritual organizations and groups within communities. Interconnections between spiritual and social justice can be useful in helping people grow spiritually and reach out to increase equity in their communities. Counselors and counselor educators could collaborate with and provide consultation to spiritual organizations that are involved in helping marginalized people within their communities. This study provides information in continuing to address the spiritual and social needs of others.

Counselor Training

Another implication for this study is the incorporation of spirituality in the discussion of social justice in counseling. This could begin to take place in counselor training programs. Training in spirituality within counselor training (Young et al., 2007) and social justice within counselor training programs is not yet widespread (Ratts, 2006). Some programs are incorporating social justice as a core guiding principle throughout their curriculum (Bemak & Chung, 2007). Several of the counselor education professors
shared about their experiences of incorporating social justice in the courses they teach. This study may be helpful for programs who would like to expand the inclusion of these areas within their curriculum. It may be helpful for training programs to address both concepts in a way that looks at the relationship between these two concepts. Furthermore, the presentation of stories of counselors who experience spirituality and social justice may be inspiring to counselors-in-training as they begin to develop their professional identity. Programs may also want include cross training in other disciplines to provide students with opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and expand their knowledge base.

Accredited counseling programs include practicum and internship components that provide students with hands on experiences in a counseling setting (CACREP, 2001). This study provides information that transformation is possible and is part of spirituality and social justice work. Therefore, programs in the future could include “transformative experiences” for students beyond the classroom, practicum, or internship. These could include immersion learning experiences in a variety of settings and system levels (Goodman et al., 2004), living within communities that are underserved or marginalized, and experiencing spiritually expansive activities (Faiver, Ingersoll, O’Brien, & McNally, 2001). By including these experiential learning modalities to a counseling program, students would be given the opportunity to practice action from the very early stages of their training. This knowledge and action synthesis could provide students with the skills to act and advocate on a variety of levels for equitable change and spiritual transformation.
For counselor educators, this study illuminates the experiences of those who work as counselor educators and as counselors. The words of the co-researchers to those pursuing a career in counseling are valuable for anyone who is exploring his or her professional position and the meaning that connects them to the counseling profession. The individuals in this study expressed passion for the work that they do, their words may inspire others toward a passion of transformation and “trailblazing” in the profession as they recognize the connections of the personal and professional, spiritual and social justice.

*Mentoring*

Mentors played a major role in the spiritual development of the co-researchers while some co-researchers discussed how mentoring was instrumental in heightening their awareness and involvement in social justice work. In some counseling programs (Ohio University and Denver Seminary) mentoring is an integral part of the counselor training experience for students. Some within the counseling profession recognize that mentoring can be a valuable experience for students and professionals (Casto, Caldwell, and Salazar, 2005). On the CSJ website, there is evidence that they are developing a mentoring program for graduate students. When this becomes available, students will have the opportunity to grow and develop their awareness of social justice advocacy. According to the findings in this study, it may also expand the students’ spirituality.

This study provides information that mentoring can impact the direction and development of counselors and counselor educators spiritually and in social justice awareness. Several of the co-researchers shared their mentors were instrumental in
guiding them professionally. This study confirms the positive potential for mentoring relationships within the counseling profession.

Supervision

Co-researchers in this study discussed people who were instrumental in their lives including teachers and mentors. No one discussed supervisors in their training as instrumental. According to the ACA guidelines (2005) and CACREP standards (2001), supervision is an essential activity in counselor training. Co-researchers discussed how their teachers impacted their awareness of themselves and awareness of social justice. As counselor trainees become more aware of social justice, it will be crucial that supervisors can address these issues and help the supervisee grow as a practitioner. This can impact the supervision that is being done during practicum, internship, and as a new professional. Polanski (2003) provides suggestions for the inclusion of spirituality in supervision practices. Others have examined multicultural awareness of supervisors and the impact it has on supervisees. According to Constantine, Warren, and Milville (2005) White supervisors with a greater awareness of their racial identity was correlated with an increase of multicultural competency of the supervisee. Many of the co-researchers in this study discussed their role as professors for practicum. These co-researchers were intentional about discussing issues of privilege, oppressions, and -isms. Their increased awareness may lead to an increased awareness of social justice and spirituality in the work of the students that they are training much like Constantine et al. study. This study provides the supervisors with examples of supervision and words of counselor education professors who are infusing social justice into their work and addressing issues of spirituality with students. Supervisors may want to take a more holistic approach to
supervision by incorporating spirituality and social justice into direction regarding skills, theory, and practice.

Future Directions for Research

Qualitative Methodology

CACREP

This study focused on the experience of social justice and spirituality in the lives and work of those who identified as counselors and counselor educators. Future studies may want to address the experience of these concepts in the lives of those who graduated from CACREP programs. This study did not inquire about the accreditation of the schools where the co-researchers received their training, however some of the co-researchers in this study graduated from CACREP accredited programs. Exploring this connection may be helpful as CACREP implements its accreditation revisions in 2009. Following the implementation of the 2009 revisions, exploring the relationship between spirituality and social justice of graduates from CACREP programs prior to 2009 as compared to those graduating from a program with the new standards could illuminate if there has been any change in addressing issues of spirituality and social justice in counseling programs and its impact on the professional development of counselors.

Politics

Another future exploratory qualitative study could be to examine the political views and their relationship to social justice in counselors and counselor educators. Nilsson and Schmidt (2005) found that political affiliation was more correlated with counseling students’ participation in social justice activities. It would be interesting to explore political affiliation and social justice from a qualitative perspective, asking what
the relationship is and how counselors and counselor educators experience the connection of the two.

Students,

A future study could explore the relationship between social justice and spirituality in the lives and work of first year counseling students. This study focused on those who have already gone through counselor training. Some of the co-researchers shared that they enrolled in doctoral level programs to increase their awareness. Other co-researchers shared that they do not view what they do as social justice and are focused more on spirituality in counseling. Questions that might be asked could be: Would first year counseling students have an awareness of spirituality and social justice? If so, where did that awareness come from? Did their awareness of social justice and their spirituality influence their decisions to be counselors? A qualitative grounded theory study could not only illuminate this relationship, but could begin the development of a theory of spirituality and social justice in counselor trainees.

Religion

Another direction would be to interview counselors and counselor educators who hold conservative spiritual beliefs or hold membership in conservative religious organizations about their experience of social justice and the role that it plays in the counseling profession and the work that they do. Previous studies have examined religious affiliation and race with attitudes about poverty (Hunt, 2002) as well as religious affiliation and attitudes about economic justice (Curry, Koch, & Chalfant, 2005). These studies were quantitative in nature and subjects were not counseling professionals. A qualitative study examining the link between a conservative spirituality
and social justice could provide areas of connection and opportunities for dialogue within
the profession. The results of such a study could also provide the counseling profession
with helpful information for outreach to more conservative spiritual leaders.

Supervision

Future studies may want to examine the role of social justice and spirituality in
the formation of supervisees in the supervision dyad. A qualitative exploration could
provide a depth of information about the impact of the supervisors awareness of social
justice issues and social justice advocacy on similar awareness and advocacy of the
supervisee. Information could provide guidelines for supervision practice and for
supervisees in choosing a supervisor.

Mixed Methodology and Quantitative Methodology

Several of the themes that emerged can be understood through the 11 spiritual
dimensions identified by Ingersoll (1998). Looking at the spiritual experiences of
counselors involved in social justice with the use of a quantitative instrument like the
Spiritual Wellness Inventory (2001) may expand the understanding of spirituality in the
lives of counselors working for social justice. Participants could be asked to elaborate on
their responses to the inventory and how it relates to their work in social justice.

Similarly, supervision assessments could be used in a mixed methodology to better
understand how various practices within supervision relate to spirituality and social
justice. As the profession develops social justice counseling questionnaires and (Chen-
Hayes, 2001) measurements, more information can be gathered about social justice and
spirituality.
Conclusion

This study has provided information from the exploration of spirituality and social justice in the lives and work of counselors and counselor educators. The results show that spirituality and social justice are connected in the lives of counselors and counselor educators. For most co-researchers, spirituality cannot be separated from their journey, and therefore cannot be separated from the work that they do in the world. Throughout their lives and careers, many have experienced connections and disconnections along the way that have shaped who they are. These have also led to action within their communities and professions.

For all co-researchers, relationships were vital in their self-discovery and work. Many spoke of collaboration as a reality or a hoped for ideal in bringing about change. Some of them have been inspired by others and taken the torch in continuing meaningful work. The role of relationships is vital to the work of counselors and counselor educators and those within the profession are encouraged to examine their relationships and the contributions this is making to their work and continued evolution.

The action and interaction of the co-researchers in their world has been guided by meaning. This came in the form of family ideals, frameworks for living, and inspirational quotes. When principles and frameworks are used to make sense of the world, it may help the person to live with integrity and stay true to their values.

Transformation and evolution are both descriptive of the spiritual, but can also describe the experience of social justice. The participants saw themselves as transformed by others and helping in the transformation of others. Through the use of resources such
as the ACA Advocacy Competencies, those in the counseling profession can find avenues to help transform their profession, communities, and clients’ lives.

Everyone faces some challenges in their lives and work and the co-researchers illustrated that the challenges they face come in any context. Many shared that through relationships and the spiritual they were able to overcome these challenges. Being intentional and aware led to help with personal challenges.

The results of this study may influence the work and lives of counseling professionals at any level of their professional development. For those who experience the spiritual in all they do, including social justice work, they may find kinship in the voices of the co-researcher’s experiences and know that they too are connected within the profession.
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APPENDIX A: Demographic Questionnaire

Please complete the following information as it pertains to you. This information will provide the researcher with context about you to illuminate the information gathered in the interview. Please use the back if you need more space. Thank you for your participation.

1. What is the highest level of education you have completed?____________________
   ________________________________________________________________________

2. From what type of professional program did you receive your training? ________
   ________________________________________________________________________

3. How long have you been in the counseling profession? _________________

4. Please describe your current employment: ________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________

5. In what professional organizations do you hold membership? _______________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________

6. Age ______________

7. Your cultural and ethnic background ________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________

8. Sex _________

9. Sexual orientation_____________________________________________________

10. Religious background _________________________________________________
    ________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. What is a story of your personal experiences that illustrates social justice and spirituality in your life?

2. What has been your experience of spirituality and social justice in your life and professional work?

3. What is the relationship of spirituality and social justice in your life? Do you see these as being related?

4. What have been some formal and informal influences for you spiritually and in social justice work? (mentors, books, education, etc.)

5. What role has your membership in ASERVIC/CSJ played in your work?

6. How have you been involved in multicultural counseling and how do you see this as being related to spirituality and social justice?

7. What have been some challenges you have faced in your work (with clients, students, communities)?
APPENDIX C: Ohio University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Project Outline Form

Title of Research Proposal: An Exploration of the Relationship between 
Spirituality and Social Justice Work of Counselors and Counselor 
Educators

Investigator(s) Information

Primary Investigator
Name Tiffany Gunnells Department: Counselor Education

Address 2114 7th Ave., Greeley, CO 80631
(If off-campus, include city, state and zip code)

Email th254703@ohio.edu Phone (970) 324-0559

Training Module Completed? X Yes ☐ No

Co-investigators
Name Department

Address
(If off-campus, include city, state and zip code)

Email Phone

Training Module Completed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Advisor Information (if applicable)

Name Dr. Dana Levitt Department Counselor Education

Address 201 McCracken Hall Phone (740) 593-4163
(If off-campus, include city, state and zip code)

Email levitt@ohio.edu

Training Module Completed? X Yes ☐ No

Anticipated Starting Date 11/7/07 Duration 7 mos
____ yrs

(Work, including recruitment, cannot begin prior to IRB approval. This date should never precede the submission date)
Funding Status
Is the researcher receiving or applying for external funding?  X Yes □ No

If yes, list source College of Education

If yes, describe any consulting or other relationships with this sponsor.

Is there a payment of any kind connected with enrollment of participants on this study that will be paid to persons other than the research participants?
X No □ Yes

(If yes, describe.)

Review Level
Based on the definition in the guidelines, do you believe your research qualifies for:
X Exempt Review Category 2
□ Expedited Review Category
□ Full Committee Review

Recruitment/Selection of Subjects
Maximum Number of Human Participants: 12 (until saturation has been reached)

Characteristics of subjects (check as many boxes as appropriate).
___Minors ___Physically or Mentally Disabled ___Elementary School Students
X Adults ___Legal Incompetency ___Secondary School Students
___Prisoners ___Pregnant Females ___University Students
___Others (Specify)______________________

Briefly describe the criteria for selection of subjects (inclusion/exclusion). Include such information as age range, health status, etc. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Participants will be chosen based on their membership to a professional counseling organization and practice as a counselor or counselor educator. In order to meet requirements for the study, the participants will be members of Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ) and/or members of the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC). Participants will range in age from approximately 22-72. It is my goal to interview participants from a variety of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Participants will be male, female, and possibly transgender.
How will you identify and recruit prospective participants? If subjects are chosen from records, indicate who gave approval for the use of the records. If records are "private" medical or student records, provide the protocol, consent forms, letters, etc., for securing consent of the subjects for the records. Written documentation for cooperation/permission from the holder or custodian of the records should be attached. (Initial contact of subjects identified through a records search must be made by the official holder of the record, i.e. primary physician, therapist, public school official.)

Participants will be recruited through the use of snowball sampling. A person from CSJ and ASERVIC will be contacted about participation in the study and others who may be interested. This will initially be done via phone and email. Follow up will be done with those suggested as possibly interested. This will also be done via phone and email. If snowball sampling fails to illicit enough participants to complete the study, then the presidents of the state and national chapters of CSJ and ASERVIC will be contacted. They will be provided with a recruitment letter and or phone call about participation in the study. Further, they will be asked if I may send a recruitment email to members of their chapters.

Please describe your relationship to the potential participants, i.e. instructor of class, co-worker, etc. If no relationship, state no relationship.

I am a member of both CSJ and ASERVIC. It is possible that I may know someone in this study due to our mutual membership, but I will not know them well. It is my plan to access possible participants through the use of snowball sampling beginning with people with whom I have had professional contact. I plan to contact former classmates and alumni of Ohio University to illicit participation, these will be people that I know, but that I do not know well.

Attach copies of all recruitment tools (advertisements, posters, etc.) and label as APPENDIX B.

Performance Sites

List all collaborating and performance sites, and provide copy of IRB approval from that site and/or letters of cooperation or support.

N/A

Project Description

Please provide a brief summary of this project, using non-technical terms that would be understood by a non-scientific reader. Please limit this description to no more than one typewritten page.
This study seeks to better understand the experiences of spirituality and social justice in the lives of counselors and counselor educators. In this study, spirituality is understood as a multidimensional term consisting of: belief in something bigger than oneself, meaningful or transcendent experiences, contribution or participation with others, and playfulness. Social justice is defined in this study as the bringing about equality for all people in society and confronting institutions or beliefs that oppress people in society. Counselors are those that do counseling and belong to professional organizations that address counseling. Counselor educators train students to become counselors.

Participants in this study will be interviewed about experiences they have had that have been spiritual and have addressed social justice. By interviewing and asking participants questions, answers will be in the participants’ voices, they will be telling their story. Hearing their stories may inspire others to grow and become more involved in their world.

Please describe the specific scientific objectives (aims) of this research and any previous relevant research.

This study aims to gather a depth and breadth of information about spirituality and social justice in the lives of counselors and counselor educators. Ratts (2006) conducted a study evaluating how counseling programs are addressing social justice in their curriculum. He did not address spirituality as a factor. Nilsson and Schmidt (2005) looked at the factors that motivate students to become involved in social justice. The researchers looked at religion as an influence, but did not address spirituality. They found that political affiliation was a significant predictor of social justice interest and involvement in counseling students.

Spirituality has been a focus of research in the counseling profession. There has been a great deal of research looking at the inclusion of spirituality and religion in counselor training programs (Burke, Hackney, Hudson, Miranti, Watts, & Epp, 1999; Cashwell, 2001; Kelly, 1994). Some studies have addressed values in counseling (Dugan, 2002) and the religiosity and spirituality of mental health workers (Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

Within the counseling profession, much of the literature addressing social justice has looked at religiosity as a factor (Balkin, Schlosser, & Levitt, in press; Nilsson & Schmidt, 2005; Ratts, 2006). Hill et al. (2000) address the division that has occurred in defining spirituality separately from religion. To date, there have not been studies in counseling that have addressed spirituality as related to social justice. Tisdell (2001) explored the spiritual development of women social justice educators, but she did not explore it in the lives of counselor educators explicitly. Parameshwar (2005) looked at the influences of leadership of historical world activists. Parameshwar found that ego-transcendence (a belief in something bigger than oneself) played a role in the work of world activists.

This current study proposes to fill a gap in the counseling literature regarding spirituality and social justice. Furthermore, it seeks to bridge these
two concepts within the profession in practice, education and training, and advocacy. This current study will also provide a format for the voices of professionals to speak about their experiences and contribute to the growing number of qualitative studies being done in the counseling profession.

Methodology: please describe the procedures (sequentially) that will be performed/followed with human participants.

1. Researcher will identify her beliefs and experiences related to the topic of study prior to interviewing participants. This will be done as part of a phenomenological study to assist with monitoring researcher bias.
2. Possible participants will be contacted through snowball sampling about interest in participating in the study. Contacting professional organizations will be done if snowball sampling fails to illicit participants.
3. An informed consent form and demographic questionnaire will be mailed to participants interested in the study.
4. Researcher will schedule interviews with participants who have returned consent forms and questionnaires.
5. Researcher will meet with or speak over the phone with participants for 1.5-2 hours. Participants will be asked open-ended questions from a semi-structured interview protocol. Interviews will be recorded with audio or video equipment.
6. Data collected will then be kept in a secure location.
7. Interviews will be transcribed. Participants will be sent a copy of the transcription to check for accuracy. Transcriptions will be analyzed by the researcher.
8. Researcher will analyze data and develop meaning clusters, themes, and categories. The researcher’s experience of the process and documents of CSJ and ASERVIC will be utilized in the analysis process.
9. Participants will be asked to check quotes for meaning and accuracy as they are used to create themes and categories.

Describe any potential risks or discomforts of participation and the steps that will be taken to minimize them.

Participants may experience some discomfort when discussing events and experiences that have contributed to the development of their spirituality and social justice interest. If the participants discuss any memories of contributing experiences that were troubling, this may cause some discomfort. Participants will be given permission to not share memories if it is too troubling for them. Additionally, if participants feel they need support or help with troubling memories, efforts will be made to refer to counseling.

Describe the anticipated benefits to the individual participants. If none, state that. (Note that compensation is not a benefit, but should be listed in the compensation section on the next page.)

There may be no direct benefit to participants. However, it is the researcher’s hope that participants will benefit from sharing their stories and
their contribution to counseling profession (counselors-in-training, counselors, and counselor educators). I hope to learn a great deal from the participants and to be transformed personally and professionally by their stories.

Describe the anticipated benefits to society and/or the scientific community. There must be some benefit to justify the use of human subjects.

Literature in the counseling profession has focused on spirituality in counseling and social justice in counseling, but there has been little written about the intersection of the two in the work and lives of counselors and counselor educators. Much of the literature to date has been theoretical in nature. This study will provide the stories of professionals who are experiencing both. It is this researcher’s hope that these stories will inspire counseling professionals in the work that they do. Additionally, this study will contribute to the growing number of qualitative research within the counseling profession. This research project will also impact me as an emerging counselor educator. In qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument. By being a part of this study as the researcher, I hope to learn about myself, about advocacy, about the counseling profession, and about the lives of colleagues across the United States. By growing in these ways, I believe that my ability to be a counselor educator in the future will be enhanced.

Please discuss the level of confidentiality, if any, honored for the data collected. For example, indicate whether records will be labeled with the subject’s name, or whether they will be labeled with a code number, with a master key that links name and code number maintained in a separate and secure location.

The identities of participants will be kept confidential by providing each participant with an alias. A key of the alias names and actual names will be placed in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s office. Demographic information will be used in this study and will be provided in a way that will make it difficult for the readers to identify the participants.

With whom will identifiable data be shared outside the immediate research team? For each, explain confidentiality measures.

A transcriptionist will be hired to transcribe the interviews that will be used in this study. The interview will be labeled with the alias for the participant. No one else will be given any identifiable information.

Will participants be: Audiotaped?  X Yes
☐ No

☐ Yes (if possible)
☐ No

If so, describe how/where the tapes will be stored (i.e. locked file cabinet in
investigator office), who will have access to them, and an estimate of the date they will be destroyed.

Recordings will be stored in a secure and locked location and will be kept on password protected discs. Information will be destroyed 5 years from the completion of this study. An alias will be used to identify recordings. The actual identity of the participant will be known only to the researcher.

Provide details of any compensation (money, course credit, gifts) being offered to participants, including how the compensation will be prorated for participants who discontinue participation prior to completion.

Participants will be compensated by a $10 gift or a $10 donation to an organization of their choice. If they choose a gift, it will be provided from Ten Thousand Villages, an organization that provides fair trade works of art. Participants will be given compensation following the completion of member checks.

Instruments

List all questionnaires, instruments, standardized tests below, with a brief description, and provide copies of each, labeled as APPENDIX C.

1. Demographic questionnaire – will collect information regarding gender, ethnicity, age, educational background, income, and religion

2. Semi-structured Interview protocol – Consists of open-ended questions regarding spirituality, social justice, training, influences, incorporations of spirituality and social justice in practice.

3. Examination of documents from CSJ and ASERVIC – newsletters and websites will be examined and used as additional information in the data collection process.

How will the data be analyzed? If applicable, state the hypothesis and describe how the analysis of the data will test that hypothesis.

Data will be analyzed using a phenomenological analysis. Analysis will be guided by a qualitative methodology. This study is guided by the central research questions: what is the relationship of spirituality and social justice in the life and work of counselors and counselor educators.

Transcripts of interviews and documents from the organizations will be analyzed for meaning units, or clusters of information. These clusters will then be deducted to 5-6 themes that represent the meaning. Themes will be described using environmental descriptors and sensory descriptors. In this study, the experiences of the researcher will be used as I will identify my answers to the questions being asked prior to interviewing participants. Throughout the study, I will reflect on the process, this information will be used as additional data in the analysis process.


Informed Consent Process

Are you requesting a waiver or alteration of Informed Consent? □ Yes  X No
(If yes, check one, and answer a - e)

□ Waiver of signature
□ Deception (incomplete disclosure)
□ Complete Waiver of consent

a. Provide justification for the waiver.

b. Describe how the proposed research presents no more than minimal risk to participants.

c. Why will a waiver of informed consent not adversely affect the rights and welfare of participants?

d. Why is it impracticable to carry out the research without a waiver or alteration of informed consent?

e. How will pertinent information be provided to participants, if appropriate, at a later date?

Even if waiver of written informed consent is granted, you will likely be required to obtain verbal permission that reflects the elements of informed consent (if appropriate). Please specify below information to be read/given to participants.

Attach copies of all consent documents or text and label as APPENDIX A. Please use the template provided at the end of this document.
Informed consent is a process, not just a form. Potential participants/representatives **must** be given the information they need to make an informed decision to participate in this research. How will you provide information/obtain permission?

How and where will the consent process occur? How will it be structured to enhance independent and thoughtful decision-making? What steps will be taken to avoid coercion or undue influence?

Will the investigator(s) be obtaining all of the informed consents? □ Yes  □ No

If not, identify by name and training who will be describing the research to subjects/representatives and inviting their participation?

Will all adult participants have the capacity to give informed consent? If not, explain procedures to be followed.

If any participants will be minors, include procedures/form for parental consent and for the assent from the minor.

Will participants be deceived or incompletely informed regarding any aspect of the study? □ Yes  □ No

If yes, provide rationale for use of deception.

If yes, attach copies of post-study debriefing information and label as APPENDIX D. Additionally, complete the questions related to a consent form waiver or alteration on page 9.
Investigator Assurance

I certify that the information provided in this outline form is complete and correct.

I understand that as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, conduct of the study and the ethical performance of the project.

I agree to comply with Ohio University policies on research and investigation involving human subjects (O.U. Policy # 19.052), as well as with all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research, including, but not limited to the following:

- The project will be performed by qualified personnel, according to the OU approved protocol.
- No changes will be made in the protocol or consent form until approved by the OU IRB.
- Legally effective informed consent will be obtained from human subjects if applicable, and documentation of informed consent will be retained, in a secure environment, for three years after termination of the project.
- Adverse events will be reported to the OU IRB promptly, and no later than within 5 working days of the occurrence.
- All protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. Research must stop at the end of that approval period unless the protocol is re-approved for another term.

I further certify that the proposed research is not currently underway and will not begin until approval has been obtained. A signed approval form, on Office of Research Compliance letterhead, communicates IRB approval.

**Principal Investigator Signature** ______________________________ Date ______

(please print name) ______________________________

**Co-Investigator Signature** ______________________________ Date ______

(please print name)

Faculty Advisor/Sponsor Assurance

By my signature as sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student(s) or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and
experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol. In addition:

- I agree to meet with the investigator(s) on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
- Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
- I assure that the investigator will report significant or untoward adverse events to the IRB in writing promptly, and within 5 working days of the occurrence.
- If I will be unavailable, as when on sabbatical or vacation, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence.

I further certify that the proposed research is not currently underway and will not begin until approval has been obtained. A signed approval form, on Office of Research Compliance letterhead, communicates IRB approval.

**Advisor/Faculty Sponsor Signature** ___________________________ Date ______

(please print name) ________________________________

*The faculty advisor/sponsor must be a member of the OU faculty. The faculty member is considered the responsible party for legal and ethical performance of the project.*
Checklist:

☐ Completed and Signed IRB-1 (this form)

☐ Appendix A - copies of all consent documents (in 12 pt. Font) including
  __ Informed Consent to Participate in Research (adult subjects)
  __ Parental Permission/Informed Consent (parents of subjects who are minors or children)
  __ Assent to Participate in Research (used when subjects are minors or children)

☐ Appendix B - copies of any recruitment tools (advertisements, posters, etc.)

☐ Appendix C – copies of all instruments (surveys, standardized tests, questionnaires, interview topics, etc.).

☐ Appendix D - Copies of debriefing text

☐ Appendix E - Approval from other IRB, School District, Corporation, etc.

☐ Appendix F - Any additional materials that will assist the Board in completing its review

☐ Appendix G – Copies of any IRB approvals

☐ Appendix H – Copies of Human Subjects Research Training Certificates

(for all key personnel involved in non-exempt research)

All fields on the form must be completed, regardless of review level. If a field is not applicable, indicate by inserting n/a. Incomplete forms will result in delayed processing.
Forward this completed form and all attachments to:

  Human Subjects Research
  Office of Research Compliance
  RTEC 117

Questions? Visit the website at www.ohio.edu/research/compliance/ or email compliance@ohio.edu
APPENDIX D: Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2 - research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Project Title: An Exploration of the Relationship between Spirituality and Social Justice Work of Counselors and Counselor Educators

Project Director: Tiffany Gunnells

Department: Counselor Education

Advisor: Dana Levitt

Robin Stack, C.I.P., Human Subjects Research Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
APPENDIX E: Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: An Exploration of the Relationship between Spirituality and Social Justice Work of Counselors and Counselor Educators

Researchers: Tiffany A. Gunnells, MA, NCC

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study
This study explores the relationship between spirituality and social justice in the work of counselors and counselor educators. The researcher is interested in interviewing people who are members of Counselors of Social Justice and/or the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling. As a participant in this study you will be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire, an participate in a 1.5-2 hour interview either face-to-face or over the phone. Interviews will be transcribed and you will be asked to read over the interview to make corrections for accuracy. The final interview transcripts will then be analyzed for common themes and categories. You will be asked again to check your quotes used in the creation of categories.

Risks and Discomforts
The risk to you in this study is that you may be exposed to questions that may illicit memories of troubling experiences. The questions that will be asked in this study include questions about past experiences that have influenced your spirituality and your work in social justice.

Benefits
There may be no direct benefit to you from this study. However, it is the researcher’s hope that you will be given an opportunity to share your voice and to contribute to the growing research base in the counseling profession. There may be some benefit to others in the profession (counselors-in-training, counselors, and counselor educators).

Confidentiality and Records
As a participant in this study, you have a right to confidentiality. Your name and identifying information will be kept confidential through the use of
alias names. If you feel it may be helpful to others in the counseling profession you have the option of choosing to use your name in this study. All data will be recorded and transcribed and will be kept in a locked and secured location in the residence of the researcher. Your identifying information will not be placed on the recordings or transcriptions. Every effort will be made to maintain security of the information collected. Ethical guidelines provided by the American Counseling Association will be followed throughout the research process. The results of this study will be used in a published dissertation and may be used in peer-reviewed journals and professional conferences as long as you are not identified and cannot be reasonably identified from the information included. However, it is possible that under certain circumstances, data could be subpoenaed by court order.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU.

**Compensation**
As compensation for your participation, you will receive a gift from Ten Thousand Villages or you may choose to have a donation made in your name to an organization of your choice.

**Recording**
In this study, your interview will be recorded and transcribed. Please initial the types of recording that you are comfortable with.

[ ] Audio  [ ] Video

**Contact Information**
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Tiffany Gunnells at 970-324-0559 or th254703@ohio.edu or the advising professor, Dana Levitt, Ph.D. at 740-593-4163 or levitt@ohio.edu.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
* you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions
* known risks to you have been explained to your satisfaction.
* you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this research
protocol
• you are 18 years of age or older
• your participation in this research is given voluntarily
• you may change your mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

Signature_________________________________________ Date____

Printed Name_________________________________________

1.0 Date: 10/14/07