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"A Vital Christian Presence in Social Work"

**DUAL DEGREES IN SOCIAL WORK AND DIVINITY:
GRADUATES' EXPERIENCE**

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Dual Degrees in Social Work and Divinity: Graduates' Experiences

By Beth L. Muehlhausen

Abstract

This report presents the preliminary findings of a research project studying the experiences of persons completing dual degree programs in social work and divinity. The study utilized a qualitative approach with hermeneutic phenomenology as the method employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with graduates in order to obtain thick descriptions of their experiences while in their dual degree programs. Themes emerged regarding: the general phenomenon of dual degree graduates' experiences; the forms of mentoring students find helpful and unhelpful; the challenges and rewards of field experiences; and ways to address spiritual and religious content into social work curriculum.

Introduction

There is a growing trend for graduate schools of social work to offer students the option of receiving dual degrees (Jayaratne, 2008). Dual degree programs offer graduate students the ability to obtain a Master of Social Work (MSW) along with a second graduate degree in less time than it would take to complete each degree individually. The 20th edition of the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* has an entry on dual degree programs for the first time (Jayaratne).

The goal of dual degree programs is to allow students to acquire greater breadth, depth, and knowledge in two areas. The assumption would be that individuals thus trained would not only help themselves, but also help the profession better integrate and create a synergic relationship with the other professions and disciplines. (Jayaratne, p.86)

Graduates of dual degree programs are taught knowledge and skills in social work and another discipline. Not only does social work have a history of collaborating with other disciplines, but as a profession social work has often been at the “forefront of developing the knowledge base for collaborative approaches to practice, through interprofessional models that integrate multiple and diverse professional systems in the design, delivery, and evaluation of effective interventions, in both local and global contexts” (Aronoff, 2008, p.533). Interprofessional approaches to practice seek to better meet the needs of clients by accessing the expertise of various professionals through a network of services rather than a piecemeal approach (Aronoff). Due to its paradigm of practice that emphasizes the contextual nature of clients’ realities, strengths, and challenges, “partnered practice is a natural embrace for social work” (Aronoff, p.535).

As of 2001, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has included language on cultural competence in the NASW Code of Ethics making “the delivery of culturally competent services an ethical issue” (Cross, 2008, p.489). “Cultural” was defined in a broad sense to include religious and spiritual beliefs calling on social workers to be competent in many areas of diversity. Churches have their own languages, norms, nonverbal symbols, codes, and patterns of relationship—their own culture (Garland, 1995). In essence, social workers employed by a congregation or faith-based agency need to be bilingual, speaking the language of social work as well as the language of the church. In regard to church social work (in its broadest sense including specific congregations or faith-based agencies), culturally competent practice means that social workers need to have knowledge of the beliefs and values of the culture of the church

(Garland, 1995; Lum, 2008). For purposes of this discussion, church social work is limited to the Christian faith.

Holland (1995) says organizational culture

may be seen as the constellation of values, beliefs, assumptions, and expectations that underlie and organize the organization's behavior as a group. Culture provides meaning and structure for all participants, guides their interpretation of and responses to issues, defines their successes and failures, and orders their responsibilities and expectations of one another. (Holland, p.1789).

Just like medical and school social workers need to understand the organizational structure and jargon of hospitals and schools, Church social workers need to have an understanding of the Bible, theology, and Christian values and how this impacts the expectations surrounding client behavior.

Christian theology and values can then be used as foundations for programming. For example, social action and community building ministries on behalf of homeless and isolated people find their basis in the concepts of "family of God" and Christian hospitality (Garland, 1995). In the same manner, the impetus for child welfare services is provided by biblical teachings on the value and role of children. Understanding these contextual characteristics is just as important for effective social work practice in a church setting as it is to understand the cultural context of an ethnic family. Within the framework of culturally competent practice, the social worker identifies "useful and complementary social work interventions that support the cultural ones. It is not an either/or approach; rather, it is a both/and, side-by-side integration of the helping process from both perspectives" (Lum, 2008, p.501). Dual degree graduates are trained to engage in culturally competent practice by virtue of being extensively trained in the cultural

context of the church through their M.Div. degree and extensively trained in the context of social work service delivery through their MSW degree.

There are considerable differences in how dual degree programs in social work and divinity are administered and “little information exists in the professional literature on the effectiveness, functions, and structures of dual degree social work programs”(Jayaratne, p.85). As of 2005, there were approximately 30 different types of degrees that have been combined with graduate studies in social work, one of which is a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) (Jayaratne).

Dual degree programs in social work and divinity take seriously the notion of training social workers to address the spiritual and religious needs of their clients. Some social work programs integrate spirituality and religion through one elective course or minimal content in existing courses. Dual degree programs move beyond those models to a full integration of faith and practice by allowing students to become well-versed in religious studies and by participating in practicum experiences that combine requirements for both master degrees. Dual degree programs vary in that some schools offer both degrees from the same institution while other schools of social work partner with local seminaries to fulfill the requirements of the M.Div. (Jayaratne, 2008). Oftentimes, students are required to apply separately and receive acceptance into each school prior to being accepted into the dual degree program. (Jayaratne). The process for completing dual degrees varies among students and institutions: students may complete the requirements of one degree before working on the other, take courses for both degrees simultaneously, or fluctuate from school to school per academic year. (D. Lee, personal

communication, June 23, 2008). Little has been published about the experiences of students completing dual degree programs.

This provides the background for a qualitative study designed to learn more about the experiences of students completing dual degree programs in social work and divinity. Statistics on the importance of faith in American culture are offered as a basis for justifying the need for social workers to be trained to address issues of spirituality and religion with clients. An overview of literature related to integrating spirituality and religion in social work curriculum is given as a basis for further understanding the attitudes of faculty and students. A brief description is given of the methodology used for the study. Secondary analysis of data is currently under way. Preliminary findings are discussed in regard to the emerging themes of: the general phenomenon of dual degree students' experiences; the forms of mentoring students find helpful and unhelpful; the challenges and rewards of field experiences; and ways to address spiritual and religious content into social work curriculum.

Review of Literature

Statistics on Faith

Programs that combine social work with divinity operate under the premise that issues of faith are important to people. According to a Gallop (1994) poll, 96% of American adults believe in God or a universal spirit and 85% of Americans consider themselves to be Christian. Yet, these data do not indicate how serious their faith is to them.

A random selection of over 110,000 American adults were interviewed as part of a 2001 study on religious identification (Religious Practices and Faith, 2008).

Participants were asked to rate their general outlook in terms of religious or secular.

Three-quarters (75%) of American adults viewed themselves as religious or somewhat religious. Statistics on religious beliefs can vary depending on who is conducting the study, the wording of survey questions, the definition of “religious,” and whether it is viewed as a separate category from “spiritual.” However, a 2002 Gallup Poll reported similar findings:

33% described themselves as "spiritual" but not interested in attending church (up from 30% in 1999)

50% of respondents said they are religious (down from 55% in 1999) (Religious Practices and Faith, 2008).

It is quite difficult to obtain accurate information on religious behavior and practice. Poll data is unreliable in this regard because people tend to give answers according to what they think they should be doing rather than what they are actually doing. For example, approximately 40% of adults claim to regularly attend religious services. However, when the number of people actually attending is counted, the percentage drops to 20% (Religious Practices in the USA, 2001). Determining church membership is cumbersome because there is no standard method. “Some count only the number of active members. Others count everyone who has ever been baptized, even though they have not walked through the door of a church in many decades. Still others inflate their figures” (Religious and Spiritual Groups in the United States, 2008). There are also some faith groups, Church of Satan, Christian Scientists and Wiccans who do not release their membership statistics (Religious and Spiritual Groups in the United States, 2008). When discussing issues of faith, there are many people who now distinguish between spirituality and religion. Limiting survey questions to church attendance leaves out New Agers and Humanists among others who emphasize spirituality over religion.

A recent survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life shows that religious values played a key role in the 2008 presidential election (Tolson, 2008). Religion was much more complicated than in past elections. There is also a generation gap.

The under-30 cohort is much more accepting of homosexuality, for example, than any older groups of evangelicals, though still distinctively less so than the general population. And a whopping 72 percent of under-30 Catholics express a tolerant view of homosexuality, compared with about 50 percent of the general population...Perhaps the most surprising finding of the new survey is that under-30 Catholics and evangelicals are even more opposed to abortion than most of their elders in both religious formations. (Tolson, 2008, p.20)

According to Whit Ayres, the partial shift in values may be explained by scientific advances that show the fetus develops early in the womb and that homosexuality is rooted in nature and not something that is a “changeable choice” (Tolson, 2008, p.20). Regardless of the difficulties in obtaining accurate statistics on religious practices and the changing complexities of religious values, there is enough evidence to show that issues of faith are important to a large percentage of the population.

Spirituality and Religion in Social Work

There has been a growing discussion regarding the inclusion of content on spirituality and religion in MSW programs. Traditionally the terms spirituality and religion are considered separate distinctions. Spirituality generally refers to fundamental questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life while religion refers to a “systematic doctrine and practice shared by groups” (Ai, 2002, p.104). Hodge and McGrew (2006) studied graduate social work students regarding the definitions of the terms spirituality and religion. Their findings uncovered a “diverse array of definitions for both spirituality and religion” despite general agreement that there is a relationship

between the two terms (p.637). Research suggests that practitioners working with self-described religious families may miss key information if they choose to dichotomize the terms religion and spirituality (Joanides, 1997).

A review of literature related to spirituality and religion found that social work addressed these issues 5-10 times more often than similar literature reviews of psychology, psychiatry and medicine (Modesto, Weaver, & Flannelly, 2006). Social work as a profession is not representative of the general population in regard to spirituality with Evangelical Christians being significantly underrepresented (Hodge, 2003a). Although social work is addressing issues of spirituality and religion, more attention needs to be paid to fostering an environment that is spiritually and religiously inclusive (Hodge).

The attitudes of faculty, students and practitioners in regard to addressing spirituality and religion with clients provide a good foundation for understanding how social work as a profession approaches the topic. Sheridan, Wilmer and Atcheson (1994) studied 280 faculty members from 25 schools of social work in regard to their views on incorporating content on spirituality and religion in the social work curriculum and found that “82.5% of respondents supported inclusion of a specialized course, primarily as an elective” (p.363). Dudley and Helfgott (1990) also found considerable support among social work faculty for offering a course on spirituality and religion. Studies involving students’ perceptions of addressing spirituality and religion with clients have found that students believe these issues are important to the therapeutic process, but they feel ill-equipped to address them with clients because they do not receive enough attention on the topic in their coursework (Cascio, 1999; DeCoster & Burcham, 2002; Graff, 2007;

Kaplan & Dziegielewski, 1999; Sheridan & Hemert, 1999). A study of social workers within the United Kingdom found that the majority of respondents believe spirituality is a fundamental aspect of one's personhood, yet, three-fourths of respondents reported receiving little or no content on religion and spirituality in the course of their education (Furman, Benson, Grimwood & Canda, 2004). Spirituality is also highly important for Canadian social workers in their personal and professional lives (Csiernik & Adams, 2003).

The theme of insufficient education on spirituality and religion is confirmed by clinical social workers who report a lack of training to address religion and spirituality in their practice with children and youth (Kvarfordt, 2005). Understanding how religion is addressed in clinical supervision and by field instructors while supervising practicum students can begin to address this lack of training and further the discussion on how best to design training programs (Aten & Hernandez, 2004; Bell, 2003). Hodge and Bushfield (2006) offer a definition of spiritual competence that is in keeping with the NASW Code of Ethics. This helps combat the fear some social workers have that discussing spiritual and religious issues with clients is in conflict with the values of social work (Svare, Jay, Bruce & Owens-Kane, 2003). Scholars have begun to offer practical frameworks, guidelines and exercises for incorporating spiritual and religious content into their practice with clients (Bartoki, 2007; Hoogestraat & Trammel, 2003; Northcut, 2000; Rivett & Street, 2001; Worthington & Aten, 2009; Zapf, 2005).

In reviewing literature on spirituality and religion in regard to social work education, Ai, Moultime, Picciano, Nagda, and Thurman (2004) consistently found that "faculty members, practitioners, and students believed that spirituality and religion were

important in the lives of clients and in social work practice” (p.108). Ai et al. also found that 80% of study participants felt their graduate programs did an inadequate job of preparing them to address spiritual and religious matters. This may be a reflection that “no part of the mental health profession has claimed the spiritual dimension of care as its teaching responsibility” (Ai, 2002, p.124). When spirituality and religious content have been included within social work curriculum, it has focused primarily on micro level issues (Ai). This is confirmed by social work administrators who report not receiving training on how to incorporate spirituality into the non-practice aspects of their jobs (Chamiec-Case & Sherr, 2006). Scholars have neglected to explore the impact organizational policies have on practice that is spiritually sensitive (Svare, Hylton & Albers, 2007).

Course content may begin by helping students address their own spiritual and religious beliefs as a means for opening up dialogue that is then expanded into a theoretical framework ultimately offering practical suggestions for working with clients on spiritual and religious matters (Crisp, 2009; Letendre, Nelson-Becker & Kreider, 2005; Northcut, 2004; Patterson, Hayworth, Turner & Raskin, 2000; Sloan, 2007; Williams & Smolak, 2007). There has been some discussion of ways to incorporate content on organized religion into macropractice courses (Netting, Thibault, & Ellor, 1990). Students who took courses that incorporated content on spirituality and religion showed significant satisfaction with course content (Ai et al). Opinions continue to vary on how to incorporate content within the social work curriculum most effectively (Ai et al.).

Ethical issues arise when incorporating spirituality and religion into social work practice. Despite agreement on the importance of spirituality and religion, there is evidence that religious or spiritual social workers experience discrimination within academic institutions and from their colleagues (Ressler & Hodge, 2005). Orthodox and liberal social workers also report that they know of clients who have experienced discrimination by social workers due to their religious beliefs (Ressler & Hodge). In studying the perception of students in regard to spiritual sensitivity, it appears that in general social workers may have an easier time addressing spiritual and religious matters with theologically liberal Christians (Hodge, 2004a). This means special attention needs to be given to social work practice that is culturally sensitive to the needs of evangelical Christians (Hodge). On the other hand, Evangelical social workers need to be culturally sensitive to clients who do not share their beliefs as it is unethical to “engage in direct evangelism in a professional relationship” (Sherwood, 2002, p.1). One factor that has received little attention is how the spiritual beliefs of social workers motivates them to be involved in social justice activities (Lee & Barrett, 2007).

Not surprisingly, there is a correlation between a social worker’s personal spiritual and religious beliefs and the extent to which they address issues with clients, i.e. the more spiritual or religious the worker, the more likely they are to address faith matters (Mattison, Jayaratne & Croxton, 2000). Hodge (2005a) found that social workers report a high level of compliance with the ethical standards related to religion. Likewise, research indicates that practitioners are open to addressing spiritual and religious issues and clients want to discuss them in psychotherapy (Erickson, Hecker, Kirkpatrick,

Killmer & Edassery, 2002; Gilbert, 2000; Gotterer, 2001; Knox, Catlin, Casper & Schlosser, 2005; Post & Wade, 2009; Rose, Westefeld & Ansley, 2001).

There is a growing body of literature in regard to assessing the spiritual and religious values of clients to aid practitioners in addressing matters of faith in the beginning stages of the helping relationship (Winship, 2004). There are a variety of instruments that have been designed to focus specifically on matters of faith including, but not limited to: spiritual ecomaps, genograms, lifemaps, and the Intrinsic Spirituality Scale (Frame, 2000; Hodge, 2001; Hodge, 2003b; Hodge, 2005b; Limb & Hodge, 2007). Hodge (2005c) discusses five different instruments in regard to their strengths and weaknesses. The joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) now requires a spiritual assessment (Hodge, 2006). Assessments can be tailored based on the specific needs of certain client populations, for example, older adults (Ortiz & Langer, 2002). Assessment tools can aid practitioners in differentiating spiritual experiences from psychopathology (Hodge, 2004b; Johnson & Friedman, 2008).

Once faith matters have been assessed, practitioners may choose to use faith based interventions (Sheridan, 2004). Clients find spiritual interventions during therapy to be more helpful than those spiritual interventions done outside the therapy session (Martinez, Smith & Barlow, 2007). Thayne (1997) offers a social constructionist perspective as a means for creating a therapeutic environment conducive to discussing faith matters. Walking the labyrinth or praying during therapy are effective interventions that meet with client approval (Bigard, 2005; Weld & Eriksen, 2007).

In addition to general assessment and intervention strategies that address spirituality and religion with clients, there is a body of research that has explored the

impact of spirituality on specific client populations. These populations include: older adults (Tirrito, 2000); the homeless (Kennard, 2002); survivors of sexual abuse (Turell & Thomas, 2001); women (Warwick, 2001); substance abusers (Stewart & Koeske, 2005); the mentally ill (O'Rourke, 1997); military personnel (Hathaway, 2006); gay and lesbian individuals (Tan, 2005); and couples (Weld & Eriksen, 2006). Clients feel empowered when spirituality is addressed as an integral part of the therapeutic relationship (Doe, 2004). African American women have used it as a source of resilience (Banerjee & Pyles, 2004). Faith-based interventions have shown statistically significant success with persons experiencing depression or anxiety (Hurst, Williams, King & Viken, 2008).

Dual Degree Programs in Social Work and Divinity

Lee and O'Gorman (2005) highlight the advantages of combining an MSW with an M.Div. as social work and ministry as professions lend themselves to being combined. However, Ashby (2005) also discusses the difficulties involved in helping students integrate coursework from both programs using the analogy of a railroad track model where "the two separate tracks run side by side connected by buried ties, but never crossing. In fact, their crossing or inability to maintain a certain distance from one another can lead to tragedy" (p.36). Social workers are suspicious that divinity students will use field practicum as a means for proselytizing, and religious institutions fear that emphasizing social work will cause students to neglect issues of the soul (R. O'Gorman, personal communication, May 8, 2008).

Students in dual degree programs are often put in the awkward position of having to integrate coursework from the two degree programs and form a dual professional identity on their own without the help of integrated curricula or field experiences (Ashby,

2005; O’Gorman, 2005). After looking at four possible models of dual degree programs, Ashby

came to the conclusion that the variety of models was the result not of a dynamic synergism between these two disciplines, but the inability of professional schools in divinity and social work to be clear with one another about what they are doing with dual degree programs. I was aided in my change of thought by the experience of a couple of current students who brought to our school’s attention the absence of a clear curricular theory of integration that undergirded their courses of study. (p.41-42)

There are only two studies that illuminate the perspective of graduates of dual degree programs in social work and divinity. Nelson-Becker (2005) conducted a study comparing the practices of persons holding dual degrees in social work and religious studies (of some sort) with persons holding only an MSW. Respondents were asked how the religious views of clients as well as their own affected their practice. MSW-only graduates tended to view religion in a constricted manner, e.g., either thinking it was important to keep religion separate from practice or feeling that their own beliefs did not equip them to address religious issues in practice. Several MSW-only graduates valued spirituality more than religion. Graduates with a dual degree were more aware of the positive and negative roles religion may play in the lives of clients. The study did not address whether the graduates’ education in terms of a dual degree or MSW only played a difference in their practice or if differences between the two groups was due to differences between people who are attracted to dual degree programs. “This study does suggest that dual degree graduates make an important contribution in building a holistic approach to professional social work practice. A dual degree does make a difference in social work” (Nelson-Becker, p.123).

Lee (2005) administered a questionnaire containing 20 items in 5 point Likert scale format to four recent graduates from the dual degree program through Loyola University. Overall impressions included the following:

- Students said they would recommend the program to others
- Students felt the clinical concentration of the MSW was consistent with the M.Div.
- Students disagreed on whether or not the integration of the two disciplines was achieved through the field practice
- Students thought their competency in helping people had been enhanced as a result of obtaining the dual degree and
- They disagreed as to whether dual degrees gave them more options in the job market. (Lee, 2005, p.141-142)

Methodology

Description of Phenomenology

In short, phenomenology holds as an underlying assumption, that the only way to understand a particular phenomenon, in this case the phenomenon of dual degree programs, is to study the lived experiences of persons who have completed such programs. Phenomenology is a qualitative method that is narrative in nature.

Phenomenologists are concerned with the meaning persons ascribe to a particular event, relationship or experience (Leedy, 1997). The underlying assumption is that through conversation and reflection with persons who have had a particular experience, the researcher is able to glean the essence or fundamental meaning of an experience regardless of which “specific individual has had that experience” (Schram, 2006, p.99).

Phenomenological methodology is more conversational than instrumental in that the emphasis is on narratives (R. Sloan, personal communication, November 12, 2008). Consequently, researchers enter interviews with a limited set of broad, overarching questions and then ask many spontaneous questions based on the participant’s narrative

(R. Sloan, personal communication, November 12, 2008). Consistency occurs not so much in the specific questions but in the analysis of the narratives. Phenomenological researchers look for themes or patterns that cut across interviews (Diekelmann & Ironside, 2006). “A theme is a recurrent category that reflects the shared experiences and practices embedded in the interview texts” (Diekelmann, 2001, p.56). The goal is to reveal previously hidden interpretations through continuous engagement with participants’ narratives (Baker, Norton, Young, & Ward, 1998). The focus is on *understanding* anything that is uncovered rather than focusing on an empirically correct interpretation (Baker, et. al.).

Dual Degree Programs

Compiling a list of schools that offer dual degrees in social work and divinity has been research in itself. Jayaratne (2008) cites a survey by deans and directors outlining dual degree programs and lists the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as the publisher. However, when I contacted CSWE directly, I discovered that this was unpublished data. I did receive an email list of dual degree programs by type of degree and another file listed by the college/university (E. Simon, personal communication, August 20, 2008). This list was not as comprehensive as the one I compiled myself using the Summary Information on Master of Social Work Programs for 2003-04 (most recent) which I had purchased from CSWE.

Using that summary guide I went through each school individually to compile a list of schools that offered dual degree programs in social work and divinity. In addition, I have searched the internet on several occasions. Websites do not always list this as an option or bury the information so deep it is not readily available. I did find four

additional programs not listed in the CSWE Summary Information. Some of these programs were listed on seminary websites in conjunction with other schools. In a couple of cases, the dual degree is listed only on the seminary website and not on the website of the collaborating institution. School websites and the Summary Information from CSWE do not always make it directly clear that students must apply to separate institutions and be accepted into both prior to working on a dual degree. Appendix A contains a list of schools offering dual degrees in social work and divinity.

Research Subjects and Sample

Program directors of social work schools offering dual degrees in social work and divinity were contacted to obtain access to graduates. The North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) also allowed me to send out an email request for research participants to all of its listservs. Based on responses, a convenient snowball sample of graduates was employed. As of the writing of this report, 16 graduates have been interviewed with the plan being to interview more. Limited demographic information is given in order to protect the anonymity of research participants.

Table 1: Demographics of Research Participants

Demographic Information	#
Age Range of Participants	25-63
Denominations Represented	4
Schools Represented	5
Participants Ordained as Ministers	7
Males	8
Females	8
Caucasians	8
African	1
African American	2
Asian American	1
Hispanic	4

Data Collection

Participants were interviewed for approximately 45-75 minutes over the phone due to geographic distance. Participants were asked basic demographic questions and then were asked 5 general questions as a means for engaging participants to share their stories regarding their experiences of completing a dual degree program in social work and divinity. The descriptive questions included the following:

- 1) How was it you came to seek dual degrees in social work and divinity?
- 2) Tell me about an experience that was particularly important to you as you went through the dual degree process.

- 3) Tell me about a field experience you will never forget.
- 4) Tell me about a significant experience you had with a mentor.
- 5) Looking back, how has the dual degree experience played into your life today.

Preliminary Findings

General Phenomenon

Rebecca Walker (2001) is the daughter of her African American mother and white, Jewish father. Walker describes in her memoir her unique worldview as someone who is simultaneously a member of two cultures and communities. When she visited her black family members, she was still Jewish. When she visited her Jewish family members, she was still black. In other words, no matter which community she was with at the time, she always held a dualist worldview, thus creating her own worldview.

Walker's (2001) memoir provides an excellent analogy of the worldview of persons completing dual degree programs in social work and divinity. Graduates may hold jobs in traditional social work settings or churches, yet, wherever they work, they always bring with them a dualist worldview that combines the world of social work with the world of the church. This is not to say that they always articulate this view to their parishioners or clients. However, they always bring with them the skills, knowledge, values, education, and language of each profession. The worldview of the dual degree graduate is a much deeper, more integrated worldview than someone who holds an MSW from a faith based university or an MDiv graduate who is interested in pastoral care. Dual degree graduates share a worldview paradigm that under girds the way they approach people and their motives for helping alleviate the suffering of others.

Some of the participants referred to a sense of calling, but not all. They all did express a desire to be of service to God and care for God's people. When they did refer to a sense of calling it was in a broad sense of the term in that they did not see themselves as being limited to any specific setting. They view themselves as engaging in ministry despite the setting. In this sense, ministry is defined by their sense of why they engage in helping professions, rather than the setting itself. As a result of this paradigm, they may or may not be ordained or see a need to be ordained as ministers.

Graduates' motives for seeking dual degrees stem from a desire to meet the "real life" needs of people in regard to basic needs for shelter, food, safety, etc. They view seminarians as not receiving enough training in regard to meeting the pastoral counseling or social needs of people. Likewise, they view social workers as not receiving enough education in regard to addressing the spiritual and religious needs of people. For this reason, they see the need for two degrees. When asked to imagine what their education would have looked like without one or the other degree, it is difficult for them to imagine not having the combination. Even those persons who rely heavily upon their training in either social work or ministry, talk about the benefits of the other degree and give examples of how both impact their profession lives.

Many research participants talked about social work field supervisors or professional employers reminding them that they were not to "proselytize" in traditional social work settings. Yet, all research participants mentioned that their first priority was to meet the basic needs of clients. They looked to Jesus as an example of someone who fed and healed people first. Research participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss matters of faith, but if it wasn't possible or did not come up, it was enough for them to

minister to clients' basic needs. Their stance was that it was not possible to talk to someone about faith until that person was fed, clothed, housed or physically safe from potential harm. This is significant as dual degree graduates may experience some discrimination in secular settings when supervisors see the master of divinity on their resume.

Forms of Mentoring

Many research participants talked about how they had initially planned to only seek one master's degree but that they had been encouraged by a college professor or church minister to consider getting dual degrees. This is significant and may mean that schools offering dual degree programs would be well served to make college professors and senior pastors aware of the benefits of completing a dual degree program and enlist them as recruiters.

Once in the dual degree program, graduates are particularly drawn to professors who have practical experience. Graduates are very concerned with living out their faith. They want professors to actively engage them in discussions on how to integrate faith and practice. They do not want to talk about theology or church doctrine in abstract ways, but to talk about God in ways that can be applied to discussions with battered wives, homeless persons, veterans of war, etc.. Along these same lines, graduates talked about the need to be able to access professors while in field practicum or even after graduation when dealing with clients or church parishioners who were in crisis. Dual degree graduates view professors as an ongoing resource for making seminary knowledge applicable to people who are hurting. Research participants who received their dual degrees in the early 70's talked about the importance of professors who marched

alongside students while advocating for civil rights of African Americans, union workers or equal rights for women. Dual degree graduates want to integrate faith and practice on micro and macro levels.

Research participants also gave examples of professors and institutions that did not reflect what they perceived to be Christian values. One participant gave the example of the seminary that spent significant funds on a steeple for the chapel despite the fact that the seminary was located in a poor neighborhood. For this research participant, the seminary had disconnected itself from its local community or the everyday needs of God's people.

Another participant described a student group in which there was conflict. Rather than the professor aiding in the resolution of conflict or facilitating discussions about forgiveness and grace, the professor simply kicked one student out of the group. For this graduate, the seminary professor's actions became a painful example of how not to behave as a Christian or church leader.

Dual degree graduates are constantly looking for ways to integrate faith and practice. They look to their professors and institutions for guidance and as examples of how to behave. They pay attention to policies, practices and behaviors that reflect Christian values of love and justice for all and they notice when those policies and practices violate the rights or dignity of some people.

Field Experiences

Field experiences tend to be the place where students put together the many facets of their social work and seminary education. When possible, they want to be placed in settings that allow them to combine the knowledge and education from both of their

degree programs. Ideally, they want field supervisors who will hold in tandem the world of social work and the world of ministry. This is the opportunity for dual degree graduates to make their education applicable. As such, many research participants talked about their field experiences as being significant even before I asked the question about their practicum experience.

Some research participants talked about field practicum as an opportunity to find their own strengths as practitioners and wanting supervisors who honored their own professional style and nurtured them as professionals. Field experiences also provide opportunities for dual degree students to develop professional identities as social workers and ministers. This is the time for them to understand what it means to be a social worker in a given setting, when to play the role of minister, and when it is appropriate to play both roles at the same time. Dual degree students welcome the opportunity to have direct conversations around the similarities and differences in playing the role of social worker and the role of minister or chaplain.

Incorporating Spiritual and Religious Content in Curriculum

Dual degree students want the freedom to ask questions about God without feeling judged by their professors. Seminary provides an opportunity for persons to question longstanding beliefs about God and formulate one's own beliefs which may or may not be congruent with what they were taught as children. Hence they want the safety of being able to question and engage in discussions with professors individually and in the classroom. They want professors who will engage them in the process and metaphorically speaking walk with them as they solidify their own beliefs. Dual degree students find that they often are the ones who engage seminary classmates in discussions

regarding the church's role in addressing issues of poverty or injustice. It would be helpful for seminary professors to initiate these discussions rather than waiting for dual degree students to challenge fellow seminarians on applying their understanding of God to actual situations of suffering.

More than one research participant mentioned social work only students who had a limited professional view in regard to client populations. Some Christian social work only students voiced a desire to stay away from potential clients who engaged in behavior that was contrary to their personal belief systems. Dual degree students found this stance troubling as they said all settings may have clients that engage in behaviors that are contrary to our personal values. These research participants voiced a desire for faith based social work programs to engage in more discussion on separating personal values from profession values and responsibilities. These participants used Jesus as an example of someone who did not shy away from people who engaged in behaviors He did not condone. For them, discussions on faith and practice needed to incorporate discussion on the social work values of self determination and the dignity and worth of all persons. They would like to see faith based social work programs incorporate discussions on working with a wide array of diverse populations.

All research participants would welcome the opportunity to have a class or classes specifically designed to help them integrate their two degrees. Students from one program that is more integrated than many dual degree programs expressed frustration over having to write separate capstone papers for each degree rather than one comprehensive paper.

Conclusion

This study was designed to give voice to persons who have completed dual degree programs in social work and divinity. Many themes have emerged that cut across all interviews. This discussion was meant to highlight some of the preliminary findings as I am still in the process of conducting secondary analysis. Qualitative research typically deals with smaller sample size. I was pleased to have even numbers in regard to gender and diversity in regard to ethnicity. However, my snowball sample was a direct result of contact with NACSW members even though not all research participants are members themselves. Only 5 of the current 21 dual degree programs were represented in my sample. Although I have met the sample requirements for my doctoral dissertation committee, I would like to obtain additional interviews to develop greater representation in regard to: NACSW members and non-members; dual degree programs that are well integrated and those that are not; graduates who attend faith based social work graduate programs as well as secular social work graduate programs; and the number of dual degree programs in general.

As I continue with my secondary analysis, the richness of data, and themes that are currently emerging, centers around the ways in which dual degree graduates incorporate the world of social work with the world of the church, thus developing a world view that is unique to this population. Describing this unique worldview will be helpful in terms of curriculum development not only for dual degree programs but aid graduate social work programs in understanding how best to integrate material on meeting the spiritual and religious needs of clients.

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Appendix A- Working List of Schools Offering Dual Degrees in Social Work & Divinity

	MSW SCHOOL	Loc. of MSW Sch	Denom. Aff. of MSW Sch	M.Div. SCHOOL	Loc. MDiv Sch	Denom. Affiliation of Seminary
1	Andrews University	Berrien Springs, MI	Seventh Day Adventist	Ass. Mennonite Biblical Sem.	Elkhart, IN	Mennonite
2	Augsburg College	Minneapolis, MN	Lutheran	Luther Seminary	St. Paul, MN	Lutheran - ELCA
3	Baylor University	Waco, TX	Baptist	Baylor's Georg Truett Theo. Sem.	Waco, TX	Baptist
4	Boston University	Boston, MA	United Methodist Church	Boston University	Boston, MA	United Methodist Church
5	Columbia University	New York, NY	none	Union Theological Seminary	New York, NY	Protestant Reformed Tradition
6	Fordham University	New York, NY	Jesuit	New York Theological Seminary	New York, NY	nondenominational
7	Loyola University	Chicago, IL	Jesuit Catholic	Loyola University	Chicago, IL	Jesuit Catholic
				McCormick Theo Seminary	Chicago, IL	Presbyterian
				Garrett Evangelical Seminary	Chicago, IL	United Methodist Church
8	Marywood University	Scranton, PA	Catholic	Moravian Seminary	Bethlehem, PA	Moravian Church - Protestant
9	Monmouth University	W Long Branch, NJ	none	Drew Theological Seminary	Madison, NJ	Methodist
10	Roberts Wesleyan Col	Rochester, NY	Methodist	Northeastern Sem at RWC	Rochester, NY	Methodist
11	Rutgers' School of SWk	New Brunswick, NJ	none	Princeton Theological Seminary	Princeton, NJ	Presbyterian
12	Southern CT State Univ	New Haven, CT	none	Yale University	New Haven, CT	Ecumenical
13	University of Chicago	Chicago, IL	none	U of Chicago Divinity School	Chicago, IL	
				Chicago Theological Seminary	Chicago, IL	United Church of Christ
				Lutheran School of Theo at Chic	Chicago, IL	Lutheran - ELCA
				McCormick Theo Seminary	Chicago, IL	Presbyterian
				Meadville/Lombard Theo School	Chicago, IL	Unitarian Universalist
				Catholic Theo Union at Chicago	Chicago, IL	Catholic
14	University of CT	W Hartford, CT	none	Yale University	New Haven, CT	Ecumenical
15	University of Denver	Denver, CO	none	Iliff School of Theology	Denver, CO	United Methodist Church
16	University of Kentucky	Lexington, KY	none	Lexington Theological Seminary	Lexington, KY	Christian Church Dis. of Christ
17	University of Louisville	Louisville, KY	none	Louisville Presbyterian Theo Sem	Louisville, KY	Presbyterian
18	Univ. of NC Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill, NC	none	Duke University Divinity School	Durham, NC	United Methodist Church
19	Univ. of Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh, PA	none	Pittsburgh Theological Seminary	Pittsburgh, PA	Presbyterian
20	Univ. of TX at Austin	Austin, TX	none	Austin Presbyterian Theo. Sem.	Austin, TX	Presbyterian
21	VA Commonwealth U.	Richmond, VA	Baptist	Baptist Theological Seminary	Richmond, VA	Baptist
				Samuel Proctor Sch of Theo	Richmond, VA	Baptist
				Union Theological Seminary	Richmond, VA	Presbyterian

