CHURCH BASED BAPTIST CLERGY SOCIAL WORKERS – DUAL ROLES: CONGRUENCE AND STRAIN – A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract

This article summarizes a pilot study done with professional social workers who are also ordained Baptist clergy working in a church. These dual roles were examined for shared qualities and challenges for persons with these two professional identities. Role theory was used to examine this duality. Professional social worker and clergy role identity development was assessed. Participants were also asked to identify primary and secondary professional roles. Participant's views of role congruence, dissidence and strain are summarized. The twofold relationship of religion and social work are explored from individual, agency and educational perspectives. The pairing of social work and religion is explored historically and from the viewpoint of current practice. The study used open ended questions to elicit narrative responses from the participants. Limited role tension was found among the respondents. Case examples are used to illustrate specific findings. Implications for practice and areas for further research are highlighted.

From social work's earliest history there have been social workers who were also clergy. Social work has been interwoven with religion since its inception. The two major tap roots of modern social work are the aristocratic women motivated by altruism and church affiliated women motivated by religious fervor (Lubove, 1965). The overlap of social work and religion has varied throughout social work's professional history. There have been times of no difficulty and at other times significant strain. Today there is a significant interest in spirituality, including faith and religion, in social work. Yet limited research has been done on the professional social worker who also has the role of spiritual leader. This pilot study asks questions centered on how Baptist clergy social workers balance, integrate and understand these dual professional roles.

The concept of multiple roles is part of the normal human narrative (Linton, 1936). However, society expects certain roles to fit together better then do others. When roles are ambiguous or appear in conflict people struggle with how to put together, mix or integrate these roles. Is the Army Chaplin a military officer, a member of the clergy or some unusual combination? Is there a similar uniqueness of the professional social worker who is also a member of the clergy?

An example from history of a person with multiple role identities is the Apostle Paul. He was known as a religious leader in the early Christian church, yet like many early Christians his cultural identity was Jewish. But unlike most Jews he also held Roman citizenship. Using whatever role identity was most functional he played various roles, or showed different parts of his identity, to move in and out of the Jewish, Christian and Roman communities. He drew from the best of these seemingly divergent roles to further his ministry and to get his needs met. Yet tension among these roles, and the expectations of him in each role, likely posed challenges to his complex identity.

Role Theory

Role theory explains how one individual can have, or play, multiple roles. The metaphor of the theater is used in this theory to describe how individuals, or "actors," play various roles in society (Moreno, 1953). In the theater roles can be designated in a number of ways. An actor may audition for a role or a director or producer may know an actor who they think would ideally play the role. The same is true according to role theory. Roles may be self imposed or suggested by others. In the theater it is common that an actor may play one role in one production and another role in another production. In some productions an actor may play multiple, even sometimes opposing roles. Type casting can be a problem for some actors and

they may have difficulty playing roles outside what is normally expected of them. These principles are used as metaphors to explain how individuals act in society. However, at times there is conflict with a role. An individual actor may find a role unsuitable or may have trouble convincing others that they can effectively play the role.

This lack of congruence, or fit, with a role can lead to role strain or even role conflict. Again using the theater as a metaphor, when an actor plays a role that does not personally fit their abilities there may be role strain. In society when an individual accepts, is appointed into, or assumes a role that doesn't quite fit, there is role strain (Goffman, 1959). This strain may occur because the individual doesn't fit the role or the role doesn't fit the individual.

There are two types of role conflict. The first occurs when there is conflict between actors. This is seen repeatedly in the theater and in society. People align themselves with an actor's role and oppose any others. In society they accept a particular point of view and disagree with others. Role conflict can also occur internally. An actor may believe they are playing a role convincingly. However, the audience may see things differently. When an actor doesn't fit the role it is described in role theory as being incongruent with role expectations. This occurs in society when society sees a person one way and they see themselves differently.

Another type of conflict is when an actor refuses to play a role because they can't see themselves as being convincing in that role. Yet in society we can not always as easily reject assigned roles. People have expectations of the ways one is supposed to act in certain roles. If societal expectations are not met there is also role conflict.

In the theater an actor can change costume and play multiple roles and in society we find ourselves playing multiple roles. This multiplicity of roles can lead to role conflict and strain. A

key to understanding role theory is to understand that roles are socially determined and individually accepted or rejected (Goffman, 1961).

Professional Role Identity and Development

The two professional roles this paper will address are the professional social worker and the religious professional or member of the clergy. The similarities and difference of individuals with these two professional roles is the focus. The question of how one individual with these two roles fits these roles together has not been explored. The profession of social work is very interested in "fit" (Germain & Gitterman, 1996). A major theoretical tenant of the social work profession is how the individual fits within the society and what effects that level of fit has on the individual and the society. We can also look at fit from an individual's perspective. The personal integration of roles is also a focus of our understanding of individuals within the social context.

Social workers generally gain their professional identity through formalized education and commitment to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (National Association of Social Workers, 1999). The Counsel of Social Work Education (CSWE) ascribes a standard course of study and experience required for identification as a professional social worker. CSWE currently requires content in spirituality as part of both BSW and MSW curriculum (Council on Social Work Education, 2010). As a social worker assesses the client, respect for the diversity of a client includes an understanding of the client's religion and what their religion means to them.

Historically the term "social worker" meant different things to different people. Persons with various degrees of training and education called themselves social workers. Today the profession of social work has become more standardized via professional ethics, educational accreditation and legal definition. Many states have recognized the profession of social work

and have legally restricted the use of the title "social worker" to individuals who have completed a bachelors or masters degree in social work. Yet becoming a member of the clergy is not so strictly defined. The role of clergy can be obtained in any number of ways.

Religious and spiritual communities are free to determine who they designate as their own leaders. "Clergy" is the generic term used to describe a religious leader. Most of the world's major religions have specifically identified clergy. In the broader Christian community clergy members have an assortment of roles with differentiating titles indicating various functions and responsibilities. In many Christian denominations formal religious training and education is required to become a clergy member. The degree most often associated with the designation of clergy in this community is the Master of Divinity (M. Div.).

This pilot study looks at individuals who have both a Master in Social Work (MSW) degree and a Masters of Divinity (M.Div.) degree and who worked or had worked in a church setting. The focus of this study was on understanding the two professional role identity developments and the consistency of purpose, values and practices that these individuals had who held these two roles. These individuals were also asked to identify their primary and secondary roles and what conflicts, if any, they felt in these two roles and what they did to resolve these conflicts.

<div align="center">Religion and Social Work</div>

One aspect of spirituality is religion. Religion is multi-faceted and can be defined differently in different contexts. Canda and Furman (Canda, 2003) summarize Cox (1992) theological, philosophical, psychological and anthropological/sociological definitions of religion. They say:

Theological definitions focus on belief in a transcendent (and/or immanent) and usually personified divine being or being and moral codes that relate to this. *Philosophical definitions*

focus on concepts that a "believer interprets as ultimate or final in relations to the cosmic order and human existence" (p.6) *Psychological definitions* focus on mental processes and states and behaviors that people relate to self-defined religious forces greater than themselves. *Anthropological and sociological definitions* focus on institutionalized patterns of symbols, beliefs, rituals, and stories that organize communities and relate to putative power or forces greater than themselves, often considered supernatural (p. 45).

Spirituality is a broader concept they define as "involving the search for meaning, purpose, and morally fulfilling relations with self, other people, the encompassing universe and ultimate reality, however a person understands it" (Canda & Furman, 1999, p.316). Although both religion and spirituality seek to understand something more than the human body they are clearly different terms and have different meanings in historical and current social work practice.

Elizabethan Poor Laws

Historically the roots of social work are heavily influenced by religion. The Elizabethan poor laws were focused on distinguishing the "worthy" from the "unworthy" poor. These principles were based, at least in part, on the biblical concept that followers of Christ should care for widows and orphans. In James it says; "Religion that God our Father accepts a pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27, New International Version of the Holy Bible). The Christian Bible also says that those who can work should work. Paul reminds his followers: For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "if a man will not work, he shall not eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10, NIV). The Protestant work ethic emphasized the God given duty to work.

However, as successive waves of new immigrants flooded America's major cities these concepts needed to be reconsidered. People wanted to work, yet they were often discriminated against. They lacked basic skills, such as ability to speak the dominate language and understand the political structure of their new country. They had limited access to resources. A new definition of who was "worthy" and who was "unworthy" needed to be found.

Social Work's Women Pioneers

Women were the driving force behind development of the profession of social work. Aristocratic women, such as Jane Addams, helped develop settlement houses that reached out to and provided any number of resources to the poor, disenfranchised and new immigrants (Bolender, 2008). The Charity Organization Society was also instrumental in developing a network of resources for the poor. While some of these women were aristocratic motivated by altruism many of their counter parts were missionary minded church women filled with religious zeal (Huff, 2000).

In those misogynistic days women were not given the same access as men to formal religious leadership. Male clergy were often involved in missionary work overseas. Unfortunately they believed that they needed to import their cultural values and behaviors in addition to their religious beliefs to the natives that they touched. History suggests that this was a grave mistake and that they were many unintended consequences of importing Western culture to indigenous persons throughout the globe. Women on the other hand were focused on "home missions" (Harper, 1996).

Many major religious denominations had home mission organizations. Women involved with these organizations were often the "friendly visitors" sharing their religious and Western cultural values with their clients. Some women may have been afraid to use the word "minister" or clergy, but many felt "called" to ministers to the poor, disenfranchised and new immigrants. In the early days of social work, or in home or foreign missions, the solution to poverty was thought to be middle class values and behaviors heavily influenced by religious values including the Protestant work ethic and moralistic ideas about poverty (Huff, 2000).

It was only when these early social workers saw the true reasons for poverty that ideas about the poor began to change. These early social workers found that poverty was not always an individual issue, but all too often a social problem. One early social worker, Mary Richmond, recognized that it was the intersection of the person in the environment that contributed to poverty and other social ills (Richmond, 1917).

Faith in Social Work Today

Today we continue to understand that individual and social factors, as well as the intersection of these two, contribute to marginalization. Today's social worker is trained to look at the person in environment and look at "how the gears grind." We make attempts to change the individual and the environment to meet client's needs. As in early social work, we currently address the spiritual needs of our clients. Today we respect the client's right to self determination and try to appreciate a client's own ideas of spirituality.

Faith based social service agency continue to provide many services focused to the disenfranchised population. The Salvation Army, Catholic Social Services and Jewish Family Services are well known agencies that provide services to the poor, disenfranchised and new immigrants. Many local communities have faith based groups or agencies that seek to provide services to those that are under or un-served by other institutions.

Charitable choice.

The United States Federal government has recognized the importance of faith based organizations and has funded many programs through "Charitable choice" (General Accounting Office, 2002). This federal government program recognizes that faith based organization have the will to provide services to people that others won't touch. Even governmental programs are ineffective in providing services to some individuals so the government has taken the unusual

position of funding faith based organizations to do the social service work that they themselves are unable or unwilling to provide.

Social work education and spirituality.

Many social work programs across the nation recognize the need for integrating faith into practice. It is common to find courses on spirituality in many CSWE accredited social work programs. Also many social work programs are schools or programs of private sectarian colleges and universities. Some masters in social work programs even have joint degree programs with theological seminaries offering joint degree programs in social work and divinity. Private as well as publicly affiliated schools offer joint degree programs training students to be both social workers and ministers. Muehlhausen (2009) identifies 21 schools of social work that have joint degree programs in where one can earn both an MSW and an M.Div.

An example of a public university that has a joint degree program is Rutgers in collaboration with Princeton (Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey, 2010). A private school offering a joint degree program is Baylor university with their sister institution Truitt Theological seminary (Baylor University, 2010). Persons graduating from these dual degree programs finish with a masters in social work as well as a second masters in divinity.

One study that was done on this population validated role strain in the social worker/clergy person (Aaron, 1999). Aaron (1999) did a 10 year retrospective study on graduates of Yeshiva University's MSW clergy track program. He identified a number of issues in graduates of that program, including homosexuality, abortion, intermarriage and drug addiction that precipitated role strain. However his study is limited because the clergy social workers he studied already had identity as clergy before they entered the MSW program at Yeshiva University. His study did not address how these respondents fit their two roles together. He also

does not address how these dual identities were developed. These questions were tested in this pilot study.

The majority of literature in social work profession has historically maintained that there is conflict between the practice of religion and the practice of social work (Cnaan, Boddie, & Danzig, 2005). Clergy members have a professional identity as leaders in organized religion and if the literature is correct, the assumption can be made that they have conflict as individuals with these two roles or professional identities.

From an individual perspective it is not uncommon to find a social worker with a divinity degree. While the research indicates that few of these individuals work within a church setting it can be assumed by their education and training that spirituality is a significant part of how they formed their professional identities. The literature is not that clear on how these two identities or two professional roles "fit" together.

<center>The Pilot Study</center>

Design

This was a pilot study that utilized a multiple case study design. Four clergy social workers from Connecticut, Georgia, Virginia and South Carolina participated. A narrative design was chosen because it allows for study volunteers to "tell their stories" about their experience. Its open ended format was necessary, in this preliminary study, because I was trying to obtain a sense of the experiences that clergy social workers had in developing and practicing their dual roles. The individual narratives of the participants, was the focus of this study. The intention of this pilot study was to develop a more comprehensive study based on the themes that were identified by this very small group (N=4) of church based clergy social workers.

Methodology

The individuals participating in this study were personally interviewed using five broad open-ended research questions. All the participants were asked:

1. How did you develop your clergy identity?

2. How did you develop your social work identity?

3. What is your perception of the "goodness of fit" between the two identities?

4. What do you see as your primary identity and how does the other one fit with it?

5. Are there any conflicts between the two identities and if so how do you resolve them?

Data Collection

The five open ended questions were used as a springboard to have a dialogue about the dual roles and identities of the clergy social workers. As has been noted above there is sparse literature on clergy social workers and the tension, if any, they feel in these two roles. Data was collected during personal interviews (with one exception). Two of the interviews were done over the phone and one of the interviews was done in person. The fourth participant was unavailable for a personal interview, but responded to the questions in a lengthy e-mail. The data was collected in an informal conversational manner where I made notes on the participant responses and tape recorded parts of the conversation. I asked clarifying follow up questions to elicit more details about the subjects' experiences with the respondents who I personally interviewed. I did not elicit any clarifying or follow up questions for the respondent that e-mailed the response to me.

Research Subjects and Sample

Individuals for this study were recruited using a variety of snowball strategies. I contacted one individual I had met at a workshop, one individual who I knew though my own graduate program was referred to me by a colleague and two volunteers were recruited through an interest group posting on Facebook. Although this is a small sample it is reflective of a very small number of individuals who are clergy social workers working in a church setting. Northern (2009) was only able to identify 21 church based clergy social workers. This small minority of church based clergy social workers is interesting in light of the fact that Muehlhausen (2009) identified 21 joint degree programs in social work and divinity. Muehlhausen's list does not include Yeshiva University's MSW track open only to clergy and it does not identify clergy social workers who completed both degrees outside of a formal joint degree program (Yeshiva University, 2010).

It is unclear from the literature if there is a paucity of church based clergy social workers or if they are an under identified subset of both the clergy and the social work professions.

Participants.

There were three men and one woman in this sample. All of the men in this sample were married and the woman was single, but in a committed relationship. All of the participants are heterosexual. Their ages ranged from their late 20's to early 50's. The participants in the study were white and identified with the majority culture. All of the volunteers in this sample were ordained clergy who were currently or had just recently been in full time paid staff positions at a church. The one participant who was not employed full time in a church had just left a church to teach in a joint degree (MSW/M. Div.) program. All of the participants were ordained in the Baptist tradition. Three of the participants had been ordained in Southern Baptist churches and

one in a Cooperative Baptist church. One of the participants who had been ordained in a Southern Baptist church was currently employed at a Baptist church that was dually aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

There was geographical diversity in this sample. Three clergy social worker were at churches in the Deep South and one was in New England. Length of time as a clergy social worker also varied greatly with one participant being a new graduate with less then two years experience and one clergy social worker with over 25 years of experience in a dual role as both clergy and social worker.

Participant's educational backgrounds.

All of the participants graduated from Baptist schools with CSWE accredited social work programs. All of the clergy social workers interviewed for this pilot study had an MSW degree. Three of the volunteers had a Master of Divinity (M. Div.) degree and one had a Doctor of Ministry (D. Min.) degree. It is interesting to note that the clergy social worker with the D. Min. degree did not have a M. Div. The Master in Divinity degree is a prerequisite to a D. Min. yet the program that granted the doctoral degree accepted the MSW as equivalent to the M. Div. for enrollment in their doctoral program. This may have been because this participant had functioned in a clergy role for so long that the seminary where he completed his doctorate accepted his MSW as equivalent to the M. Div.

Two schools were represented in this sample. One of the schools, Baylor University, has a formal joint degree program. The other school, The Carver School of Church Social Work, was a CSWE accredited school of social work at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. One of the participants in the study is the one and only pastor in the church while the other three were or are associate pastors.

Preliminary Findings

Initially all of the clergy social workers in this study said they felt "good fit" between their two roles. One clergy social worker stated they felt "great" fit in the two roles. The participants said that they felt a strong desire or a calling to the clergy. Social work as a profession was generally introduced to the respondents during college or seminary. Primary role identity differed among the respondents. The clergy social workers interviewed for this study identified no internal conflicts in their dual roles and when conflicts were identified they were identified outside their professional personhood.

Clergy Social Worker 1

The first clergy social worker in this sample is a full time pastor in an intercity church. This clergy social worker said that he had no conflicts with his dual identities. He identifies himself as a "progressive" pastor. This clergy social worker is able to integrate his dual roles and identity with no internal or external conflict. This clergy social worker gave an example of how he considers himself progressive. He said:

> I want to be known as…the pastor of the people…I'd be honored if prostitutes, drug dealers, and the homeless all call me their pastor. That would be an honor. Today there was a prostitute out there and we sent her a hotdog. She was watching us prepare hotdogs. "This is from our church. God would want you to know that you are always welcome in our church." One time I was out there sitting on the steps. A group of prostitutes came up. The cops came by and said "what are you girls all doing?" "We're here talking to our pastor." I'm honored they felt that way. You know the mentally ill, the people with mental illness, we have a lot of them in our church. We want them (to) take positions…we don't want to just be a church in the neighborhood, or a church that's just ministering to the neighborhood. We want to empower the neighborhood to minister to themselves.

This clergy social worker developed his ministerial identity during and after college. He became interested in missionary work during college. He participated in a program offered by his denomination where he was placed in an inner-city mission for two years after he graduated college. Following that extended internship he chose to continue his graduate education in a

seminary based social work program. During his graduate education he took "extra classes to become a preacher." His primary identity is as a "pastor," but he states that he identifies himself as a social worker "when it's to his advantage." He said:

Well, sometime I interact with other social workers. And they look at clergy, and they sort of think we're stupid people. And sometimes we do stupid things. Well, I'm quick to, if I see that it will open doors, or met let them look at us in a different way, I'm quick to say "Well, I also have an MSW." "What? You have an MSW?" And I'll say it that way. Also if we're working with the homeless…We just got through a 10 year plan to end homelessness... We're not going to end homeless…In being a part of that group we talked about having an MSW. Well I talked about that… I get a voice… I think you speak in different worlds. There is the clergy world, the social work's world, the agency world, and there's the other world. It's tough sometimes to get a voice in the social work world.

This clergy social worker developed his social work identity during his graduate education in social work. He specifically entered a seminary based program because he had an interest in the disenfranchised in the urban setting. His social work education was part of his career goal. He does mostly macro practice. He uses his uses his social work skills to develop programs that reach out to the disenfranchised in his community. He gave an example saying:

The social work training and all that helped me to understand (and) helped me to sort of understand the psyche of people and looking at things in the way that would normally not look at things. We use single system design a lot. Looking at how you measure things before you do the intervention, how to get a picture of how things really are. And then you do your intervention and you measure afterwards what was done, to see what changes (and) you do that with everything…It sort of gives you different lens to look at…the environment, the life, looking to bringing about change and yourself.

He says he addresses the physical needs of his congregants/clients first and their spiritual needs second. He has a multi-ethnic church that has a specific outreach to new immigrants in his community.

Clergy Social Worker 2

The second clergy social worker from this sample says that the two roles have "great" fit for her. She did not develop two separate identities as clergy and then social worker or visa

verse. She developed her identity as a clergy social worker during college and further in seminary/graduate school. She knew that she "wanted to do something in the church," but the only professional clergy roles she knew were pastor/preacher or evangelist. She did not feel that she fit into any of these roles, but she continued to feel a "calling" to the church. She attended a Baptist university where she became exposed to social work, the practice area of church social work and to the concept of social work as a ministry. She focused her education on social work within the context of the church.

She enrolled in the joint degree graduate program developing her social work identity along side her ministerial identity. Her identity as a social worker was formed by her theological beliefs and her social work values shape her theological views. She said:

I guess if I'm really honest, I would say that I had a theology before I did my social work education that was naturally leaning towards social work values and then when I discovered that there was a set of values out there…everything came alive. I had been leaning that way, but I didn't know anybody else who thought the same. I remember being a journeyman in Africa, and sitting in West Africa with all these hungry people, thinking, OK I have the good news but there has to be something more then a theology for...something more then an empty theology…I started integrating those two it was like everything in my spirit "this is what it is" I intuitively knew, but was not confirmed until that.

Although she is ordained as a member of the clergy and has been an associate pastor in a church she primarily identifies herself as a social worker. She said: "I was identified as the associate pastor, and I preached and all that stuff, but if I were inside of my head, as I was doing my ministry, I would identify myself as a social worker."

Although this clergy social worker had no internal conflicts with her dual identity she found herself "limited" in the church role. She said:

When the church first hired me…one of the things the pastor touted was that I had two degrees and I could help with benevolence and getting a tilted incarnation look beyond their own walls, when we were having a benevolence issue like how much money to give out, etcetera, when some one calls…The pastor said during a leadership meeting, and during our deacon's meeting, "we have a licensed social worker on our staff, we need to utilize that," and one of the

members said "who?" And just that identity, even if they knew I was a social worker, it did not translate as helpful, or as any kind of supplement to my divinity degree. And very few people knew that I had the (social work) degree. I did make sure when I was hired that I had continuing education funds to keep up my license…I said this is part of who I am, and I want to keep up my license. They affirmed that was but that was…it.

She felt that the church had difficulty understanding her social work role and further difficulty accepting her role as a woman pastor. She believes that her role as female clergy was more difficult for the church to accept then was her role as a church social worker. She was a staff member in a Baptist church in the Deep South where the role of women as pastors is not as usual as it is in other denominations or regions.

Clergy Social Worker 3

The third clergy social worker in this sample was motivated by his desire to help the disenfranchised. He said that he found great excitement doing "mission trips" where he and members of his church would participate in short term projects aiding others. He felt that he wanted to do this more and more, but he needed a way to "get in the door." His desire to help others led him to the conclusion that as clergy person, or pastor, he could accomplish these goals. He realized that in order to accomplish his personal and professional goals he needed training as both clergy and social worker. He wanted a joint degree program that integrated both clergy and social work identities. He searched and found a seminary based MSW program where he developed his clergy and social work identities together. He also says that he sees good fit in his roles as clergy and social worker.

In his dual roles he sees his primary purpose in the church to "push people out of the pews."

He gave an example of the way he does this saying:

(Senior adult church members) are going to go up to north Georgia, to get apples. Rather then just carrying empty vans up there, they've been doing a food drive. So there going to go up there and go to a church's ministry, missions center and get a tour and deliver this food to help stock the food pantry, then they can pick up their apples and come back home. Now that's senior adults. So if you build in the mission's piece, if you build in that piece, so the naturally occurring fun trip that they have, you gently push these people along. So the next time you say "hey, were going on a mission's trip," then they start thinking like, "oh, I can do that. I can do that, I'm not afraid." Its baby steps. You incorporate it into every thing you do. You integrate it.

This clergy social worker noted the response of some of his church members to these

mission trips. He said:

Others actually listened to what the needs were, wrote it down, came back to the church and started a Sunday school class figuring out how we can meet that need…people didn't come away unaffected. They were affected in some way. Most of them it was very, very positive.

This clergy social worker sees one of his significant roles as helping his congregation to

see that people they would not normally interact with are people too. He states proudly, "I deal

with the fringe." His primary identity is as a "minister," but he utilizes his knowledge and skills

as a social worker to accomplish his goals. This clergy social work identifies as a pastor so that

he can accomplish his personal and professional goals within his church where he is employed as

"the minister of families and education."

As with his colleagues above this clergy social worker has no internal conflicts about his

dual role as clergy and social worker. However, he does see some difficulty in how others in his

church and community see him. He chooses to identify himself as a minister and not a social

worker although he sees his work as mainly social work practice. He said:

It's like you've got to explain yourself to people and I'm getting tired of explaining myself to people. It's like the world doesn't recognize what a gift they have when they run across someone with a background in social work and theology. Because they don't think that way…I've had to do the two resume thing. One resume that looks really social worky, and the other resume that looks really faith based. And depending on who, or what...I pull the different one out. And it shouldn't have to be that way, but that's the way it is, that's the way it is.

He also feels that he is more progressive then many members in his church and that they do not fully understand his social work values. He is troubled by his individual church's lack of support for the ordination of women. He identifies himself as an agent of change where he is slowly helping members of his church community to become more aware of the needs of women, the poor and other people on "the fringes of society."

Clergy Social Worker 4

The last clergy social worker in this sample also stated that he saw good fit in his dual roles as a clergy and social worker. This clergy social worker developed his clergy role before he developed his professional social work identity. He said that when he was about 15 he felt "called" into the ministry. He pursued a typical path toward becoming a minister by going to college and then to seminary to complete a divinity degree. His call strengthened during his college and seminary experiences.

During his seminary experience he began to develop an identity as a social worker too. This began when he "took some classes" in social work and during his social work field placements. His identity as a social worker became more solidified during his first few jobs out of seminary. He worked in jobs where he was identified as a social worker before he became employed in a church. He is currently an associate pastor in a church where he identifies more as a pastor then as a social worker.

He reports no internal or external conflicts with his dual role. He states that his role of pastor is supported by his social work knowledge and skills. He finds that his knowledge, values and skills as a social worker are especially helpful in his pastoral role when he does clinical work, program development and administration. He sees the role of social worker supportive and congruent with his primary role as associate pastor

Discussion

Trends identified in this pilot research do not reveal there is conflict between the roles of social worker and minister. In fact this sample suggests that there can be good fit between the two roles. All the volunteers in this sample stated there was good fit with the roles with one stating that there was "great" fit with the dual role.

None of the respondents experienced internal conflict in their dual roles. Some external conflict was noted. Some participants said that they were not fully accepted as social workers or their social work values about the dignity and worth of all persons was not fully appreciated by their parishioners. Also the acceptance of women in the role of clergy was mentioned by two social workers as an area of external conflict. However, these clergy social workers appeared to cope with this tension effectively. The case examples repeatedly show that the clergy and social work professional roles are developed together. The role identity development described by these respondents is one of intertwined role identity development. These examples suggest that these roles are not developed independently or in parallel, but together. The narratives of the respondents repeatedly suggest that religious and spiritual motivations are fundamental in their dual role identity development. Although the clergy role is the primary role that is expressed to others by the majority of the respondents, social work identity is a significant part of the respondents' internal professional identity.

An unexpected result of this study was that the majority of these social workers did mezzo or macro practice rather then a focus on clinical practice. One participant said: "I did not do the counseling, per say, the pastor had that role." Another one said: "people went to the senior pastor for counseling, no matter what their credentials."

The narratives of these clergy social workers suggest that the historical role of spiritually motivated individuals working for the benefit of the disenfranchised remains active and alive today.

Implications for Practice

Multiple joint degree programs suggest there is continued interest in the dual role of clergy and social worker. There are multiple social workers practicing and pursuing these two roles and this dual identity. Agency and public policy support the joint efforts of the social work and religions community. The profession of social work and organized religion need to recognize their interdependency. Social work knowledge, values and skills are helpful in professional ministry, especially ministry that targets disenfranchised populations. Some individuals may not access social work resources, but may access spiritual resources. Social workers need to continue to be aware of the spiritual needs of their clients. Holistic practice goes beyond the traditional bio-psycho-social perspective of the client in the environment, but includes a bio-psycho-social-spiritual view of the person in the environment (Nelson-Becker, 2005). The commonality of these two professions needs to be celebrated.

Future Research

This pilot study suggests that this is an area that needs further research to bolster the social work professional literature. This pilot study is limited by its small number of research subjects and the fact that only one religious sect is studied. A larger study may yield different results. There is no attempt to have this sample represent the clergy social work community as a whole. Clergy social workers from a variety of locations that represent a various faith traditions should be targeted in further research. It is also noted that this sample is over represented with men and future research should seek to broaden gender diversity. Further research needs to be

completed to see if the results of this pilot study represent clergy social workers as a whole or if they are unique to this particular religious sect. Analysis by sophisticated qualitative software would also likely yield results not noted in this pilot study.

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