

DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS IN SOCIAL WORK AND DIVINITY:  
GRADUATES' EXPERIENCES OF "JOURNEY COMPANIONS"

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## PREFACE

Dissertation formats and guidelines are typically written with quantitative or hypothesis testing research in mind. “Many qualitative researchers struggle to compress, rearrange, and manipulate their qualitative research proposals (dissertations) into existing materials too often designed specifically for quantitative research methods...Theory-building research, however, needs distinctive formats to maintain the aim and integrity of the particular approach and project” (Munhall & Chenail, 2008, p.4). This qualitative dissertation follows the phenomenological research dissertation outline described in Munhall and Chenail.

## ABSTRACT

Beth L. Muehlhausen

### DUAL DEGREE PROGRAMS IN SOCIAL WORK AND DIVINITY: GRADUATES' EXPERIENCES OF "JOURNEY COMPANIONS"

There is a growing trend for graduate schools of social work to offer students the option of receiving dual degrees, which gives 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. As of 2005, there were approximately 30 different types of degrees that could be combined with graduate studies in social work--one of which is a Master of Divinity (M.Div.). Very little is known about the effectiveness of such programs and the experiences of graduates completing them. The aim of this study was to describe the lived experiences of persons receiving an MSW and an M.Div. from dual degree programs. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) includes religious and spiritual beliefs in its definition of culturally competent practice within the code of ethics. 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. Dual degree programs in social work and divinity are quite timely given that 96% of Americans say they believe in God or a universal spirit. Phenomenology seeks to understand a particular phenomenon from the point of view of those who have experienced it. With this in mind, this study reports the findings

resulting from interviews conducted with 16 graduates regarding their experiences while in a dual degree program. One of the key phenomenological patterns that emerged in all the interviews conducted was that dual degree graduates want “journey companions,” i.e. persons who share their worldview.

Margaret E. Adamek, Ph.D., Chair



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## Chapter One

### *Introduction: Aim of Study*

#### *Phenomenon of Interest*

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 synergistic relationship with the other professions and disciplines. (Jayaratne, p. 86)

There are considerable differences in how these programs 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). (See Appendix A for a list of schools and the dual degrees offered).

A review of the literature regarding dual degrees shows that, as early as 1985, questions were being raised as to whether dual degrees strengthen or weaken the profession (McClelland, 1985). The few studies that have been conducted on dual degree programs appear to show that they strengthen the profession by training social workers to meet the multifaceted needs of clients. One study focused on the professional identity of

persons completing a dual degree program in social work and special education (Marschke, 2001). There was unanimous agreement among respondents that they were pleased to have developed expertise in both programs. Two-thirds of the respondents described themselves as both a social worker and educator and over three-fourths (80%) wanted to work in a setting that utilized both sets of skills (Marschke). Coulter and Hancock (1989) highlighted a joint degree program in Southern Florida that enabled students to obtain joint degrees in social work and public health education. The program arose out of a growing need in Florida to better equip social workers to work in maternal and child health programs.

Focusing on common ground can aid in interdisciplinary conversations (Praglin, 2004). Furman and Fry (2000) discussed the benefits and barriers involved when ministers and social workers refer clients to each other to address specific issues. Their study highlighted the need for greater collaboration between the two professions (Furman & Fry). Social work has a history of treating the whole person. Yet, our “effort to be scientific in our approach to clinical practice often has obscured our examination of the religious and spiritual beliefs and practices of our clients” (Northcut, 2005, p. 45). Offering elective courses on religion and spirituality could begin to create space for integration (Northcut).

#### *Perceived Justification for Studying the Phenomenon*

##### *Review of literature on 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 have been considered separate terms. Spirituality has generally referred to

fundamental questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life, while religion has referred to a “systematic doctrine and practice shared by groups” (Ai, 2002, p. 104). Hodge and McGrew (2006) studied the definitions of the terms spirituality and religion held by graduate social work students. 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 in 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 has addressed 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 found that students believed these issues were important to the therapeutic process, but they felt ill-equipped to address them with clients because the topic did not receive enough attention in their coursework (Cascio, 1999; DeCoster & Burcham, 2002; Graff, 2007; Kaplan & Dziegielewski, 1999; Sheridan & Hemert, 1999). A study of social workers in 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). A study of Canadian social workers found that spirituality is highly important in their personal and professional lives (Csiernik & Adams, 2003).

The theme of insufficient education on spirituality and religion is corroborated by clinical social workers who reported a lack of training to address religion and spirituality in their practice with children and youth (Kvarfordt, 2005). Understanding how field instructors address religion while supervising practicum students can shed light on the dearth of exposure to it and on optimal ways 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*:

Spiritual competence can be defined as an active, ongoing process characterized by the following three, interrelated dimensions: 1) a growing awareness of one's own value-informed, spiritual worldview and its associated assumptions, limitations, and biases, 2) a developing empathic understanding of the client's spiritual worldview that is devoid of negative judgment and, 3) an increasing ability to design and implement intervention strategies that are appropriate, relevant, and sensitive to the client's spiritual worldview. (Hodge & Bushfield, 2006, p. 106)

This definition 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, Moulton, 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 spiritual and religious content has been included within social work curriculum, the focus was primarily on micro level issues (Ai). This is confirmed by social work administrators who reported 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 of 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., 2004). Opinions continue to vary on how to incorporate content within the social work curriculum most effectively (Ai et al.).

Ethical issues have arisen when spirituality and religion are incorporated into social work practice. Despite agreement on the importance of spirituality and religion, there has been evidence that religious or spiritual social workers experienced discrimination within academic institutions and from their colleagues (Ressler & Hodge, 2005). Orthodox and liberal social workers also reported that they knew of clients who have experienced discrimination by social workers due to their religious beliefs (Ressler & Hodge). Having studied the perception of students in regard to spiritual sensitivity, it appeared that in general social workers may have had 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 motivate 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 spiritual issues with clients: 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 indicated that practitioners were open to addressing spiritual and religious issues and that clients wanted 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 regarding assessment tools that aid practitioners in addressing matters of faith in the beginning stages of the helping relationship (Winship, 2004). A variety of instruments have been designed to focus specifically on matters of faith, including spiritual ecomaps, genograms, lifemaps, and the Intrinsic Spirituality Scale (Frame, 2000; Hodge, 2001; Hodge, 2003b; Hodge, 2005b; Limb & Hodge, 2007). Hodge (2005c) discussed five different instruments in regard to their strengths and weaknesses. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) now requires a spiritual assessment for health care organizations receiving federal funds (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) offered a social constructionist perspective as a means of creating a therapeutic environment conducive to discussing faith matters. Walking the labyrinth (an ancient meditation tool that entails walking a circular path to the center) or praying during therapy were effective interventions that met 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 (McInnis-Dittrich, 2009; 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 felt empowered when spirituality was 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 showed statistically significant success with persons experiencing depression or anxiety (Hurst, Williams, King, & Viken, 2008).

Following the events of September 11, 2001, it may be even more necessary for social workers to be trained in addressing matters of spirituality and religion (Ai, et al., 2004; Davidowitz-Farkas & Hutchison-Hall, 2005). Houses of faith swelled the first

weekend after the tragic event, as people turned to spiritual and religious leaders to make sense of their grief. Grief turned to anger and resulted in a backlash toward Muslim and Sikh people, resulting in incidents of violence (Ai, et al.). Social workers need to be equipped to handle the roles spirituality and religion play in human development while advocating for vulnerable members of society who are religious minorities. Providing social workers with an overview of various religions helps them to conduct practice in culturally sensitive ways (Hodge, 2002).

The demographic landscape of the United States is shifting greatly as we experience an increase in the aging population. Baby Boomers are growing older and life expectancy has grown dramatically. In a society that is extremely youth-oriented, social workers need to be equipped to address spiritual dimensions among an aging population for several reasons (Ai, 2002). First, it is predicted that by the year 2040, there will be a 50% increase in the number of people coping with a chronic condition, making the aging population particularly disadvantaged (Ai). Secondly, as people cope with difficult experiences, spiritual concerns that address human value and the meaning of death become intensified (Ai). Third, by virtue of their life experiences in an ever-changing society, baby boomers have demonstrated over the years “their special needs for spiritual care as an important part of human well-being” (Ai, p. 106).

*General overview of dual degree programs in social work and divinity.*

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. These programs expand on the concept of integration through one elective course or minimal content in existing courses 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's 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.

Lee and O'Gorman (2005) highlighted the advantages of combining an MSW with an M.Div., as the professions of social work and ministry lend themselves to being combined. However, Ashby (2005) also discussed 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 concluded 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)

### *Specific Context*

There are approximately 30 graduate schools that combine a master of social work with some type of master’s degree related to religion, including theology, pastoral ministry, religious education, pastoral counseling, Jewish studies and divinity. There are currently 21 schools that combine social work and divinity. A Master of Divinity or “M. Div.,” is unique in that it is the only degree specifically designed to train persons to become clergy. This study was limited to persons seeking dual degrees in social work and divinity. There are persons (like myself) who have master’s degrees in social work and divinity but did not complete a dual degree program. This study was limited to the context of dual degree program graduates. Specifically, the aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of graduates while they were in the dual degree program.

### *Assumptions*

I received an MSW in 1990. My professional experience has been that, although social workers espouse to use a wholistic approach when working with persons, spirituality and issues of faith are often not addressed. My experience has been that

colleagues are more comfortable dealing with the taboos of incest or addiction than with matters of faith. I also hold an M.Div. degree, which I completed in 2005, and am an ordained minister. My seminary required only one three credit course on pastoral care out of a program that required 90 credit hours (the equivalent of a doctorate). Yet, I was required to have 15 credits of church history. As one classmate observed, parishioners never call their pastor at 3:00 a.m. to ask a question about church history, but will call in the middle of the night because they are in psychological and emotional pain. Ministers often refer parishioners to outside counselors, but that is not always possible. Having received education in social work and divinity, my assumption is that persons with both degrees are better equipped to handle psycho-social issues that bring up theological questions such as “why is there suffering?” “Where is God in the midst of personal or communal tragedy?” My assumption is that dually-trained persons are equipped to meet both psychological and spiritual needs.

#### *Choice of Qualitative Research Method*

Conducting a quantitative or qualitative study is predicated upon the research question, how much is already known, and what information the researcher is seeking.

Qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Alternatively, a quantitative study, consistent with the quantitative paradigm, is an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true. (Creswell, 1994, p. 1-2)

Leedy (1997) outlined four different types of qualitative research, including “case study, ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory in regard to: the purpose of the research, nature of the research process, methods of data collection, methods of data

analysis, and how the findings are communicated”(p. 166). Case study usually seeks to examine a single case to better understand a person or phenomenon. Ethnography seeks to “understand the relationship between behavior and culture” (Leedy, p. 166).

Phenomenology describes a particular experience from the perspectives of those involved. Finally, grounded theory aims at deriving a theory that links the perspective of the participants to social science theories.

Qualitative inquiry was appropriate to studying participants in dual degree programs because little if anything is currently known about how many people are graduates of such programs and what their experiences were like in combining degrees in social work and divinity. I was not seeking to derive a theory about dual degree programs or understand the culture of such programs. Conducting a case study might have been helpful in understanding one such program or the experiences of one graduate. However, I wanted to have a general description of the experience from the perspective of students in a variety of programs. Consequently, I used a phenomenological framework and methodology as a basis for understanding the experiences of dual degree graduates. “As a qualitative method, phenomenological analysis seeks to grasp holistically the ‘lived experience’ and the life worlds of study participants who share a particular experience in common” (Padgett, 2008, p. 486). In regards to this study, the common experience was completing a dual degree program in social work and divinity regardless of what institution participants attended.

### *Relevance to Social Work*

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. Hodge and Bushfield (2006) discussed what it means to be spiritually competent. Churches have their own languages, norms, nonverbal symbols, codes, and patterns of relationship—essentially, their own culture (Garland, 1995). 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 church’s culture (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 as 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 of 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.

## Chapter Two

### *Evolution of Study*

#### *Rationale*

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 having a religious or secular worldview. 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% of respondents 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 (churches) 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). Such faith groups as Church of Satan, Christian Scientists, and Wiccans 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 showed that religious values played a key role in the 2008 presidential election (Tolson, 2008).

Religion is complicated by 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 president of a company that conducts public opinion research, 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.

### *Historical Context*

The profession of social work has its roots in the Christian church. Christians throughout the centuries have provided care to the poor and oppressed (Garland, 1995). Church groups and individuals during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries formed Charity Organization Societies (COS) that were designed by middle-class women to improve the condition of the poor and indigent (Brieland, 1995). Quakers, with their focus on egalitarianism, were influential in prison reform, reforms in care for the mentally ill and disabled, and the opposition of slavery (Garland, 1992). An Iowa Congregationalist minister, Charles O. Brown, was the first to use the term “social gospel” in 1886 (Garland, 1995). The Christian basis for social concern and social action was founded in the social gospel movement.

In the midst of such reform movements, the social work profession was developing. Jane Addams became a pioneer social worker in the settlement house movement after rejecting a missionary career (Garland, 1992). A leading social work executive and social reformer, Owen R. Lovejoy, began his career as a minister serving as pastor of a congregation in Illinois from 1839-1856 (Garland, 1995; Lovejoy, 2008). As social work has become secularized over the years, the church has moved from being the primary host setting to one of many host settings.

Since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the strict separation of church and state has been reversed, allowing for faith-based agencies to receive government funding (Cnaan, 2008). The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 contained

a section referred to as “Charitable Choice” (Cnaan). Despite continued debates by religious leaders over the benefits and problems associated with Charitable Choice, George W. Bush was instrumental in the creation of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (Boddie, 2008). “The office was designed to increase the public role of religious organizations in the provision of welfare, to blur the lines of the church-state separation, and to encourage all government units to contract out with religious organizations” (Cnaan, p. 441).

Supporters of Bush’s faith-based initiative hold several assumptions:

- 1) Located in communities, congregations are more responsive, flexible, and less encumbered by bureaucracy;
- 2) Congregations are better positioned to recruit and employ volunteers and therefore provide social services at a lower cost;
- 3) Congregation donations that currently support social services will increase in response to demand for services;
- 4) Legislative reforms related to charitable giving will provide incentives to increase giving. (Boddie, 2008, p. 171-172)

Cnaan (2008) noted that social work and religion “are the two elements that are most concerned with the welfare of the needy and disadvantaged in our society...A coalition between the religious social services and social work is always stronger than each walking alone” (p. 441-442).

The emphasis in recent years on the collaboration of faith-based organizations with social services providers has seen an increase in the number of social workers who work not only in community organizations affiliated with the church, but are hired on as part of church staff (Cnaan, 2008). Dual degree programs in social work and divinity have risen out of this trend as persons are seeking to gain professional training in both fields of study so as to be of better service to church parishioners and members of local church communities. Persons receiving dual degrees also bring with them the

professionalism that comes with formal training as opposed to church volunteers who may genuinely care for people, but who may be ill-equipped to handle critical or crisis situations. It is relevant to have a basic understanding of parish social work because it provides a sense of what it means for social workers to work in a congregational setting.

Parish social work refers to professionally trained social workers holding either a bachelor's or master's degree in social work and who work in a congregational setting. Baylor University offers a specialty track training social workers to work in faith communities (CSWE, 2003-04). Parish social work is a specialty area under the umbrella of church social work. The term church social work includes social service agencies affiliated with a particular congregation, social service agencies that are the effort of more than one congregation coming together to provide services to the community, and individual social workers who are on the staff of a specific congregation (Garland, 1998). Parish social workers bring the knowledge, values and skills of the social work profession to the congregation as a resource (Garland, 1992). These social workers assess the needs of the parishioners and members of the community. They define those needs in the context of the mission of the church to minister to people. They provide leadership in equipping the congregation to provide these services or take social action (Garland, 1992).

Social workers take a wholistic approach to their practice, which includes an understanding of the relationship between the social, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of people. Social work education generally does not teach students how to articulate their faith (Larkin, 1983). However, that is a vital skill for a parish social worker meeting the multifaceted needs of people. Parish social workers frequently go

unnoticed because they hold various job titles which may not distinguish them as social workers (Garland, 1987). What makes these social workers unique is their commitment to integrating their faith and practice, the profession of social work with the profession of ministry (Ferguson, 1992; Taylor & Wolfer, 1999).

The church is a place where people in trouble naturally turn to for help (Lehmacher, 1997). Parishioners feel a sense of trust with church staff that allows them to ask for assistance when they normally would not. This is why it is vital that parish social workers be members of the congregation (Garland, 1995). People are more likely to approach the parish social worker at a church supper, or after a Sunday service, as that is less threatening than going to a community mental health agency. Consequently, social work in a church setting allows the social worker to reach clients that may otherwise fall through the cracks.

Parish social workers carry out traditional social work roles including overseeing social ministry programs, supervising volunteers, coordinating self-help groups, assessing the needs of the congregation and community, and implementing new programs to meet those needs (Garland, 1987). “A majority of congregations participate in or support social service activity at some level, although only a small minority of them operate their own programs. If they do have programs, they are likely to be short-term, small-scale poverty relief of various sorts—food and clothes pantries and emergency financial assistance operations” (Garland, 2008, p. 284). Congregations are also a significant source of volunteers as they frequently provide volunteers for existing social programs, like Habitat for Humanity (Garland, 2008).

Parish social workers also provide direct care to parishioners in the form of counseling (Lehmacher, 1997). Parish social workers use counseling within their practice in many ways (Garland, 1987). Some may provide long term counseling themselves, others may do an initial assessment and refer the individual out to a trained counselor, while still others are instrumental in developing and overseeing lay ministry programs to meet the crisis needs of the congregation (Schmitt, 1988).

Parish social workers are not limited to one practice focus. They may address a gamut of issues dealing with basic needs for shelter, food and safety to counseling issues concerning addictions, family matters or marital discord. Depending on the specific needs of the particular parish, some social workers engage only in case management, only counseling or some combination of both. As a result of such variety, a parish social worker must have excellent skills as a general practitioner (Muehlhausen, 2003). Many social workers also engage in activities traditionally assigned to ministers. Parish social workers interact with many types of community within the setting of the church. They also work with many client systems, including individuals, couples, families, groups and the parish as a whole.

### *Previous Research*

#### *Preliminary research on parish social work.*

In May/June of 2001, I interviewed five parish social workers over the phone as part of a preliminary study to sort out key areas of study with regard to the field of parish social work. Interviews lasted 45-90 minutes and focused on a dual purpose—defining the field of parish social work, and understanding how best to prepare and equip future social workers for a career in churches. When asked to describe what it is like to be a



social worker on a church staff, respondents focused primarily on their ability to incorporate spirituality and faith into their practice. All had worked in secular settings previously. They enjoy the church setting because it gives them the “freedom to be wholistic.” While working in secular settings, even that of a hospital, they were not able to address issues of faith as freely. The ability to address spiritual issues as a legitimate aspect of treatment was very refreshing to them.

When asked how their role differed from that of a traditional minister, they unanimously stated that it was their ability as a general practitioner to 1) assess client needs, and 2) connect people with the necessary and appropriate resources. They also said that they had more time to spend with people in sessions than the ministers. Their experience was that ministers were so busy preparing for worship, leading educational classes, or focusing on traditional ministerial duties that they did not have time to conduct a thorough assessment of client needs. Interviewees reported that ministers are also not trained to conduct thorough assessments or to know the local community in the same way as social workers. Hence, it was much more effective to have people meet with the social worker unless the pastor was specifically needed to address the client issue.

Defining “client” can be tricky in a church setting according to parish social workers. At times the whole parish is defined as the client. This is true when the social worker assists with worship or leads educational programs. Social workers educate the parishioners on the purpose or mission of social ministry programs. They help parishioners connect the dots between their individual faith journey and their relationship to their “neighbors.” Social workers provide a key leadership role in defining and implementing the parish’s connection to the local community. “Client” can also be

defined as individuals, couples or families within the parish that require counseling or support of some kind. Depending on how the individual congregation defines the job description of the social worker, she/he may engage in crisis or short-term counseling with parishioners.

Whether or not clients are members of the congregation greatly affects the degree to which issues of faith are addressed by the social worker. With individuals who are members of the congregation, issues of faith are an integral part of the social worker's practice. With parishioners, the social worker feels free to initiate discussions of faith just like she would any other topic. Prayer is also quite prevalent in the social worker's interactions with parishioners, as counseling sessions are frequently ended in prayer.

According to the parish social workers interviewed, issues of faith are not as readily addressed with clients who are not parishioners. Contrary to what secular social workers may think, parish social workers do not see their primary role as evangelism. They may or may not offer to pray with someone at the end of their time together, depending on what issues have been discussed. The social worker interviewed who sees people in need of basic assistance, prays with people only if they ask or if they raise issues of faith. As another social worker put it, she has strong beliefs about "not using help as bait for evangelism." With non-parishioners, faith is part of her practice in so much as it dictates her purpose for providing care. She is "acting out God's love in tangible ways by showing that she genuinely cares about people." She accepts people where they are and respects their differences. She sees her role as giving people options while understanding that God gives us "choices and free will."

The social workers I spoke with felt prepared to work in a church setting. When asked what suggestions they had for educators charged with equipping future parish social workers, they stressed two things. First, parish social workers need to be spiritually mature in terms of honoring one's own faith journey and not be afraid to openly express their faith. This is important if one is to assist in worship, lead educational programs, or pray with others. Second, they found it helpful to have taken courses on Biblical or theological studies in conjunction with the traditional social work curriculum. This educational background makes it possible for them to speak the language of the church as well as the language of social work.

Northern (2009) recently conducted a study of 30 social workers employed in churches. She used the same survey questionnaire used in a 1987 study (Garland, 1987). One of Northern's significant findings was in response to asking research participants what they would like to see in social work education. Participants listed the following educational needs:

- Ethical issues of social work within churches
- Dual roles
- Learning how to educate and motivate the congregation toward social justice and volunteerism
- How to collaborate with agencies and other churches
- Conferences on this subject
- Education about the dynamics of church culture
- Grant writing
- Counseling skills
- More schools providing education about practicing within a congregational context (Northern, 2009, p. 280).

Northern's (2009) study suggested that social workers on a church staff engage in many of the same practices as their secular counterparts in regard to linking persons with other support systems, collaborating with communities, and individual problem-solving.

She also found that church social workers must deal with the additional issues of dualistic relationships and isolation. Many of her respondents commented on the need to network with other social workers on a church staff.

*Research on dual degree graduates.*

The few schools I contacted to obtain information to compile Appendix B do not keep statistics on the number of graduates who have completed the dual degree program. In regard to research, 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 (n = 45) holding dual degrees in social work and religious studies (of some sort) with persons (n = 36) 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, 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 the cause of differences between the two groups. “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 five 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)

*Preliminary research on dual degree programs.*

*Social Work and Divinity* by Lee and O’Gorman (2005) discussed the results of a symposium on dual degree programs in social work and divinity held at Loyola University Chicago in April of 2002. Both authors were contacted to obtain additional information. Dr. O’Gorman strongly concurred with Ashby’s (2005) finding that at Loyola University (where Lee and O’Gorman teach), the dual degree program is not integrated at all (R. O’Gorman, personal communication, May 8, 2008). Part of the difficulty is that students may receive their M.Div. degree from a number of local Chicago seminaries while completing their MSW from Loyola. The other difficulty with integration is the number of students in the dual degree program at any given time. Typically, there are only one or two students at a time working on the dual degree, which makes it problematic in terms of course offerings, integrated seminars, or having classmates with whom to connect. O’Gorman says that in the spring of 2008, for the first time, there were 8 applicants to the dual degree program. O’Gorman reiterated that clinical pastoral education is an excellent means for integrating the perspectives of social work and ministry, and that it would allow students to complete practicum requirements for both degrees in a single setting (O’Gorman, 2005). However, he has had numerous difficulties finding supervisors willing to support such students. Social workers are leery

of students emphasizing faith, and ministers are leery of social workers focusing too much on psycho-social issues. There is a good amount of groundwork that needs to be done in preparing practicum sites and preparing supervisors to handle the unique needs of dual degree students.

Dr. Lee referred to dual degree programs as being in the infancy stage in terms of theory and pedagogy (D. Lee, personal communication, June 23, 2008). Dual degree programs in social work and divinity are so new that there are a limited number of graduates and students currently enrolled. Dr. Lee said that until dual degree programs have produced a first generation of graduates, there will continue to be problems in finding adequate field placements and supervisors who understand both degrees. He attributes the growing trend of dual degrees to the feminist movement and the ability of women to be ordained in many denominations. He also thinks that students seek a dual degree due to the flexibility it gives them within the job market.

Dr. Lee believes there is a three step process involved in truly integrating dual degree programs:

- 1) Ridding institutions of dichotomous thinking (splitting religious beliefs from social work practices) despite social work's emphasis on wholistic treatment of clients.
- 2) More comparative analysis on the strengths and weaknesses of social work and ministry to develop a clear understanding of each
- 3) Integrative work, including theory development, that brings the strengths of social work and ministry together in ways that create a synergistic win/win. (D. Lee, personal communication, June 23, 2008).

Staff persons at the CSWE bookstore were unable to find any published material on dual degree programs when contacted. Consequently, I purchased from CSWE: 1) Directory of Colleges and Universities with Accredited Social Work Degree Programs, 2) Statistics on Social Work Education in the United States for 2004 (most recent) and 3)

Summary Information on Master of Social Work Programs for 2003-04 (most recent).

The latter had descriptions of schools with master's programs including which schools offer dual degrees. Jayaratne (2008) cites a survey by deans and directors outlining dual degree programs and lists CSWE as the publisher. However, according to CSWE, this is unpublished data, but CSWE did supply me with a list of dual degree programs by type of degree and another file listed by the college/university (E. Simon, personal communication, August 20, 2008). (See Appendix A for a list of schools and the dual degrees offered). This list was not as comprehensive as the one I compiled from the Summary Information. I now understand firsthand why Jayaratne says "there are some questions about the reliability and comprehensiveness of these data" (p. 85).

Compiling data on which schools of social work offer dual degrees and whether both degrees are received from one institution, or a university in collaboration with a local seminary was in itself. I searched the internet on several occasions looking for schools that offer dual degrees in social work and divinity. Websites do not always list this as an option or bury the information so it is not readily available. I also found 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 (See Appendix B for a working list of schools offering dual degrees in social work and divinity).

Miller, Hopkins, and Greif (2008) reported similar difficulties in obtaining information regarding dual degree programs in social work as they, too, found CSWE's data to be out of date. In searching the websites of 167 accredited schools of social work, their study confirmed difficulty in finding information regarding dual degree programs on the websites of schools of social work, making it difficult for students to know that obtaining a dual degree is even an option. Despite the lack of information, they did find that dual degree programs in social work are on the rise.

Given the lack of current information regarding dual degree programs in social work and divinity, the aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of persons who have received an MSW and an M. Div. from dual degree programs. Phenomenology, a methodology that seeks to understand lived experiences, provided an appropriate method for beginning this process of understanding.



## Chapter Three

### *Method of Inquiry: Phenomenology in General*

#### *Introduction to Phenomenology*

Phenomenology is complex in that it refers to a philosophical tradition as well as a methodology (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006; Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). “In its broadest sense, phenomenology refers to a person’s construction of the meaning of a phenomenon, as opposed to the phenomenon as it exists external to the person. The phenomenon experienced and/or studied may be an event, a relationship, an emotion, or even an educational program” (Leedy, 1997, p. 161). “Phenomenological researchers, particularly those of a descriptive bent, focus on what an experience means for persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it” (Schram, 2006, p. 98). 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, p. 99). “The goal of phenomenology is to describe lived experience” (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007, p. 77).

Schram (2006) identifies five basic assumptions of phenomenologists:

- 1) Human behavior occurs and is understandable only in the context of relationships to things, people, events, and situations
- 2) Perceptions present us with evidence of the world, not as the world is thought to be but as it is lived. Thus, understanding the everyday life of a group of people is a matter of understanding how those people perceive and act upon objects of experience
- 3) The reality of anything is not “out there” in an objective or detached sense but is inextricably tied to one’s consciousness of it. Phenomenologists discuss this idea in terms of the intentionality of consciousness. Accordingly, you cannot develop an understanding of a phenomenon apart from understanding people’s experience of or with that phenomenon.

- 4) Language is the central medium through which meaning is constructed and conveyed. Thus, the meaning of a particular aspect of experience can be revealed through dialogue and reflection.
- 5) It is possible to understand and convey the essence, or central underlying meaning, of a particular concept or phenomenon as experienced by a number of individuals. This premise is associated primarily with descriptive phenomenology, an approach that rests on the thesis that essential structures constitute any human experience. (p. 99)

### *Rationale for Phenomenology*

Phenomenology as a method of inquiry was appropriate to this study as I was seeking to understand the lived experience of persons who have completed a dual degree program in social work and divinity. I was interested in the everyday life of dual degree graduates in the context of how they have combined social work with ministry. Specifically, I was interested in the lived experiences of graduates while they were in the dual degree program. In keeping with phenomenological principles, the phenomenon of dual degree programs cannot be understood apart from understanding the experiences of graduates. I was interested in discovering the essence or fundamental meaning of the experience of dual degree graduates as a group regardless of which schools participants attended.

### *History of Phenomenology*

The boundaries between phenomenological philosophy and methodology become so blurred that it is difficult at times to distinguish phenomenological philosophers from methodologists. Part of the difficulty is that phenomenology is a philosophical tradition that undergirds most qualitative inquiry (Hatch, 2002). Although many people have contributed to the philosophy of phenomenology, there are some key persons who stand out in the literature. Edmund Husserl is widely credited as the first

phenomenological philosopher (Jones et al., 2006; Sokolowski, 2000; Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). Husserl drew on the work of Franz Brentano (who wrote on the many senses of being in Aristotle) and Carl Stumpf (a psychologist and student of Brentano) (Sokolowski; Speziale & Carpenter). Yet, Husserl's work far exceeded that of Brentano and Stumpf (Sokolowski). The German phase of phenomenology is attributed to the work of Husserl (1857-1938), and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). Max Scheler and Hans-Georg Gadamer are also included in this phase (Jones et al.; Sokolowski 2000). The concepts of essences, intuiting, and phenomenological reduction came out of this phase (Speziale & Carpenter). The French phase includes the work of Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961). "The primary concepts developed during this phase were embodiment and being-in-the-world" (Speziale & Carpenter, p. 80).

Much of the literature on phenomenology focuses on the core elements shared by philosophers. Yet, each philosopher did form a slightly different school of thought: "Gadamer's work focused on the philosophical and historical; Husserl, on transcendental psychology; Heidegger, on hermeneutic phenomenology; and Merleau-Ponty, on existential phenomenology" (Jones et al., 2006, p. 46). Research in education tends to represent hermeneutic phenomenology or "the science of interpretation" (Jones et al., p. 46). All forms of phenomenology take a constructivist approach, believing that multiple realities exist, which are socially constructed.

### *Heidegger's Hermeneutic Phenomenology*

Phenomenology is an umbrella term under which there are different schools of thought that overlap, yet offer distinctions (R. Sloan, personal communication, November

12, 2008). This project utilized the philosophical principles of Martin Heidegger as a foundation for hermeneutic methodology. Leonard (1994) provides an excellent framework for understanding Heidegger's concept of the person, of which there are five key facets, including:

- 1) Persons as having a world.
- 2) The person as a being for whom things have significance and value.
- 3) The person as self interpreting.
- 4) The person as embodied.
- 5) The person in time. (Leonard, 1994, p. 46-54)

*Persons as having a world.*

Researchers engaging in Heideggerian hermeneutic inquiry assume that human communities share an understanding of their lived experiences that is shaped by culture, language, and other social practices. This is not simply to imply that all persons hold the same understandings, but to indicate that understandings are shaped by experiences in particular worlds. (Baker, Norton, Young & Ward, 1998, p. 549)

For example, social workers share a common understanding regarding social work history, culture, language, educational requirements, and practice roles, i.e., the *world* of social work. Social workers can carry on conversations regarding the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics* as social workers all share an understanding of those ethics and the importance of following ethical guidelines.

The concept of worldview can refer to any human community that shares a common understanding regarding life experiences, history, language and beliefs. The list of communities containing a worldview is endless as all human beings participate in many communities based on race, gender, geographic location, economic status, marital status, religious affiliation, and profession/career. Any phenomenological interpretation is then grounded in this construction of a worldview (Baker, et al., 1998). It is important to note that when Heidegger wrote about the concept of worldview, he was referring to

persons in the context of *a* worldview (R. Sloan, personal communication, November 4, 2009).

Included in Heidegger's concept of persons as having a world is the concept of "thrownness" (Leonard, 1994). This means that persons are "thrown" into a particular place in time, race, culture, economic status, geographic location and family at birth. One's personal concept of self is established within the confines of the culture and world into which they were born. "In other words, world sets up possibilities for who a person can become and who she cannot become" (Leonard, p. 48).

The concept of "thrownness" also refers to situations into which a person is thrown. For example, anyone who has dealt with a chronic illness understands what it means to be suddenly thrown into a world surrounded by medical doctors, language, procedures, equipment, paperwork, etc. (Sloan, 2002). Pember (2002) chronicled her experiences of being thrown into the world of the Civil War. Pember served as matron of the Confederate Chimborazo Hospital during the war and poignantly describes how basic luxuries and supplies grew scarce over the course of the war, thus creating a new world order.

When an individual is thrown into a new world, she/he often experiences the Heideggerian principle of "breakdown." A person's concept of world is typically so pervasive that it is overlooked until there is some form of "breakdown" (Leonard, 1994). There are so many aspects to one's language, culture, station in life, and general worldview that one is unaware of until they are gone. The events at Fort Hood, Texas, in November, 2009, in which a United States serviceman opened fire and killed 13 persons on a U.S. military base, provide an excellent example of "breakdown." Many people on

the base at the time of the shooting had loved ones serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The comment was frequently made that military personnel expect to be in danger or to fear for their lives when they are stationed in a foreign country in the midst of an actual war zone. They do not expect to be killed on a U.S. military base which is perceived to be safe and where one is surrounded by allies. Hence, there was a significant sense of “breakdown.”

*The person as a being for whom things have significance and value.*

Heideggerian phenomenologists study persons in context. Empirical research treats variables such as anxiety in pregnancy as something that is context-free (Leonard, 1994). However, anxiety in pregnancy varies greatly among pregnant women because pregnancy and motherhood can hold different meanings based on whether the pregnancy was planned, accidental, or the result of a forced sexual encounter. Understanding anxiety in pregnancy will vary greatly depending on the circumstances, that is, on the *world* of the pregnant woman. The significance then of women’s anxiety during pregnancy changes based on the context in which women experience anxiety.

Sloan (2002) interviewed patients on their experiences of using a dialysis machine. Medical personnel and many patients perceive dialysis machines as life-saving devices. Yet, Sloan found that many patients experienced the dialysis machine as “killing them.” For patients in this group, the dialysis machine signified a loss of self and of a normal lifestyle. The significance of the dialysis machine was predicated upon the context of the patient’s worldview (Sloan).

*The person as self interpreting.*

According to Heidegger, human beings are engaged in “interpretive understanding” in the context of our “linguistic and cultural traditions” (Leonard, 1994, p. 52). For example, Caudill and Weinstein (1969) studied Japanese and American babies and found “that by the age of 4 months the babies studied had become distinctly Japanese or American” (Leonard, p. 52). “In the phenomenological view, then, persons can never perceive ‘brute facts’ out there in the world. Nothing can be encountered independent of our background understanding. Every encounter is an interpretation based on our background” (Leonard, p. 52).

*The person as embodied.*

From the standpoint of phenomenology, people do not have bodies, but rather are embodied (Leonard, 1994). Bodies are not simply some object machine. We gain access to the world through our bodies. It is our bodies and our senses that make us conscious of experiences (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). When illness occurs, it impacts the patient’s ability to negotiate the world (Leonard). The problem is not the “breakdown” in a machine, but instead the patient’s embodiment which must now be renegotiated. Leonard argues that nurses understand more than medical doctors the need for patients to “reclaim that sense of embodiment that allows for their taken-for-granted, unselfconscious transactions with the world” (p. 53). Likewise, social workers working with clients who have experienced some form of physical trauma, such as child abuse, rape, domestic violence or the effects of war, understand that physical trauma does not affect the body as if it were an object machine. Instead, clients experience the physical trauma in ways that impact their cognitions, emotions, and spiritual beliefs--their entire

sense of self. Therefore, a significant part of the therapeutic healing process centers around helping clients renegotiate a world in which their bodies hold painful memories.

*The person in time.*

Traditional Western notions of time are linear in nature (Leonard, 1994, p. 53). Under this paradigm, time is viewed as a series of nows that are unrelated, yet belong to one another in a successive way. In contrast, Heidegger viewed time as essential to being. The Heideggerian concept of “being in time” can only be understood in the context of “having-been-ness and being expectant” (Leonard, p. 54).

To return to the example of anxiety in pregnancy, the older pregnant woman with career commitments has a having-been-ness that includes, perhaps, insisting on doing things with great precision and care. Her having-been-ness has also included much rumination on whether an infant can be left in the care of a nonparent while the parents both return to work full time. Her being-expectant includes an awareness that her company expects her to return to work full time as an equally functioning member of the “team.” Her anxiety in pregnancy, then, can be seen as being constituted by her past and future. (Leonard, 1994, p. 54)

*Heidegger and Theology*

Heidegger’s philosophy was also heavily influenced by his experiences with and understanding of theology (Caputo, 2006). Heidegger was raised in a devoutly Catholic family and was groomed for the priesthood until 1911, when his health prevented him from continuing his studies. His theological and philosophical thinking went through different phases and was influenced by the World Wars (Caputo). As a philosophy and subsequent methodology, one of the fundamental aspects of Heideggerian phenomenology is its focus on essences or themes that emerge from studying the lived experiences of persons and thus give subsequent meaning to a particular phenomenon.



In keeping with this pattern of thought, Heidegger sought to demythologize Christianity, which heavily influenced his work on Being and Time (Caputo, 2006; Heidegger, 1962). Demythologizing entails sorting out the themes of Christianity regarding care, decision, and authenticity from cosmic myths about heaven and hell as places above and below the earth and about heavenly messengers who move between these places (Caputo). Heidegger focused on the fact that although we know little of the “historical” Jesus, we know a great deal about the earliest communities of His followers. These communities’ stories of Jesus “contain the essence of the Christian message, the saving truth” (Caputo, p. 331). “The task of theology, armed now with the Heideggerian analytic of existence, is to deconstruct and demythologize the canonical Gospels in order to retrieve their *kerygman*, the living-existential Christian message, one of existential conversion (*metanoia*), of becoming authentic in the face of our finitude and guilt, a task that faces every human being” (Caputo, p. 331). Many Christian theologians, including Paul Tillich (a colleague of Heidegger) have been influenced by Heidegger’s work (Caputo). Tillich emphasized a conversational theology (Williamson, 1999), which was in keeping with Heidegger’s emphasis on conversing with research participants’ narratives (Baker et al., 1998).

#### *Heideggerian Phenomenology Methodology/Procedures*

Theory assumes a different role in hermeneutical phenomenology. The focus is on understanding the phenomenon based on meanings that arise out of the lived experience of those engaging in the phenomenon (Leonard, 1994). The phenomenological researcher does not make theoretical assumptions or predictions. Hermeneutical theory simply seeks to reveal meanings associated with practical

knowledge that is left hidden in empirical research approaches (Leonard). Heidegger's phenomenology is concerned with ontology: "what does it mean to *be* a person and how is the world intelligible to us at all?" (Leonard, p. 46). Phenomenology then explores "what it means to be a person in a particular situation at a particular time" (Sloan, 2002, p. 124). Such an orientation was fitting for this particular study, which sought to understand what it means for graduates to *be* persons with dual degrees navigating the world of social work and the world of ministry while experiencing the particular situation (world) of a dual degree program. For Heidegger, "human beings are always already in the world as interpreters of experience" (Sloan, p. 128).

Drawing on Heidegger's view of the person, phenomenological methodology assumes that "the researcher has a preliminary understanding of the human action being studied. It is by virtue of our world that we, as researchers, have the questions we have, and that we see the possibilities we see" (Leonard, 1994, p. 57). Forestructure is the term Heidegger used to describe preunderstanding, which contains three aspects (Leonard, 1994). First, fore-having refers to the background practices that make us familiar with a phenomenon (Diekelmann & Ironside, 2006). Second, fore-sight concerns the particular interpretive lens through which we approach our research question (Leonard). This conceptual framework provides the means for gaining access to the phenomenon. Fore-conception is the final aspect of the forestructure: "there is always a preliminary sense of what counts as a question and what would count as an answer" (Leonard, p. 57).

Equipped with this preunderstanding, the researcher enters the phenomenological study with the goal to "borrow" other people's experiences. We gather other people's experiences because they allow us, in a vicarious sort of way, to become more

experienced ourselves” (Van Manen, 2008, retrieved under heading “empirical methods”). Specific means for gathering data on experiences include: a) protocol writing (which includes having research participants write an account of their experiences; b) interviewing participants; c) observing; and d) studying descriptions of experiences found in various forms of literature and art (Hatch, 2002).

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 (Diekmann & Ironside, 2006). “A theme is a recurrent category that reflects the shared experiences and practices embedded in the interview texts” (Diekmann, 2001, p. 56). The goal is to reveal previously hidden interpretations through continuous engagement with participants’ narratives (Baker, et al., 1998). The focus is on *understanding* anything that is uncovered rather than focusing on an empirically correct interpretation (Baker, et al.).

Another assumption of Heideggerian phenomenology is that the interpretive process is circular in nature (Leonard, 1994). The research process juxtaposes parts with the whole in a hermeneutical circle. The researcher looks at the lived experiences of participants to gain a deeper understanding - in other words, pick out the themes or essences of what is already known about the whole phenomenon. The researcher then reexamines the whole in light of new insights gained from the parts. “The interpretive

process follows this part-whole strategy until the researcher is satisfied with the depth of his or her understanding. Thus, the interpretive process has no clear termination” (Leonard, p. 57). For example, we cannot understand the term sadness without describing a situation that is sad and our response to the situation. Our understanding exists in a circular fashion where the situation, feeling and reaction all refer back to each other.

Hermeneutical phenomenology also assumes that there is no atemporal, ahistorical, objective view of the world because the researcher also has a world that exists in historical time (Leonard, 1994). Meanings are objective in the sense that they are shared and verifiable between research participants and the researcher. “The fact that researchers bring their experiences and presuppositions to the interpretation does not contaminate the interpretation but makes it meaningful” (Baker, et al., 1998, p. 550). Therefore, hermeneutic phenomenologists “do not attempt to isolate or ‘bracket’ their presuppositions but rather to make them explicit” (Diekelmann & Ironside, 2006, p. 261). This practice of making explicit any assumptions or preconceptions is referred to as decentering (Munhall, 2007).

In keeping with Heidegger’s hermeneutical circle, data analysis is not linear but occurs in a helical fashion. Sloan (2002) identifies three moments when interpretation occurs:

- Moment 1. “In the moment” interpretations occur simultaneously with gathering the original narrative
- Moment 2. Interpretations of each individual narrative as an entity to itself
- Moment 3. Interpretations of an ensemble of narratives collected across a life’s work (to date) of inquiry. (p. 129)

During “moment 1,” researchers clarify with the participant the meaning of what is said. Researchers also keep field notes regarding each interview in regard to thoughts and observations. When typing up transcripts from interviews for “moment 2,” any observations regarding body language or non-verbal expressions are added to give as much information regarding the original interview as possible. This is important as it is during moment 2 that each individual transcript is analyzed alone for what is contained within that single narrative (Sloan, 2002). It is during the 3<sup>rd</sup> “moment” that narratives are analyzed collectively to reveal patterns of meaning shared by all interviews.

## Chapter Four

### *Method of Inquiry: Phenomenology Applied*

#### *Aim*

The aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of persons who have received an MSW and an M.Div. from dual degree programs. Specifically, I was interested in the lived experiences of graduates while they were in the dual degree program.

#### *Quality Criteria*

There is debate among qualitative researchers regarding issues concerning rigor as many reject traditional terminology associated with quantitative research, in particular the terms validity and reliability (Trochim, 2006). Yet, other qualitative researchers still prefer to use the terms validity and reliability (Morse, Barrett, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Munhall (1994) defined validity in the following way: “validity in a phenomenological study is just that: the unaltered faithful telling of experiences by people” (p. 84). Munhall offered the following criteria for insuring rigor within phenomenological research:

- Resonancy: This concept or criterion indicates that the written interpretation of the meaning of the experience resonates with individuals.
- Reasonableness: Does the interpretation seem reasonable? Is it a possible explanation of the meaning of an experience?
- Representativeness: Does the study adequately represent the various dimensions of the lived experience?
- Recognizability: Like resonancy, it rings a chord; yet within this criterion, individuals read the study who have not necessarily had the experience and they recognize certain aspects about an experience that they now become more acutely aware of.
- Raised Consciousness: This is a response to your study that engenders a focus toward and a gaining understanding of an experience that the reader has not considered. Now brought to consciousness, the experience is seen fresh.

- Readability: Your study should read like an interesting conversation, and since we are attempting to understand experience, the writing should be understandable. Metaphors and analogies are useful aids to understanding.
- Relevance: Our studies should bring us close to our humanness, increase our consciousness, enable understanding, give us possible interpretations, offer us possible meaning, and guide us in our lives, personally and professionally.
- Revelations: This criterion reminds us that often something was concealed and that we were able to find a deeper level of understanding.
- Responsibility: We must always be aware of the ethical considerations of our study. (Munhall, 1994, p. 190-192)

The criteria outlined by Munhall (1994) overlap in many ways, but offer a foundational understanding for addressing issues of rigor in phenomenological research. These criteria are referenced as I discuss the application of phenomenological methods in regard to this study.

### *Sample*

In order to maintain *representativeness*, the sample was limited to schools and their graduates who offer dual degrees in social work and divinity. A convenient, snowball sample was utilized to identify graduates to interview. Demographic information regarding the research participants is found in Table 1. The sample was comprised of 16 persons, 6 more than proposed. Increasing the number of persons interviewed allowed for an increase in the diverse make up of participants as the first 10 participants interviewed were not of Hispanic descent. Having as much diversity as possible helped to rule out other variables and shed as much light as possible on the phenomenon itself. The sample included a total of eight Caucasians, two African Americans, an Asian American and an African. Half the participants were male and half were female. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 63. Nearly half (N = 7) of the

participants were ordained ministers and slightly over half (N = 9) chose not to be ordained. Participants represented seven states and five dual degree programs. Specific schools and the denominational affiliations of participants are not identified to adhere to the criteria of responsibility and maintain the confidentiality of the research participants. Likewise, the specific countries of origin, of the Hispanic and African participants, are not included to maintain as much confidentiality as possible. The number of dual degree programs and graduates of such programs is small enough that too much information could lead to participants being identified. Two participants held dual degrees in social work and religion rather than a master of divinity, a fact I was unaware of until I interviewed them. In consultation with my dissertation chair, I decided to include these participants and their data because the information shared during the interviews was not significantly different and the degrees were perceived to be similar enough to the focus of this study.

Table 1: Demographics of Research Participants (n = 16)

Demographic Information	#
Age Range of Participants	25-63
Denominations Represented	4
Schools Represented	5
States Represented	7
Participants Ordained as Ministers	7
Gender	
Males	8
Females	8
Race/Ethnicity	
Caucasians	8
Africans	1
African Americans	2
Asian Americans	1
Hispanics	4



### *Setting*

All participants were interviewed over the phone with the exception of one who was within two hours' driving distance. In that specific case, I drove to the participant's hometown and the interview took place in the participant's office. The other 15 interviews were conducted over the phone because participants were located throughout the United States. All interviews were recorded to allow for transcribing.

### *Gaining Access*

When possible, program directors from various schools were contacted for assistance in gaining access to graduates. This proved to be more complicated than anticipated. Some schools referred me to the recruitment office or alumni affairs. Some schools were unwilling to release the names of graduates or help in any way. A couple of schools did agree to contact students for me, but none of the 16 research participants in the sample were recruited in this way. The North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) did agree to send out a bulletin announcement to each of their 8 listservs. A copy of the bulletin can be found in Appendix C. All of the 16 research participants are a direct or indirect result of that email bulletin. Not all of the research participants are members of NACSW. However, as this was a snowball sample, the persons who responded to the NACSW email bulletin were asked for names of colleagues.

### *General Steps and Ethical Issues*

Once potential research participants were identified, they were contacted by phone or email. Three people did not wish to participate. One person directly told me "no." Two other people scheduled appointments but were not available when called and

did not respond to follow up emails or phone calls. However, the vast majority of persons contacted were happy to participate. Participants were contacted by phone or email to set up an appointment time. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a list of potential “starter” questions (see Appendix D).

Participants were sent copies of a written consent form and asked to return it prior to the interview. It proved difficult to have participants return the signed consent form. They either forgot or did not see it as necessary. Since I had communicated with research participants more than once to set up an appointment, my sense was they felt that they have already given consent. In consultation with my dissertation chair and the Institutional Review Board, I was able to receive a “waiver of written consent.” This meant that interviews began with participants being told the nature of the research project and being told they could choose not to answer any questions or end the interview at any time. They were then asked to give consent before the interview began.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim out of respect for the integrity of the interviewees’ “delivery” and in order to insure *reasonableness, representativeness and recognizability*. Notes were taken during the interviews, which proved to be quite helpful on the few occasions when I had trouble with my recording equipment. Interview tapes, field notes, and transcripts were kept in a locked file cabinet to protect confidentiality. The names of participants were changed to pseudonyms at the time of original transcription to further insure that the criteria of *responsibility* was met and steps were taken so that pseudonyms coincide with the ethnicity of the participant. Names of schools and cities were omitted to hide the identity of the participant and the institutions

attended. Each interview received a study number and transcript number as part of my long term data management of confidential research data.

### *Data Analysis*

In order to maintain the criteria of *resonancy and reasonableness*, I participated in Dr. Sloan's research class in June of 2009. The class focused on learning how to engage in phenomenological methodology in regard to analyzing data in moments 2 and 3 of the interpretation process (Sloan, 2002). The class gave me the opportunity to engage in both forms of analysis on data that was not my own. This experience proved invaluable as I was then able to apply the skills I learned to my own data.

In keeping with Sloan (2002), I did ask research participants clarifying questions during interviews as part of moment 1 of the interpretation process. This also aided in *reasonableness and representativeness* as I did not make assumptions about the meaning of terms, but asked research participants to define or clarify terms they used during the interview. Secondly, each interview was analyzed individually to determine themes that emerged throughout the interview. Third, interviews were analyzed in regard to patterns that arose across participants. Patterns refer to those concepts that show up in all interviews, while themes refer to the ways in which a pattern manifests itself in different ways (R. Sloan, personal communication, July 6, 2009). The analysis process was circular in terms of looking at individual transcripts, reviewing them in light of the phenomenon as a whole and then returning to individual transcripts for a greater understanding (Leonard, 1994).

After conducting the first five interviews, I shared my initial findings with Dr. Sloan in July, 2009, to discuss patterns and themes that I saw emerging in the data. This

helped to clarify that I was on the right track in keeping with the concept of “decentering” (Munhall, 2007). Dr. Sloan also helped me to see themes that I had initially overlooked, which expanded the *representativeness* of the study by including other dimensions of the lived experience of my research participants. The conversation with Dr. Sloan provided a framework for engaging in future interviews. As additional research participants mentioned the same themes, I was able to seek more detailed information to bring more clarity to the themes.

As of August, 2009, I joined the Hermeneutic Circle through the Indiana University School of Nursing. The Circle meets twice a month for two hours and is structured so that participants are given time during each meeting to share the status of their progress and seek input at any stage of the data gathering or analysis. The Circle provides a means for graduate students conducting phenomenological research to share transcripts with one another as well as discuss all aspects and phases of the research process. It also provides a forum for discussing the philosophical principles associated with phenomenological philosophers. The Circle has proven invaluable as I have sought the advice of my classmates and faculty on numerous aspects of my research process. I have been given time during the meeting every time we met and in addition, the Circle was kind enough to devote almost one whole session to me when I was at a critical point in my analysis. It has provided not only a means for peer debriefing (contributing to *resonancy, reasonableness, raised consciousness and relevance*), but also a means for better understanding phenomenological methodology in general. In addition, I have consulted with Dr. Sloan in person, over the phone, or via email to clarify themes present

in interviews and to make sure that I was appropriately using Heideggerian principles, which has contributed to *revelations*.

## Chapter Five

### *Findings of the Study*

#### *Introduction*

I went into this study thinking that I would develop a greater understanding of dual degree *programs* in social work and divinity. Although that was part of the learning process, what I discovered was that in keeping with Martin Heidegger's concept of persons as having a world, dual degree graduates in social work and divinity have a unique worldview. The discussion of findings will begin with an analogy that proved helpful in understanding dual degree graduates worldview. This will be followed by a general discussion and description of this worldview.

Phenomenologists interpret data to look for reoccurring patterns as well as the way those patterns are manifested in the form of themes. The most prevalent pattern found throughout the interviews and that was present in each and every interview was that graduates of dual degree programs want to be accompanied by "journey companions." Dual degree graduates want people who are "companions" in their worldview even if those people do not hold dual degrees themselves. This pattern of journey companions manifested itself in regard to four key themes including schools, peers, churches, and families. Each of these themes is discussed in terms of positive and negative experiences with journey companions. In other words, what does it look like when schools, peers, churches and families exhibit behaviors and actions that coincide with the worldview of the dual degree graduate as well as what it looks like when those behaviors and actions clash. When recording findings, although several research participants may give examples of themes, phenomenologists identify patterns in the data

and look for cases that exemplify those patterns. Therefore, as themes are discussed, exemplars drawn from the actual interviews will be given to highlight those themes. Please note that all participants' names have been changed and only pseudonyms are given with direct quotes, or in reference to research participants. Examples from 15 of the 16 participants are included. I have not included a quote from Leandro Diaz, as he spoke very softly. That, combined with his Hispanic accent, made it very difficult to transcribe his interview.

### *The Analogy*

Heidegger referred to persons as having *a* world. Dual degree graduates do have *a* world. What makes their world unique is that it is very much a dualistic world. They hold in tandem the world of social work and the world of ministry. They may hold jobs that emphasize one profession over the other; however, they always bring with them the world of the other profession. As a backdrop for understanding this dualistic worldview in terms of a singular worldview, it is helpful to discuss the life story of Rebecca Walker (2001). This is in keeping with Munhall's (1994) criteria of *readability*, which includes the use of metaphors and analogies as a means for aiding understanding.

Walker's (2001) book is entitled *Black, White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self*. Rebecca Walker is the daughter of African American writer, Alice Walker, and Jewish lawyer, Mel Leventhal. She described herself as a Movement child because her parents married and fell in love during the Civil Rights Movement when they both were advocating for social change. After her parents' divorce, Walker fluctuated between her mother's home in the San Francisco area and her father's home in New York. She described at length juggling the two worlds of her parents, their families and

cultures. “Moving from household to household is like switching between radio stations: Each type of music calls for a different dance, but it all exists simultaneously, on the same dial. Doing the switching is easy, it’s figuring out how one relates to the other that is hard” (Walker, p. 39). She described going to Jewish summer camp and making sure she fit in with the other campers. “When I get there I do what I do everywhere else, I heighten the characteristics I share with the people around me and minimize, as best I can, the ones that don’t belong.....I move my body like I belong but I also hold it back” (Walker, p. 184-185).

Walker (2001) described regularly shifting her “self” to fit the circumstances and culture that she finds herself in at any given time. There was a strong undercurrent of loneliness throughout her story. After spending time in each of her family settings, it was difficult to shift back to the other one. This was particularly apparent in regard to her friendships with peers. “I feel as if we speak two different languages and I am the only one who can speak both, who even knows that there is more than one to be learned.....I love her (referring to a friend) but it is too hard to be the translator, the one in between, the one serving as the walkway between two worlds” (Walker, p. 211-212).

For Walker (2001), the worlds of her mother and father felt drastically different and oftentimes in conflict with one another. Dual degree graduates in social work and divinity did not describe the worlds of social work and ministry as being in conflict with one another. Yet, what dual degree graduates have in common with Walker is the sense of combining two distinct worlds into their own singular worldview despite its dualistic quality. Like Walker, dual degree graduates very much want people near them who are able to hold both worlds in tandem, in a sense to honor the bringing together of the two



worlds. Walker and dual degree graduates resonate with people whom they perceive to be “journey companions,” i.e., those people who acknowledge the coming together of two worlds. This is not to say that these journey companions are conscious of the characteristics of these two worlds or are even aware that they are bringing together two worlds in their actions and words. What resonates with Walker as well as dual degree graduates is that these journey companions engage in activities, language, etc. that are congruent with their dualistic worldview so that they do not feel forced to choose between two worldviews.

In describing her favorite uncle, Walker (2001) gave voice to the need for journey companions. When she was with her favorite uncle, she did not have to choose between her mother and father, or hide half of herself in order to fit in:

My father’s brother Jackie and my mother’s brother Bobby are my two favorite uncles. Uncle Jackie is my favorite because he always asks about my mother. Even more than that, I like his sweet man smell, his habit of playing with my hair when we are seated at the Passover Seder table together, the way he absentmindedly twirls my fat curls around and around his short, thick fingers. He is not afraid to touch me, to be close to me, and this is important. There is also the fact that he, a nice Jewish boy from Brooklyn, is married to my aunt Lisa, a nice Italian Catholic girl from Staten Island, so there is a kind of harmonious discord in their house, a bicultural theme that feels familiar. (Walker, 2001, p. 45)

Walker’s experience with her uncle is a reminder of Heidegger’s concepts of 1) the person for whom things have significance and value, and 2) persons as self interpreting (Leonard, 1994). Uncle Jackie absentmindedly twirling Rebecca’s curls held great significance for Rebecca. Based on her background experiences of having to juggle two distinct worlds, Rebecca interpreted her uncle’s action as a sign of acceptance and validation. The significance is that Rebecca felt safe with her uncle as he saw her in her entirety.

Walker's (2001) book is unique because it described in great detail shifting between two worlds as she moved through childhood and adolescence striving to formulate a sense of self that integrated both worlds. She is not alone, however, in her struggle to bring together two worldviews as she develops her own singular, integrated world.

Farajaje-Jones (1993) and Lorde (1984) discussed the intersection of race and sexual orientation, of juxtaposing the world of African Americans and the world of gays/lesbians. Farajaje-Jones and Lorde described being African American and homosexual. Their race and sexual orientation are integral parts of them and cannot be separated. Certain situations may call upon them to draw more heavily on their experiences with race or sexual orientation, but they always bring both perspectives with them, combining them into a singular perspective or *world*. This understanding of a singular, yet dualistic worldview is key in understanding the experiences of dual degree graduates who always carry with them the world of social work and the world of ministry.

#### *Phenomenon in General – The Dualistic Worldview of Dual Degree Graduates*

Like Walker (2001), dual degree graduates talked of speaking two languages and shifting their focus and language if they are talking with social workers or persons in a church setting. They defined themselves as social workers, ministers, or both, depending on the context. Depending on the situation, having a Master of Divinity can give them credibility and authority or it can become a hurdle that must be overcome. Just as Rebecca Walker heightened characteristics to fit whatever family situation she was in, dual degree graduates emphasize those social work or religious characteristics that aid in

their effectiveness with clients, parishioners or colleagues. They also downplay or choose not to share those characteristics that they perceive to be barriers to effective social service or pastoral delivery.

Rebecca Walker (2001) gave voice to shifting herself to fit the situation while internally having an integrated self that held a dualistic worldview. Even though dual degree graduates may shift between the worlds of social work and ministry, internally they are constantly putting the puzzle pieces together to form an integrated worldview. The dualistic worldview of dual degree graduates becomes an integral part of who they are as professionals and human beings. All of the persons interviewed combined their two degrees in some form or fashion. Even one participant, who works solely in the social work arena, shared at length his experiences of teaching a bible study at his church designed to help parishioners begin to think about their faith, and what they personally believe, rather than simply spit back what they are taught. It is not uncommon for dual degree graduates to emphasize one degree in their work setting and yet give voice to the other set of skills in their volunteering.

As I conducted my interviews, I encouraged participants to share what they learned from each degree program by asking “how would your social work education have been different had you not had the divinity education?” and visa versa. There were times when participants were able to share significant benefits of each. Yet, there was a synergistic quality to their experience of being dual degree graduates. Dawn Douglass, a 28 year old Caucasian female, described this in the following way:

You know. I don't – I really don't think there's a specific moment when I like – a light bulb goes off and I'm now integrating social work and seminary. I think it just – it becomes part of who you are. And so because it's part of my background and part of my training, I don't think there is

ever a time that I would only be doing social work without my seminary education informing what I'm saying. Or if I'm doing something that someone would say more is in ministry, then I would be doing that without – it's, you know, kind of like once you've been given information and once it's influenced you, there's no way to really – unless you consciously try to ignore it. So I think that they're both – they both become part of who I am. So whenever I'm doing something, it's always both of them are kind of at play in my mind.

Steven Davis, a 50 year old Caucasian male, explained his experience as follows:

I think we all go through this “what's life about?” It's a sort of grand purpose, that, what's the meaning? And for me it's connected to the story of God having made people in God's image and that part of that being made in God's image was to be there with and for other people. And when that picture became mired, broken down, that—this sort of restoration of that original picture, that original vision, for me, comes in trying to restore relationships, communities, connections between two people. And from what I know of social work, that's almost exactly what I think social work intends to do. And so for me the narrative is just this perfect fit with what social work is called to do. And so it's a real undergirding of why social work makes sense to me, why I get to feel motivated in spite of a lot of the challenges that come with being in the field of social work, so just sort of making sense of social work and motivating to do social work to play a real critical element.

Sarah Dunning, a 48 year old Caucasian female, articulated the synergism between social work and seminary by saying, “I mean if the whole purpose for church work, the whole purpose of being church together is giving and receiving the love of Christ, then probably I got a better set of skills in the school of social work, probably a better understanding of that in seminary.”

Dual degree graduates talked of ministry in broad terms. Not all participants mentioned feeling “called,” but all did describe a desire to be of service. Elijah Norton, a 52 year old Caucasian male, articulated this well. “When I felt called to ministry it was a very broad calling...I was drawn to ‘ok, its just not a preaching kind of calling, but a life calling to work with people.” Ministry then is not limited to a focus on spiritual well

being in which ministers preach and teach the Gospel message with the intent being to bring people to Christ.

Dawn Douglass, a 28 year old Caucasian female, defined ministry in the following passage:

I think whenever you're extending love and kindness and a compassionate ear to someone in pain, that is ministry. We don't have to have a badge on that says "I am a minister." But when we're doing something that brings about healing for another person, that is ministry. And if we're not able to bring the name of God into it, then we know in our hearts that what we're doing is because we want to care for people and whether they have a belief in God or not that we see them as someone of value who was created by God and deserves to be cared for.

Taylor Pierce, a 25 year old Asian American female, talked about ministry as a form of proclaiming the Gospel:

So while I always knew things like Jesus calls us to love the poor and things like that, I didn't really know how to fit that in as part of the Gospel message. And so part of it is me just understanding the work that I do as a social worker as proclaiming the Gospel, even though I say nothing about Jesus when I serve clients.

Dual degree graduates turn to the Bible and Jesus (or Christ as some refer to Him) for examples of ways to care for people, of combining social work and seminary training. Biblical stories, especially those of Jesus, hold great significance and meaning for dual degree graduates. None of the participants mentioned Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, but they all found significance in Jesus tending to the basic physical, emotional, social, and psychological needs of people as well as their spiritual needs. Jesus then becomes an embodied example of how to combine the world of social work with the world of ministry. Victor Thurman, a 63 year old Caucasian male, working in a secular social work setting shared why Jesus is a significant example, "I think of Jesus as a very

political character in history, the way he challenged rules and regulations, tried to humanize the world and the way we lived.”

Evan Harris, a 29 year old Caucasian male, said the following about Jesus:

The more I studied scripture and looked at the life of Christ, I saw in essence maybe He was the first social worker advocating for the oppressed. Speaking up for so many things and then ultimately creating a way, empowering us all to have a relationship with our creator, if we choose to. So I saw Jesus as an empowering example of social work.

Sarah Dunning, a 48 year old Caucasian female, referred to the story of the “hemorrhaging woman,” a woman who bled for several years until she touched Jesus’ cloak while He was walking through a crowd. For Sarah, this story was a prime example of how Jesus addressed the multiple needs of persons:

Christ healed her physically. He healed her spiritually. He healed her socially. He healed her in a sense of belonging. ....you cannot ask a person who is suffering to be saved just spiritually. You have got to address their economic, their political, their every kind of suffering. He did that with her and I think that is just a really great example of social work and seminary kind of coming together.

Vanessa Martinez, a 26 year old Hispanic female, articulated her understanding of Jesus in the following way:

I was always drawn to the different Bible stories about Jesus helping the poor, healing the sick, or talking to the woman that was hemorrhaging and just reflecting back on the people that Jesus was found among weren’t the most educated and elite. They were real people with real problems. And so that’s what I try to present when I talk about Jesus, is that Jesus cared about people as they are, not just perfect people or seemingly perfect people.

In keeping with this concept of Jesus healing the physical, political, and social needs of people as well as the spiritual, all of the persons interviewed talked about living out their faith in very active ways. They used terms like “live the talk,” “flesh on the Gospel,” “witnessing faith” or “community ministry.” They also talked about how social

work and particularly their social work internships helped shape their theology because they were forced to understand God in the context of real life suffering.

Valentina Zamora, 30 year old Hispanic female, talked about how her theology was formed in the messiness of life and how that influenced her understanding of the mission of the church:

I think one of the things that was very helpful in doing the degrees together was that my theology was formed in the messiness of reality, like actually doing community work in situations that were ethically difficult, where it wasn't clear, it wasn't black and white. And so I find that through my experience in seminary and the school of social work, I'm less certain about some of the named dogmas, like as far as what do I believe about the end times or whatever and having formed very strong passionate beliefs around how the Gospel is expressed. And so theologically that means how do I define what it means to be saved, is salvation about what happens when you die or is it about changing the way you live right now, and can I hold a faith in Christ and ignore the poor. Can—is that—is it even possible to have supposedly a faith in Christ when we're not engaging community needs?

Dawn Douglass, a 28 year old Caucasian female, compared herself to seminary only students as she talked about forming her theology:

I would say that social work students are more likely in a seminary classroom to probably bring up an issue of, well, okay, if you're saying this is what the Gospel says, you're saying this is what God wants for us, well, what does that sound like to a child growing up in an abusive home? I think because we were in our field placements in our social work internships, we're interacting constantly with people who are more on the margins of society.

I had the pleasure of interviewing a couple of people who got their dual degrees during the Civil Rights Movement. As this was a significant time of social change, they naturally were seeking ways to integrate faith and practice. Yet, they share the same worldview of an *action-oriented* faith as persons in their 20's who have only recently completed their dual degrees. This leads me to believe that this worldview is not

contextual to any one point in history, but rather representative of the worldview of persons completing dual degree programs in social work and divinity. Victor Thurman, a 63 year old Caucasian male, gave an example of putting faith into action:

One faculty member said “you gotta live this talk that we do.” There were lots of new developments. I remember marching with blacks in the city to try and get them entry into the labor unions and they were building the skyscraper building in (city). I don’t know, we walked around, we wore our clerical collars to try and be a visible symbol. I remember marching and people were throwing things at us off the buildings, construction workers.

Malik Sanders, a 63 year old African American male, used the term “witness your faith” to describe this action-oriented faith:

You witness your faith by exercising the principles of social justice and mercy in the world He was seeking. And the church has become comfortable in doing what is convenient and not what is biblically correct. I tried to do my whole life. Even when making enemies, being passed up for promotions because I’m too radical or too dangerous but if it means making a statement by your actions, witnessing your faith by your life and the things you do because it’s the right thing to do and because it’s biblically correct.

Sarah Dunning, a 48 year old Caucasian female, used the term “flesh on the Gospel.” When asked to define that phrase, she answered with the following:

What I mean by that is that I think it’s easy in the seminary and in church today to talk in abstract about what it means to be a follower of Christ, to be a disciple...to be a follower, you know, the definition of Christian is to be Christ’s follower. So to be a follower today, it’s easy to have a church level conversation of praise and singing which is all yummy and wonderful, but if I really look at Isaiah 61 and what Christ chose to talk about when he unrolled the scroll in the synagogue and he was introducing Himself...it was about loving, feeding, freeing the people, all of us.

Evan Harris, a 29 year old Caucasian male, talked about the church playing an active role in the community:

I always try to ask people the question “if our church went away, what kind of hole would it leave in the community?” I know that’s a question a



lot of folks don't, have never asked before. And so I think social work helped me ask that question because of just looking at the world and the injustices that are out there and the wrongs that I think that God wants Christians to be able to not just speak out against but seek ways to better those. I don't want to beat the dead horse on community ministry, but I think that's a huge part of who we need to be as a church.

Vanessa Martinez, a 26 year old Hispanic female, described this phenomenon as the social Gospel:

With the combination of social work and religion, it becomes more of the social Gospel. You point people to Christ through the soup kitchens and the shelters and the hospitals and things of that nature versus, I know you're starving and that's really bad, but God loves you and God wants to give you a better life on the other side.

This general understanding of the dualistic, but integrated worldview of dual degree graduates who combine the worldview of social work with the worldview of seminary into a unified worldview, provides the foundation for understanding the importance of journey companions, those persons who behave or do not behave in ways that are congruent with this worldview.

#### *The Pattern: Journey Companions*

The most prevalent pattern found throughout the interviews and that was present in each and every interview was that of "journey companions." Research participants did not refer specifically to the term "journey companions." Phenomenologists review the information given in interviews to discover patterns and themes and then provide an interpretive means for discussing those. "Journey companions" is the term I coined to describe and conceptualize what I repeatedly heard participants saying. "Journey companions" refers to the pattern expressed by dual degree graduates who want people who are "companions" in their worldview even if those people do not hold dual degrees themselves. This pattern of journey companions manifested itself in regard to four key

themes including schools, peers, churches and families. To understand the prevalence of this pattern in regard to each theme, I tracked whether or not a research participant mentioned each of the themes and separated those into positive and negative experiences. Tables 2 and 3 list each participant and whether or not they discussed a positive or negative experience with their schools, peers, churches or families.

Table 2: Reports of Positive Experiences with Journey Companions

Pseudonym	Schools	Peers	Churches	Families
Victor Thurman	X		X	X
Unathi Naik	X			
Evan Harris	X	X		X
Destiny Carter	X		X	
Elijah Norton	X			X
Thomas Nelson	X		X	X
Malik Sanders	X	X	X	
Kiefer Stewart	X	X		
Steven Davis		X		
Taylor Pierce	X		X	X
Sarah Dunning	X		X	X
Yolanda Vasquez	X		X	X
Leandro Diaz	X			
Valentina Zamora	X	X	X	
Vanessa Martinez	X			
Dawn Douglass	X	X	X	X

Table 3: Reports of Negative Experiences with Journey Companions

Pseudonym	Schools	Peers	Churches	Families
Victor Thurman	X		X	
Unathi Naik	X			
Evan Harris		X		
Destiny Carter				
Elijah Norton			X	
Thomas Nelson				
Malik Sanders	X			
Kiefer Stewart	X			
Steven Davis	X	X		
Taylor Pierce				
Sarah Dunning	X	X	X	
Yolanda Vasquez	X			
Leandro Diaz	X		X	
Valentina Zamora	X			
Vanessa Martinez	X	X	X	
Dawn Douglass		X		

In regard to the prevalence of each theme, it is not surprising that all participants discussed experiences with schools as my research was designed to ask them about their experiences while they were in dual degree programs. Likewise, since they were focused on school experiences, the persons who did mention family tended to do so in passing ways or share how their family experiences led to their desire to seek dual degrees in social work and divinity. The family theme was more subtle and I did not see it at first until I was advised to look for it (R. Sloan, personal communication, July 6, 2009). What follows is a discussion of each theme in regard to what it looks like when schools, peers, churches and families exhibit behaviors and actions that coincide with the worldview of the dual degree graduate as well as what it looks like when those behaviors and actions clash. Exemplars will be given for each theme to enable the reader to better understand their nuances.

*Schools as journey companions.*

The theme of schools is broad in that it includes experiences of dual degree programs, schools of social work, seminaries, and faculty members. As seen in Table 2, all but one participant mentioned positive experiences with schools. It is important to note that the individual who did not mention a specific positive experience with his school may in fact have had one, but did not mention it in our interview. I did not specifically say “share a positive or share a negative experience.” I simply asked participants to share their *significant* experiences. It is somewhat difficult to separate experiences with schools or seminaries from those with specific faculty as faculty members represent their institutions. However, experiences with schools/institutions in a broader sense are discussed and then experiences with individual faculty that graduates

found helpful or unhelpful. First, the role of undergraduate faculty in encouraging students to apply to dual degree programs is discussed.

After asking participants to share basic demographic information about themselves, the next question asked was “how was it you came to seek dual degrees in social work and divinity?” Two people made reference to an undergraduate faculty member encouraging them to not just seek a master’s degree in a field related to their bachelor’s degree, but to consider attending a dual degree program. Some of these graduates were unaware that dual degree programs existed until undergraduate faculty mentioned it or schools with dual degree programs came to their undergraduate school to hand out information regarding graduate programs of study. This is a significant finding as it would serve dual degree programs well to coordinate with undergraduate schools that provide bachelor’s degrees in social work or religious study of some kind. Malik Sanders, a 63 year old African American male, shared how an undergraduate faculty member was instrumental in his decision to attend a dual degree program:

The spring of my senior year (college) I was licensed as a minister by my church and my senior year Mrs. (name) who was the senior coordinator of the social welfare program at (names school) which is a small black (denomination) school in (state) with about 1200 people and the first school in (state) to be accredited in a baccalaureate social welfare program. I was telling her about the (names a different university) recruiting on campus. I had her for a class and every day she worried me to death about interviewing with them. “Mr. Sanders, I taught at (names schools) and you are as competent a social worker as they are. You need to apply to the (names university) school of social work.” I told her “I can’t do it because I’m going to seminary.” She kept worrying me to death and I said, “I’m going to the interview just to shut her up.” She is still alive and writing and every time I see her I hug her as my patron saint.

Vanessa Martinez, a 26 year old Hispanic female, shared her experience with an undergraduate faculty member:

I was a religion undergrad and I had an elective left at the end of my undergraduate career, so I took Intro to Social Work. And the professor was just like, “you should be a social worker. You should do our master’s program.” And I was like, I’m not doing a master’s. I’m not cut out for a master’s. And like I really – she was like, “where’s your application for grad school?” And I was like, I’m not coming. And she was like, “okay.” Next week, “where’s your application?” I graduated and it was like the end of the summer and she was still emailing me and calling me every week, where was my application. I was at (school) and it has a dual degree program. And she knew that I was a religion undergrad. And so she was like, “well, you can go to seminary and get your master’s in social work and we’ll pay for it.” And I was like, I’m not coming. A week before our classes started, I finally went and like dropped off my application that I had just kind of halfway thrown together. She told me to go take my GRE, so I went that day and took it. I was accepted to the program on a Thursday and I started both programs on Monday:

Once students began to work on their dual degrees, they reported a sense of having to form a dual degree identity on their own. Steven Davis, a 50 year old Caucasian male, gave voice to a lack of integration in dual degree programs:

I’d say probably one of my reactions was somewhat disappointment that there really wasn’t any integration or connection between the two degrees. But as far as an expectation that I had going into the program, again, not negative in the sense of I felt they were intentionally working against one another. I think each degree was really not that interested or did not find the other sphere necessarily that relevant. I was the only dual degree student that I knew who said—there wasn’t as if there was any type of cohort or other folks who were attempting the same type of dual degree program, so it was really very much of a program that logistically cut a year off my education but never really seriously brought the two realms of study together.

As persons new to the professions of social work and ministry, dual degree persons tried to form professional identities and sort out what it meant to be a professional social worker or minister. This was complicated by the fact that they were trying to form two professional identities at once. The schools/programs represented in the sample did not have an integrated seminar or course specifically designed to help dual

degree students integrate their two degrees. This included a school of social work that emphasized the integration of faith and practice. Even within that program dual degree students were expected to write a thesis or capstone paper for each degree rather than one integrated paper. It is important to note that the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill currently has two courses designed to integrate the degrees of social work and divinity (Amelia Roberts-Lewis, personal communication September 29, 2009). Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain the names of their graduates or interview them so they could be included in this initial report. It is my understanding that UNC Chapel Hill is the only dual degree program to offer integrated courses.

Several graduates mentioned that it would have been helpful to have courses specifically designed to assist them in integrating their two master's degrees. They also were drawn to faculty who hold both degrees themselves - a rarity in itself - or have a commitment to integrating theological and social work training in very practical ways. This finding is supported by Lynn's (2000) research of 11 graduate social work students' perceptions of advising through the use of an integrated seminar. Lynn found that "this select group of students want a powerful bond with their advisors, whom they view as role models and mentors" (p. 1). Dual degree graduates' sense of having to develop a professional identity that combines two professional worldviews into one without the aid of an integrated seminar, or other formal means, gives significance and meaning to those journey companions who contribute to dual degree persons' sense of what it means to hold in tandem the world of social work and the world of ministry.

As previously mentioned in discussing the worldview of dual degree graduates, participants felt that their social work courses and social work internships positively



affected their understanding of God and their identity as Christian social workers.

Participants also talked about seminary as a positive experience that opened their minds and expanded their understanding of God. They appreciated being able to ask questions and think critically about religious beliefs in a safe environment. This open - mindedness included an affirmation for women to hold positions of leadership within the church.

This was particularly significant for a couple of the female participants who had been raised to believe that only males were to hold positions of church leadership. Seminary education helped to broaden their minds and affirm them as church leaders and ministers.

Taylor Pierce, a 25 year old Asian American female, is one of the women who struggled with understanding her role in the church as a woman:

I think a lot of it was just seminary was a place that encouraged me to feel free to ask the questions I wanted to ask.....It challenged me to ask the question, if God has created all people and all people are equal and all people are loved—and this is—this was an idea I promote and value—and especially as a social worker, when I'm trying to say things like the people that we put on the margins are the people that God loves just as much as the people we put in the center of society, then how come God would say men are the only ones who are allowed to do these certain things, serve as a minister, serve as a deacon, and they have to be the spiritual leaders in their families, all these things that I had been told growing up were part of what my faith should be, seminary gave me the freedom to challenge that and say that it doesn't make sense that the God that I think that I know and that I want to be serving.....so how do I reconcile that?

Dawn Douglass, 28 year old Caucasian female, talked about how classes on church history contributed to her open - mindedness:

So I would say that there's two parts of it that were really important. One was studying Scriptures specifically and learning different concepts of Biblical interpretation. The other one is learning the history of Christianity and recognizing that throughout it there have been numerous arguments over what we consider doctrine or dogmas and our foundational beliefs. And as you learn about church history and see that Christians have disagreed from the very beginning, I think it also it helps you to be more open-minded in that way, that you recognize we've had varying

opinions on these issues since the beginning. And I think, at least for me personally, that then encourages you to be a more open-minded person because if you can see that people have legitimate disagreements and have good reasons for both of their sides, then it's not so easy for me to be able to say, well, this one way is right and that one way is wrong. Because when you read both, you begin to realize, well, there is a legitimate argument on both sides and maybe there is some truth on both sides of those things...I think it's kind of cultural competence in recognizing that I'm from a different culture and learning to value theirs and still value mine.

The freedom to ask questions and explore beliefs was so important that, when there was a lack of freedom to explore ideas, students experienced Heidegger's concept of "breakdown." Victor Thurman, a 63 year old Caucasian male, gave the following example:

While everything was happening, I was going through my faith crisis I guess I would call it because I said 'I don't know what I'm doing here.' I remember going to see a man (theology professor)...I remember I went in to see him and had him for some history course, church history. I went in and said 'I'm just not sure what I believe.' He said, "tell me what you wrote your paper on."...I said, 'on 18<sup>th</sup> century English deism.' He said, "well, what did you find in that paper that struck your interest?" I said, 'the thing that most impressed me was how faithful these people were to what they believed but they had such great tolerance for people that believed other things. That was impressive to me. That you could have such passion and faith about what you believed and yet tolerance.' And he looked at me and said, "what if Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life? And YOU don't push that issue? And let other things come into the way?" He started to raise his voice and point in his finger at me. I said, 'what am I doing here?' you big nut because I don't know what I believe. And I just dismissed him as a jerk...I remember that story because I was looking for people to reach out to help me understand what this faith journey I am on continues to move through.

Valentina Zamora, a 30 year old Hispanic female, referred to a general lack of openness in her school of social work:

I think that the culture at the school of social work was very much about being afraid of confrontation and being afraid of conflict. And so everybody denies, everybody denies, let's all get along and let's not, you know, that's kind of the way it was at the school of social work. Well, it

was nice, like pre-school, kind of. And I just think that's not what—social work could be very constructive in a creative way and—in a good way, I mean. And so I just think that when we don't provide opportunities for people that have discussions and flesh out their ideas or engage in a way that is friendly, that people are robbed of the opportunity to think critically about their beliefs and to hear from other people of different perspectives.

Kiefer Stewart, a 63 year old Caucasian male, described a lack of openness at his school. He attended a program different than the one attended by Valentina Zamora:

The environment at the graduate school of social work program at (university) was most hostile to spirituality. It was anything but supportive. When we learned systems theory, having a conversation with the instructor about whether or not the spiritual dimension is real. Systems theory was three overlapping circles for them. They did not see there was a fourth circle called the spiritual dimension and at the school of social work spirituality was just a subsection of the emotional.

“Breakdown” can also occur when schools or institutional policies and behaviors are perceived to not be in keeping with Christian and social work ethics that relate to issues of social justice and the full inclusion of all God's people. Dual degree persons' focus on ethics means that issues of social justice are of paramount importance to them. Dual degree persons emphasize ethics by combining the NASW Code of Ethics with Christian ethics, which results in their feeling a strong ethical obligation to behave in ways that bring about justice and wholeness for all persons and seek ways to eradicate barriers to full inclusion. One could argue that all social workers and Christians by virtue of professional ethical standards as well as Biblical ethical standards should be concerned with eradicating such barriers. There are plenty of examples within the professions of social work and ministry of persons who behave in ethical ways and plenty examples of those who do not. It may be that “breakdown” occurs because dual degree persons are not expecting people in ethical professions to behave in ways that actually perpetuate oppression in some form.

The best way to describe this emphasis on social justice in regard to the worldview of dual degree persons is to say that they do not perceive spirituality to be an individualistic endeavor but, rather, a communal one. Community is not limited to members of a local congregation; it is defined broadly to mean that dual degree persons feel a strong sense of eradicating all forms of suffering that impede individuals' and peoples' potential for wholeness. Victor Thurman, a 63 year old Caucasian male, described this in the following excerpt:

I remember that they had built this huge chapel...Many of us were opposed to it. Our seminary was located in an increasingly poor area across from a high school. And they wanted to invest a gazillion dollars in building this Calvinistic chapel on campus. Some of us were outraged....We had this big fence around the seminary which symbolized our separation from the rest of the world...When we were about to graduate...the board of directors wanted to buy us our robes as sort of a gift to us, these real nice graduation robes which could be used as ministerial robes. Some of us said, 'nah, we think the money oughta be donated to the Cambodia Relief Fund for Children.' Well, our board was really conservative and I only knew that a little bit at the time and of course, they didn't want to do that...In our graduation picture there are 5 of us that are in "civis." We refused to wear them.

Malik Sanders, a 63 year old African American male, described advocating for change at the seminary:

The school of social work was a very interesting, very open campus, very exciting campus. We had to liberate the seminary. We had to pull by the teeth. Our first year of seminary, four black students wound up at the seminary...By our last year we had 38 black students and faculty and administrators. So we were able to change the tenor and the fabric of the seminary even to the point of having a black dean elected for the first time in (name) seminary history. Seminary was very resistant to change and forced us to be very demonstrative in our demanding equality in this city.

Dual degree persons experienced Heidegger's concept of "thrownness" as they were "thrown" into the world of social work and the world of seminary, which resulted in being "thrown" into a dualistic world. It may be that all graduate students experience a

sense of being “thrown” into a new world as they form a new professional identity. My sense is that this feeling of being “thrown” into professional worlds is heightened for dual degree persons who are thrown into two professional worlds at once. This “sense’ is based partly on an interview conducted with a woman after the 16 interviews in this initial report were conducted. She holds two degrees but got them at different times in her life. She got a master’s degree in social work when she was younger and then several years later got a Master of Divinity degree and is now working as a minister. For her, the second degree was a second career and a shifting of careers. Consequently, she does not perceive her worldview to be dualistic as she only developed one professional identity at a time.

The other contributing factor to my sense that dual degree persons experienced a heightened sense of “thrownness” is that they tended to highlight in their interviews those faculty members who helped assist or mentor them in forming a professional identity as a dual degree person. Some research participants mentioned faculty in regard to teaching them specific skills regarding assessment or intervention. Other participants spoke fondly of faculty who reached out to them individually, providing a support system and sounding board. One participant in particular talked about turning to faculty from both the school of social work and seminary during a professional tragedy.

In keeping with Lynn’s (2000) research findings that graduate students want a strong bond with advisors because they fulfill the role of mentor, research participants mentioned significant experiences with faculty who took a personal interest in their success, providing emotional support as well as concrete resource assistance as needed. This held significance for dual degree persons because they interpreted these actions from

faculty as a reminder that God is personally invested in their lives and, as Christians, they believe God expects all of us to care for one another. Therefore, individual acts of kindness exhibited by faculty members were congruent with the dualistic worldview of participants who believe that it is important to care for people's basic emotional, psychological, and physical needs in addition to spiritual needs. As dual degree persons were receiving training in two helping professions, they appreciated also being on the receiving end. Elijah Norton, a 52 year old Caucasian male, talked about the importance of a male faculty member:

There are two people at the seminary that come to mind...I think what I gathered from him as a professor, mentor, friend was that he was very encouraging. I had a lot of respect for him because he also had a lot of, I mean I felt like he was honest and he was credible. The experience I am thinking of is really more in conversations with him than in any formal advice that he gave me. I had a great deal of respect for him. Plus he was a male mentor and there aren't many males in the social work field. Being fatherless in a sense, although he wasn't much older than me, it meant something to have that male affirmation.

Destiny Carter, a 30 year old African American female, referred to the significant role her "Godmother" played while she was in graduate school. Her "Godmother" was actually a faculty member in another department of the university and not affiliated with the school of social work or the seminary:

I can remember my first semester of school, I almost literally dropped out. Because it was so difficult. The transition for me from ministry to seminary was very hard, possibly cause of the information I was learning and the history and things that I had never been exposed to...was a challenge for me and the classes were very difficult. Because there is a different style of writing, a different style of understanding, communicating. All of those things are very different. And so my Godmother was there to encourage me, to let me know that I would make it through, that things were going to be okay. That I needed not to give up. That if I didn't give up, I would get through and see that everything would be okay. So that was the main support. She was just there to be my

cheerleader. To let me know that even though things are difficult, everything would work out.

Sarah Dunning, a 48 year old Caucasian female, described the important role a faculty member played as she was experiencing a personal tragedy:

When I was graduating from the school of social work, my best friend in the world was in the ICU dying. I had done all the work for an extra special certificate in trauma and crisis intervention but there was no way I was going to be able to write it up. I just didn't care anymore. I was exhausted, the most important person in the world to me was dying slowly, and um, I had done all the work and you know I had a professor call me up and say "I thought you were going to get the concentration in trauma" and I said, 'yeah, I think I've done all the work, I just can't write it up. I'm going to let it go. I made peace with it. And she said, "well, what are you doing at 2:00 or whatever?" and I went into her office and she asked me every question and she typed it up. I could do it verbally... I had never received that kind of, "you don't feel good, we get that, but it's real important, you've done the work and we want to affirm you." I had never received that. So, what the two programs did for me personally (she crying) was life changing in a way I couldn't even have predicted in terms of affirmation and gender.

Evan Harris, a 29 year old Caucasian male, was serving as a youth minister when one of the teenagers from church was killed in a car accident. He was very appreciative of faculty members' assistance in meeting the needs of his parishioners and community members:

The mantle of ministering to a youth group that was hurting fell on me. And the mantle of ministry (sic) to a town that was hurting as they were calling people of all different churches and different places to come up and be with hurting students when they announced the death and all of that... It was on a school day, and she was driving to school, I mean it was a really tragic situation. And so that mantle of ministry fell very heavily on me. I was in the midst of my social work and seminary time and so being able to go to pastoral care professors to talk about things we can do with complicated grief and things we can do with grieving teenagers but also to have social work folks suggest literature for me and the directions that I could take my youth group, I think that was a very beneficial struggle for me to go through.

There is one last nuance to the theme of schools that bears mentioning before moving on to the other themes regarding journey companions. This nuance is in regard to the positive and negative experiences of dual degree students who are also international students. Fortunately, two participants who identified themselves as international students were included in the sample. They each attended a different dual degree program at different ends of the United States. Their need for journey companions was heightened by the addition of cultural differences. They experienced an additional layer of “thrownness” as they were also “thrown” into a different culture by virtue of attending graduate school in a different country. Both of the international women interviewed, shared significant positive and negative experiences in terms of their interactions with faculty from their respective schools of social work and seminaries. Unfortunately, I had a difficult time transcribing the interview with the woman from Africa even after listening to the tape several times. I typed up notes from the interview and am relying on field notes. Consequently, there are no direct quotes from her.

Both social work and ministry profess the inherent value of individuals. Yet, cultural differences can present a barrier to one’s success in graduate school. Some faculty members approach this as an opportunity for collaboration and growth. Unfortunately, there are some social work and seminary professors who view international students as inferior rather than viewing these students in the context of cultural differences. In these instances, students experience “breakdown” in the form of discrimination from their professors as well as the institution of higher education.

Unathi Naik, is a 44 year old woman from Africa. (The specific country is omitted to aid in maintaining confidentiality). As a dual degree graduate she found the



school of social work much more accommodating than her seminary in helping her navigate cultural barriers. For Unathi, these barriers included writing skills in regard to English because she was more familiar with British English than American English. She had never been exposed to a Xerox machine or computer until she came to the United States. She was unfamiliar with APA standards as they applied to citation. The school of social work she attended provided one-on-one support with a professor in order to explain things to her and help her navigate cultural differences. This was in stark contrast to her seminary experience, where she received no support and felt very lonely. As a master's student, in a school of social work, her experience was that they went out of their way to help her.

Yolanda Vasquez is a 27 year old Hispanic female from a South American country. She also had a positive experience with a social work professor while she was in the dual degree program. The faculty member not only helped her navigate language and writing barriers, but also helped her find work:

She knew that I was from another country. She knew that I had many questions and I knew that she was okay with me asking and she was not going to judge me....She was always available...Sometimes international students, and I would say I felt sometimes like that, you feel like you are not equal to the rest of the students because, first, you are not from here, so you feel like an outsider. Second, English is not your first language, so you have a disadvantage. So because your accent and you have to write things and take a writing lab and you have to work on your grammar more and it doesn't come as natural as for some people.

So she never make me feel like that. And I was her graduate (assistant) and she always complimented my work and she was very—she always complimented my strength and when I had things that didn't go well, then she would teach me. So I needed that at that time, especially at the school of social work because I did my undergrad in religion, so I had more knowledge about religious terms and Bible terms than social work....

One thing that she also did for me which was very practical is that international students, they cannot work outside of campus. They have to work on campus. So during the summer, usually they don't offer the Graduate Assistant program for students. It's very difficult to find a job on campus. So she had a lot of work to do and she advocated within the school for me to stay working with her because she knew that I needed the income. She knew that that was my only source of income. I had to—yeah, I had the scholarship, but I didn't have a way for me to...for my living expenses.

Unfortunately, Unathi and Yolanda experienced discrimination from the graduate schools they attended. Yolanda experienced discrimination at her seminary. Unathi experienced discrimination in her social work program as a doctoral student, which was a change from the support she received as a master's student. Unathi decided to pursue a doctorate in social work after she received her two master's degrees. She was accepted into the doctoral program and finished all of her coursework except for research and statistics classes, in which she struggled. After all her work, she was told by her advisor to talk to another professor. That professor told her she could not finish because getting a Ph.D. was not for an international student. She was not offered any assistance in regard to understanding or navigating the cultural divide in regard to research or statistics. As a result, she has still not completed her doctorate. She feels this was a form of racism and she feels abandoned by the school of social work. It was clear from our conversation that this was a very painful experience for her.

Yolanda experienced discrimination from a seminary professor while she was in the dual degree program. The professor in charge of her small peer group operated under the assumption that she was not capable of doing the work required in order to complete the program, despite having been admitted into the program:

Because I was international and all of that, she kind of was all the time thinking, this is my perception, that probably was not going to make it at

the school. And they kind of like asked—I guess she was concerned, if we can put it into terms, and they had asked me to do extra work just to make—by “extra work,” I mean like to send my papers to her and things like that, just for her to know that, okay, yeah, I’m really learning how to write and do my papers and all of that. And it would be like confirmation or something just through the first semester...I just didn’t like that because if you are international you are from another country, because you don’t speak—this is not your first language, that they assume that you are not going to be able to make it...Instead of helping me, they were hindering me because I had to do extra work and I didn’t have time for those things. Because they were not part of my requirements, they were part of just to make sure that I was going to be able to make it. And I didn’t appreciate that.

Feminist theory holds as one of its guiding principles that “the personal is political.” That principle applies to many human interactions and is not limited to issues of gender discrimination. For Unathi and Yolanda, their personal experiences of discrimination felt political in the sense that they thought it was not a personal issue of their capabilities as much as a systemic treatment of international students by their schools. These experiences held significance and meaning as the women’s experiences were viewed in the context of the worldview of dual degree graduates who believe in the value and dignity of all persons, and that social workers and ministers have an ethical duty to eradicate systems of oppression rather than reinforce them.

*Peers as journey companions.*

As mentioned previously in the context of schools, dual degree persons are looking for companions to help them form a professional identity. Companions can contribute to an understanding of what it means to be a professional social worker, minister and, better yet, a person with both degrees. Since the participants interviewed did not have access to any structured integrated seminar course, they were grateful for those opportunities that arose informally and spontaneously with their peers to discuss

classes and their developing professional identity. In contrast, it is often in the painful experiences that the greatest learning takes place. When people behave in ways that are in stark contrast to the worldview of dual degree persons, not only does “breakdown” occur, but out of that situation arises a clearer understanding of the ethical behaviors, actions and beliefs in which dual degree persons believe social workers and ministers are to engage.

Several participants spoke fondly of informal gatherings with peers that helped them to process what they were learning. Their education was enhanced by their exposure to peers and the opportunity to openly discuss and piece together what they were learning. One participant took this even farther as his peers formed a community that became a means for advocacy at the seminary. Steven Davis, a 50 year old Caucasian male, described the importance of his peers in the following excerpt:

The social work degree, we did have a sort of cohort group. And I learned a lot from the kinds of different social work, different people were doing with different populations or under different auspices. So I found that very enriching, particularly since I hadn’t –didn’t have any undergraduate training in social work. If anything, it was brand new to me.

Valentina Zamora, a 30 year old Hispanic female, referred to the informal ways her peers reached out to each other. She said, “Half the class again, was amazing and I learned a lot from my peers. We did a lot of like parking lot discussion...If you go either to get...to eat or something and have these great discussions.”

Evan Harris, a 29 year old Caucasian male, shared his experience with peers:

One of the things that helped me along in the process was the cohort that I was able to travel this short four year journey with. There was about five or six of us that started together, same time, same degree plan, you know, from your graduate....your colleagues are so important, but I think even so much more doing a people oriented based field is to have the support of colleagues, not just of professors, but of colleagues who are sharing your

call and sharing a lot of your same desires to work...you know Christians who are seeking to help you, pray for you, and you know, flesh out this wacky dual degree.

Malik Sanders, a 63 year old African American male, described the important role his peers played in advocating for change at the seminary when he said, “We invited black clergy. We had a black preaching conference. The black student union organization even had input in issues of black staffing and we became a sounding board for black staff who were not really dealt with very justly.”

Throughout my review of participant interviews, I found that seminary education influenced the dual degree person’s understanding of social work. Likewise, social work education influenced the dual degree person’s understanding of God in the context of suffering. “Breakdown” occurred when dual degree persons perceived their seminary classmates as not considering how their message of God would be perceived by persons who were experiencing some form of suffering. In this regard, dual degree students were heavily influenced by their social work training and their understanding of viewing individuals in context.

Sarah Dunning, a 48 year old Caucasian female, described her frustration with seminary - only peers who were not exposed to human suffering:

The young white men in seminary frustrated me because they were speaking from a place of ignorance. They were speaking from a place of a lack of experience.....They had NO (emphasized) idea what suffering looked like...They didn’t know and I knew they were going to be the leadership. I knew they were going to be the senior pastors some day. They did not know what suffering looked like. I said to them, “I want you to engage the question that possibly you have no idea what this looks like. You don’t know suffering. You don’t know loss, which is wonderful, you don’t know want, you don’t know deprivation, and you sure as hell don’t know oppression. You are the dominant culture, of the WORLD (emphasizes)...smart, young, fit, resourced meaning time, money, skills,

you have everything. You do not know oppression and I don't know that you can minister the gospel if you don't know oppression."

Evan Harris, the 29 year old Caucasian male who had to deal with the teenager's tragic death, was well aware that he was suffering along with his parishioners when he had a strong reaction to a comment made by a seminary peer. "I never forget, there was a youth minister sitting right across from me in the library and she said, "this is God's plan." I got so mad at her. I wanted to go bull, I don't serve a God who does this, I serve a God who can SAVE (emphasizes) this."

The most striking example of "breakdown" in regard to peers came from a research participant who was kicked out of her peer group. This overlapped into a negative experience with a faculty member who mishandled the situation and did not facilitate any form of conflict resolution. It also overlapped into a "breakdown" in the church. The situation held significance and meaning for the participant because she saw it as an example of how the church and its people can behave in unchristian ways.

Although she is not Catholic, this story reminds me of those stories of Catholics who have been excommunicated, meaning they were kicked out of the church. I am including a lengthier passage but I believe it is important to share the story in the research participant's own words in order to include all the nuances and complexities of the story.

The following story came from Vanessa Martinez, a 26 year old Hispanic female:

My first year of field experience, and I was working with immigrants, and there were two of us assigned to this particular field placement. At my university we had the option of kind of writing our learning contract with what we wanted to learn and how we wanted to do that. The requirements that fit into the criteria that were required, that was okay. So, the two of us were very different. One of us was very focused and very product-oriented. I happened to be very people-oriented. So I structured my learning contract so that I was interviewing community leaders and interviewing families about their experiences and talking with children

about their goals, participating in community events that were focused on the immigrant population. The other student, because I wasn't present at that location, I wasn't turning out lots of paper products and research and things of that nature, went to the seminary and told one of my seminary professors that I was cheating in graduate school, that I wasn't doing my internship.

That resulted in – at our seminary, we had covenant groups and these were groups where basically we were put together to pray and to share our testimonies. I think the intention was for us to grow together and really become like spiritual accountability partners. As a result of this person thinking that I wasn't doing my internship, my covenant group decided that they did not want me in their group anymore. For me that was a really hard experience because these were people that I trusted.

I wasn't cheating in graduate school. I ended up making an A in my internship. I ended up getting offered a paid position to come back at that same location the following year. But it really kind of rocked my world that these Christian people that I was supposed to be spending my time with I felt like weren't demonstrating Christ-like behavior. I felt like several of them were. I mean, there were only two of us out of the five people in that group that were even at that internship. I felt like the other three people really weren't involved in that situation at all.... The other three people, they just agreed with her. They didn't talk to me about the situation. They didn't talk to both of us to get the whole picture. That was really hard for me. I spent the next year doing covenant group by myself, so it was like an independent study. The professor for covenant group, she sat me down and had this long talk with me about integrity and about cheating and that was really frustrating for me because I wasn't cheating. I was doing my work, but I was doing things that fit with my personality and that's how I had written my learning contract.....

I went to him (social work professor) and I was like, this is what I've done, this is how many hours I have, this is what I have left to complete. I was turning in my – for my coursework, I had to turn in a journal every week of what I was doing at that location. We had to discuss it in our classes. I told him, this is what I've done. If you feel like I'm cheating or being dishonest in any way, please tell me because my understanding is that these things are my contract and you signed off on my learning contract. There wasn't a problem. It was the other person's perspective and the person at the seminary.

I guess that was really hard for me because of all the places I would have expected someone to listen to me and really seek to find out the true story, I would have expected that to be in a Christian setting and it wasn't at all. That professor at the seminary wanted nothing to do with me. That

professor told me, you can meet with me, but I don't really feel that I need to meet with you, like she didn't want anything to do with me even after I had explained to her and showed her my learning contract. I showed her the work that I had done because I had to record all of my interviews with families and community leaders and children. I had to type all of that out, so I could document my work and I could prove that I was doing my work, but she was bent on the fact that I was cheating. That really created a sense of distrust for me being in a Christian community and it created a sense of just really being aware of how people will do things for their own benefit.

*Churches as journey companions.*

Vanessa's interpretation of her experience as meaningful in regard to Christian practice and the role of the church, lends itself to discussing the next theme of churches. The theme of churches can also be a broad area inclusive of experiences at the denominational or local levels, with one's individual congregation, or specific persons in the church. Based on our discussion so far, it is no surprise that dual degree persons have strong opinions and a clearly defined worldview of how they believe the church should be. The desire of dual degree person to live out an action-oriented faith that meets the basic needs of people's physical, mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being, manifested itself in the stories they shared regarding churches that engage in activities related to eradicating injustice, poverty and hunger. When the church and its representatives neglected the basic needs of human beings, "breakdown" occurred.

Research participants were drawn to stories of churches that meet the basic human needs of persons in their communities. Victor Thurman, a 63 year old Caucasian male, gave an example of a local church doing community work:

A lot of churches do good. I'm on a community foundation board and today...I was meeting with a group at a small African American church that's got an afterschool program where they do mentoring, tutoring, teach life skills, all mostly single mom homes, all poor, lot of drug involvement, and here's a church trying to make a difference in the world.



Thomas Nelson, a 30 year old Caucasian male, shared the importance of his church by saying, “Fortunately, the church I go to, there are a lot of people like me who span both worlds and so there is this social justice viewpoint in the church where it’s not that they’re separate worlds, it’s really this overlap of worlds.”

Dawn Douglass, a 28 year old Caucasian female, gave an example of her congregation proactively choosing to remain in an inner city despite its changing demographics:

Many of the people in our church made the decision that we intentionally wanted to move into low-income areas to get to know our neighbors because our church was one of those instances that it used to be in more of a middle to upper-class neighborhood and then a lot of the people who went there wound up moving out to the suburbs. So many of the churches in the city, when that happened to them, the churches relocated and moved out to the suburbs where the people had moved to. But our church, long before I ever got there, had made the decision that they would stay located within the community, that they weren’t going to move out to the suburbs. But then they’re now in the middle of kind of a low-lower income neighborhood. And there were still a lot of people that would drive in on Sunday mornings who were living out in the suburbs.

Yolanda Vasquez, a 27 year old Hispanic female, talked about the difficulties of immigrants in navigating paperwork and legal issues. She shared how the denomination in collaboration with local churches is addressing this need:

Then I learned that here in (state), the Hispanic (names a mainline denomination) they were addressing this issue. They were trying to address the issue because it was many personal experiences, many problems with their immigrant members... So they wanted to start a program that would help immigrants with their legal documentation, meaning like help filling out paperwork and all of that so that they can start the immigration process and be, when applicable, become residents.

Dual degree persons also found helpful those persons in the church who helped them develop a professional identity as ministers. Taylor Pierce, a 25 year old Asian American female, shared the importance of her contact with a female minister:

The other probably key player was a good friend and minister at the church that I had found myself attending. I wasn't a member there at the moment and that was because they had a female pastor and I just still wasn't too sure about it. But talking to her and helping—she helped me understand what she believed to be true about God and the way God calls us. And she helped me to understand her own calling in ministry, how she—I mean, she came out of a background much like my own. She was (names denomination) growing up and believed that her role in life was to support her husband and stay home and all sorts of traditional roles that I felt myself as well.

Valentina Zamora, a 30 year old Hispanic female, shared the important role played by a military chaplain as she was heading to Iraq:

I got deployed to Iraq...I had two days to report to duty, went from Haiti to Iraq as a soldier and while I was there I met a chaplain who, during a very difficult period for me, was just an inspiration. He kind of asked those – he kind of had these questions when, if you're not sure if you're going to live or die and so I thought about what I would want to do with my life if I survived. He told me about the dual master's program at (school). I wasn't interested in seminary at that point or social work, but having developed a mentoring relationship with him, I eventually decided to apply to come to (school).

One of the most serious forms of “breakdown” uncovered in interviews with dual degree persons was a result of negative experiences with churches at all levels. Four of the persons interviewed talked about no longer being active in a church and only rarely attending worship services. This is discussed further in the next chapter as it warrants future research and further study. They were also four people who shared significant negative experiences with the church. Negative experiences that led to “breakdown” typically centered on issues of social justice. Dual degree persons were greatly affected by instances where they believed the church (either at a denominational or local congregational level) behaved in ways that perpetuate some form of injustice, rather than being an instrument for eradicating injustice. These injustices can be a reflection that the church is valuing certain individuals or groups more than others. The injustices can also

be a reflection of the paradigm that the role of the church is to bring individuals to Christ rather than a paradigm that is focused on community well-being. As mentioned earlier, dual degree persons were very concerned with meeting the basic needs of individuals and communities. When churches neglect the basic needs of parishioners or community members, dual degree persons see that as an injustice and an affront to the mission of the church as outlined in the teachings and life of Jesus. The four research participants who shared stories of negative church experiences, choose to be less involved or active in the church and focus their attention on being of service in more secular settings.

Victor Thurman, a 63 year old Caucasian male, gave an example of injustice at the denominational level in regard to the discrimination of women by male clergy. Victor received his degrees in 1972 and shared how getting degrees during the Civil Rights Movement raised his consciousness. In this example he referred to Angela Davis, an African American female professor who was a political activist during the Civil Rights Movement:

And it was the same year we gave \$10,000 donation to Angela Davis Defense Fund...I remember being out on a delegation, there were 3,000, most of them were ministers, but there were elders and some youth. And I remember this woman came to give the first talk on the status of women in the church. I can still see her walkin' on the stage with big boots on. And this was sort of the time. And these ministers started to say "go back to the bedroom where you belong. Go back to the kitchen where you belong." I'm lookin around and there are African American ministers saying these things. I said, 'we just gave \$10,000 to Angela Davis, we're talking about liberation here. Doesn't that transpose for you?' They said, "no." I just...That's an incident that I haven't forgotten. There were lots of things like that in the church and its unwillingness to take strong positions on important social issues. I said, 'I don't know if I really want to be part of this thing.' You know, so when I'm deciding what I want to do when I grow up or get my degrees here, I, um, thought the church is probably not where I wanted to do it.

The incident with the denomination and fellow ministers came at a time when Victor was in graduate school and forming his identity as a minister. Because he felt the male ministers were perpetuating sexist practices that devalued women, he did not want to become one of their colleagues. The ministers at the denominational convention helped Victor form a ministerial identity in ways that were negative and did not coincide with his worldview. Consequently, “breakdown” occurred.

Victor chose to utilize his education and skill set in the social work arena while attending and volunteering at a local church. Further “breakdown” occurred after a new minister came to the church. This added instance of “breakdown” has resulted in Victor “worshipping at the church of the New York Times” on Sundays. He chooses to stay home and read the paper rather than attend church services:

I’ve been inactive in my church for over 2 years. Mostly because change in ministry. I went to that church because the minister had the church socially involved in big ways in this community. It seemed like with a change, and organizations do change, I realize they’ve turned inward and now its more important to paint walls and to fix up your building, and that’s where the energy goes and so I have just not wanted to be part of that.

Sarah Dunning, a 48 year old Caucasian female, experienced personal discrimination by the church as a divorced woman. In the 1990’s she applied to work in church missions. As a result of being rejected, she ended up in the Peace Corps. She described a significant sense of pain and the meaning associated with the messages she got from the church as a result of being divorced. She experienced significant “breakdown.” Although she eventually went on to get dual degrees in social work and divinity, she was another research participant who mentioned not attending church very often, if ever:

The reason I went into Peace Corps is that I had tried to go into missions and in the 90's, I hope its different today, but in the 90's, "you're divorced, we're not sure that's an organization that's interested in you"...and that caused a very spiritual crisis. I mean it was really, it was like a community like God saying, "you know, you're really kind of tainted. Technically, we don't think that sin of divorce is worse than anything else, but you're not good enough to be in mission.".....How does the church get it wrong? Well the church really hurt me. The message to me was "we love you, you're good, you've got a place, but it's not a special place."

Injustice can also be perpetuated when the basic human needs of individuals and parishioners are neglected. Elijah Norton, a 52 year old Caucasian male, shared his pain over feeling neglected emotionally by his church after the death of his brother:

I think my church, like a lot of churches, if you're absent, there's not a lot of follow up, there's not a lot of people there to call you or check up on you even if you've been an active member of the church. I think that disappoints me a bit, knowing that I participated in the choir and the missions and justice ministry group and other activities of the church for several years. I got a card from the church when my brother died which was a very nice thing. I haven't gotten any calls from anyone. That disappoints me also that there weren't people who truly cared outside of when you are there at the church. And to me I wonder about the life ministry of the church. Maybe my expectations are too high, I don't know. But I know that I am the opposite way. I used to send people cards or call them if I knew they were troubled or whatever. I guess in a personal sense I feel neglected. I know I shouldn't feel that way, but probably how I do feel so I kind of backed away from things.

Vanessa Martinez, a 26 year old Hispanic female, experienced injustice from her seminary peer group and professor which led to "breakdown" in regard to the church. She experienced another instance of "breakdown" when she was working on a church staff during graduate school. One of her responsibilities was to check in on a parishioner who was unable to get home health services. The woman was bedridden and being cared for by her special needs granddaughter. To complicate the situation, the two were hoarders, living in filthy, horrifically unsanitary conditions. After the granddaughter left

feces for the woman to eat for breakfast, Vanessa felt compelled to call Adult Protective Services:

It was just really an eye-opening experience for me because I had tried to get several of the church members to come out and help her get her yard organized or to get her house cleaned up. Everyone was like, oh, we don't want to do that. Again, just seeing the church, I felt not living as Christ intended and then having to be the person that hurt her in a very real way because calling Adult Protective Services, it kind of changed the course of the end of her life and the things that happened.

APS finally forced a home health agency to come out and it was really an ugly situation. She felt ostracized by her church. I felt frustrated with the church for say—you know, because I was saying this to one of our members. 'She's been at this church since 1918 and she's always given to the church. She's always prepared meals for people and done all these other things. And now that she needs the church, where are we to help her?' So, that was a hard experience....

The pastor also was just like, you know, he doesn't want to help, and if we help her, we're going to have to help everybody and we just don't have enough people to do that....The people at our church had a Meals on Wheels program and I tried to get her on the Meals on Wheels program for lunch. And he said that because of her location it wouldn't be feasible to put her on the lunch route because it would make that route impossible to complete in an hour. Basically just ambivalent.

The fact that four research participants reported limited involvement in the church as a result of negative experiences was an unexpected finding. It was unexpected because I was asking questions associated with their general experiences while in graduate school. I assumed the information I obtained would fall more under the category of "program evaluation." I was surprised because these participants came from different denominations and based on that my guess is they fall in different places on the liberal/conservative spectrum. In my personal experience, liberal Christians are less concerned with regular Sunday worship attendance than those Christians who would label themselves as conservative. This thread of "breakdown" in the church leading to

limited involvement by dual degree persons who have been trained to be church leaders warrants further discussion and research.

*Families as journey companions.*

The theme of families was more subtle and, as previously mentioned, I did not see it initially. I believe this was in part due to my focus on program evaluation. Another factor is that the theme of families was simply not as strong as the other themes, which may be due to the interviewees' focus on program evaluation. Half of the comments about family were in regard to the ways childhood experiences or relatives who were ministers or social workers contributed to the dual degree person's desire to be of service. Most research participants mentioned family briefly as a side comment while sharing how they came to seek dual degrees in social work and divinity. These comments were usually one sentence or two and include the following circumstances:

- Victor Thurman grew up in a family that was active in the church.
- Evan Harris's father was a social worker and his grandfathers were both ministers.
- Elijah Norton's grandmother was very spiritual and active in her church.
- Thomas Nelson's wife was interested in social work and exposed him to the dual degree program.
- Dawn Douglass's parents were both ministers.

Elijah Norton and Yolanda Vasquez mentioned growing up in poverty and understanding what it meant to lack food. This significantly influenced their worldview and desire to be of service to those in need. As a result of growing up in a poor family, Elijah Norton was exposed to social workers:

I was raised in poverty. My father never paid child support. My mother was dependent, as I look back as an adult, she probably had dependent personality structure and was traditional female. She did not seek employment and so we were raised on public assistance. And so we came in contact with social workers.

He was not alone, as Taylor Pierce, a 25 year old Asian American female, was also exposed to social workers as a child:

I've always been interested in being a social worker. It started when I was real little. My younger siblings are adopted and we went through that process. I learned what a social worker did and what I really knew is that they helped people somehow.

Sarah Dunning's (a 48 year old Caucasian female) mother influenced her decision to attend graduate school in a significant way that was a bit different than the other participants. After she returned home from the Peace Corps, Sarah was unsure of what to do and took a job in the business arena. She ended up miserable and depressed:

My mom kept saying to me, "what would you love to do?" It was a question that really annoyed me, I mean, really annoyed me. I'd be like 'damn it, if I knew what I wanted to be doing, I'd be doing it.' She kept asking it, and finally I let the question germinate in me.....Going back to this piece my mom kept asking me "what would you love to do?" and seminary kept coming up.

Two participants made reference to family while they were in the program. Victor Thurman had an inner city internship and was exposed to a great deal of violence. He mentioned going over to his girlfriend's (later wife) apartment after work to have a glass of wine and unwind as he was so tense. Taylor Pierce's (25 year old Asian American female) husband influenced her theology while she was in graduate school:

Kind of one of the key people that those conversations were with was the man that ended up becoming my husband but who had been supportive of women in ministry for much longer than I have. So he came to (seminary) already with that perspective. We would talk a lot about—we kind of figured out where my place is and just trying to understand the Scriptures generally.



Once I saw that participants were mentioning family in subtle ways, I did ask one participant directly about family to see if any nuance to the theme would arise:

Beth: Tell me about an experience with just family as you went through the dual degree process. We've talked about faculty and peers.

Malik: I got married when I was at the seminary and I had a child, but my family was supportive, but they were more behind the scenes.

No one mentioned any negative experiences in regard to family. This is somewhat unexpected given that more than one female participant mentioned growing up in a denomination that did not support women being ministers. I personally had more than one female classmate in seminary whose husbands were not supportive of them becoming ministers to the point where two women got divorced over the issue.

### *Conclusion*

Dual degree graduates hold a worldview that is dualistic in nature in that they combine the world of social work and the world of ministry into one integrated and synergistic worldview. They had a heightened experience of “thrownness” because they were thrown into two professional worlds at once. As a result of having formed a worldview that is dualistic, they resonated with journey companions who engaged in behaviors and practices that were in keeping with their worldview, which emphasizes a faith that is ethical and justice oriented meeting the multiple needs of individuals. Dual degree persons interpreted the actions of fellow Christians through this lens. They paid attention to the examples set by schools, faculty, peers and churches. Interactions with journey companions held great significance and meaning to dual degree persons. When journey companions behaved in ways that were perceived by dual degree persons to be unethical or unjust, “breakdown” occurred. At times “breakdown” was significant

enough to cause a “break” in relationships as in the case of Unathi who has not finished her doctorate or the four participants who have limited, if any, involvement in their churches. These findings have implications for social work education and practice, seminary education and ministry, and future quantitative and qualitative research.

## Chapter Six

### *Discussion of Findings*

#### *Aim of the Study*

The aim of this study was to understand the lived experiences of persons who have received an MSW and an M.Div. from dual degree programs. Specifically, I was interested in the lived experiences of graduates while they were in the dual degree program.

#### *Key Findings of the Study*

Dual degree graduates in social work and divinity have a unique worldview. This finding is consistent with Martin Heidegger's concept of "persons as having a world." Dual degree graduates in social work and divinity have *a worldview*, but it is worldview that is dualistic--combining the principles of social work and Christian ministry. The most prevalent pattern that was found in each of the interviews was that dual degree graduates in social work and divinity want to be accompanied by "journey companions." Dual degree graduates want people who are "companions" in their worldview even if those people do not hold dual degrees themselves. This pattern of journey companions manifested itself in four key themes: schools, peers, churches, and families. The positive and negative experiences of dual degree graduates gave insight into an understanding of their general worldview and how its influence affected their relationships with journey companions. Negative experiences with journey companions led to Heidegger's concept of "breakdown," oftentimes resulting in some form of separation.

### *Significance of the Study*

This study sought to expand on the previous work of Lee (2005) and Nelson-Becker (2005) in regard to understanding the general phenomenon of dual degrees in social work and divinity. Lee's research study was limited to four graduates of Loyola University who completed a 20 item questionnaire using a 5 point Likert Scale. Nelson-Becker's research study compared dual degree graduates holding degrees in social work and some kind of religious degree with MSW only graduates in regard to how their own or clients' religious views affected practice. This study was broader in the sample representation. Participants in this study represented five dual degree programs with graduation dates spanning the years 1972 – 2008. Participants were located throughout the United States and represented four Christian denominations.

Allowing participants to share their stories in a narrative format resulted in a deeper understanding of the issues facing dual degree graduates and ways dual degree programs can enhance the experience for students completing such programs. Participants were asked general initial questions, which resulted in the freedom to share those experiences of their dual degree program that they found significant. These shared experiences provided the basis for describing the general worldview of dual degree graduates. Describing the worldview of dual degree graduates had not been done prior to this study. As there is growing discussion among social workers regarding the integration of faith and practice, understanding the worldview of dual degree graduates has meaning for the profession of social work as a whole. Dual degree graduates, by virtue of having to form a dualistic professional identity, can contribute to the discussion on the integration of faith and practice. Dual degree graduates have a very action

oriented approach to faith, which takes discussions of faith and practice out of the theoretical realm and places them in the context of applying faith to real life situations of suffering.

Understanding the desire of dual degree graduates to have journey companions has implications for both program development and how churches meet the ongoing psychosocial and spiritual needs of individuals with dual degree education. Without the presence of journey companions, dual degree graduates experience “breakdown” and suffer from some degree of separation, particularly in regard to the church.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

This was a phenomenological, qualitative study designed to describe the lived experiences of dual degree graduates while they were in the dual degree program. Given that it is difficult to obtain the names of persons completing dual degree programs, I was very pleased to include interviews with 16 dual degree graduates. However, the 16 research participants represented only four denominations and only five dual degree programs. Ten participants were from the same school and three were from another. Given the fact that there are currently 21 dual degree programs that include seminaries representing 11 Christian denominations, the lack of more diversity in the sample regarding denominations and programs represents limitations to the study. There was consistency in regard to the general worldview of dual degree graduates and the theme of journey companions, but it would be helpful to know whether that consistency were to remain with representation from additional Christian denominations and dual degree programs.

The other key limitation to this study is that none of the research participants attended the dual degree program at North Carolina Chapel Hill. This is significant because many participants mentioned the lack of any integrated course or assignment in their dual degree program. Therefore, it would have been helpful to interview graduates who had the opportunity to participate in such a course to see if the variable of an integrated course did in fact aid in the formation of a professional, yet dualistic worldview.

There is great diversity among Christians, even within specific denominations. Rather than focusing solely on a participant's denominational affiliation and making assumptions that may be inaccurate, I would have been better served asking participants the degree to which they consider themselves to be theologically liberal or conservative. I would also have been better served asking them how they define the terms liberal and conservative. Asking participants to rate themselves in regard to being liberal or conservative would have helped eliminate any bias or inaccurate assumptions on the part of the researcher. It would have helped flush out any nuances associated with simply asking participants to share their denominational affiliation.

#### *Implications of the Study for Dual Degree Programs*

Given that interview questions focused on the experiences of graduates while they were in the dual degree program, there are numerous implications of this study for dual degree programs. The first implication is in regard to recruiting future students. As more than one person mentioned the role of undergraduate faculty as important initial contacts, dual degree programs would benefit from marketing their programs to undergraduate social work and religion professors since they can play a key role in encouraging college

students to pursue dual degrees in social work and divinity based on the strengths and interests faculty identify in students.

Current collaboration about dual degree programs between social work schools and seminaries focuses on logistics in regard to program requirements and tuition fees. Once logistics are in place, there is no collaboration between institutions and no attempt at full integration. Many research participants referenced having to form a professional identity on their own as a dual degree student/graduate. Forming a professional identity as a social worker and minister was complicated by the fact that students/graduates were trying to discern what it meant to be a professional social worker or minister in addition to forming a professional identity that straddles both professions. Clearly, persons who completed dual degree programs in social work and divinity wanted their programs to play a proactive role in assisting them in the formation of a dualistic, professional identity and worldview. When asked what suggestions they had, research participants said they wanted integrated courses preferably taught by faculty holding degrees in social work and divinity. Participants wanted the freedom to complete assignments that integrate theoretical and practical material from both degree programs. They wanted to engage in dialogue regarding ways in which the professions of social work and ministry naturally coincide, and/or where professional conflicts may arise.

Research participants talked about the need for mentors in forming their dualistic, professional identity. Graduate students looked to dual degree faculty to set examples of what it means to be effective social workers or ministers. Graduate students paid attention to how faculty behaved in ways that were congruent with social work and Christian ethics. Knowledge of social work and ministry in dual degree graduates was

not limited to course content; it was enhanced by their positive and negative interactions with faculty. Some participants felt more comfortable than others seeking out mentors. Dual degree programs would be strengthened if they proactively assigned faculty as mentors to dual degree students to assist them in navigating the formation of their dualistic worldview. Research participants welcomed the formal and informal conversations they had with faculty. They wanted faculty to serve as a resource for providing practical tools for integrating faith and practice. Rather than having students seek out their own “journey companions,” dual degree programs would enhance students’ experiences by proactively providing journey companions.

Research participants talked about the importance of peers as journey companions. Again, conversations with peers happened in informal, spontaneous ways. The implication is that dual degree students would welcome having their programs take an active role in forming community among students. Holding periodic, informal, yet regularly scheduled conversations among dual degree students would provide a structured way for students to discuss how they are combining social work theory and Christian theology with social work practice and Christian ministry.

#### *Implications of the Study for Social Work Education*

Dual degree graduates in social work and divinity reported that their social work education influenced their theology, i.e their understanding of God. This is helpful to discern as discussions on faith and practice within the profession of social work often focus on how faith influences practice. Dual degree graduates shared how faith influenced practice, but it is a two-sided coin and they were able to share the flipside, i.e., the influences of practice on faith. Social work as a profession has the potential to not



only collaborate with other professions, but to influence those professions and thus expand the reach of social work. Social work's bio-psycho-social approach to meeting the multiple needs of clients is unique. This study focused on dual degree programs in social work and divinity. Yet, schools of social work offer numerous other dual degrees. Rather than simply looking at the logistics of combining degrees, social work educators would be well served to look at ways to fully integrate other dual degree programs.

Dual degree graduates in social work and divinity discussed the importance of being able to meet the spiritual needs of clients in addition to their physical, emotional and psychological needs. Graduate programs of social work would benefit from including courses on spirituality and religion in the curriculum. This study focused on combining social work with Christian ministry. Yet, social workers need to receive education and training in regard to meeting the needs of clients of all faith traditions. Without their seminary training, dual degree graduates reported they would have felt less equipped to address the spiritual needs of clients.

#### *Implications of the Study for Churches*

The previous section addressed issues regarding education. It is clear from talking to dual degree graduates that they believe their seminary training would have been inadequate in preparing them to address the psychological and emotional needs of parishioners. A dual degree person interviewed after the initial 16 participants said that his seminary did not require even one course on pastoral care and counseling. He participates in a ministerial group with local ministers. He said that the frequent topic of conversation among group members is how to meet the psycho-social needs of parishioners because the ministers feel ill-equipped to address those needs. He also

reported that with the current state of the economy, parishioners do not have the money or the insurance to seek outside counseling and are increasingly turning to their ministers for counseling. Parishioners would be better served if seminary education included more courses on pastoral care and counseling. It is not enough to simply teach ministers to “refer out” when parishioners do not have the financial means to seek outside counseling. Many persons feel a level of trust with their clergy person and are hesitant to seek more secular avenues for counseling. Schools of social work might consider offering modified programs of study to local ministers to bolster their expertise in pastoral care. Denominational or local church bodies would be well served to consider bringing in social workers to provide ongoing education and resource services to ministers who are out of school and serving congregations.

Denominational and local church bodies also need to be mindful of meeting the multifaceted needs of dual degree graduates. Four of the sixteen participants mentioned at least one negative experience with the church in some form. These participants experienced Heidegger’s “breakdown” to the point where they have limited or no connection with a local congregation. “Breakdown” then has the potential for becoming a “break away.” This is a significant finding of this study given that dual degree graduates in social work and divinity are trained to be church leaders. Hence, the church is losing people who have received additional training and expertise by virtue of their master’s in social work, individuals who have a great deal to offer the church at multiple levels. Yet, these people perceive the church as not having enough to offer them.

The implication is that the church (at a denominational and congregational level) needs to pay closer attention to meeting the pastoral needs of its current and future

leaders. In this context church leadership is not limited to work in congregational or faith based settings, but is defined in its broadest sense as dual degree graduates viewed their work as ministry regardless of the setting. Dual degree graduates who are not employed as full-time ministers may go unnoticed by denominational bodies that focus their attention on meeting the needs of full-time ministers. This is especially true for those dual degree graduates who perceive their work to be ministry but choose not to be ordained in their denomination. Most denominations require some type of monitoring of ordained ministers in order for them to remain in good standing within the denomination. There are also denominational meetings, retreats, and workshops designed to facilitate networking among ministers. Dual degree graduates who do not seek ordination or work in a traditional church setting are in danger of falling through the cracks, themselves, when it comes to meeting their own spiritual needs.

Special attention may need to be paid to mentoring or ministering to people with dual degrees so they have a means for processing their frustrations with the larger church, ministers, or congregations, and so that any form of “breakdown” does not lead them to “break away.” The lack of involvement or minimal participation in a local congregation by a dual degree graduate can be a sign of “breakdown.” Dual degree graduates have a unique worldview that may be lacking in many churches. As a result of their social work training, dual degree graduates are able to see people in context and have the skills and training to meet the multifaceted needs of individuals. The implication is that they have the potential to broaden Christianity’s understanding of what it means to be followers of Christ and to educate fellow Christians on what it means to put faith into action.

Several research participants mentioned challenging classmates on the way they approach the Gospel message because as dual degree persons they had to develop their understanding of God in the context of real suffering. Dual degree graduates by virtue of raising awareness to issues of social justice may end up playing the role of prophet. In this sense they are challenging the church to meet the basic needs of persons, but being a prophetic voice can be a lonely endeavor. Implementing a means for dual degree persons to network with other dual degree persons after graduation might prove useful. Denominations and dual degree programs need to partner to come up with creative ways of tracking dual degree graduates and meeting their needs for support after graduation. Another implication is that the Church would be well served to utilize dual degree graduates as an expert resource for addressing issues of social justice. Getting dual degree graduates involved in some form of community ministry may help combat the potential for “breakdown.”

#### *Implications of the Study for Future Research*

I have already consulted with the Institutional Review Board and Hermeneutic Circle so that I may interview additional dual degree graduates beyond this initial sample of 16 and continue my research. My agenda is to seek graduates from those schools and programs not currently represented in my sample. Interviewing students from additional schools should also help give the sample more diversity in regard to denominational affiliation. Enlarging the sample will allow me to pick up on patterns other than “journey companions” to determine if they are anomalies or patterns and themes that cut across all interviews. Having developed an initial understanding of the general worldview of dual degree graduates, future interviews can hone in on developing a deeper understanding of

that worldview, specifically in regard to how dual degree persons' social work education influences their understanding of God.

There was considerable interest in my research when I presented my initial findings at the annual convention of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work on October 31, 2009. I am hopeful that my continued research on dual degree graduates will provide a means for developing a language and a venue for discussing the integration of faith and practice within the field of social work.

As my research continues, I plan to seek out students who have graduated from NC Chapel Hill to better understand how that unique program has implemented an integrated seminar for dual degree persons. The integrated seminar course is typically taught in the spring semester and taken during the students' final semester. I would like to travel to North Carolina to conduct a focus group, or individual interviews, with students taking the class in the spring of 2010.

There are some other implications for research that are not on my immediate agenda. Research participants who attended a faith-based social work program alluded to differences they saw between MSW-only students and dual degree students. It would be helpful to conduct comparison studies to bring these differences to light as a means for broadening the discussion on faith and practice, and wholistic social work practice. Participants also alluded to differences between seminary-only and dual degree students. A comparison study between seminary-only and dual degree students would also prove useful. It would be helpful to conduct a quantitative study of seminaries in order to determine how many require courses that train future ministers to meet the psychological, social and emotional needs of parishioners. I suspect that the lack of training ministers

receive in non-spiritual areas can provide a basis for dual degree programs to advocate for the need for seminarians to seek dual degrees in social work. Lastly, it would be helpful to conduct a quantitative study to determine how many persons have completed dual degree programs in social work and divinity. No one is currently keeping such statistics and many dual degree programs do not even keep records on the number of people who complete their programs. This would be a difficult study to complete, but useful in understanding the prevalence of the dual degree phenomenon.

Future research is needed on students who complete dual degrees in social work and a degree other than divinity. For example, how do students completing dual degrees in social work and law or business administration develop a unique worldview by combining social work with another profession? Do dual degree graduates in other degree programs also desire journey companions, or is that a nuance specific to dual degree graduates in social work and divinity? With the number of options now available to persons seeking to combine social work with another profession, more research is needed to understand the motivation and educational needs of dual degree persons. In other words, what is the lived experience of graduates of other dual degree programs of social work?

#### *Implications of the Study for the Profession of Social Work*

Dual degree graduates in social work and divinity regularly discuss placing theology in the context of real life suffering. By virtue of their extensive training in social work and Christian ministry, they are forced to wrestle with messages about God given to people in tragic situations. They are mindful of ways religious clichés are unhelpful in the context of deep emotional pain. Combining social work and ministry

equips them to be culturally competent to meet the spiritual needs of clients as well as the bio-psycho-social needs. Dual degree graduates report a feeling of being bilingual and bicultural, speaking the language and knowing the culture of social work and the church. There is potential for clients to benefit from working with dual degree graduates who have received extensive training in addressing matters of faith while also receiving training in addressing psycho-social matters. The key awareness in understanding how the lived experience of dual degree graduates in social work and divinity impacts their work with clients is that dual degree graduates in social work and divinity do not shy away from tough situations, as they feel equipped to address the multiple needs of clients.

## Appendices

### Appendix A - List of Dual Degree Programs Listed by School

Augsburg College	M. Theology (for leadership)
Baylor University	M. Divinity
Boston College	JD MBA M. Pastoral Ministry/Religious Ed
Boston University	MPH M. Divinity D. Divinity M. Education D. Education M. Theological Studies Ph.D. Sociology
Case Western Reserve University	JD MBA M. Nonprofit Management Certificate – Gerontology Certificate – Nonprofit Management
Catholic University	JD
College of St. Catherine University of St. Thomas	JD M. Theology M. Divinity
Columbia University	JD MPH MPA MPP M. Divinity M. International Affairs M. Jewish Studies M. Special Education M. Urban Planning
Eastern Washington University	JD (Gonzaga University School of Law)
Florida International University	JD
Florida State University	JD M.S. Public Administration M.S. Criminology
Loma Linda University	MPH



Loyola University, Chicago	JD M. Jurisprudence M.S. Child Development M. Divinity M. Women's Studies
Marywood University	MPA MA Pastoral Counseling M. Divinity Certificate – Adv Grad Study in Art Therapy
Michigan State University	JD
Newman University	MBA
Our Lady of the Lake University	M. Pastoral Ministry
Saint Louis University	MPH MPA MA Pastoral Studies
San Diego State University	JD (California Western School of Law) MPH
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale	JD
Springfield College	JD (Western New England School of Law)
State University of New York At Stony Brook	JD (Touro Law Center)
Syracuse University	JD MPA Certificate – Women's Studies Certificate – Gerontology Certificate – Conflict Resolution Certificate – Health Svc Mgmt/Policy Certificate – Disability Studies
Temple University	MPH
Tulane University	JD MPH Ph.D. in Social Work
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa	MPH
University at Albany-SUNY	JD MPH M.A. Bioethics (Albany Medical College & Union University) M.A. Criminal Justice M.A. Public Affairs & Policy M.A. Sociology (SUNY New Palz) Ph.D. Certificate – Center for Women in Government Certificate – Nonprofit Management

University at Buffalo-SUNY	JD MBA M.S. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences B.A. Interdisciplinary Human Services Ph.D. in Social Welfare Certificate – Administrative Management Certificate – Financial Management Certificate – Trauma Counseling
University of California, Berkeley	MPH
University of California, Los Angeles	JD MPH MPP M.A. Asian-American Studies
University of Chicago	MBA MPP M. Divinity Ph.D.
University of Connecticut	JD MBA MPH M. Divinity (Yale School of Divinity)
University of Denver	JD M. Human Communications M. Theology M. International Studies Certificate – Family Therapy Certificate – Social with Latinos/as Certificate – Response & Recovery to Trauma Certificate – Animal Assisted Social Work Therapy Non-Academic Certificate – Jewish Communal Services
University of Georgia	JD
University of Houston	JD MBA MPH Ph.D. in Social Work Certificate – African American Studies Certificate – Gerontology Certificate – Women’s Studies
University of Illinois at U-C	M. Marriage and Family
University of Iowa	JD M. Urban & Regional Planning

University of Louisville	JD M. Divinity M. Pan African Studies M. Women & Gender Studies
University of Maryland, Baltimore	JD MBA MPH M.A. Jewish Communal Services
University of Michigan	JD MBA MPH M. Urban & Regional Planning M. Information Science
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	MPH MPA MPP M. Urban & Regional Planning
University of Missouri, St. Louis	Certificate – Gerontology Certificate – Nonprofit Organization Management
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	JD MPA M. Divinity
University of Pennsylvania	MPH
University of Pittsburgh	MPH
University of Southern California	JD MPA M. Urban Planning MPP M.S. Gerontology M.A. Jewish Communal Services Certificate – Nursing Case Management
University of South Carolina	JD MPH MPA Certificate – Gerontology Certificate – Drug and Addiction Studies
University of South Florida	MPH
University of Texas at Arlington	MPA M. City & Regional Planning M.A. Urban Affairs M.A. Criminology & Criminal Justice M.A. Sociology Ph.D. Comp. Social Policy (w/Ph.D. in SW)
University of Texas at Austin	JD M.Divinity
University of Washington	MPH

Virginia Commonwealth University	JD (University of Richmond) M. Divinity (Richmond Theological Consortium) MPH
West Virginia University	MPA Certificate – Gerontology Certificate – Health Care Administration Certificate – Nonprofit Management Certificate – Women’s Studies
Yeshiva University	JD

*Information received from E. Simon at CSWE, personal communication, August 20, 2008.*

Appendix B- Working List of Schools Offering Dual Degrees in Social Work and 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
				Loyola University	Chicago, IL	Jesuit Catholic
7	Loyola University	Chicago, IL	Jesuit Catholic	McCormick Theo Seminary	Chicago, IL	Presbyterian
8	Marywood University	Scranton, PA	Catholic	Garrett Evangelical Seminary	Chicago, IL	United Methodist Church
9	Monmouth University	W Long Branch, NJ	none	Moravian Seminary	Bethlehem, PA	Moravian Church - Protestant
10	Roberts Wesleyan Col	Rochester, NY	Methodist	Drew Theological Seminary	Madison, NJ	Methodist
11	Rutgers' School of SWk	New Brunswick, NJ	none	Northeastern Sem at RWC	Rochester, NY	Methodist
12	Southern CT State Univ	New Haven, CT	none	Princeton Theological Seminary	Princeton, NJ	Presbyterian
				Yale University	New Haven, CT	Ecumenical
				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
13	University of Chicago	Chicago, IL	none	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
				Baptist Theological Seminary	Richmond, VA	Baptist
				Samuel Proctor Sch of Theo	Richmond, VA	Baptist
21	VA Commonwealth U.	Richmond, VA	Baptist	Union Theological Seminary	Richmond, VA	Presbyterian

## Appendix C - Request for Interview Candidates

Interview candidates are wanted for participation in a social work doctoral dissertation entitled “Dual Degree Programs in Social Work and Divinity: Graduates’ Experiences.” I am seeking persons who have completed a dual degree program in social work and divinity having received an MSW and MDiv. Persons will be interviewed over the phone or in person when possible for approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours about their experiences while in the dual degree program. Confidentiality will be strictly maintained and the names of individual participants will be changed prior to any publication of findings. If willing to participate, please contact Beth Muehlhausen, a doctoral student at Indiana University in Indianapolis, IN.

Appendix D - List of Interview Questions for Graduates of Dual Degree Programs in  
Social Work and Divinity

*Demographic Questions*

Age  
Gender  
Race/Ethnicity  
Year Received Degrees in Social Work and Divinity  
Denominational Affiliation  
Ordained      If yes, what year.  
Current Job Title      Setting

*Descriptive Questions*

How was it you came to seek dual degrees in social work and divinity?

Tell me about an experience that was particularly important to you as you went through the dual degree process.

Tell me about a field experience you will never forget?

Tell me about a significant experience you had with a mentor.

Looking back, how has the dual degree experience played into your life today.

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## Curriculum Vitae

Beth L. Muehlhausen

**Credentials:** A.C.S.W. (Academy of Certified Social Workers)  
L.C.S.W. (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)  
Ordained Minister in Christian Church Disciples of Christ (June, 2006)

**Education:** Indiana University, Indianapolis 2010  
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work  
Minor: Women's Studies  
Honors: Women's Studies Scholarship

Christian Theological Seminary 2005  
Degree: Master of Divinity  
Honors: Thomas J. Liggett Scholarship (this includes full tuition)

Indiana University in Indianapolis 1990  
Degree: Masters in Social Work  
Practice Emphasis: Interpersonal with a Mental Health Focus  
Honors: Advanced Standing

Valparaiso University 1987  
Degree: Bachelor of Social Work  
Minor: Business Administration  
Honors: Alumni Scholarship

### **Teaching Experience:**

**1/07-5/07** Anderson University Sociology Department (Anderson, IN) - Adjunct Faculty. Taught the following courses; Self and Society which combined principles of psychology and sociology; and Human Sexuality which combined biology and sociology.

**1/96-5/99** Indiana University School of Social Work (Indianapolis, IN) - Adjunct Faculty. Taught the following courses; Practicum Seminar for BSW Juniors which included classroom instruction as well as field liaison duties; Practicum Seminar for BSW Seniors; and Human Behavior and Social Environment - Individuals for BSW Sophomores and Juniors. Have also been a field liaison for MSW students.

Served as the teacher practitioner for the Youth Development Field Unit (YDFU) which was comprised of four youth development agencies: Boys and Girls Clubs of Indianapolis (B&GCI), Indiana Youth Group (IYG), Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY), and Indiana Youth Institute (IYI). Was paid through a Lilly grant given to Boys and Girls Clubs of Indianapolis (B&GCI). Duties included: supervising all MSW and BSW students assigned to the field unit, facilitating a weekly peer group, providing individual supervision to MSW students, assisting in the training of the students throughout the semester, making field visits, meeting with the students to complete their practicum evaluations, and communicating with agency personnel assigned as the students' onsite task instructors.

**Research  
Experience:**

**8/94-2000** Indiana University School of Social Work (Indianapolis, IN) - Doctoral Student. Completed an independent study in Women's Studies that entailed doing a literature search for a research project on the correlation between healthy babies and the religious practices of the mother.

As part of a research internship, completed a literature search and wrote the first draft of a paper that was presented to the Council on Social Work Education in March, 1998, by Dr. Marie Watkins. Co-wrote the Youth Development Field Unit Student Handbook which entailed compiling information on the four agencies comprising the Youth Development Field Unit, developing assignments for the students, and describing all aspects of the field unit.

As preparation for dissertation, conducted a preliminary study of five social workers in various parts of the country who are serving in congregations.

**Pastoral/Ministry  
Experience:**

**9/04-6/05** Central Christian Church (Anderson, IN) - Student Associate Minister. Duties included occasional preaching and leading of worship; Coordinating family ministry events; working closely with the Christian Education committee to meet the needs of children, youth and their parents/guardians; reaching out to families not active in the church; reviewing curriculum used for church school and Vacation Bible School; coordinating and organizing Vacation Bible School; and helping the congregation to develop an approach to children that was welcoming and inclusive.

**1/04-5/04** Clarian Health Partners (Indianapolis, IN) - Chaplain Intern. Completed one unit of CPE (clinical pastoral education). Provided chaplaincy services to patients and families at Riley Hospital for Children and Indiana University Hospital. Served as the oncall chaplain for several shifts, which gave me a wide range of pastoral experiences dealing with people who are in physical, emotional and spiritual pain. Had several encounters with patients who were dying or had just died.

**Clinical Social  
Work Experience:**

**1/91-4/94** Fairbanks Hospital Outpatient Center (Greenwood, IN) - Addictions Counselor and Family Therapist. Provided group and individual counseling for persons who are chemically dependent and their families. Gained experience in the following areas: working with adolescents and adults who are in treatment for addiction; family members on parenting skills, marital and codependency issues; and women in treatment who were also survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

**1/90-5/90** Damien Center (Indianapolis, IN) - Graduate Social Work Intern. Worked with seropositive individuals and people living with A.I.D.S. Duties included: crisis counseling and ongoing case management for 15 clients; ongoing counseling of a client with possible dual-personality disorder as well as clients who were chemically addicted; participation and assistance in facilitating the "Persons Living with A.I.D.S." and "Family of Choice" support groups; participation in the Indianapolis Youth Group for Gay and Lesbian Youth; participation as a co-therapist with a private practitioner working with Center clients; and visiting clients in the hospital.

**5/87-5/89** Penstar Residential Services (Rockville, IN) - Social Worker. Was the social worker for four homes for MR/DD adults. Duties included: implementation and teaching of a social-sexual education program; counseling of residents and staff; planning inservices for staff on human sexuality and communication; reviewing of staff documentation on resident's socialization skills and behaviors; preparing a newsletter for family and friends of residents; applying residents for social security, supplemental security income and medicaid; and conducting job interviews for group home staff.

**Presentations:**

Muehlhausen, B. (2009). *Dual Degree Programs in Social Work and Divinity: Graduates' Experiences.* Paper presented at the annual convention of North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW). Indianapolis, IN.