

**CONFIDENTIAL****Suggested pastoral responses to the Bob Brandenburg situation****1. Formal public acknowledgement of the harm done**

The professional advice I have received has consistently emphasised the therapeutic benefit of a formal statement in which the Church acknowledges that:

- A/ In June of this year, shortly before his death, a former employee and volunteer leader of the Church in this Diocese had admitted a number of offences of sexual assault on minors. There is now some evidence which suggests that this was not an isolated incident and that the former employee had engaged in extensive and substantial sexual abuse over a period of many years.
- B/ Those who are abused in this way may suffer extensive physical, emotional, social and spiritual harm. The Church is appalled that one of its members should have acted in a way which would cause such harm.
- C/ Whilst not accepting liability for the harm done the Church will make provision for counseling for those who have suffered harm.

**2. The pastoral care of individuals, families and parishes (and perhaps the Diocese)**

- A/ Individuals and families: The establishment of a small, confidential referral team of professional people who have experience helping individuals and families who are suffering from the consequences of sexual abuse.
- B/ Parishes and Diocese: The provision of seminars or workshops to help parishes (particularly those which had active CEBS branches) and the Diocese deal with the reality of the situation and with the deep and often conflicting emotions which it raises. It may be that the issue could be explored at Parish or Diocesan level through a series of workshops and then closed off through an appropriate motion at the May 2000 Synod.
- C/ Funding: A special fund may need to be established to provide for these responses.

**3. Prevention of abuse in the future**

- A/ All clergy and salaried lay ministers should be required to undertake Mandatory Reporting training.
- B/ Key volunteer lay ministers should be encouraged to undertake Mandatory Reporting training. Financial incentives could be made available to Parishes to encourage compliance.
- C/ As a matter of urgency the Diocese should adopt and disseminate regulations and guidelines with respect to Duty of Care for parishes and church organisations. (I recommend, as a model, the publication 'Duty of Care and Church Leadership', Claire Lunnay, SA Baptist Union, 1998)

**4. Continued investigation of the extent of the abuse which has occurred**

It is important, in my view, that this ugly and deeply hurtful matter is cleared up now and that unresolved issues are not left to fester. There have been allegations that abuse has occurred in other parishes and at Diocesan Camp Sites. In view of the established connection with abuse which has occurred in Tasmania and recent events connected to CEBS in NSW it may be that some form of national church enquiry is necessary. The evidence for a network of sexual offenders is tenuous however, failure to investigate could leave the church open to charges of neglect of its duty of care.

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