Towards Understanding

A study of factors specific to the Catholic Church which might lead to sexual abuse by priests and religious

July 1999
YOU WILL COME TO KNOW THE TRUTH

AND THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

(John 8:32)
INTRODUCTION

The Australian Catholic Church Responds to Sexual Abuse

At their April 1996 meeting, the Australian Catholic Bishops formulated a comprehensive and detailed nine-point 'plan of action' which sought to respond to the magnitude of this problem of sexual abuse by priests and religious. The plan of action was publicly released on 26 April, accompanied by a Pastoral Letter to the Catholic People of Australia, and included the following initiatives:

1. Establishment of a National Committee for Professional Standards to continue to review and update the principles and procedures used by the Bishops to deal with allegations of sexual abuse.

2. The National Committee for Professional Standards to make a submission to the New South Wales Police Royal Commission.

3. Conducting of professional and independent studies to investigate how incidents of sexual abuse have been handled by dioceses and religious orders, how well the needs of victims have been met, and what might be done to assist victims.

4. Conducting studies to investigate how incidents of sexual abuse have been handled in those communities in which they have occurred.

5. Convening meetings involving the counselling services of the Church in which Bishops and religious leaders might meet with victims who have suffered sexual abuse by a priest or religious.

6. Development of a code of conduct for priests and religious.

7. Undertaking of a study of any factors specific to the Catholic Church which might lead to sexual abuse by priests, religious or church workers.

8. Establishment of a national program to treat those clergy and religious who suffer from psycho-sexual disorders.

9. Employment of a full-time Executive Officer to coordinate the above initiatives and to assist the National Committee for Professional Standards.

ACBC, (1996a)

The plan of action was later formally endorsed by the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes. This plan can be taken as an indication of the resolve and the commitment of the leaders of the Catholic Church in Australia to address the issue in an open and proactive manner.
The undertaking of the present research is a direct result of this resolve. The determination of Church leaders in Australia to address the issue of sexual abuse can be gauged from the words of one member of the joint bishops' and religious leaders' National Committee for Professional Standards:

> There must not be a complacent belief that the time of crisis will pass and, without any special effort on anyone's part, life will then be back to normal again. The revelations have been so shocking that the very word 'normal' will have a different meaning after this.

Robinson, (1996; p.16)

December 1996 saw the bishops and the religious leaders issue the document *Towards Healing: Principles and Procedures in Responding to Complaints of Sexual Abuse Against Personnel of the Catholic Church in Australia*¹ (ACBC & ACLRI, 1996b) which binds Church leaders ad interim to the provisions outlined in the document.

Unlike protocols developed in other parts of the English-speaking Church which have primarily addressed the issue of child sexual abuse, *Towards Healing* has extended its coverage to the more difficult area of sexual offences involving adults.

The present research project was commissioned by the Australian Catholic Bishops and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes as part of the implementation of Item 7 of the plan of action. Research was commissioned to make a clinical investigation of factors specific to the Catholic Church which may lead Church personnel to commit sexual abuse.

The services of the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission and Centacare Catholic Community Services Sydney were retained in December 1996 to undertake the research.

The National Committee for Professional Standards was charged with the responsibility for ensuring the research was completed in accord with the Terms of Reference set down by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.

¹ Hereinafter referred to as *Towards Healing*. 
CHAPTER ONE

Child Sexual Abuse

INTRODUCTION

In any endeavour to understand the real nature of child abuse, to minimise the possibilities of recurrence and to make a contribution through our reflections it is important to be aware that child abuse is extremely complex and that there are no simple solutions. Child abuse involves basic human energies and yearnings - sexuality, power, esteem, and the many elements of human interaction and relationships.

There is more to the issue of child sexual abuse than the failings of individuals, whether they be offences against children or youth, or whether they be the omissions of leaders who failed to take appropriate action when offences became known. The issues are further compounded by the attitudes prevalent in society at large. A deeper understanding of the intricacies and complexities of child abuse in society and a greater awareness that abuse does not occur in a vacuum will assist us as we grapple with the reality of child abuse within our Church.

Research in the area of child sexual abuse is very limited. A variety of factors including difficulties in finding representative samples, the lack of a standard definition of what constitutes child sexual abuse and the widely held view that only some 10 percent of cases of abuse are reported all contribute to hindering research.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Although sexual activity between adults and children has been ever present, it has had relatively little public exposure and has been surrounded by secrecy, denial, minimisation, and misunderstanding. The failure to address its nature and extent has contributed to an environment in which it has often been, inappropriately attributed to a stereotyped offender such as a ‘dirty old man in a raincoat’...the reality is otherwise.


History reveals three important themes in relation to child sexual abuse. First, abusive practices towards children have long existed in various degrees, within ordinary, accepted social behaviour. Second, denial of the existence and significance of child sexual abuse has persisted throughout history. Third, the dominance of patriarchal values throughout history has denigrated the rights of both women and children. Acts of child sexual abuse go back to antiquity and are described in the earliest historical accounts, captured in the most ancient clay markings.

Maltreatment of children in any form, especially physical abuse, was 're-discovered' in the early 1960s by Kempe and his colleagues in the United States and societies could no longer refuse to acknowledge the existence of child abuse. By the earlier part of this century sexual abuse had become characterised as extrafamilial assault, committed by 'strangers', with the victim perceived as being a 'temptress' rather than as an innocent child. Oates (1990) states that while society could cope with 'stranger danger' and the threat of the stereotypical child molester assaulting children, it was much more threatening to acknowledge that sexual abuse was commonly occurring within the family, committed by family members upon whom children were dependent and whom they should have been able to trust. The acknowledgement of sexual abuse was therefore a threat to the structure of the family.

Underlying many historical practices is the assumption of male superiority and dominance.

One of the most disturbing discoveries for me has to do with the impact of underlying social attitudes and values related to male and female sexuality. More than I ever realised, these tend to condition males to be sexual predators and females to be sexual victims...Social attitudes that view women and children as sexual objects and blame the victim who is sexually harassed or assaulted continue to be a norm in our culture

Freud and Kinsey are the two researchers who have heralded the modern era of inquiry into the area of human sexuality. Sigmund Freud made the first major attempt to explore the long-term implications of child sexual abuse on the human psyche. In the course of treating young women for what was termed 'hysteria' Freud identified that the common element in all their backgrounds was child abuse by an adult man. Freud's theory met with such strong opposition and fierce indignation that in 1897 he abandoned it in favour of one that proposed that the memory of childhood abuse is not a true memory but rather a childhood fantasy of desire for sexual contact with the parent of the opposite sex.

It is likely that the shift in Freud’s thinking was responsible for denying proper attention to the issue of child abuse for many years. Women in psychoanalysis revealing abuse were now much less likely to be believed, and this attitude continued to a greater or lesser extent well into the twentieth century and even into our own days. For many years after Freud, studies not only minimised the prevalence of child sexual abuse, they also minimised the resultant trauma.

Alfred Kinsey became one of the best known researchers in the area of sexuality in our modern time. However, in his national study of the sexual behaviour of men and later women in the United States very little attention was given to children and the issue of child sexual abuse. Kinsey referred not to 'child abuse', but to 'adult-child contacts'. Kinsey, like Freud, bears some responsibility for maintaining the denial and ignorance that completely surrounded child sexual abuse until the 1970s. Some contemporary researchers maintain that Kinsey and others 'minimised' or played down the sexual abuse of children and placed the blame on the victim, the child, because they felt society had not reached a point where it was able to acknowledge intrafamilial sexual abuse.

In more recent times various theories were proposed to explain the behaviour of victims of incest. All of these were founded on the same assumption – namely, that the child (especially the female child) and not the offender, was ultimately responsible for the
Only in the late 1970s did significant change in thinking occur, partly because of a rapid rise in the number of reported cases of child sexual abuse, and partly because of a number of careful and rigorous studies into sexual behaviour. Among these studies were those conducted by David Finkelhor whose work brought societal recognition of the plight of abused children to a new level. It has been a slow and difficult road to convince society to take cognisance of the fact that child abuse exists and occurs with devastating effects on children.

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?
The terms 'child abuse' and 'sexual abuse' do not have precise definitions. Sexual abuse of a child, however, always involves an adult's sexual urges expressed in sexual activity with a prepubescent child or with an adolescent at least five years younger than the offender, whether or not the child or adolescent is a willing participant. One widely accepted definition based on Schechter and Roberge's (1976) work defines child sexual abuse as "the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent". The key element of any definition lies in the acknowledgement of the limitations or more precisely the inability of children to give truly informed consent.

Sexual abuse of children includes a variety of activities short of, as well as, full sexual intercourse and is not always violent or non-consensual (Wood). Child sexual abuse may involve activities ranging from exposing the child to sexually explicit materials or behaviours, taking visual images of the child for pornographic purposes, touching, fondling and/or masturbation of the child, having the child touch, fondle or masturbate the abuser, oral sex performed by the child, or on the child by the abuser, and anal or vaginal penetration of the child. Sexual abuse has been documented as occurring on children of all ages and both sexes, and is committed predominately by men, who are commonly members of the child's family, family friends or other trusted adults in positions of authority. Sexual abuse of children is perpetrated by people with diverse backgrounds and from all walks of life, all races and cultures.

TYPES OF ABUSER
There are six terms commonly used to refer to sexual abuse of children and young persons.

**Paraphilic** is a clinical term that refers to persons who have recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, urges or behaviours that occur over a period of at least six months. (OSMIV, p.536)

**Paedophilia** refers to the activity of sexual abuse of a minor by an adult or a person at least five years older than the child.

**Paedophile** refers to a person whose sexual preference is for pre-pubescent children, male or female, and who acts out that preference over a period of time, and who is at least five years older than the victim.

**Ephebophilia** refers to the activity of the sexual abuse of a pubescent or post pubescent minor by an adult at least five years older than the minor.
All child sexual abuse is generally referred to as 'paedophilia' but not every child abuser is a true paedophile. It is most important to recognise this distinction. Paedophilia is the activity of child sexual abuse; the paedophile is one type of offender.

Paedophiles and ephebophiles can be identified as fixated or regressive. The terms exclusive and preferential are sometimes used to refer to fixated paedophiles while the terms non-exclusive and situational are used to refer to regressed paedophiles. Research has shown that while offenders generally fall into a category there is considerable overlap.

The majority of paraphiliacs are not psychiatrically ill although they may suffer psychiatric symptoms or features of poor impulse control, disordered personality, anxiety or depression. Researchers have found that sex offenders especially rapists and non-familial child molesters suffer from intimacy deficits and are, as a consequence, lonely individuals. The literature also suggests that one cannot explain or dismiss paedophilia or ephebophilia as being symptomatic of another psychiatric illness. It is clear that in the majority of cases, the paedophile and the ephebophile know what they are doing is wrong and have full volitional control over their actions.

The best course of long-term prevention right now is in a commitment to increased understanding. There are many facets to this whole issue; it is extremely complex. In order to prevent something happening in the future, we need to be as confident as possible that we really do understand what the experience is and what it means in the present. We are not yet at that point either as a mental health network or as a church.

Loftus (1989: p.24)

The Fixated Paedophile

The fixated abuser's sexual and erotic feelings and stimuli are focused primarily and exclusively on prepubescent or on post pubescent children. This preference is acted out over a period of time lasting at least six months. Some paedophiles prefer males but the vast majority offend against females. Others have no gender preference. Most have a particular age preference. The fixated paedophile shows an affinity for socialising with children. Many charismatically attract children with shows of affection and offers of gifts and there is a gradual progression from mild physical contact to oral-genital acts followed by intercourse.

Fixated abusers frequently display the following characteristics. They are:

- developmentally and psycho-sexually arrested;
- immature;
- non-assertive;
- heterosexually inhibited;
lacking social skills and knowledge of sex and sexuality; and/or
• possibly abused as children.

Fixated abusers' relationships with adults are poor. Manipulating and controlling children is easier since children are less able to retaliate and are more easily threatened. The fixated abuser's behaviour is often addictive and only outside intervention will stop the abuse. Treatment prognosis is poor.

Situational Offenders
Other offenders against children may be 'situational' or 'regressed' offenders - that is, those who, given certain circumstances, may offend on occasions. Regressed offenders usually have poor coping skills and low self-esteem. Their sexual interaction with children is a substitute for sexual interaction with a 'preferred peer sex partner'. Such occasions may be at times of intense anxiety and stress such as the loss of employment or the loss of intimacy with a partner. Some offenders display emotional levels of maturity lagging well behind physical and even intellectual growth. Regressed abusers usually have heterosexual adult to adult relationships and are often married with families. Some are homosexually oriented. Abusive sexual behaviour usually arises when they are experiencing severe stress or anxiety especially in relationships. They are people likely to abuse when environmental circumstances such as opportunity and the disinhibiting effects of alcohol, loneliness or revenge are present. Some offenders use alcohol and/or drugs prior to engaging in sexual activity with a child as a means of breaking down inhibitions. Treatment outcome possibilities for regressed offenders are marginally better than for fixated paedophiles.

While incestuous abusers tend to use coercion and threats, employing a variety of manipulative behaviours such as threatening force, trickery and coaxing to achieve their desire, extrafamilial offenders are generally not violent or aggressive. They are manipulative and controlling, using strategies such as being caring and affectionate, showering attention on and giving gifts to their victims.

Sadistic Offenders
Only a minority of paedophiles are sadistic offenders. Such offenders display aggressive traits and antisocial personality features. They are sexually aroused by aggressive acts and their attacks are associated with a high risk of physical damage, assault and even death. The child is usually not known to the offender and force is almost always used to abduct the child.

Paedophilic type behaviours may occur in the context of senility, intellectual dysfunction or organicity.

Differences between Offenders and Nonoffenders
There is evidence from the literature to support the position that the psychopathology of child sexual offenders differs from that of nonoffenders on one or more of the following factors:
• offenders have a higher rate of personal sexual abuse in their childhood;
• offenders have experienced wider elements of human deprivation or neglect in their childhood in the form of emotional and physical abuse;
• offenders display intimacy deficits and can be generally described as 'lonely' individuals;
• offenders display poor and manipulating relationships with adults and peers;
• offenders exhibit significant difficulties in establishing and maintaining personal relationships which lead to social alienation;
• offenders display a level of psychosexual and social development equivalent to the stage of psychosexual and social development of their victims;
• offenders take no responsibility for their own offending behaviour but rationalise their behaviour by blaming their victims;
• offenders display behaviour patterns typical of addictive personalities such as:
  - egocentricism,
  - a primary concern with fulfilling their own needs,
  - extreme guilt experienced in relation to their offending behaviour but not to the extent to cease the abuse, and/or are prevented from offending only by direct intervention.

Very few paedophiles or ephebophiles acknowledge, or can accept, the harm they do to their victims. Research indicates child sex offenders do not generally analyse their behaviour, but function on rationalisation. They use many rationalising strategies and arguments to excuse their abnormal and/or criminal behaviour.

**Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Offences against Children**

Recent years have seen a greater acknowledgement of the existence and prevalence of child sexual abuse. It is now universally accepted that its incidence is under-reported

_Wood Royal Commission, Vol.IV (p.616)_

There is a universal recognition that the disclosure and subsequent reporting of child sexual abuse falls far short of the true incidence of such abuse. There is no clear consensus as to the extent of non-disclosure or reporting save for agreement that it is substantial. In considering the incidence of sexual abuse against children it is important to note that it is difficult to assess with accuracy the actual prevalence rate in any population as not all cases are reported, prosecuted or substantiated. For example two studies cited by the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption to the Wood Royal Commission suggest respectively that only 2 percent of familial and only 6 percent of extrafamilial child sexual abuse were ever reported to police. The wide variety of definitions of sexual abuse used and the population from which the sample is drawn create additional difficulties when ascertaining incidence of child sexual abuse.

The magnitude of the problem is not one that can be accurately described by figures or statistics. It ranges from familial abuse through abuse from relatives or hitherto trusted family friends to abuse from strangers. Much of it remains unreported to authorities. Many of the reported cases cannot be taken further for various reasons, including the tender years of the child and the inability to
testify as to the details of the incident. Without wishing to engender paranoia, the Commission has concluded that the incidence of paedophile activity is of considerable proportions such as to amount to a very significant problem.

Wood Royal Commission, Vol.IV (p.562)

Evidence from a wide variety of studies supports the view that males commit the greater number of sexual offences against children. A conservative estimate would claim male offenders commit some 90 percent of all reported cases of sexual abuse involving children. While all sexual offences against children are under-reported, incidents involving female perpetrators are more likely to be unreported than incidents involving male offenders. The consensus among the experts who gave evidence at the Commission, supported by convictions statistics, has been that females rarely, if ever, sexually abuse children. (Wood Royal Commission, Vol.IV. p.633)

Finkelhor and Russell (1984) propose that females abuse in a small proportion of cases: approximately 5 percent of cases with female victims and 20 percent of cases involving males. Often women who sexually abuse do so at the instigation or encouragement of male abusers and are charged as accessories rather than as the party who initiated the offence. On the available evidence it appears that some 5 percent of men and 0.5 percent of women molest girls.

It is clear from the literature that there are generally multiple victims of each paedophile and ephebophile and that these victims are boys and/or girls ranging from infancy to 17 years. The risk of abuse to girls is two to three times higher than for boys. Australian research confirms overseas studies that approximately 28 percent of girls and nine percent of boys reported sexual experiences with an adult. The mean age of assault for girls was approximately 9 years and 10 years for boys. The pattern for substantiated sexual abuse involving female children peaks around ages 3 to 4 years and rises dramatically again at 14 years while for male children it peaks around 4 to 5 years of age.

Research indicates that a vast majority of cases of sexual offences against children in New South Wales and Victoria is perpetrated by parents, siblings or relatives (approximately 48%). These Australian figures confirm overseas studies that between 70 and 80 percent of child sex abusers are known to their child and adolescent victims. There is little doubt that the most common offender against both girls and boys is the unrelated male known to the family. Most have established trust through a parental or authority relationship with their victims and are often physical or emotional father figures. National figures for 1995-96 report that only 2 percent of substantiated sexual abuse notifications involved strangers.

A helpful profile of child sexual abuse is provided in the 1997 study by the New South Wales Judicial Commission which reported that offences involved sexual intercourse with a child under 10 years, indecent assault, aggravated indecent assault, homosexual intercourse with a male between 10 and 18 years. The figures do not take into account the large number of offences that are dealt with in the Local Courts for which statistical analysis is very difficult and where many of the minor sexual offences are dealt with. The study found:

- 14 percent of multiple trial cases resulted in a guilty outcome;
- offenders were mostly male;
46 percent of proven victims were assaulted by family members; 31 percent by an immediate family member, generally the father;

54 percent of proven victims were assaulted by a non-family member (44 percent by an adult known to the family, 5 percent by a teacher, clergyman or babysitter and 5 percent by a stranger);

72 percent of the proven victims were female;

females were more likely to be abused by a family member in the family home;

boys were more likely to be abused by a non-family member, known to the family;

girls were more likely to have suffered prolonged abuse; and that

boys were more likely to have been victims of single incidents.


WHY IS IT THAT SOME MEN ABUSE?

There is no single factor that explains why some men abuse. Single factor theories are inadequate to explain the full range and diversity of paedophilic behaviour.


Many articles and texts indicate widely held acceptance of the four factors Finkelhor has identified to bring some light to this vexed question. He has proposed that all factors play a significant role.

1. Emotional congruence - the offender finds children attractive; his own development is arrested; he has low self esteem; he has inherited male socialisation to dominance; he identifies with the aggressor.

2. Sexual arousal - heightened arousal to children; possible conditioning from early childhood experience; hormonal abnormalities; socialisation through child pornography or advertising.

3. Blockage - difficulty relating to adult females; inadequate social skills; sexual anxiety; disturbances in adult sexual romantic relationships; repressive norms about sexual behaviour.

4. Disinhibition - lack of impulse control; mental retardation; alcohol; drugs; pornography; failure of incest-avoidance mechanism; situational stress; patriarchal norms and cultural tolerance.

For sexual abuse of a child by an adult to occur, the adult must:

- have sexual feelings for the child or children in general
- overcome his internal inhibitions against acting out the sexual feeling
- overcome the external obstacles to acting out the feeling
- overcome any resistance or attempts at avoidance by the child
Other researchers such as Marshall and Barbaree (1990) offer a simplified summary of the factors underlying abusive behaviour.

1. **Biological factors** - these set the stage for future learning rather than determine outcome. There is no clear association between genetic factors and sex offending against children.

2. **Childhood experiences** - these are extremely important for determining the child's capacity for intimacy, security and for learning role models. A significant number of perpetrators of child sexual offences appear to have arrested social and sexual development. Increasingly, links are being made in research between childhood experiences and arrested or fixated adult behaviour.

3. **Sociocultural context** - that is, the messages the child receives regarding the place of women and children in society. These are important given that findings indicate that three features largely determine the frequency of abuse - the level of interpersonal sexual and physical violence, male dominance and negative attitudes towards women and children.

Additionally, some researchers put forward the view that family relationships are the key to proper understanding of the nature of the offender. Our personality and our self-image depend to a large extent on the way we were brought up - how we learned to relate to parents and siblings, whether or not we developed a proper sense of self. Poor self image means we have to discover ways of finding our own power and of being able to exercise that power in a manner which gives us a real sense of achievement, command and control. This is especially significant in a culture of male dominance and power.

As Southdown director Donna Markham explains:

> When the need for proving oneself by overcoming poor self image fuses with (even normal) sexual energy, abuse often results - *the fusion of aggression and sex is clinically very close*. We can be so ashamed of our own limitations and our own ability to achieve, that we find socially unacceptable ways of overcoming this apparent fear. Our shame at being apparently "no good" makes us fear the opinions of others. We tend, therefore, to act in strange ways to show that we are the "men" the western world expects us to be.

*(Interview July 14th 1997)*

Research has also identified the effect of situational factors such as stress, anger and depression that can trigger episodes of loss of control. However, it is important to realise that these factors can never be used as an excuse for loss of control or abusive behaviour.

Many offenders have been the victims of abuse. Some researchers would assert that perhaps the strongest single correlation with abusive behaviour as an adult would be experiences as a victim of abuse in childhood. Other therapists would identify wider elements of childhood human deprivation or neglect, both emotional and physical, as significant contributors to individuals being at risk of abusing as adults. Exposure to fragmented, inconsistent and disturbed parenting, domestic violence including child physical, sexual and emotional abuse and rejection, impede the development of self-esteem, emotional attachment and confidence in expression of feelings.

There is consensus within the literature that abusers are not ‘out of control’ people who have no ability to exercise choice about their behaviour or lack of ability to take responsibility for the consequences of their behaviour.
CHAPTER TWO

What the Literature Tells Us About Priest and Religious Offenders

INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE

A major handicap in ascertaining the incidence of sexual abuse against children within the community is the differing reporting requirements and regimes which have been introduced across the jurisdictions as a result of changes in policies relating to child abuse and neglect. A crucial issue for Church authorities concerns establishing whether there is any significant difference between the rate of sexual offences against children committed by priests and religious and the rate of similar offences committed by the general population.

While definitive research in the area of child sexual abuse is limited this is especially so in relation to offences by priests and religious.

There is simply too much we do not yet know. Anyone who suggests the contrary at this point is doing us all a great disservice. Our information about the clergy and religious population involved in the issues of sexual impropriety is primitive, at best; our reflections on the 'not yet gathered data' are of necessity, therefore, pitifully shallow and piecemeal.

Loftus (1989:p.6)

In New South Wales in 1994 four religious ministers were prosecuted two of whom (approximately 0.63% of proven offenders in 1994) were Catholic priests.

Analysis of the Victorian data reported for 1992-93 indicates that 170 cases (6.77%) of reported sexual offences against children were committed by a person in a position of authority to the child, for example a teacher, religious leader or sports coach. A breakdown of the data identifying the actual number of Catholic priests or religious included in the figure of 170 is not available.

Sipe (1990), drawing from a private database collected over 30 years of clinical practice, estimates that 6 percent of American priests sexually abuse children. Of these offences, 2 percent involve paedophilic activities and 4 percent involve ephebophilic activities. A number of other researchers broadly support Sipe's early findings (Fortune, 1989; Rutter, 1989; Steinke, 1989).

The Saint Luke Institute\(^2\) has cited a 1992 study by Dempsey et al. estimating that between 80 and 90 percent of sexual abuse of minors perpetrated by Catholic priests is directed at same-sex adolescents and provides corroboration of this figure from estimates.

\(^2\) A psychiatric hospital in Maryland originally established to evaluate and treat alcoholic and addicted clergy and which, more recently, treats clergy with a variety of addiction and personality disorders including sexual dysfunction.
at Saint Luke's Institute and other facilities which assess and treat Catholic priests and religious. (Robinson, Montana & Thompson, 1993:p.1)

Loftus and Camargo (1993) carried out a retrospective survey of 1,322 men who had attended treatment programs run at Southdown. Their findings revealed that 117 residents admitted to age-inappropriate sexual misconduct (i.e. the victims were aged 19 or under). Of the total sample, 8.4 percent reported some explicit genital activity with an "underage" person. Those who had sexual contact with children aged 13 years or under, the group most likely to meet diagnostic criteria for paedophilia, represented 2.7 percent of the total sample surveyed.

Sipe (1990) again drawing from a private data base estimates that 6 percent of American priests sexually abuse children. Of these offences, 2 percent involve paedophilic activities and 4 percent involve ephebophilic activities. While there has been some debate on the limitations of Sipe's claims, it can be noted that a number of other researchers broadly support his findings. (Fortune 1989; Rutter 1989; Steink 1989).

The Cardinal's Commission on Clerical Sexual Misconduct with minors in the Archdiocese of Chicago established an offence rate, based on cases actually dealt with by the Archdiocese, of 2.7 percent. This report estimated that approximately 90 percent of priests in the United States who have sexually abused children under 18 years have been homosexual ephebophiles. In a review of 59 cases of priests reported for sexual offences involving children under 18 years, only one case involved paedophilia. (Archdiocese of Chicago, 1992:pp.11-12)

**PROFILES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIEST AND RELIGIOUS CHILD SEX OFFENDERS**

There is a view generally maintained in the literature that those priests and religious who commit sexual offences against children are no different from the general population of sexual offenders in terms of their psychopathology. It is argued that the dynamics and issues involved in cases of clergy or religious offenders parallel those of others in conventional positions of authority including incestuous parents and human service professionals such as therapists, doctors and teachers (Hulme, 1989; Blanchard, 1991; Loftus & Camargo, 1993). This point is cogently reinforced by Loftus and Camargo (ibid.:p.289) who state categorically that:

> [t]here are certainly no differences legally or in terms of public accountability in standards of rehabilitation. ...(We) do not think there is any significant difference in these men that is accounted for by religious motivation and/or spirituality. We certainly have no evidence to suggest that spiritual motivations or religious sensitivities make any difference in assessing or treating their behaviour.

In Loftus and Camargo's 1993 survey of the Southdown Program, the typical priest or religious sex offender against children was described as over 49 years of age when first seen, from a middle-class socio-economic background and to have had at least 15 years of priestly or religious ministry behind him before referral. These offenders showed no

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3 A centre established for the treatment of addicted priests which has moved into the treatment of priests and religious with sexual disorders.
evidence of personal or family history of substance abuse or psychiatric disorder although they had frequent and random sexual encounters over a prolonged period of opportunities.

Blanchard (1991:p.238) likens the driving forces behind sexual abuse by clergy to those that drive 'more conventional' sex offenders citing power, control, personal reassurance, anger and hostility as reasons behind the offences. Other researchers who have experience of priest and religious child sex offenders, like Suzanne Jenkins (cited in Tucci, op. cit.), hold the view that abusers can and do separate their public and private lives.

Psychopathology of Priest and Religious Child Sex Offenders

Blanchard has suggested that priests who commit addictive and assaultive sex develop long-lasting 'inner wounds' that are based in an individual's personal insecurities, shame, anger and loneliness. (ibid.,p.238) Perhaps, the most conclusive research examining the differences within a population of priest and religious child sex offenders and religious nonoffenders on measures of psychopathology comes from a 1993 study conducted at the Saint Luke Institute (Robinson et al., 1993). This study reviewed the psychological, psychosocial and neuropsychological test profiles of clergy with sexual difficulties toward children (the sample included paedophiles and ephebophiles), compulsive behaviours towards adults, alcohol problems and a control group consisting of priests with mood disorders requiring treatment.4

The results of some of the differences observed between the paraphiliac groups and the control group are as follows. Paedophiles and ephebophiles reported a high idealisation of both parents, particularly their mothers, evidence of some frontal lobe impairment and a longer mean response time to complete tasks requiring complex motor functions. A greater number of ephebophiles demonstrated a higher impairment in attention/concentration, complex nonverbal problem solving and verbal memory than either paedophiles or the control group.

Paedophiles performed worse on measures of non-verbal intelligence, mental flexibility and visual memory. There was no significant difference observed on IQ scores.

Childhood Experiences of Priest and Religious Child Sex Offenders

About 30 percent of priest and religious offenders are victims of abuse themselves. This results in a cycle of offending in which the victim becomes an offender in his or her attempt to resolve personal issues of abuse.

The 1993 study previously cited by Robinson et al. identified that priests who were classified as paedophiles and ephebophiles, reported a significantly higher incidence of childhood or adolescent sexual experiences, with both same sex and opposite sex partners, compared to a control group of priests. Overall 43 percent of paedophiles and 40 percent of ephebophiles reported no childhood or adolescent sexual experiences compared to 60 percent of the control group.

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4 The study proposed that priests in the control group had no neuropsychological or psychological impairments and thus could be compared to the other groups.
Sipe (1995:pp.10-12) claims from his experience of 473 priest child sex offenders in the United States, that 70 to 80 percent of priest abusers had themselves been abused as children, some by priests. 10 percent of Sipe's population of offending priests had been abused by a superior in a seminary training system.

Robinson et al. (1993) reported a significantly higher incidence of childhood or adolescent physical abuse recounted by paedophilic and ephebophilic priests compared to a control group. Dempsey (1992:p.6) noted that some priests who engaged in paraphilic activities with children have tended to choose a victim about the age they themselves were when they first entered the seminary.

Occupational Factors
In addition to those factors identified for the non-religious population of child sex offenders, it is possible to identify a number of factors that are more relevant to priests and religious who offend against children. The research suggests there are some specific occupational-related factors that are peculiar to priests and which intensify and foster an addictive cycle amongst this group. These include:

- 'pedestalisation' of clergy by congregations whose expectations only serve to enhance the sexual obsession and reinforce the need for secrecy;
- the martyr-like position clergy can portray due to their 'emotional poverty' coupled with their willingness to be at the service of the congregation;
- the trusted positions clergy enjoy, as guardians and champions of morality, which places them in dependency relationships with vulnerable people.

These factors interact with an individual's inner beliefs about his or her own shamefulness encouraging an optimum environment in which obsessive sexual behaviour can take place. Religious life can appear to provide the sanctuary needed to avoid this continual battle with personal shame. It offers, so it seems, to poor self image, a certain status; it provides the mechanism to do good for others. The culture of church and religious life especially in the harshness of the discipline imposed, of emotional deprivation, of an all-male environment – all of this, according to Buckley, probably serves to reinforce negative self-image in those who enter religious life with a poor sense of self (1996).

The risk of offending is increased when the potential perpetrator encounters a person who, by virtue of his or her subordinate position or emotional state, is vulnerable to exploitation. This applies especially, but not exclusively, to priests and religious. A person may be vulnerable because:

- of the age differences between the offender and victim (i.e. student and teacher);
- the offender occupies an esteemed position of trust (Parish Priest, Superior);
- there is a real or perceived imbalance of power and authority in the relationship (Superior and novice);
- the victim is placed in a role in which there is a natural desire to please (Parish Priest, teacher);
- the victim is undergoing a personal, emotional or sexual crisis (seeking guidance and assistance from religious counsellors).
Robinson et al., (1993) have also reported that approximately 25 percent of priest paedophiles and ephebophiles used alcohol prior to or during their sexual activities involving children.

As has been noted, adults who are placed in a position of trust and care over the child (including priests and religious) are responsible for committing some of the reported sexual offences against children. The rate of offence for adults in a position of care and trust is significantly lower than the incidence of sexual offences committed by a child's immediate family and relatives, familial acquaintances or friends. There is no evidence from the literature to confirm or deny whether priests and religious manoeuvre themselves into environments where children can be found, i.e. schools, parish youth groups, altar servers.

Theological Factors

David Ranson believes that within the Catholic Church sexual abuse often occurs at that point where dysfunctional elements in three major areas of life come together: theological, psychological and social. He maintains the two major theological factors are the patriarchal imagery of God and the ambiguous tradition of sexuality.

The human way of reacting to something or someone is largely determined by the way we imagine that thing or person to be. Likewise the way we imagine a particular relationship determines the way we will act in that relationship. In like manner, we will behave towards God according to our image of who and what God is. When the driving imagery for the priest or religious in ministry is tied to lordship or control rather than to the image of authentic Trinitarian community, collaboration, participation and love the structures for domination and subservience are inherently present and the beginnings of a framework for abuse are established.

Our image of God will also determine the ways in which we view failure, fragility and vulnerability. Some images of God will demand perfection, placing enormous pressure on the person to achieve holiness. Images of God demanding perfection will also legitimise a sort of public perfectionism in which personal or corporate fragility is either denied altogether or is overcome. Images like these make it easier for church authorities to distance themselves from individuals who fail by abuse, in favour of maintaining the collective ‘perfection’ and invulnerability of the church or congregation as institution. More loving images of God will invite people, including church ministers, to accept and attend to their vulnerability and admit to personal limitations and mistakes.

The Christian traditions’s view of sexuality has been ambivalent. The meeting of the Christian religion with Greek culture as the Gospel spread to the Hellenistic world led to an understanding of ‘perfection’ as being closely related to the absence of passion – a sort of asexuality. There are many examples in early Church history of heterodox teachings viewing human sexuality with deep suspicion.

Although condemned as heresy, such movements were to persist in some form for centuries to come and to re-emerge strongly in the form of Jansenism in 17th century France, subsequently influencing Irish theology and spirituality with consequent impact on many parts of the Catholic world. In the words of therapist Robert Grant: ‘Jansenism’s denigration of the body and sexuality has cut a cruel path through the psyche of many clergy and religious currently over the age of 35’ (1994-5:p.25). Moral theology has been dogged by that dominant thread of matter-spirit separation,
Chapter 2 – What the Literature Tells Us About Priest and Religious Offenders

Despite the incarnational nature of Christianity and has had an enormous impact on the theology of sexuality and many residual effects of this heresy are still present in the Church.

Celibacy

Celibacy is a tradition in the Roman Catholic Church, and in other religious traditions, which dates from the fourth century. It was not until the twelfth century that celibacy became a requirement for all clergy in the Western Church. Celibacy is a state in which a voluntary decision is made to avoid sexual encounters of any kind or form. Canon 277 § 1 notes celibacy is a special gift of God by which sacred ministers can more easily remain close to Christ with an undivided heart, and can dedicate themselves more freely to the service of God and their neighbour.

The role of celibacy as a factor contributing to sexual offending is a sensitive issue. The Winter Report noted that

much concern has been expressed over the possible link between priestly celibacy, which is a long standing discipline of the Roman Catholic Church, and the occurrence of child sexual abuse. The Commission has been unable to establish any direct correlation in this, and statistics tend to indicate that the incidence of sexual abuse of children among celibate clergy is no different from that among other groups within the general population. (Vol.I:p.97)

It would appear that an active and satisfying sexual life is no guarantee against offending or violation of sexual boundaries. However, it should be clear that there is no simple answer here either. While there is no evidence to support a direct link between the church’s requirement of mandatory celibacy and the reporting of instances of child or adolescent sexual abuse, it cannot be said that it is entirely irrelevant either. (Loftus, J. Sexual Abuse in the Church: A Quest for Understanding, 1989)

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible from the literature to draw a number of conclusions regarding the specific nature of sexual offences against children committed by priests and religious. The conclusions are as follows:

• it is a fact that there are instances of fixated paedophilia among priests and religious of the Catholic Church in Australia. The prevalence of such fixated paedophilia appears to be lower than that in the community at large;
• some child sexual offences by priests and religious relate to dysfunctional psycho-pathological states;
• most child sexual offences by priests and religious involve ephebophilic rather than paedophilic behaviour and are frequently associated with situational factors relating to lifestyle and ministry;
• child sexual offences by priests and religious are more frequently homosexual rather than heterosexual in nature - this is the opposite of the pattern for child sex offenders in the community at large;
the 'pedestalisation' of priests and religious by members of the Church, particularly by children, as well as the associated belief in and respect for their spiritual authority, have led to misplaced trust being put in them and failure to adequately supervise adult-child interaction and activities. This finding refers to what could be termed a 'modality difference' inherent in clerical or religious vocations that can not be said to apply to nonreligious child sex offenders;

• priest and religious child sex offenders are themselves likely to have been the victims of sexual abuse as children; and

• erroneous views about the criminal nature of child sexual abuse and about the observance of celibacy seem to have some significance in offences committed by priests and religious against children.

It makes little sense to seek to make predictions about any single factor playing the significant role in sexual disorders involving children. It is more correct to conclude that sexual disorders involving children, including paedophilia and ephebophilia, are a consequence of processes in which a number of psychopathological and situational factors play a role. This conclusion applies equally to priest and religious child sex offenders as it does to nonreligious child sex offenders.
BACKGROUND
During 1997 and 1998, the researchers distributed questionnaires to persons with an interest in the research area. The questionnaire took the form of a Survey Instrument and was constructed to explore issues raised in a review of the child sexual assault literature.

A total of 405 surveys were distributed. A total of 66 surveys were returned. Additionally, 30 face to face consultations were conducted. The overall response rate for bishops was approximately 50 percent and for religious leaders 20 percent. The latter response rate from religious leaders reflects the lack of known incidents of child sexual abuse by women notwithstanding the fact that the majority of religious in Australia are women.

The comments and contributions from participants responding to the Survey Instrument and those involved in the face-to-face discussions verify many of the findings identified in the literature. As well as substantiating specific factors relating to known child sex offenders, there were valuable insights into aspects of the life and culture of Catholicism in Australia and, in particular, of priesthood and religious life.

SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST CHILDREN COMMITTED BY PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS
The information gathered from the literature review and the consultative stage of the research allows the following observations to be made concerning the extent and the nature of child sexual offences committed by priests and religious in Australia.

It was widely accepted by participants in the consultations that the rate of sexual offences against children is much higher for priests and male religious than it is for female religious. However, there was evidence presented in the literature to support the reality that sexual offences against children by women do occur. A number of disclosures made to the researchers clearly indicate that sexual offences by female religious have indeed occurred in Australia. In the absence of empirical evidence, further research is necessary before the contention can be substantiated that sexual offences committed by women religious seem to be related to either pubescent or post-pubescent females.

The Extent of Offences
Reporting in the media and the strong reactions of victims' advocacy groups lead the public to believe that the incidence of child sexual offences within the Church is higher than in the general population. This perception is unable to be effectively challenged due to the lack of any systematic data collection or research. This lack of accurate figures on the prevalence rate of sexual abuse against children committed by
priests and religious either for Australia or overseas is less than helpful in assessing with any degree of accuracy the extent of abuse.

It is to be expected that under-reporting of sexual offences by members of the Church community would follow the trend of under-reporting in the general community. Stephen Rossetti (interview 11 July, 1997) warns that 'any statistics you've read are all guesses simply because there are no statistics available and there probably never will be' – there is just no way of knowing how many child abusers there are in society at large. Victim rates are easier to find than offender rates.

Evidence from the research literature and from discussions involving clinicians and therapists, supports the view that there are no essential differences between the incidence of priest and religious child sex offenders and the incidence of child sex offenders in the general population. There is no evidence to indicate that clergy/male religious molest minors at a higher rate than non religious males. The reality is, in fact, that the majority of sexual offences against children are perpetrated by family members and family friends. It is clear children are at greater risk of being sexually abused by family members and friends than by priests or religious.

The Nature of Offences

The results of both the literature review and the consultations are consistent in suggesting that true paedophile activity by priests and male religious is overwhelmingly perpetrated against pre-pubescent boys. The consultations confirmed the findings from the literature that the incidence of true fixated paedophilia among priests and religious is quite small. Furthermore, responses strongly reinforced the contention that most sexual offences against children committed by priests and religious can be described as instances of homosexual ephebophilia. Therapists were firm in their conviction on this matter. Moreover, on the basis of the limited available data, fixated paedophilia is not evidenced in the majority of criminal offences against children or against adolescents by either priests or religious.

These findings are the complete opposite to the pattern of offences committed by child sexual offenders in the general community who are more likely to offend against girls than boys. The Research confirms that many male religious who commit sexual offences against children are engaged in ministries which involve male environments (e.g. schools), and offences are therefore primarily due to occupational factors rather than any irregular psychopathology. It is recognised that priests and religious who minister to children and young people, because of the nature of the work undertaken, are uniquely vulnerable.

IDENTIFICATION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

A number of conclusions can be drawn about the psychopathology of priest and religious child sexual offenders and the environments in which they live.

There is clear evidence that considerable differences do exist between child sex offenders and the general population. When specific consideration is made of priests and religious, Loftus and Comargo (1993) argue there are no significant differences between the psychopathology associated with priest and religious child sex offenders compared to non-religious child sexual offenders. This was confirmed by the research.
Australian respondents reported that priest and religious child sexual offenders exhibited, to a greater or less degree, some or all of the following psychological characteristics and backgrounds:

- greater incidence of personal childhood sexual abuse;
- greater incidence of childhood emotional and physical abuse;
- intimacy deficits;
- poor adult relationships;
- social alienation;
- a similar psycho-sexual and social development to their victims;
- addictive personality behaviours; and,
- rationalisation of behaviour by blaming victims.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF PRIEST AND RELIGIOUS OFFENDERS

Findings from the Survey
The Survey Instrument sought information relating to the personal background of those who enter priesthood or religious life and their relationship with parents and siblings. Specific comments were sought that might have some relevance to the sexual offences committed by the individual.

Family Background: Relationships with Parents and Siblings
The most consistent comments related to the offenders’ relationships with their parents. On the side of the mother, strength and dominance were stressed, over-attachment, linking the choice of priesthood or religious life with the religious influence of the mother. By contrast, severity, fear, lack of affective relationship were repeatedly stated in relation to the fathers of offenders. Typical expressions used to describe this father-child relationship are captured by the comment, ‘father absent physically and emotionally from his life’. In other cases ‘deprived and difficult family circumstances’ were mentioned. The patterns of early life were consistently described and a common thread in most of the observations was of failure of nurturing relationships during childhood and adolescence.

There appeared to be no observable pattern in reported childhood relationships between offenders and their siblings. For example, responses underlined both the presence and the absence of sibling relationships: 'only child', 'only boy in a family of girls', 'adoption in infancy', growing up from an early age in an orphanage, or sent to boarding school at various stages of education.

The most notable comment made about the family background of offenders was that only a small number of offenders had what was described by respondents as a 'loving, normal and healthy' childhood.
Personal Childhood Physical or Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse of male offenders themselves in childhood was mentioned in a majority of responses. The circumstances of this abuse varied considerably and included an older adolescent, a parent (in one case a mother), a family relative, a pastor, school teachers and other young persons in the context of a boarding school (peers). A few responses alluded to serious physical abuse as well as sexual abuse.

Two Church Leaders, both therapists, stressed that an offender's personal experience of being sexually abused in childhood was 'common but by no means universal'.

Emotional and Intellectual Maturity When Entering Priesthood or Religious Life

The state of emotional and intellectual maturity that a priest or a male religious brought to his formation years was a factor that provoked strong response amongst respondents. Comments referred both to the nature of candidates and the structures of admission. It was evident from responses that some comments referred to practices within seminaries and religious houses of formation that were current in the 20 year period between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. These included, but were not limited to, entry to the 'Juniorate' at an age as young as 14 years, complete isolation from families, isolation from any involvement in the wider community (including newspapers, radio and television) and deprivation of normal cross-gender social interaction.

More than half of the responses stressed the superior intellectual abilities and qualities of offenders but placed these in sharp contrast to their emotional and sexual immaturity. There was consensus that the arresting of human psycho-sexual and psychological development accompanied entry to seminary or religious life directly from secondary school. More than one respondent identified the years of formation for priests and religious as being responsible for an 'affective hibernation' of the emotional and psychological growth of most males who entered seminaries or houses of formation, and that this retarded development was particularly noticeable in offenders.

It was suggested that the period of 'hibernation' was coupled with a general lack of preparedness to acknowledge or address the importance of healthy emotional and intellectual development of trainees. The result is claimed to be failure to address serious personal problems and deficiencies in potential candidates for ministry. Such a situation becomes particularly regrettable where normal social development and education are regarded as peripheral to formation for ministry.

From the broad scope of responses, there was some acknowledgement of the considerable change that has taken place in the circumstances of entry to priesthood and religious life during the late 1990s. Two submissions in particular, both from Church personnel, expressed continuing personal reservations about the intellectual maturity and the affective orientation of candidates currently presenting as candidates for priesthood and religious life.

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5 A juniorate is an institution attached to a house of religious formation attended by prospective religious during their secondary school years. During the earlier part of this century, young boys/youths intending to become priests often attended a 'minor seminary', attached to or associated with a major seminary, during their years of secondary education.
Sexual Orientation, Affective and Sexual Development

There was some overlap in comments received in response to this item and the previous item (Emotional and Intellectual Maturity when Entering Priesthood or Religious Life). Respondents claim that confusion about personal sexual orientation is quite frequent. This is especially so in instances where the offender’s entry to priesthood or religious life is at a very young age, or where lack of affection and warmth characterises an offender’s relationships with parents.

Respondents cited the element of opportunism as being a frequent factor in the committing of offences. Such comments particularly related to male offenders whose ministry required them to have regular close contact with children (e.g. working in school environments).

Personal History of Physical and Mental Health

Comparatively little comment was made by respondents about offenders' histories of either physical or mental health. There were certainly no responses that cited either of these health issues in the childhood background of offenders.

While the childhood physical or mental health of offenders may have had some significance in an offender's later committing of sexual abuse (e.g. the onset of offending, the pattern of offences), any causal association was difficult to establish in the mind of respondents. In accepting that the physical or mental health of offenders might play some role in the incidence of sexual offences, therapist respondents indicated that the evidence of pre-existing childhood physical or mental ill-health in offenders is more likely to be as a later accompaniment of abusive patterns of behaviour rather than as a predictive indicator. This reinforces the view that not every person who has experienced childhood abuse or earlier episodes of mental illness is predisposed to become a sexual offender against children. It seems, however, that a number of offenders have, themselves, identifiable instances of these factors in their childhood or adolescent backgrounds.

ADULT PERSONAL LIFE OF PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS WHO OFFEND

The second section of the Survey Instrument referred to the adult personal background of priests or religious who commit sexual offences against children. Respondents were asked to comment on those aspects of an individual's adult life and behaviour which they (the respondent) thought might have some relevance to the sexual offences committed by that individual.

Significant Characteristics of Personality and Behaviour

The term ‘ambivalence’ was frequently used by respondents to describe significant characteristics of offenders' personality and behaviour. Two forms of behaviour were described as existing in the one personality: one 'gentle', 'loving', 'understanding'; the other 'domineering', 'threatening', and even 'sadistic'. Therapists reported that ambivalence evidenced itself most noticeably in respect to authority, swinging between the extremes of submission and revolt.

Certain offenders were described as usually portraying an almost dual personality or set of diametrically opposed behaviours, characterised by the terms 'reserved' and 'proper', when in a comfortable environment through to 'stubborn' and 'determined' when in a challenging environment. Notable personality traits such as 'withdrawn',
'petty and at times intransigent' were frequently mentioned. 'Passive aggressive' was the common term used to describe the behaviour of other offenders in relation to the interpersonal style they adopted with authority figures.

Retarded affective development was frequently described, often hidden behind a facade of gentleness, kindness and generosity. Offenders were frequently seen as intense and restless, with low tolerance of stress, combined with a propensity to flare into anger. A therapist characterised one offender as 'secretiveness and rage beneath a smooth exterior'. Another comment was of a person who 'works well in positions of authority, but finds it hard when challenged or in a situation of conflict'.

When it came to describing patterns of behaviour and relationships in work and ministry, many of the responses were quite negative. Offenders were variously described as: 'displaying skills for engaging people and insinuating (themselves)', 'demanding of others, with indications of perfectionism, control, manipulative behaviour, workaholism, passive aggression', 'goal oriented for affirmation and concerned with issues rather than people', 'always on the go, narcissistic, yet with an absence of true reflectiveness', 'secretive and "poker-faced" with little sense of guilt, facile at lying and denial', 'a poor self-image seeking affirmation in a controlled setting, often that of children'.

As well as the above descriptions, which generally relate to all offenders against children, respondents were adamant priest and religious offenders used religion and their own religious role in an unhealthy and regressive way with adults but especially with children. Frequent reference was made to priest and religious offenders invoking a false spirituality in an attempt to impress others, or of hiding behind a clerical facade and using their position within the Church as a means of gaining respect.

Offenders were described in terms of their social competence and their ability to be integrated in their normal public environments. One comment described a priest offender as 'popular socially and a good mixer, but at a superficial and undemanding level'. Many respondents described the general relationships of priest and religious offenders with other adults as 'extensive but superficial'.

Social Integration, Personal Adult Networks
Comments on social integration were abundant and forceful. On the whole respondents suggested that dysfunctional social behaviour was a general accompaniment of offending relationships with children. Offenders were described as 'appearing gregarious'. This outward expression masked the real situation of interpersonal relationships, with respondents describing offenders as not only being devoid of any significant peer relationships but, evidence of any commitment to 'mutuality of genuine adult to adult relationship' was rare.

Contacts with peers were described as often being at a superficial, undemanding level or remaining 'at the level of religion, sport or finance'. In specific cases, offenders were seen 'to relate only to adults that they could control' or 'to be quite seductive and to develop "fan clubs" rather than mature relationships'. Offenders were reported as being dependent on their role identity as a priest or a religious for their acceptance by other adults and adult peers, rather than on their own person.

Other offenders were described as 'loners' and, in those instances where religious were the subject of comment, it was noted that members of religious communities had a
history of being easily isolated from fellow members of their congregation. When these interactions took place, which was normally only as required (thereby limiting contact to essential issues) they tended to be characterised as being 'functional' rather than 'open and mutual'.

Respondents reported the pattern of interpersonal contacts in which offenders felt 'comfortable' was limited to those revolving around their work which in most cases involved direct regular contact with young people. Most respondents commented that priest and religious offenders themselves had reported that they were more comfortable in the company of children and young adults. Priests and religious who had offended against children had displayed a history of cultivating children, some of whom were victims of sexual offences, as leisure companions. Based on the responses, some indicative significance was assigned to the behaviour of priests and religious who relate poorly to adults and who constantly seek out the company of children or young people.

If offenders against children do not relate well to adults in general, that is particularly so of their attitude to women. Poor adult relationships with women were stressed many times in submissions. Comments ranged from 'awkwardness' and 'avoidance', to seeing women as 'a threat'. At the most extreme end it was reported that some offenders had a distorted aberrant perspective on women in general characterised by comments such as 'I hate the smell of women', 'women lead us into sin', 'there is nothing pure about them in any way'. For numbers of offenders, it was reported the only so-called 'real' contact with adult women was limited to their mother and female members of their family, with whom relationships were not always mature and healthy.

The literature is quite clear when it rules out other psychiatric disorders as being causally related to paraphilia, and particularly to paedophilia. Paedophiles and ephebophiles know the true nature of what they are doing and have volitional control over their actions. Respondents agreed with this opinion for both fixated and regressed paedophilia and referred to techniques of denial, dissociation and rationalisation in offenders. These findings reflected general agreement with the summation of Pollock and Hashmall (cited in Parkinson, 1997:p.54) who have suggested five progressive levels of denial of offence:

1. Denial of fact ('Nothing happened');
2. Denial of responsibility ('Something happened but it was not my idea');
3. Denial of sexual intent ('Something happened and it was my idea, but it wasn't sexual');
4. Denial of wrongfulness ('Something happened and it was my idea, and it was sexual, but it wasn't wrong'); and,
5. Denial of self-determination ('Something happened and it was my idea, and it was sexual, and it was wrong, but there were extenuating circumstances').

In conclusion, it is stressed that all the psychological features identified above are generally associated with all child sex offenders. They are not uniquely attributable to priest or religious child sex offenders. There is general support for the view that there are no significant or observable differences between priest or religious child sex offenders when compared to non-religious offenders.
Occupational Factors

There remains the extraordinary, often unspoken, expectation that celibate clergy have somehow been rendered asexual by their professed celibate commitment and that their sexual impulses no longer present with any force.

(Response from male religious)

No strong evidence emerged from the responses for the existence of a definitive causal link between specific situational factors and the committing of child sex offences. Some evidence did support the view that, regardless of the type of paraphilia, there are observable patterns in an offender's adult personal life that indicate:

- a significant behavioural characteristic of exclusively seeking the company of children;
- obsessional behaviour patterns; and
- social isolation from peers and other adults.

There is no evidence from the literature or the consultations to support the existence of significant differences between child sex offenders in the general population and priest or religious child sex offenders, when occupational factors are taken into account. However, four observations can be made:

1. Certain ministries within the Catholic Church are 'risk ministries' for priests and religious (e.g. education, substitute care of children, youth ministry). These ministries provide a ready opportunity for those priests and religious with a psycho-sexual disorder to engage in sexual behaviours with children. This risk must also be considered to apply equally to ministries engaged in by women religious.

2. Seminary formation for secular priests and community living for male religious take place in an all male environment. This environment reflects male values and is conducive to a homo-erotic sexual development which does not adequately deal with sexuality in general, or the feminine in particular. When failure of celibacy occurs involving children or adolescents, it is frequently manifested in homosexual rather than heterosexual behaviour.

3. The research suggests that such a sexual orientation may be a result of the homo-erotic milieu of the seminary and community living environments. This is not to detract from the significance that poor formation in celibate sexuality and inappropriate choice of celibacy, may also have during the formative period of priesthood and religious life.

4. Organisations like churches, whose authority is based on moral and religious principles, tend to have idealised expectations of priests and religious and are therefore reluctant to acknowledge guilt and failure. Since the Catholic Church has extensive involvement in education with children and young people in stress and crisis, it is these children who are the ones fixated and regressed paedophiles consciously groom as victims and consequently they are the most at risk.
CHAPTER FOUR

Adult Sexual Abuse

INTRODUCTION
From an exploratory review of the literature and from early general discussion, the Research identified a range of views concerning adult sexual relationships involving priests and religious. These views extended from instances of sexual offences as described in the Criminal Codes through to all instances of adult sexual relationships. Any discussion of sexual relationships involving priests and religious must be premised on the understanding that the rule and the ideal of celibacy in Canon Law imply much more than a state of not being married and, much more than refraining from non-consenting sexual relationships.

In the early planning stages of the study, clarification was sought on what the National Committee for Professional Standards 'the National Committee' envisaged by the term 'sexual abuse' and how it viewed the application of sexual abuse involving priests and religious to the study of adult relationships. There is a recent renewed insistence by Church authorities on celibacy as a requirement for priestly and religious life and a growing call by members of the Church community for patent authenticity in ministry and congruence between what is asked of the faithful themselves in respect of sexuality and the personal conduct of priests and religious.

The National Committee gave a clear and definite indication that the present study should include instances of abusive adult relationships involving priests and religious. Furthermore, it should extend to all adult sexual relationships entered into by priests and religious.

When the National Committee published Towards Healing at the end of 1996, the Catholic Church in Australia publicly acknowledged both the existence of sexual abuse by its ministers and the need to address such abuse. The Church also formally committed itself to address principles and procedures for responding to complaints of sexual abuse against adults as well as children, by Church personnel in Australia. What that document could not convey however, is any accurate sense of the extent or frequency of such abuse. Both in general society and in a Church context, more offences are certainly known to occur than are formally reported.

Many in the Church, including the National Committee, prefer to use the term 'pastoral' rather than 'professional' to describe the ministry of priests and religious. Such a view of ministry strongly suggests that there is no situation in which an ordained priest or professed religious could be considered as not being in at least a potential pastoral relationship with other adults. Ministry within the Church can provide to potential offenders possibilities of access, trust, victim vulnerability, secrecy and non-disclosure. And though evidence is abundant that criminal assaults are overwhelmingly by men, and
against women, there were examples given of homosexual, as well as heterosexual, adult assault.

WHAT IS ADULT SEXUAL ABUSE?
Abusive adult relationships do not always involve criminal acts nor do they have to imply sexual abuse. Some relationships involve psychological or emotional abuse; others represent abuse or misuse of power or authority by one of the adults in the relationship. Apart from clear instances of criminal behaviour, determination of abuse in adult sexual relationships is more complex and difficult. This can especially be so when it is a case of a consenting sexual relationship involving a priest or religious.

In studying adult sexual abuse in a Church context, four aspects need to be considered. They are:

- civil and criminal requirements for personal behaviour;
- professional codes of conduct and ethics;
- pastoral codes of ministry in the Catholic Church; and,
- the commitment of Catholic priests and religious to a celibate lifestyle.

All priests and religious are bound by Civil and Criminal Codes, by pastoral responsibilities of ministry in the Church, and by their public profession of a celibate lifestyle; many of them are also obligated by professional qualifications as for example are teachers, therapists and social workers.

Adult Sexual Relationships
There is considerable resistance across the membership of the Church to the use of the term 'sexual abuse' when discussing professional or pastoral relationship. This appears to be based on a view that where no civil or criminal offences occur, where the sexual behaviour involves the consenting conduct of two adults and does not represent the sexualising of a professional or pastoral relationship, 'abuse' is not in question. While sexual offence \textit{per se} may not be an immediate issue in many of these relationships, a question still remains as to how 'true consent' can be freely given by a person entering into a sexual relationship with a priest or a religious.

It is pastoral adult sexual misconduct, characterised by the sexualising of a pastoral relationship, or sexual abuse in the context of a relationship of care, that more often applies to incidents of abuse against adults in the Church.

\textbf{Criminal adult sexual assault}: This term refers to behaviour involving two adults (which may include instances involving an adult and a person who has reached the age of consent but who has not obtained the age of legal majority) where consent to engage in sexual behaviour has not been freely given. It replaces the legal term 'rape' and is referred to as 'unlawful sexual penetration' in the Model Criminal Code.

\footnote{\textit{Adult} is defined as being a person over the age of consent.}
Professional adult sexual misconduct: This term is used to refer to behaviour where a person holding a position of authority, power and/or trust behaves in a sexual manner towards another person, whether male or female, child, adolescent or adult, who expects to receive a service, other than of a sexual nature, and where the sexual behaviour is considered by ordinary people to be beyond the normal exercise of acceptable duties associated with that position. The term is most usually applied to those people who provide a professional service in return for a fee.

Pastoral adult sexual misconduct: This term has been used in this document to describe those relationships involving a minister of religion where the normal boundary of personal intimacy that exists with a person in a pastoral relationship is violated.

CRIMINAL ADULT SEXUAL ASSAULT

Reliable statistics on the incidence of criminal sexual offences against adults are not available in Australia (ABS, 1993a:p.59). Given the lack of data it is not possible to make any comparisons between the rate of offence in the general population and the rate of offence by priests or religious. However, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the general incidence of this offence in Australia.

The National Committee on Violence noted one of the most indicative features of violence in Australia was that the vast majority of those who commit acts of violence, including sexual assault, are males (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1990:p.33). This view was reinforced by the National Committee on Violence Against Women (1992). The Australian Law Reform Commission has concluded that adult sexual assault is overwhelmingly a crime committed by men against women and that over 90 percent of adult sexual assaults recorded by police between 1989 and 1991 involved female victims. (1994: p.28)

A study of 1,366 offences of unlawful sexual penetration of adults reported to Victorian police in the period 1987-90 reported that 94 percent of victims were women and that 99 percent of offenders were men (Victorian Community Council Against Violence, 1991).

The 1995 National Prison Census reports that of those sentenced prisoners held in Australian prisons on 30 June 1995, there were 2,088 males serving terms for sexual offences compared to only two females. Furthermore there were 146 unsentenced male prisoners awaiting sentence for sexual offences compared to one unsentenced female. (ABS, 1997:pp.21,48). On the available evidence it is apparent that males are significantly more likely to perpetrate the offence of unlawful sexual penetration of an adult than are females.

Bargen and Fishwick have drawn attention to the fact that the major finding from both international and national surveys into the criminal act of unlawful sexual penetration of adults is that those who do report these acts to the legal authorities are in a minority (1995: p.23). In a study of women's experiences of reporting incidents of unlawful sexual penetration, CASA House concluded that while there had been a wider acknowledgment in the community that violence against women is a large scale problem its actual incidence can only be 'guesstimated'. (Gilmore & Pitman, 1993:p.6)
A number of authors have provided a range of reasons to explain why women are reluctant to report incidents of sexual assault or of unlawful sexual penetration. These reasons include the following:

- victim experienced feeling of shame;
- victim was in a state of shock;
- victim did not think the act was serious enough;
- victim did not believe police would act/ would not be believed by police;
- victim had a dislike of police or had previous negative experience with police;
- victim afraid of going to court;
- victim was afraid of perpetrator; and/or
- the perpetrator was known to the victim.

The Australian Law Reform Commission's report into women's access to the legal system in Australia also highlight the special difficulties confronting women of all social classes and cultural backgrounds which contribute to their inequality before the law. (1994a,b,c)

Victims and Offenders

The National Committee on Violence Against Women highlighted the fact that most violence against women is perpetrated by men known to the woman, men with whom they are, or have been, in intimate relationships. Victims are most likely to be females aged between 18 and 30 years. The victim's home or the home of the offender accounts for approximately 53 percent of all adult sexual offence sites.

A national survey of 30,000 women conducted in 1980 supported the conclusions of the Australian Crime Victims' Surveys in finding from respondents that a strong relationship exists between broken marriages and sexual abuse of women. Over 25 percent of permanently separated women and 13 percent of divorced women had been the victims of sexual offences.

Data concerning the relationship of the victim to the offender indicates that most sexual offences against women involve offenders known to the victim.

Reports by the New South Wales Sexual Assault Committee suggest that a range of methods is used by offenders to threaten victims of unlawful sexual penetration. Physical force is most likely in offences perpetrated by husbands, partners or ex-partners (92%) while the use of a weapon is most common in cases of unlawful sexual penetration where the victim is unknown to the offender (47%).

A summary of available data concerning offenders reveals the following characteristics:

- typically male between the ages of 18 and 30 years (46% between 18 and 25 years and 18.5% between 25 and 30 years);
- unskilled or semi-skilled labourer (56% unskilled and 26% semi-skilled workers, only 5% identified as professional);
• high rate of unemployment (47% of alleged offenders were unemployed at time of offence);

• had consumed alcohol in the six hours preceding the offence; and,

• majority of offenders act alone.

The New South Wales Standing Committee on Social Issues summarised the findings of the incidence of sexual violence offences in Australia, including the offence of unlawful sexual penetration of adults, as follows:

• the incidence of sexual violence in Australia ranges from a prevalence rate of 0.5 percent to 7.26 percent. (1996:p.16)

• between 0.5 and 1.0 percent of the adult female population in Australia is sexually assaulted during a 12 month period based on data from the national Crime Victims' Surveys. (1993:p.122)

• the recorded rate of sexual offences in Australia has continued to trend upward based on crime statistics from the States and Territories indicating that either reporting rates and/or offending rates are increasing. (1993:p.122)

Criminal Adult Sexual Assault by Priests and Religious

There is obviously interest from church authorities in Australia and overseas, as well as from the wider church community and the general community, to ascertain whether there is any significant difference between the rate of criminal sexual offences against adults committed by priests and religious compared to the rate of similar offences committed by non-clerical individuals (i.e. the population at large). Criminal adult sexual offences by priests and religious appear to be relatively rare, though they do occur. Likewise, while the incidence of adult sexual misconduct by priests and religious acting in a professional role is small, it also does occur.

In the course of consultations and in written responses to the Survey, specific examples of adult sexual assault by priests and religious were cited by respondents. However, there have been very few criminal adult sexual assault convictions recorded in Australia against priests or religious.

The Research did not find in the clinical literature any information that specifically pertained to the offence of unlawful sexual penetration of an adult by priests or religious. However, two instances of unlawful sexual penetration of a male adult by a male religious were known. The Research did not find any instances of priests or religious who had been charged with an offence of unlawful sexual penetration of a female adult from the available data. Nor were there any known instances of female religious who had been charged with criminal sexual assault of another adult.

There is a lack of empirical data to make any assessment as to whether the rate of priests and religious committing criminal adult sexual assault is significantly different from the rate that occurs in the general population.

Reasons for the Under-reporting

The reluctance of adult victims of unlawful sexual penetration to report incidence of criminal adult sexual assault means that there can be no accurate estimation of the true rate of these sexual offences. Under the present legal system, women who are the victims of sexual offences are required to physically confront their abusers in the court.
locale and the potential for intimidation from the offender has been reported as a major reason for the lack of criminal prosecutions (ALRC, 1994a). It is suggested that many women who have been the victims of unlawful sexual penetration offences are likely to have second thoughts about challenging a person of the repute of a priest in public. The words of Brownmiller (1975:p.256) offer a salient perspective on these issues:

All rape is an exercise in power, but some rapists have an edge that is more than physical. They operate within an institutional setting that works to their advantage and in which a victim has little chance to redress her grievance.

There is almost unanimous agreement that where priests or religious commit criminal sexual assault or engage in compulsive sexual offences, whether or not formal criminal charges are brought against the offender through the legal system, there must be suspension from, or termination of, ministry.

PROFESSIONAL ADULT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Professional adult sexual misconduct occurs in a relationship between a professional and a client where the normal boundary of personal intimacy is violated.

Background

As early as 1917 Freud sounded the first warning bells for therapists when he identified that clients were capable of exhibiting erotic and romantic emotions towards their counsellors. He labelled the process of these feelings towards the therapist as 'transference' and later identified that therapists were also capable of reciprocating these emotions through 'counter-transference' (1958). Based on his own clinical experience with counter-transference, Freud went on to caution other therapists that they should resist acting on these feelings.

Despite, or perhaps as a result of, the continuing misunderstanding of the therapeutic relationship, a growing number of authors since the 1980s began seriously to address the issue of sexual exploitation of adult clients by various health professionals (Quadrio, 1994; Pope, 1994; Fortune, 1989; Gabbard, 1989; Rutter, 1989; Schoener & Gonsiorek, 1988; Masters, Johnson & Kolodny, 1977).

Masters et al. (1977), in the course of sex therapy research, highlighted the significant number of their own research subjects who had been sexually involved with former therapists. These reported findings certainly served to refocus the attention of professional therapists on inappropriate sexual contact with clients.

There has been a variety of terms to refer to sexual relationships between professionals and their clients in the clinical literature. Unfortunately, some of these terms are unhelpful and others rely upon contradictory theoretical constructs indicating that caution needs to be exercised when discussing this issue.

The term 'professional adult sexual misconduct' has been adopted to describe that behaviour where a person holding a position of authority, power and/or trust behaves in a sexual manner towards another adult person, whether male or female, who expects to receive a service, other than of a sexual nature. In order to reflect community standards on what is considered to be within the realm of acceptable
professional behaviour, such sexual behaviour must be considered by ordinary people to be beyond the normal exercise of acceptable duties associated with that position.

Some priests and religious perform ministries that require them to hold professional qualifications and in these roles, priests and religious have a professional duty of care to their clients. For such ministers, the issue of what constitutes unprofessional behaviour and professional adult sexual misconduct is prescribed in the standards or Codes of Conduct relevant to each professional occupation. When priests or religious acting in professional occupational roles breach the prescriptions relating to sexual misconduct involving clients they, like their non-religious peers, are guilty of professional adult sexual misconduct.

Reference has already been made to the reluctance of many in the Church to use the term 'professional' in relation to the ministry of priests and religious. Yet many of their activities, especially the more pastoral and humanitarian ones, clearly parallel the activities of professionals who have quite clear codes of ethics related to their professional services, and who acknowledge a formal 'duty of care' in respect of clients. A better understanding of the principles of professional conduct and the reality of professional misconduct is a good basis for understanding the requirements of pastoral relationships.

The focus of this discussion is on those standards directly relevant to the conduct of professionals with respect to sexual relations with clients.

**Professional Standards**

Increasing awareness of the responsibility professionals have towards their clients, both within the general and the professional communities, has led many human service professions to develop protocols and standards which can be applied to those instances where a client brings a complaint against a member of a specific profession.

Statutory authorities are also responding to the needs of an increasing number of victims who are coming forward to make complaints against professionals. For example, the New South Wales Health Care Complaints Commission has attempted to define adult sexual misconduct for health care professionals by identifying six areas or types of activities:

- sexual assault;
- sexual relationships;
- inappropriate relationships;
- inappropriate medical examinations;
- inappropriate treatment; and,
- sexual harassment

Some examples of professional adult sexual misconduct identified by the Health Care Complaints Commission include:

- having a sexual relationship with a patient during the course of, or following, therapeutic treatment;
- providing drugs in exchange for sexual favours; and
• making sexual or erotic comments to a patient during treatment.

Two key signals of boundary erosions are:

• requesting or pressuring the patient to perform a task or join an activity for the primary benefit of the practitioner; and
• asking to see the patient outside the office in the absence of an actual emergency or other compelling clinical reason.

Professionals use a number of determinants to help identify the boundaries which define a professional relationship. Typical examples of these determinants include:

• appointment times;
• the place and physical setting for the appointment;
• understanding/expectation that a specific service(s) will be provided by the professional;
• recognition of the academic/professional qualifications of the professional which legitimate his/her capacity to deliver a specific service(s);
• payment of fees by the client to the professional for the delivery of this service;
• confidentiality or 'privilege' of information provided by a client to a professional;
• appropriateness of clothing worn by professional (and client);
• use of appropriate language; and,
• appropriate physical contact.

These guidelines clearly identify for a client the confines of the professional relationship (i.e. when, where and why the relationship takes place) and can be used to establish the existence of a contract between a client and a professional.

All health care professionals uphold the principle that it is the professional's own responsibility to ensure, no matter how seductive or willing a patient may be, that no impropriety occurs in the client-professional relationship (HCCC, 1997b:p.1). As the Health Care Complaints Commission notes,

(m)ost of us can think of patients who are attractive sexually and of patients who are seductive. One of the reasons we collect a fee is to put the power structure of the relationship beyond doubt. Amongst other things one is paid not to seduce and to reduce seduction. No one can be criticised for being sexually attracted by a patient; the issue is what one does about it.

This quotation introduces two important concepts. First, it recognises that inappropriate sexual conduct between a professional and a client does not have to involve genital sexual behaviours. Genital sexual behaviour involving a professional and a client is a clear instance of professional adult sexual misconduct. But, professional adult sexual misconduct can occur in a relationship where the normal boundary separating personal intimacy and sexual intimacy is violated.
Secondly, the Commission's Code clearly makes reference to the concept that a person who acts in a professional capacity (e.g. as a teacher, therapist, counsellor, etc.) has a fiduciary obligation to meet the required professional standards. These standards are commonly contained in a profession's Code of Conduct. A fiduciary obligation can be said to exist as an integral component of the contract that is entered into between a client and a professional for the provision of a specific service.

It should also be recognised in this discussion that it may not only be the erotic or sexual behaviours which harm patients most when a professional engages in professional misconduct. Often it is the violation of trust itself between the professional and the client or the treatment of a client beyond the professional's expertise which can result in harm for the client.

Standards are an expression of each profession's duty of care to its clients. If a complaint is judged by the professional's peers to be serious enough and is proven, it may result in the professional being de-registered by the profession's 'Registration Board' or 'Professional Standards Committee' which have disciplinary powers over the professional. De-registration means that a professional can no longer practise as a member of the profession.

Professional adult sexual misconduct can also involve what is accepted as being consenting adult sexual behaviour. While in these instances there may be no question of legal redress by either party, the professional can expect to be disciplined by his or her Registration Board or Professional Standards Committee. Most human service occupations make provisions which allow, and indeed encourage, a professional who becomes sexually involved with one of his or her clients to refer that client to another member of the profession.

The Incidence of Professional Adult Sexual Misconduct Among Professional Communities

There is no reliable data from which to draw accurate conclusions on the extent of professional adult sexual misconduct among professionals working in the human services area.

At present in Australia, there are no statutory requirements for the notification of violations of sexual boundaries between therapists and their clients although there are clear ethical guidelines in place restricting consenting sexual relationships or prohibiting such relationships entirely. These guidelines are contained in the code of ethics or conduct of relevant professional bodies.

Quadrio (1994) has noted that there are a number of barriers which confront victims of professional abuse who seek to disclose an incident of abuse which include:

- the failure of peers to notify offending colleagues to professional bodies for fear of personal litigation;
- a reluctance on the part of the client to disclose fearing he or she will not be believed or fearing a conspiracy of protection by the relevant professional body;
- the possibility that a complainant will be discredited as a result of either vindictiveness by the professional or the professional's attribution that the
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complaint(s) has arisen from the complainant's own psychiatric pathology (hysteria or borderline personality disorder); and,

- damaging publicity to the client or his/her family which may result from a disclosure.

There is an absence of any reliable and valid data to indicate the extent of sexual exploitation or abuse suffered by clients undertaking therapy. A number of surveys have documented prevalence rates of sexual boundary violations perpetrated by psychologists and psychiatrists (Quadrio, 1994; Gebbard, 1989) to be in the vicinity of 6 to 12 percent.

The rates for perpetrators according to gender are 7 to 10 percent for male therapists and 1 to 3 percent for female therapists. Whilst Quadrio estimated a rate of three percent for psychiatrists in New South Wales, calculated from the number of patients seen within her clinic, she acknowledges this to be an underestimate of the true rate.

The Incidence of Professional Adult Sexual Misconduct Among Priests and Religious

A priest or a religious who acts in a professional capacity as a teacher, therapist, counsellor or pastoral carer undoubtedly has a fiduciary obligation to meet the standards and Code of Conduct required by the professional discipline.

The Researchers have used the term 'professional adult sexual misconduct' to apply strictly to only those instances of sexual abuse involving priests or religious engaged in a conventional professional relationship with a client.

There is no data available from the literature which specifically deals with priests or religious therapists, either overseas or in Australia, who have perpetrated professional adult sexual misconduct. However, there is a consensus in the literature that those priests or religious who engage in sexually exploitative behaviours in the course of their pastoral ministry are no different from the general population of sexual offenders.

It has also been argued by some writers that the dynamics and issues involved in cases of priests and religious who enter sexual relationships with adults, parallel those of others in conventional positions of authority including professionals such as therapists, doctors and teachers (Loftus & Camargo, 1993; Blanchard, 1991; Hulme, 1989).

PASTORAL ADULT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

As well as criminal sexual assault and professional sexual misconduct, an amount of the literature and comments in the course of the research centred on the relationships of priests and religious beyond the criminal code and with official pastoral responsibility. Many in the Church community would support the view that some type of fiduciary relationship exists between priests and religious and those people to whom they minister. The term 'pastoral adult sexual misconduct' was adopted to characterise sexual boundary violations in the particular context of Church ministry. Pastoral adult sexual misconduct and professional adult sexual misconduct have very much in common and the principles and codes of behaviour of many professional bodies offer sound guidelines defining best practice.
Towards Healing states, 'Sexual approaches by clergy or religious to adults in their pastoral care are sexual harassment or, in more serious cases, sexual assault'. When a sexual relationship takes place in the clear context of the Church pastoral role of a minister, there can never be a non-abusive situation. Groups of professionals in civil society, especially in the helping professions, unequivocally condemn sexual relationships with those for whom one has a fiduciary responsibility, whether that involves the payment of fee for service or not.

Adult Sexual Relationships

A significant number of priests consulted in the course of the research could instance priest colleagues who lead a lifestyle where they are privately in a personal relationship, while celibate in respect of official ministry. Therefore while there are no prevalence figures for this group, the fact that therapists and clinicians could refer to such ministers confirms that their number is considerable.

Over the past decade there have been numerous instances brought to public attention which clearly establish the fact that priests and male and female religious do engage in sexual relationships. Sipe has made public statements that the size of the population of priests and religious engaged in heterosexual and homosexual adult relationships is significant (1994b:p.134).

Other writers have highlighted the stories of those who have been sexually involved with a priest or a religious and the victim's initial inability to see these relationships as anything other than consensual (e.g. Jenkins, 1995; Sperry, 1995b; Maris, 1995; Ormerod & Ormerod, 1994). The pertinence of these remarks is simply to highlight the fact that just because there is no evidence that priests or religious have been charged with the offence of unlawful sexual penetration of an adult in Australia, such offences do not occur.

The number of responses to the Survey relating to adults was 44. In addition, 32 face-to-face consultations were conducted during the research. There was a significantly lower rate of response for offences against adults compared to the response rate for offences against children. As was the observation in the case of responses received to the Survey Instrument concerned with child sexual offences, the response rate for religious leaders was extremely low. Since criminality is not always in question in adult offence, but rather issues of consent, the low response rate may simply indicate reluctance by potential respondents to be judgmental.

All of the responses and consultations dealing with sexual abuse involving adults committed by priests and religious referred to male offenders. It has not been possible from responses or during the consultations even to comment on the prevalence of criminal offences, professional adult sexual misconduct or pastoral adult sexual misconduct committed by priests and religious. However, it is possible to indicate the nature of offences against adults by priests and male religious from the responses received. These are given in the categories of sexual behaviours listed previously and include the following behaviours:

- indecent touching;
- unlawful sexual penetration (including aggravated offences and incest);
- sexual experimentation;
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- purchased sex;
- sexual relationships leading to pregnancies, childbirth, terminations of pregnancy;
- long-term stable sexual relationships;
- serial monogamous sexual relationships;
- homosexual relationships; and,
- compulsive sexual behaviours.

Because the general expression 'sexual offences against adults' applies to such a range of behaviours and to such different categories of offenders, comments received in the form of written responses and discussion through consultations were quite diverse and therefore somewhat difficult to summarise. There is however, a considerable amount of information directly relevant to the Study's general line of inquiry that has been described below.

The frequency with which 'consenting relationships' were not acknowledged as constituting any form of offence was noted in the course of the consultations. It is not possible to ascertain whether the sexual partner of a priest or religious gave willing consent. Regardless of whether consent was freely given, the clear expectation from Church leaders and membership is that the minister is always responsible for a pastoral relationship and that sexualising a pastoral relationship is always ethically and morally wrong.

It is evident from the literature and from personal responses to the present research that there has been a lack of explicit guidelines relating to the personal and professional requirements for ministry, of statements of appropriate and inappropriate conduct and of specific procedures to deal with allegations of sexual offence.

As well as ensuring ongoing formation for priests and religious, it is argued that a realistic Code of Conduct will ensure that Church leaders, priests and religious themselves, and members of the Church, have a common, publicly accepted understanding of pastoral responsibilities and personal boundaries in ministry. The document, *Integrity in Ministry*, (1999), strives to achieve this objective. It seeks to preserve the pastoral nature of ministry while at the same time providing a clearer sense of the boundaries of a pastoral relationship thus ensuring that the personal well-being of all Church members remains the primary focus of pastoral care.

While there is evidence that a significant number of both Australian priests and male religious are not faithful to celibacy, there is no evidence to suggest that the majority of priests and religious in Australia are not faithful to their celibate commitment.

**Sexual Orientation**

The sexual orientation of priests and religious has been specifically discussed in the literature, particularly that emanating from the United States, with claims of increasing numbers of applications for the priesthood from homosexual men. In the Winter Report it was noted, 'The Commission has reason to believe that there are likely to be members of the Presbyterium with a homosexual orientation. North American data suggest that among clergy generally, approximately 30% are homosexual in orientation' (*Winter Report* Vol.I.:p.160).
Responses received during the research also supported what is maintained in the literature, that an amount of adult sexual misconduct is homosexual in nature and beyond that again, that adult sexual relationships are engaged in with fellow priests and religious, as well as with other adult persons outside the religious community.

It is claimed that the incidence of adult homosexual relationships involving priests and religious, particularly male religious, does not occur equally; in particular groupings of priests and religious, adult homosexual relationships appear to occur with greater frequency. Further research is required to ascertain the reasons why such patterns exist and to clarify whether local Church institutional structures, practices and cultures are significant factors in explaining such differences.

To people outside the institutional Church and to many Church members, particularly women, any seeming acceptance of a discrepancy between the proclamation of celibacy and its observance represents unacceptable double standards. They ask if the Church values celibacy as it proclaims it, what ecclesiastical sanctions exist for known and conscious breaches of celibacy and why such sanctions seem to be so rarely applied.
In the current social milieu individual ministers, dioceses and religious orders have inevitably begun to face accusations of abuse against children, notably in the United States, later in Canada and, in recent years in Australia. The Catholic Church in the major English-speaking countries has been shaken publicly and internally by a range of clear cases of sexual abuse which have received exposure in the public arena.

In more recent times the Catholic Church in Australia has taken steps to address publicly the issue of sexual abuse. The Research raises a number of factors specific to the Church itself which are considered to contribute to the structural and cultural environment. These factors are dealt with in Chapter Five.

Personal and Professional Accountability of Priests and Religious

Two distinct themes arose in comments about supervision in ministry. The first acknowledged the traditional individual nature of priestly ministry, especially as exercised by the largest group of priests, those incardinated into dioceses.

The second theme was a highlighting of the almost complete lack of supervision of priests and religious. The lack of supervision of offenders, before and after instances of abuse had been brought to the attention of church authorities, drew specific attention from respondents. Both victims and therapists expressed their concern that structures of supervision and support for priests have, for the most part, only been established by church authorities after offences have occurred.

There is no doubt that in any other social context, such a model would be seen as inadequate by current professional standards of health care or welfare, as indicated in various Codes of Ethics of professional bodies. All major professions have codes of behaviour. While some may resist the attempt to codify appropriate behaviour in what is essentially a pastoral relationship, it is necessary both as a guide and a protection that all areas of ministry are guided by properly formed codes of behaviour, and that appropriate protocols are in place and known to all for dealing with instances of abusive behaviour including prompt attention to victims.

The Wood Royal Commission (1997:pp.1033-1034) concludes its section on the churches by stating:

No Church can today responsibly exist without a protocol that suitably addresses at least:

- a procedure for receiving and dealing with allegations of sexual abuse, whether raised by the victim, a third party or self confessed perpetrator, to ensure that matters involving criminality are referred to the police for investigation, and that the remainder are suitably investigated and resolved internally.
• the provision of and support for and assistance of victims of such abuse at the hands of the clergy and others holding office within the Church, either as employees or volunteers
• the provision of treatment, where assessed worthwhile and consented to by the offending member
• the delivery of education and counselling concerning the risks of sexual abuse and the procedures/facilities earlier outlined, to all members of the Church, and particularly to those who are having difficulties with their own sexual urges, before they fall prey to them
• the removal of those members for whom an unreasonable risk of harm to children is assessed to exist, from any positions placing them into contact with children and young people, and
• the independent and effective oversight and monitoring of the operation of the protocols, guidelines and programs developed in this area.

Wood Royal Commission, (Vol.V.p.1034)

If the present situation is to be addressed seriously, there needs to be a commitment from church leaders to create an appropriate supportive environment for those ministers in their care. It is imperative that church leaders recognise it is not simply a matter that can be addressed through the education of individual ministers in civil and criminal requirements.

Acceptance and Education for Ministry

In our view, the imperative nature of early prevention of sexual abuse by priests or religious has to be embedded in the very process of selecting and forming candidates for the priesthood. ....Admission criteria should also be based on the personal strengths of the individual and on the integration of his life experience in terms of transforming his own self rather than in terms of acquiring new knowledge.

From Pain to Hope (1992,p.34)

The state of emotional and intellectual maturity that a priest or a male religious brought to formation years was a factor that provoked strong response amongst respondents. Comments referred both to the nature of candidates and the structures of admission. It was evident that some comment referred to practices within seminaries and religious houses of formation that were current in the period between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. These included, but were not limited to, entry to a 'Juniorate' at an age as young as 14 years; complete isolation from families; isolation from any involvement in the wider community (including newspapers, radio and television); and deprivation of normal cross-gender social interaction.

More than half of the responses stressed the superior intellectual abilities and qualities of offenders but placed these in sharp contrast to their emotional and sexual immaturity. There was consensus that the arresting of human psycho-sexual and psychological development accompanied entry to seminary or religious life directly from secondary school and this was particularly noticeable in offenders.

It was suggested that the period of 'social isolation' was coupled with a general lack of preparedness to acknowledge and address the importance of healthy emotional and intellectual development of trainees. The result is claimed to be failure to address serious personal problems and deficiencies in potential candidates for ministry. Such
a situation becomes particularly regrettable where normal social development and education are regarded as peripheral to formation for ministry. From the broad scope of responses, there was some acknowledgement of the considerable change that has taken place in the circumstances of entry to priesthood and religious life during the late 1990s.

Professional opinions on the value of screening vary. The possibility of being abusive is simply a permanent dimension of the human situation. However, all opinions accept that screening is a necessary and helpful tool in the process of examining candidates for religious life. Screening can provide valuable insight into the psychological and emotional development of the candidate. The phenomenon of sexual abuse coming to light in society and church over recent years is further indication of the wisdom of screening. The Report from the ad hoc Committee on Child Sexual Abuse From Pain to Hope advocates that special attention be given to the harmony or disharmony which exists between the candidate’s chronological age and his life style. The Cardinal’s Commission stated quite starkly, ‘There are no simple or immediate screening tests to identify either actual or potential sexual offenders against children.’ (ACBC & ACLRI, 1996a:p.52) It would therefore appear essential that there be, in orientation and during the early formation of candidates to the priesthood and to religious life, definite and detailed education and awareness programs. These would assist candidates and church authorities to discern the suitability of potential candidates for ministerial lifestyle, especially where ministry might involve children.

Respondents expressed a clear desire to build the spiritual and pastoral role of priesthood and religious life on a healthy, open and mature personality. There was a group of interrelated comments that touched on this issue that can be exemplified by the following:

The psychology of sexual growth was totally ignored in a system which presumed acceptance of celibacy as a way of life without any personal evaluation. A mixture of ignorance, curiosity, lack of interpersonal formation, left priests open to a variety of unhealthy responses to life situations that grew out of lack of self knowledge or sexual knowledge. Many of the present expressions of sexually dysfunctional behaviours by priests and religious are the result of poor formation in celibate sexuality.

Discussing the place of continuing professional development for priests and religious, a religious leader identified:

...the need at all stages of both preparation for and performance of priestly ministry, for procedures to ascertain the sexual adjustment of ministers. Waiting for a calamity to occur is not sufficient. Ongoing assessment is needed for each individual and support must be provided.

There is adequate evidence in the literature, from the experiential domain of those involved in the process of formation and from therapists, to demonstrate the failure of the Church to deal sensitively, but directly, with candidates about issues of personal sexual integration. This has been a definite contributing factor to later sexual offending.
The Exercise of Ministry

Many respondents commented on the particular lifestyle context of Catholic ministry. It was noted that particular and observable features of this lifestyle gave rise to, in the opinion of some respondents, a lack of personal privacy and personal space, an authoritarian atmosphere and a lack of human warmth and spontaneity in the lives of many priests and religious. It was suggested that a well-integrated personality was especially required in the case of diocesan priests.

It was reported that some priests and religious channel all their energies into ministry activities thereby losing the sense of reflectiveness and spirituality necessary for managing their daily lives. Typical responses highlighted the belief that many priests are unable to manage all the demands made on their own lives. They experience isolation from their superiors, from their peers, from the people they come in contact with through their ministry and, on occasions, from the realities of everyday living.

It was noted that during preparation for priesthood and ministry, priests have often not learned, or been taught, how to successfully take possession and direction of their own lives. In the case of religious priests and brothers, community life is no guarantee of a supportive context for ministry.

Several cases were cited where religious priests and brothers living in community had sought out for their social interaction the company of sexually immature young people (adolescents). The Survey comments reinforced the significance of not maintaining appropriate relationships with adults. A code of conduct that is clear and direct was perceived by many respondents to be essential to give guidance on sensitive matters. The recently developed Integrity in Ministry demonstrates a concerted effort by the Church to address this problem. Integrity in Ministry provides clergy and religious with comprehensive guidelines that will assist those in ministry to perform their pastoral duties in a more informed manner.

Reference has already been made to the importance and the value of supervision and accountability for all priests and religious in their pastoral ministry. Supervision in ministry remains one of the most difficult issues to discuss with many priests and religious in the Catholic Church. Therapists who work in the area of child sexual abuse by priests and religious consider the committing of offences is directly related to the lack of supervision or accountability mechanisms.

Therapists continually stressed the positive benefits, as well as the preventive aspects, that supervision programs can bring, especially to known offenders and those who may be at risk of offending. The issue of establishing adequate and appropriate supervision and accountability mechanisms is one which therapists, as well as lay members of the Church community, are most adamant is an absolute necessity. Their claim is that, apart from infrequent parish or community visitations by bishops and religious leaders, priests in particular have little accountability and, with the possible exception of parish finances, almost no supervision.

Many respondents claimed the failure to investigate complaints of sexual offences against children is the ultimate expression of lack of accountability on the part of the Church. Lack of supervision in ministry has to be another significant factor contributing to the occurrence of sexual offences against children and also to their continuance.
In this regard the provision of appropriate and regular structured supervision and firm knowledge of the requirements and dimensions of accountability are essential elements in a bishop’s and a religious leader’s duty of care towards their priests or their religious as well as to the wider Church community. What has been discussed in relation to duty of care in respect of offences against children obviously applies also to sexual abuse involving adults and will be referred to later.

**Perception of and Commitment to Celibacy**

There was unanimity in the comments of respondents about how offenders rationalise the contradictions between their commitment to celibacy and their committing of sexual abuse. Respondents reported that many offenders grudgingly accepted the conditions of celibacy as *a rule of Church law, which comes with the job*, and regarded the conditions as not necessarily positive. For many offenders, it seems celibacy simply infers two negative impositions: no sexual expression and no marriage.

There was strong agreement that offenders in the main seem to dissociate their abusive behaviour from their notional commitment to celibacy and in so doing they split and compartmentalise aspects of their daily lives and behaviours. Of particular significance was the high number of responses which described known offenders as having a ‘strong commitment to celibacy.’ One can only infer that respondents were underlining the dissociated and distorted thinking that there is in offenders between their chosen lifestyle and their actual behaviour.

It was clear from the responses that certain offenders believe that by engaging in sexual offences with children, they have observed the rules about adult women *vis-a-vis* celibacy. Furthermore, offenders demonstrate an ability to live with the inconsistency of their lives without seeking help or guidance.

Dimensions of stress and frustration were linked to a range of what could be termed 'difficulties' confronting diocesan priests. These difficulties include the general climate of priesthood that has seen significant change in the institutional and public image of the priest over the past two decades in particular. The esteem of the community for priesthood and its perception of how ministry is lived have decreased in recent times. Many priests and religious have experienced the negativity towards the Church that has accompanied reporting of sexual offences by ministers. A number of respondents reported that there was a widespread sense within the ranks of diocesan priests across Australia that their ministry is neither appreciated nor affirmed by bishops. This was seen as a significant contributing issue to any stress or frustration experienced. For diocesan priests, and those religious priests working in parishes, there can also be serious frustration in dealing with the daily affairs of the parish as well as the more demanding members of the parish.

Therapists commented that even when priests and religious develop peer or age appropriate relationships, they experience great difficulties in communicating their inner states - even to counsellors. A number held the view that the amount of stress and frustration experienced by offenders was partly linked to the offenders' understanding and experience of their own sexuality and celibacy. This is not to infer the condition of celibacy itself is directly linked to the committing of sexual offences.

Morale was almost universally described by respondents as poor. One reason given was that there is little sense of 'professionalism in ministry'. By 'professionalism' was
meant what many described as a general lack of adequate, rather than formal, qualifications or the provision of quality professional development opportunities which would more readily equip priests to address the range of complex interpersonal situations they face in the conduct of their ministry. It would appear that many priests were searching for some type of specialised developmental inservice training, not available from retreats, in order to enable them to perform their ministry better.

The lack of personal support networks within the clergy results in many priests not having a sense of their own wellbeing and worth. It was further commented that many priests and religious appear unable to draw strength and/or hope from their own ministry or the ministry of their peers.

While the low morale of individual priests and religious was not of itself a factor in sexual offences against children, there was ample evidence that allegations and instances of child sexual abuse by priests and religious do contribute to low morale. There is no doubt that priests and clergy have been deeply affected by the issue of child sexual assault allegations against their peers. While the following comments were made in relation to events in Canada they equally can be said to apply to the Australian scene:

...during the last few years many have been hurt, angered, made to feel ridiculous and demoralised by the revelation of child sexual abuse by some of their colleagues. They feel they have irretrievably lost respect and support from their people. Some have also demonstrated an inability to deal with basic questions raised by these events and seem overwhelmed by fear, anxiety and discouragement


Readmission to Ministry

It is undeniable that some of the worst instances of sexual abuse have been committed by priests and religious who have continued in or returned to ministry after offending. Most distressing is the fact that a small minority of these offences has involved priests and religious whose behaviours can be identified as those of fixated paedophiles.

Responses indicated that there was universal acceptance that priests or religious who had been proven to have engaged in sexual abuse against children, either by a Court process or by church or civil investigation, were 'guilty' of committing such offences. Respondents held this opinion regardless of any situational factors that may have been cited by the offender as excusing the offence. It also appeared from the responses that the impact of many criminal trials relating to child sexual abuse by priests and religious, along with the publicity surrounding inquiries into paedophilia in New South Wales and elsewhere, may have assisted many bishops and leaders to clarify their position on the question of a priest's or a religious' return to ministry after offence.

Despite the strength of the theology of ordination, its permanence and the Church's emphasis on forgiveness and reconciliation, responses from all groups surveyed were almost unanimous that priests and religious convicted of offences against children should never be returned to ministries with children. Therapist respondents were absolute in their conviction there should be no return to ministry and that this should be an obligatory procedure.
The Winter Report advises that convicted priests never be given pastoral responsibility for children (Recommendation 36). The Code of Conduct for Clergy for the Anglican Archdiocese of Sydney states that where allegations of abuse of a child by a person have led to those allegations being upheld by a court or by a church or other disciplinary procedure, or to a conviction of the alleged offender, then that person must not be placed in ministry to do with children or adolescents (Section 2.1.7). It goes on to state that a person convicted of any offence must be thoroughly interviewed and not appointed to any ministry which may be seen to provide an opportunity for reoffending (Section 2.1.8).

The positions noted above do not indicate an unwillingness to forgive or reconcile the perpetrator; rather they argue the care and protection of children and vulnerable adults must always take precedence.

On the subject of readmission of offenders to ministry, an adult victim's support person relayed the following:

Forgiveness does not necessarily mean a restoration to all previous rights and privileges. It is not a matter of an abusive minister being excluded from the Church, merely from the exercise of ministry, since he has shown himself unworthy of the trust that has been placed in him by the whole Church community. This does not indicate any lack of forgiveness on the part of the Church.

The Cardinal's Commission in Chicago facing this problem stated:

[The Commission found this to be an exceedingly difficult mandate on which to develop a recommendation... The Church faces competing interests in attempting to resolve the issue of possible return to ministry. (1992:p.20)]

Likewise the Committee established by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops stated in its report *From Pain to Hope*: (1992:p.29)

We were aware of the very difficult task which the third part of our mandate entailed: How to deal within the Church with priests who have been found guilty of sexually abusing children? Should there be any possibility of a return to ministry after a criminal sentence and a prison term: If so, under what conditions?

Simplistic solutions to the question of return to ministry are to be resisted. There is a serious responsibility to exercise pastoral care for all even those who have offended. There is an equally serious responsibility to provide assistance for victims who have suffered abuse. It is important to act justly and to appear to do so.

In considering the question of a return to ministry it must be remembered that active paedophilic or ephebophilic behaviour does not normally diminish with age. The struggles of paedophiles and ephebophiles are not fundamentally struggles with religious life or celibacy; they are problems within the persons themselves. Emotional responses that simply call for forgiveness under the erroneous assumption that with forgiveness and good will all will be well, also lack appreciation of differences in offenders and the dynamics they use. A total emphasis on forgiveness ignores the depth of suffering endured by victims, underestimating therefore the gravity of abuse and its long-term effects.
Ultimately the decision concerning return to ministry is one of prudential judgement. The decision should flow from serious consideration of the issues made in dialogue with all relevant parties and especially the professionals involved in the offender's treatment and aftercare program. While it may be not only possible, but indeed appropriate, that an offender be permitted to return to general ministry it would be strongly recommended that no priest or religious who is known to have sexually abused a minor, whether convicted or not, be assigned to ministry which facilitates access to minors. In making this decision it must be kept in mind that there always remains the danger that an offender can rely upon his position as a priest to exert power and influence and in some cases to reoffend.

OTHER ISSUES
The Survey Instrument provided respondents with space to make any other comments they believed might be of interest to the research. Four major groups of issues have been identified from these comments:

- the need for an understanding of human sexuality in the formation and ongoing education of priests and religious;
- the need to situate the ministry of priests and religious in the wider context of the expectations of civil society;
- the need to examine whether the institutional structure of the Church itself might contribute to the incidence of abuse committed by priests and religious; and
- the need to examine any differences between the incidence of sexual abuse against children perpetrated by the three sub-populations of diocesan priests, religious priests and religious brothers.
Chapter 6 – Issues Arising from the Research

CHAPTER SIX

Issues Arising from the Research

VOCATION TO PRIESTHOOD AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

Personal Religious Experience and vocation

I think we need to move away from the personal “me and God” sense of vocation to that of a community based model. If the priesthood is more than a personal elevation of the individual, if it is a call to service within the Body, then the very call to someone to participate in this ministry of Orders should come in some manner through the community within which the service is to be exercised. What I am trying to say is the call from the Holy Spirit to a person and the verification and testing of that call must be based in the faith community, not in the individual. It then becomes a matter for community, as well as individual discernment.

Rev Philip Lewis, St John’s, Vol.2, (C.86)

Vocation has traditionally meant a call from God to an individual to be a priest or religious. It has been seen as a personal matter between the Holy Spirit and the person, being ratified by the call to profession or ordination. There is evidence to suggest a simplistic ‘grace of state’ affirmation exists for some priests and religious that vocation is a direct calling from God. It appears to be based on the premise that with ordination or religious profession would come all the divine assistance needed to live out a life commitment. This is a premise which minimises the human requirements for ministry in the contemporary Church. Such a perspective undoubtedly has resulted in people being accepted into religious life, or being ‘given the benefit of the doubt’, when there were strong human indications that ministry in the Church was inappropriate for them.

There has always been another different theology which affirms that ‘grace builds on nature’ and which calls for clear personal and social attributes as pre-requisite human requirements of ministry in the Church. It would be the viewpoint of many members of the Church that one should not ask ‘Is the candidate suitable for priestly or religious life?’ but rather, ‘Is priesthood or religious life suitable for this candidate?’ Personal religious experience can be ambiguous and needs careful analysis.

Both the literature and the consultations underlined the importance of fundamental human personality qualities as the basic requirement for all exercise of ministry in the Church. The church’s tendency in the past to accept “personal call” without serious questioning needs to be kept in mind. The following two quotations may serve to highlight this issue.

Any theology of vocation to the priesthood that rests solely on the experience of an interior call by the candidate, needs to be examined.

What I am trying to say is that the call from the Holy Spirit to a person and the verification and testing of that call must be based in the faith community, not in the individual.

Reverend Phillip Lewis, Vol.2, (C.83)

Masculine energy tends to be competitive and compartmentalising, leading to lack of capacity for genuine interior reflection and for appropriate intimacy. Such a male culture can create a dependency on role and on work for self identity, resulting in the loss of humanising tenderness. At worst, male cultures can encourage men to grow in forgetfulness of how to relate humanly to peers, both male and female, in healthy adult and generative ways. However, the need for intimacy cannot be extinguished. If not satisfied in normal ways, it will find expression in covert or distorted ways, some of which can become sexualised – another element in a framework of potential abuse.

Denial of the feminine remains a significant factor in church culture. This is most noticeable in the absence of women in church structures and positions of responsibility. Inherently this preaches a lack of respect for women, despite the politically correct words that are often spoken. It seems probable that the enshrining of power, position and superiority in a male priesthood through the structures and culture of the church, contributes to a climate in which sexual offences against women can more readily occur. Recommendation 31 of the Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Child Sexual Abuse states, “It is important to emphasise how necessary it is that women be among those who collaborate in the formation of candidates for the priesthood. The involvement of women is considered essential at all stages and in every aspect of the formation including teaching, counselling and pastoral work”.

**Permanency of ordination**

A further practical difficulty comes from the sacramental theology of ordination in the Catholic Church. Insistence on the special character and permanence of ordination has made for reluctance to permanently deprive the ordained minister of his ministry, except when patently a requirement in response to sexual offences against children. Consequently, preservation of the role of priesthood in the Church has, in certain instances, seemed to be regarded as more important than the demands of justice for victims or the protection of children.

If Christian commitment to unconditional forgiveness is added to an unrealistic and inappropriate theology of vocation, a climate can be created where sexual offences are seen as personal moral lapses which can, and should, be forgiven.

**CELIBACY**

Particularly pertinent to any questions posed around causes of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy is the issue of celibate power. The Catholic Church has consistently maintained the special character of the sacrament of priestly ordination and has linked it with a requirement of complete and permanent celibacy. It is when the theological reality of 'priesthood forever' meets the human reality of permanent sexual abstinence that there is frequently a tension. Such a tension is further compounded when priesthood is proposed to a person for whom a celibate lifestyle is not appropriate.

In the context of the twentieth century Church, this basic tension is heightened by the fact that exceptions to the rule of celibacy exist. Such exceptions were frequently emphasised
in the course of the literature search and were reinforced during the consultations. Commonly cited exceptions to the rule are as follows. Some non-Roman Rites allow married clergy. Some clergy are married when ordained, e.g. those ministers who are admitted to the Roman Rite from the Anglican Church. Some priests of the Roman Rite have been allowed to marry in certain circumstances. And, the plain fact is that a considerable number of priests in ministry are not celibate.

An obvious question arises from this reality. As a requirement, can celibacy be properly lived if it is not freely chosen? Church authorities need to be confident that at the time a person is required to make the decision of commitment to celibacy, at the time of ordination or acceptance into religious life, this decision is made on an informed basis, knowing the full implications of his or her decision. One option which has been suggested by some in the Church is that entry into the sacrament of holy orders be postponed until the person is able to bring a fully developed and mature adult point of reference to the decision.

Recognising the Positives of Celibacy

It is helpful to regard the writings of Häring, Rice, Sipe, Crosby and others as contributing to the development of a new understanding of celibacy and celibate sexuality. While it is true these authors have written variously about the negative aspects of celibacy, which are often based on their own experiences of the problems encountered by those who struggle to live their promises, they have also highlighted the positive aspects of healthy celibacy.

For example, Sipe (1996:p.40) has developed an operational definition of celibacy which has some merit and might prove useful to furthering the development of celibacy:

*Celibacy is a freely chosen dynamic state, usually vowed, that involves an honest and sustained attempt to live without direct sexual gratification in order to serve others productively for a spiritual motive.*

The significance of this definition is that it acknowledges that priests and religious who are committed to being celibate make *an honest and sustained attempt* to live a celibate lifestyle. Celibacy is seen as a journey that individuals freely undertake. Along the journey the individual will need constantly and freely to recommit to living celibately.

It is clear that public (Catholic) opinion is shifting away from the assumption of mandatory celibacy for priests. Stephen Rossetti’s recent research (1996:p.40) indicates that fewer than one-third of Catholics in the U.S. favour mandatory celibacy. In dioceses affected by child abuse scandals, the preference was 23 percent. In parishes where a priest had been accused of abuse, only 18 percent favoured mandatory celibacy. Whatever else these figures indicate, they point to a popular belief that celibacy is a significant factor in abuse by professed celibates. The media also hold this view. Recent litigation, media disclosures and publications attest to the active sexuality of at least a proportion of the population of priests and religious.
The Winter Commission, Vol.1, (1990:pp.97,98) concluded that:

celibacy as an absolute requirement for the ministerial priesthood must be more fully examined by Bishops, and that for some individuals it may create excessive and destructive pressures.

Dempsey et al., (1992:p.6) are amongst those theorists who make some connection between sexual abuse and celibacy.

At times, there may be a priest who is basically heterosexual in orientation but believes it is wrong either to feel or to express his sexual attraction to a woman because of his vow of celibacy. However, he is able to rationalise that having a sexual encounter with boys or adolescent males is not a violation of his vow of celibacy.

Whilst the ideal of celibacy retains validity, practical regard for the celibate lifestyle of priests and religious has been significantly diminished.

At a time of declining ordinations and ageing priesthood, there is a sense among Church membership that failures in celibacy continue to be condoned or are simply ignored. There has even been a view, expressed by priests and religious as well as those in the wider Church community, that the appearance of celibacy is considered more important in the Church than faithful and uncompromised ministering to the pastoral needs of the faithful.

The tensions surrounding mandatory celibacy and ordination or religious profession are undeniably significant as situational factors in instances of sexual offence. They are inextricably linked to wider theological question of the renewal of Church structures and ministry.

Are celibate clerics at greater risk of offending?

Four issues are considered crucial in determining whether celibate clerics are at particular risk of committing sexual offences. First, celibacy influences the frequency with which sexual emotions may be expressed. A celibate heterosexual or homosexual religious individual may have difficulty coping with celibacy and this may create significant intrapersonal conflict and angst. These emotions are sometimes acted out in boundary violations. However, sexual boundary violations and breaches do occur involving non-celibate people. There is no evidence to make a causal link between lack of sexual outlet and perpetration of sexual abuse.

Second, celibacy itself cannot explain choice of partner or form of sexual expression. There is no strong empirical evidence in support of the contention that celibacy causes a person to develop paedophilic or other paraphiliac urges or behaviours. In the cases of genuine, constitutional (fixated) paedophiles, it is quite improbable to assert any causal connection. Their psychosexual constitution would most certainly pre-date any commitment to priestly celibacy. It is also clear that a large number of constitutional paedophiles (perhaps the vast majority) appear to be married men and this too would rule out any specific causal link with chosen celibacy (Loftus, J., 1989). It should be noted that data supplied by the Judicial Commission of New South Wales reports that of the four ministers found guilty of sexual offences against children in 1994, two were married at the time of the offences. While the size of this sample of offending
priests and religious is extremely small, it does raise a question about the legitimacy of 'blaming' celibacy as the prime reason for offending.

It could be said that frequent contact with children may provide the opportunity for sexual involvement with children. However, it is argued that many paedophiles are either predatory in nature or have pre-existing paedophilic tendencies and therefore have a propensity to gravitate or manipulate themselves into situations allowing access to children. Although it is possible that some men enter religious life as a strategy to cope with their aberrant sexuality, there is no data to substantiate speculation that they become priests or religious to gain access to children.

Third, speculation that celibacy per se is responsible for priests and religious committing child sexual offences is to define the 'problem' as solely a problem of institutional design which detracts from, or even offers an excuse for, the legitimate exercise of personal responsibility. One must acknowledge that the beginnings of sexual dysfunctions may go unnoticed in adolescence and remain undetected for many years developing into disorders which can only be evidenced over time through abnormal behaviour. The unresolved question is whether an individual's sexual dysfunction played any role in, or had any influence, either overtly or covertly, over the decision to embark on the particular type of job or career he or she finally chose.

And finally, an active and satisfying sexual life is no guarantee against offending or violation of sexual boundaries. Absent or poor marital and/or sexual relationships may increase the risk of committing sexual offences but this is not an inevitable outcome. In fact, evidence indicates that a significant proportion of sexual offenders involving children have access to and engage in satisfactory sexual relationships with age and sex appropriate partners.

It is true that in relatively recent years a number of authors have begun to analyse the state of celibacy in the Church. Some contributors have focussed on what they have identified as the negative aspects of mandatory celibacy. Very few of these published works cite any scientific or empirical evidence which conclusively demonstrates that celibacy has a direct causal link to the committing of sexual abuse against children by either priests or religious.

At the same time, it is clear that the environmental stressors do play some role in paedophilic behaviour (DSM 111-R, 1987). To what extent is celibacy a stressor in the group that is the focus of this study? No clear answer yet exists. When we turn our minds to other cases of inappropriate sexual conduct with minors where the men involved may not be fixated, exclusive-type paedophiles or ephebophiles, celibacy factors may play an even larger role. Loneliness and isolation are repeated themes in the clinical picture. To what extent these factors would be minimised by a non-mandatory celibacy rule remains unclear (Loftus, J., 1989).
Formation in Celibate Sexuality

Priestly formation ought to foster mature persons, men of character, capable of bearing pastoral responsibilities, faithful to their priestly mission and to the duties which they assume. Likewise, it ought to form men with a heart of true compassion, capable of faithful collaboration, as well as men of judgment, capable of a sound evaluation of persons and everyday events” (The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of Today, working document of the Eighth World Synod of Bishops.)

Rome (1990: n.37).

There seems no doubt that limited or poor formation practices in the area of celibate spirituality made significant contribution by default to later expressions of sexual dysfunction. Current church practice is to ordain only those who have first discerned a call to celibate living. However it is probable that very few today, or in the past, have presented themselves for ordination with this discernment. Celibacy is seen simply as “part of the package” for those who would be priests and the same would seem true of religious life. It is quite possible for individuals to be attracted towards many positive aspects of religious life and ministry without ever really accepting the element of celibacy.

Taken this way, celibacy – that which should be a most personal choice of lifestyle – becomes a ‘not owned’ ‘taken for granted’ element of the chosen life of priesthood or religious life. Where celibacy has not been discerned as a vocation, there is strong likelihood that the person’s sexuality will become split from other motivations and come to exercise an autonomy of its own, especially in times of serious anxiety or stress. This is highly significant in the light of offenders’ ability to rationalise their behaviour by compartmentalising their lives.

Education for ‘celibate sexuality’ is seen as being an essential foundation element of the formation and personal development of all priests and religious. It should not be regarded just as a preventive measure for those priests and religious who can be identified as being at risk of offending. Since the choice of a celibate lifestyle is not appropriate for the majority of people, and is an essentially distinct choice from ordination to priesthood, education is all the more necessary in a Church which obliges celibacy as a condition of priestly ordination.

Until recently there has been little formation in celibate sexuality in seminaries and houses of formation. What has emerged in more recent years in this area has been mostly in the form of special workshops and one-to-one accompaniment. This places unreal and perhaps illusory expectations on the process of personal spiritual direction, counselling and therapy. An ongoing, cohesive and sustained program covering all aspects of celibate sexuality is necessary – biological, psychological, sociological, theological and spiritual dimensions appropriate to the stages of formation. Ad hoc week-end type programs are insufficient.

Power, Women and Celibacy

The issue of power and control over others is central to an understanding of sexual abuse, whether it occurs in nuclear families, the family of the church or in non family relationships. Additionally, it must be recognised that the acceptance of male dominance has caused sexual abuse offending to be an almost exclusive male problem.
Richard Sipe, in *Sex, Priests and Power* (1995), argues that power is systemic in the church. He examines critically what he calls the *system of celibacy* in the church. He says: ‘the celibate/sexual system is a brotherhood of guaranteed employment, respectability, prestige and power’. Sipe claims that celibacy ‘must transcend institutional boundaries and must become truly personal and interior’. He maintains that celibacy itself is not the problem and never has been. But he says (1995:p.162-2):

> The crisis is the claim to celibate privilege and authority not based on reality and religious service but dependent on law, ideal, and control in the service of economic, social, and political or sexual domination. Power perverted in the name of religion is the problem.

Sipe’s claim is that ‘celibate power’ is based on interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements which hold the celibate/sexual system in place, and form both the contour and the character of its power. (op.cit.,p.163). Because power is at the root of abusive behaviour with children and in many cases, with adults, we should be aware of the ways in which power operates in our own system. Reverend Philip Lewis commented in his submission to the Winter Committee that: ‘abuse of power by clerics within the framework of the church is fundamental to understanding the sexual abuse of our children by priests.’ (Vol.II. C.85)

A clear and resounding message received in the course of this research study centred on those elements of the ‘culture of the Catholic Church’ which contribute to a lack of respect for women and subsequently their subservient role in the life of the Church. A direct consequence of this cultural attitude is the ready victimisation of women through sexual offence. As long as the culture of the Church does not put men and women on a basis of true equality, then women and children will remain vulnerable to abuse.

It is the enshrining of power, position and superiority in a male priesthood, through the structures and culture of the Church, which also directly contributes to a climate for sexual offences against women. Women claim that the Church is in need, not of power, but of empowerment. Empowerment is a mutual concept, shared and brought to fullness by each other. Sexual offences by ministers are seen to be indicators of the need for Church renewal in its structures of authority, its gender bias, its sense of community and its willingness to be truly inclusive of women.

Within the Catholic community, in the literature which deals with the subject of priesthood and religious life and in the responses received by the researchers as a result of the consultations of the present study, there is certainly unanimity that:

- the living of celibacy requires adequate formation and ongoing education in human sexuality;
- celibacy has been proposed to a considerable number of priests and religious for whom it is not an appropriate lifestyle; and,
- celibate sexuality develops in a climate of openness, support and choice, not in one of negation and repression.

Two particular comments which echo these views stand out. ‘Where celibacy is a condition of ordination, rather than a freely and independently chosen value, persons will be ordained who cannot integrate their sexuality in a celibate lifestyle and become
abusers, either of children or of adults' and 'I am convinced that institutions are not the place to form healthy celibates'.

Celibacy – a valid lifestyle

Although it is true that some persons who profess celibacy commit offences against children and violate their pastoral boundaries when relating to women, celibacy remains a valid and respected lifestyle for a significant number of people in society. This study has found no evidence to support the view that celibacy, of itself, is a significant factor in contributing to child sexual offences committed by priests or religious, any more than it is for anyone else. A disturbing fact remains that some priest child sex offenders believe that sexual offences involving children (particularly male children and youth) are not occasions when a vow of celibacy is broken.

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL OFFENCES

The experience of child sexual abuse for the Australian Catholic Church has been a more recent occurrence and has followed a somewhat similar, yet less extreme, pattern to that which has emerged in northern America. In recent years in Australia there has been a discernible growing awareness of the personal rights of children, an emergence of the need for clearer codes of professional ethics for practitioners and the establishment of public tribunals to deal with complaints, such as the Health Care Complaints Commissions in various states.

During this period there have also been allegations and public disclosures made to Church authorities about sexual offences committed by priests and religious. Some of these public disclosures, after due investigation by civil authorities, have proceeded to criminal and civil hearings.

At the same time as these occurrences were taking place, there have been instances of allegations made by the media which claim the Australian Catholic Church has acted slowly, reluctantly or, in some cases, not at all to allegations of child sexual abuse. A number of media reports have proposed that Church Authorities have acted with complicity in minimising or refusing to accept information brought to them. It must be kept in mind, however, that the apparent inaction by Church authorities in many instances was indicative of the times. Many other institutions within society, both secular and religious, acted similarly (Jenkins 1996). This position is argued to have arisen because of the difficulty in arriving at strategies. Sensitivity to the needs of the victim was sometimes overshadowed by a concentration of attention on the alleged perpetrator.

The number of quite public disclosures, allegations, trials and convictions relating to sexual offences against children over the past four to five years, has forced Australian society, to acknowledge the magnitude of the problem, as evidenced by the establishment of public inquiries into paedophile activities in a number of Australian states. The findings of these inquiries and the public indignation that follows such revelations create a protective community awareness about children and sexual abuse. Furthermore, this awareness has resulted in the community holding a strong expectation that such offences will not be tolerated and that those whose actions do not measure up to this standard can expect no sympathy. These expectations were reiterated during the Wood Royal Commission. The second instalment of the Final Report of the New South Wales Royal Commission, publicly released on 26 August 1997, includes a chapter titled 'The
Churches'. Some of the comment applies generically to all religious bodies but there are also specific comments in relation to the Catholic Church.

The 'Wood Report' represents the first instance in which a competent independent statutory body has publicly and critically analysed the Churches' handling of offences against children. Consequently, some of its findings are pertinent to the present discussion. Chapter 11 of the 'Wood Report' begins with an analysis of the reactions of the churches to allegations of sexual abuse involving children. These reactions have included:

- outright denial of complaints;
- minimisation and avoidance of complaints;
- regarding sexual abuse as moral failure rather than criminal offence;
- defending the institution of the church;
- disguising the reality of offence by using euphemistic language to describe the offence and to minimise the offence (e.g. Professional Standards Committee or Special Issues Sub-Committee);
- trying to deal with accusations within the forum of the church;
- invoking the confidentiality of the pastoral relationship;
- respecting victims' wishes that police not be notified; and,
- giving priority to insurance and liability concerns rather than putting victims first.

Observations made by respondents during the course of the present research about the Catholic Church response to allegations of child sexual abuse by priests and religious endorse the applicability of the above reactions to the way the Catholic Church in Australia has dealt with allegations of sexual abuse.

The Royal Commission also examined the incidence of sexual abuse involving children in the churches and reviewed a number of case studies of offences by church ministers, before turning to the protocols that are in place in various groups to deal with instances where allegations are made. It also issued a clear warning that allegations of criminal abuse cannot, and must not, be dealt with by the institution in which they occur. Rather, allegations should be acted upon by the proper civil authorities. The necessity for adequate protocols to be in place in the churches and for ministers to be fully informed is insisted on.

As cited earlier in this paper, the Wood Royal Commission (op.cit:pp.1033-1034) concludes its section on the churches by stating:

No Church can today responsibly exist without a protocol that suitably addresses at least:

- a procedure for receiving and dealing with allegations of sexual abuse, whether raised by the victim, a third party or self confessed perpetrator, to ensure that matters involving criminality are referred to the police for investigation, and that the remainder are suitably investigated and resolved internally;
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- the provision of and support for and assistance of victims of such abuse at the hands of the clergy and others holding office within the Church, either as employees or volunteers;
- the provision of treatment, where assessed worthwhile and consented to by the offending member;
- the delivery of education and counselling concerning the risks of sexual abuse and the procedures/facilities earlier outlined, to all members of the Church, and particularly to those who are having difficulties with their own sexual urges, before they fall prey to them;
- the removal of those members for whom an unreasonable risk of harm to children is assessed to exist, from any positions placing them into contact with children and young people; and
- independent and effective oversight and monitoring of the operation of the protocols, guidelines and programs developed in this area.

In the light of its commendation of the efforts being made to address incidents of sexual offences against children, the Royal Commission made no specific recommendations in respect of the churches, other than stressing the significance of formal and comprehensive protocols for dealing with allegations and formal processes for acceptance, education and supervision of ministers.

ISSUES OF POWER AND CONTROL

We believe that misuse of power is a common thread to violence and sexuality, child pornography, family violence, child sexual abuse and social breakdown.

Submission to the Winter Committee, Vol.II. C.121

It is clear from the ongoing experience of the Australian Church that there are men in ministry who are sexually compulsive, who disregard celibacy, who have used physical force to sexualise pastoral relationships, who have relied on their position of trust as pastors to abuse vulnerable women. Knowledge of and inaction about their behaviour have to be acknowledged as factors in the continuation of abuse and in the silence and non-disclosure of abuse by victims. There are many complex personal and socio-cultural factors that impact on a person’s predisposition to abuse another. When considering the factors it is essential to have some understanding of the role that power and control play.

The terms ‘power’ and ‘control’ tend to connote physical force in the act of abuse, but most abuse is not committed by physical force. More often used is the power of emotional manipulation, authority or position via threats or promises as means of controlling the child. When a person in a position of trust violates that trust by abusing, that person is exercising and abusing his power both to force his will upon his victim and also to prevent the victim from revealing his transgressions.

We come from a long history of catholic laity giving priests and religious a status and power beyond what might be considered reasonable. Priests especially were often placed on a pedestal by the community and ‘given absolute power and authority on all issues – morals, lifestyles, behaviour, religion, education’ (Winter Commission, Vol.2, 1990: C.101). For the most part such trust was well founded but some priests and religious appear to lack awareness of the power differential that exists between themselves and those they serve.
Screening for Ministry

Ray Reid, in reference to a paper by Bishop David Richards et al. (1997), outlines nine traits as useful reference points in the assessment of candidates for formation:

- **empathy:** capacity for warmth, positive self image, absence of prevailing angers
- **maturity:** balance, good judgement, good relation of impulses to value system
- **inner control:** stability based on inner resources
- **sensitivity to emotions:** capacity to accept emotions in self and others, absence of impersonal coldness
- **reality with fantasy:** creative imagining balanced with reality-testing
- **ambition:** desire to succeed, absence of neurotic need to be recognised
- **personal value system:** values direct behaviour, ability to articulate reasons
- **sexual understanding:** comfort in sexual orientation and awareness, freedom from tendencies to act out, no denial of importance of sexuality
- **self understanding:** in touch with self, aware of mood changes, not dominated by anger or guilt or artificial euphoria.

Stephen Rossetti (1996:pp.74-77) argues strongly for a comprehensive and intensive psychosexual history as part of the screening process. He claims that such a process can help surface psychosexual “red flags” that might otherwise remain hidden from normal screening procedures. Gerald Coleman S.S. (1996) outlines one process designed by Rossetti and Meyer (1996:p.10), where the threefold purpose is described as follows:

- to assist a seminarian in better understanding and evaluating the history of his sexual life;
- to help the seminary form a balanced and healthy seminarian; and
- to assist the church in ordaining priests who are sexually balanced and integrated.

Rossetti (1996:pp.66-67) explores six psychological red flags:

- Confusion about sexual orientation
- Childish interests and behaviour
- Lack of peer relationships
- Extremes in developmental sexual experiences
- Personal history of child sexual abuse and/or deviant sexual experiences
- An excessively passive, dependent, conforming personality.
The recognition of 'red flags' must be treated with great caution. They are no more than one of many strategies that should be considered when reviewing suitability for religious life. However, appropriate screening, including the intensive psychosexual history outlined above can help to identify:

- those permanently unsuitable for religious life (eg. clinically diagnosed paedophiles or ephebophiles);
- those at least temporarily unsuitable (eg. emotionally underdeveloped);
- those who seem to have the requisite potential qualities; and
- those who have many potential qualities but who also carry some personality factors common to those who have been abused sexually.

Whatever the limitations of the screening processes, those responsible for the admission of candidates are certainly in a better position to make informed decisions after proper screening.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS

This is a major aspect of life calling for attention within the Church at large. Traditionally church ministers have not been called to face formal systems of professional supervision and accountability in ministry.

The Catholic idealisation of priesthood and religious life has resulted in the past in little critical evaluation of either competence or personal integrity in ministry. People trusted clergy and religious. It can now be claimed that some parents have put their children at risk because of their misplaced confidence in the moral and spiritual integrity of priests and religious. It seems that such misplaced confidence arises primarily from confusion in the minds of people between role, competency, integrity and holiness of priests and religious.

Ministry should be characterised by transparency and service, not by secrecy or by resorting to authority. It should be exercised with clear procedures and guidelines that are known by all, Church members as well as ministers themselves. And further, there is need for an ongoing education of ministers which must be based on a concept of ministry to priests and religious as well as by priests and religious.

Accountability in ministry, beyond personal behaviour, also calls for review. Until recently, such accountability was to one person, the Bishop or Major Superior, and the strength and value of such accountability depended strongly on the relationship of the two persons involved, particularly on the leader’s strength and persistence in calling members to accountability. Some of the most notorious cases of clerical sexual abuse were perpetrated in situations where accountability was non-existent. At the very least the standard of accountability should measure up to current professional standards in areas such as education and welfare. Closed and/or secretive systems are notoriously places of abuse.

Priests and religious in ministry are seldom required to undertake regular professional supervision or performance assessment. Many live and work alone, with little or no peer support, or with relatively superficial peer relationships which can neither confirm nor challenge effectively.
In Ranson's (1997:p.6) words:

It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that isolation is strongly detrimental to the personality, has dramatic implications for sexual dysfunction, and establishes the horizon against which abuse is perpetuated.

Since the issue of unacceptable conduct involving adults has also come to light, many professional occupations have developed appropriate standards which make clear what is unacceptable conduct in the professional relationship. These standards have also been incorporated into their Codes of Conduct. *Integrity in Ministry* is a response by the Church to the demand for a clear code of behaviour.
QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE STUDY

What vision does the Church have of the vocation to priesthood and religious life in the 21st Century? Does this vision incorporate the development of a theology of celibate sexuality for priests and religious?

How does the Church in Australia understand its structures of leadership and authority? Are they based on openness, healthy relationships, service and inclusiveness?

What are to be the structures for Formation and for Ministry in relation to screening, formal education, professional and human development and supervision?

How does the Church in Australia promote sound and self possessed priestly personalities?

How does the Church protect and promote the well being and safety of its members, particularly children and vulnerable adults?

Are there any vocational, psychological or other differences between priest and religious child sex offenders in respect of ‘fixated’ or ‘regressed’ paedophilia or ephebophilia?

What are the implications for priests and religious of their professional, pastoral and personal domains being the same/blurred and how can these be addressed in contemporary society with integrity, compassion and understanding?

Can celibacy be properly lived if it is not freely chosen? In light of the special character of the sacrament of ordination, how can the Church deal with priests who are not able to live a celibate lifestyle?

Will Bishops and religious leaders support the implementation of the principles outlined in the document Integrity in Ministry? What are the implications of the current research for the implementation of Integrity in Ministry? How might a Bishop or Religious Leader deal with an individual Priest or Religious Leader who is unable to personally accept the Principles in Integrity in Ministry?
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