

BISHOPS COMMITTEE
FOR
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
REPORT

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

27 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER 1995

BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS REPORT

1. MATTERS RAISED BY CATHOLIC CHURCH INSURANCES

Catholic Church Insurances Ltd will provide a report on Insurances matters concerning Professional Standards for the Bishops in time for the next meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. C.C.I. have also engaged the services of a Media Consultant to assist the personnel of C.C.I. in responding to enquires from the Media. The service is also available to Dioceses and Religious Congregations. A Report is also being prepared by C.C.I. to provide advice on the safe retention of files held by Dioceses and Religious Congregations in dealing with disclosures of Sexual Assault by Catholic Church personnel.

2. "SEXUAL ABUSE BY PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS:

Attached to this Report is a draft of a document entitled: "Sexual Abuse by Priests and Religious: a Statement of Principles". Although much consultation has already taken place in the preparation of this present draft, it must still be treated as a draft. Hence, in discussing the draft with your advisers, kindly ensure that it remains a reserved document. Comments and advice on the document should be forwarded to Bishop Geoff Robinson prior to 31 January, 1996.

3. REVISION OF THE PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A process has commenced for a review of the procedures which are to be used by Dioceses and Religious Congregations in dealing with allegations of sexual misconduct. Meanwhile, the procedures which were approved by Conference in April 1992 remain in effect.

4. MEETING OF ENGLISH SPEAKING EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES DEALING WITH CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE BY CLERGY.

Arrangements are being made for a meeting of representatives from English speaking Episcopal Conferences, dealing with child sexual abuse by clergy. It is anticipated that the meeting will be held in Chicago, U.S.A. from 7-10 May 1996. Bishop Peter Connors, Father Brian Lucas, Sister Angela Ryan, C.S.B. and Mr Laurie Rolls (C.C.I.) will represent this Conference.

5. WORKSHOP AT THE CONFERENCE ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, PSYCHOTHERAPISTS AND CLERGY

Bishop Geoff Robinson, Father John Usher and Sister Angela Ryan, C.S.B. will conduct a workshop at a Conference on Sexual Exploitation by Health Professionals, Psychotherapists and Clergy to be held in Sydney in April, 1996.

Most P JConnors
Secretary
29 July 1995

SEXUAL ABUSE BY PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS: A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

(28-10-95)

1. The bishops and the leaders of religious institutes of the Catholic Church in Australia acknowledge and deeply regret the fact that a number of priests and religious have sexually abused children, adolescents and adults in their pastoral care.¹ On behalf of the whole Church they offer to the victims of such abuse a sincere apology.
2. They recognise that the bringing to light of this abuse is for them a challenge to both personal and institutional change.
3. The purpose of this document is to name the principles on which to base the Church's response to complaints of sexual abuse by priests or religious. It will be accompanied by a separate document detailing the procedures to be followed in particular cases.

SEXUAL ABUSE

4. Priests and religious enjoy a special position of trust and authority towards those who are in any way in their pastoral care, e.g. members of a parish, employees, students or persons seeking advice. Any attempt by a priest or religious to sexualise a pastoral relationship through suggestive comments, unnecessary questions or physical contact involves a breach of trust, an abuse of authority and professional misconduct. Such an approach will cause confusion to the other person, and any consent given by that person will fall short of free and full consent. Even when it is the other person concerned who seeks to sexualise the relationship, the priest or religious must guard the boundary against sexual contact.
5. Any form of sexual behaviour with a minor, whether child or adolescent, is always sexual abuse, and is both unethical and criminal.
6. Unwelcome sexual approaches to an adult constitute sexual harassment or, in more extreme cases, sexual assault, and may be subject to various provisions of the civil or criminal law. Even in cases where the civil authorities may not see grounds for taking action, Church authorities must be aware of the elements of abuse that are present and treat the matter accordingly.

1. There have also been cases of sexual abuse by other persons connected with the Catholic Church, both employees of Church agencies and volunteer workers, some clearly working in the name of the Church, others more marginally connected. It would be difficult to cover all of these categories in the one document, and there is obviously a special wrong when the offender is a priest or religious. Another document will be published at a later date dealing with abuse by other Church workers, and the present document will limit itself to priests and religious.

THE VICTIMS

7. The bishops and religious leaders promise to take seriously all allegations of sexual abuse by priests or religious. They will avoid the further suffering that can be caused to victims when the effects of abuse are minimized, distorted or denied.

8. Victims of sexual abuse can experience fear, shame, confusion and the violation of their person. They can feel guilty, blame themselves and take responsibility for what has happened. Children and adolescents can suffer distortions in the process of determining their sexual identity, and even their identity as persons. Victims can go through a long period of silence, denial and repression. Other people can refuse to believe them, reinforcing their sense of guilt and shame.

9. The intensity of the effects of sexual abuse on victims will vary. Some of the factors involved are the age and personality of the victim, the relationship with the offender, the duration and frequency of the abuse, the particular form of the abuse, the degree of force used, the threats used to compel secrecy, and the degree of violation of trust and abuse of power involved.

THE OFFENDERS

10. In many cases of sexual abuse free choices are made and many serious and sacred taboos are broken before the offence takes place. Vulnerable persons are often carefully selected as potential victims and care is taken to threaten them not to tell anyone what has happened. These facts argue to a clear awareness of the wrong that is being done.

11. Offenders can, indeed, frequently present as not merely respectable, but even as good and caring people. They can be quite exemplary in their public life, and this can actually become part of their allowing themselves a private life that is in direct contradiction to the public perception.

12. Bishops and religious leaders must, however, admit that there can also be institutional causes of abuse and institutional failure to prevent its occurrence. They must, for example, ask themselves why offenders, when first conscious of a temptation to abuse, were either ashamed or afraid to seek help, and why in these circumstances the Christian message failed to move them. If some offenders are working out of serious psychological problems in this field, such that sexual abuse quickly becomes a compulsion that leads to denial and self-deception, they must ask what institutional factors prevented the facing and overcoming of these problems.

THE CONTEXT

13. Until quite recently the extent of sexual abuse in our society was not known. This was in line with the secrecy that surrounded many aspects of sexual behaviour, and in particular anything that deviated from what was perceived as the norm. People in general also

did not understand the profound effects that sexual abuse can have on its victims.

14. Within the Church the problem was at first instinctively treated as a moral one, for the person guilty of sexual abuse had clearly committed a moral wrong. For many years, however, Church authorities did not adequately realise what it meant for a sexual offender to be truly repentant. They did not realise that an offender in this field is all too likely to offend again unless serious and lengthy therapy is obtained. They also paid too much attention to the fact that the sin was a sexual one and not enough to its effects on the victim, so that their understanding of repentance was misdirected.

15. The bishops and religious leaders of today recognise the hurt that has been caused by the lack of an adequate response when allegations were first made. Ignorance, fear and placing the reputation of the Church before the needs of victims contributed to their suffering. The bishops and religious leaders express profound regret and sorrow for this hurt and suffering.

16. Ignorance can no longer be an excuse. Sexual abuse is now discussed more often and more openly, and the effects of abuse on its victims are better understood. The response of the Church must, therefore, be a new response to a fresh understanding.

THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH

17. No one can change the past, undo the wrong that has been done, or banish the memories and the hurt. In seeking to do what is possible, however, there are six things in particular that the Church shall now strive for: truth, humility, healing for the victims, assistance to other persons affected, an appropriate response to the offenders, and prevention for the future.

TRUTH

18. Sexual abuse by priests or religious is news, and the news will not go away until the cases that have arisen have been resolved and no new ones occur. Any attempt to conceal the news story only increases its news value, and will quickly become itself the story.

19. However unpalatable the truth may be, the Church shall seek to know the full extent of the problem and the causes of such behaviour within a community that espouses the values of Jesus Christ.

HUMILITY

20. It is very humbling for a Christian church to have to admit that some of its priests and religious have committed the offence of sexual abuse. It is only humility, however, that will create the energy needed to care for victims and prevent abuse in the future. Pride must not take away that energy.

HEALING FOR THE VICTIMS

21. Whenever the offender has been a priest or religious, Church authorities accept that they have a responsibility to give whatever assistance they can to bring healing to those who have been victims of abuse.

22. Each Church authority shall designate competent and understanding persons to whom all complaints of sexual abuse by priests or religious may be made, and shall make available the names of these persons.

23. The persons designated shall listen fully, honestly and sympathetically to those laying complaints, both concerning the facts of the situation and the emotional and spiritual effects it has had on them. They shall assure complainants that, if the facts are truly as stated, abuse must be named for what it is and victims assisted to move the blame from themselves to the abuser. They shall enquire what needs to be done immediately to ensure that a complainant feels safe from further abuse.

24. When a report is then made to the appropriate Church authority, prompt action shall be taken to prevent the possibility of abuse to other persons. An offer of both psychological and spiritual assistance shall be made immediately, so that the healing process can continue.

25. In some cases the Church authority shall advise the complainant to take the matter immediately to the police, assist in doing so, and cooperate in police investigations. In other cases (e.g. when the facts are uncertain or when the complainant is unwilling to go to the police), the Church authority shall establish its own investigation to discover the true facts of the situation. In this case, the authority shall avoid delays in responding to letters or requests, and ensure that complainants are informed of the process being followed and of the progress of the case.

26. Whenever it is established that sexual abuse did in fact take place, the Church authority shall immediately enter into dialogue with victims concerning their needs, and ensure that the Church community truly does all that is in its power to assist the healing process. There will be occasions where it is appropriate for the authority to seek to secure a written apology from the offender to the victim, or to invite the offender to consider pleading guilty before the court and so spare victims further anguish.

ASSISTANCE TO OTHER PERSONS AFFECTED

27. The bishops and religious leaders shall seek to put in place some means of bringing both psychological and spiritual healing to all those persons who, in addition to the victims, have been seriously affected by acts of sexual abuse.

28. The effect on the family of the victim can be profound. Sometimes the disclosure is so terrible that the family would rather reject the victim than face the reality. Parents can feel guilty that they did not more effectively protect their child.

29. The parish, school or other community in which the abuse occurred will be deeply affected. The more popular and respected the priest or religious was, the greater will be the shock.
30. The family and close friends of the offender will be deeply hurt. They can find it difficult to know how to respond and how to act towards the offender.
31. All priests and religious are affected, and the thought that other people might be looking at them as potential child molesters is hard to live with. They have had to make changes in their manner of relating to all young people, and some good things have been lost in these changes.
32. The whole Church community has been affected, for all Catholic people have been dismayed by the stories they have heard. The credibility of the whole Church has been affected and the religious faith of many has been disturbed.

AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE OFFENDERS

33. Serious crime demands serious punishment, and serious offenders cannot ever be restored to the *status quo*. They were given power over and access to vulnerable people, they abused this power, and it cannot be given to them again. For many, this means that they must never again have the right to call themselves priests or religious or present themselves to others as such.
34. In addition to appropriate punishment, however, bishops and religious leaders accept that they have an ongoing role in seeking to ensure that offenders come to a true appreciation of the enduring harm they have caused, seek professional help in overcoming their problems, do whatever is in their power to make amends and, above all, never offend again.
35. In order to carry out this responsibility, Church authorities must continue to have some contact with offenders and some form of influence on their conduct. In order to achieve change, they must hold out to them something more than the prospect of unending condemnation. They must be able to tell them that there can eventually be forgiveness, by human beings as well as by God.

PREVENTION FOR THE FUTURE

36. The bishops and religious leaders shall undertake serious work aimed at reducing the risk of abuse by priests or religious in the future. This work can be presented under the headings of identifying the causes of abuse, the selection and training of candidates and community education.

IDENTIFYING THE CAUSES OF SEXUAL ABUSE

37. Five lines of enquiry immediately suggest themselves.

38. Many offenders were themselves victims of sexual abuse in childhood. What can be done to help them to seek assistance in the healing of this abuse before they run the risk of themselves becoming abusers?

39. Has there been a biased intake, that is, have persons prone to offend in this way been attracted to priesthood or religious life? Their motivation need not have been malicious, for they could have felt attracted to work with children or young people, but have been unaware at the time that this attraction contained unhealthy and dangerous elements.

40. Most acts of sexual abuse are more about power than they are about sex. In investigating the causes of sexual abuse, therefore, it is important to investigate the use and abuse of spiritual power by priests and religious.

41. Has there been a poor preparation for a celibate lifestyle? There is no statistical evidence to suggest that celibates are more likely than married people to commit sexual abuse, but a poor preparation for a celibate lifestyle can leave a person with a serious psychosexual immaturity.

42. Finally, has there been an absence of a forum in which priests and religious could comfortably explore psychosexual issues? Have anxieties consequently gone underground because priests and religious had to live up to expected images of perfection? Have these buried anxieties then sometimes been acted out in compulsive and disowned ways?

43. The investigation must look at all aspects and examine all possible theories, for in this field prevention is the only acceptable solution.

SELECTION AND TRAINING OF CANDIDATES

44. There is no simple means of separating in advance those who will later abuse sexually and those who will not. There are some signs to look for, e.g. victims of sexual abuse should always seek professional assistance in coming to terms with what has happened to them or they run a risk of themselves becoming abusers; those who tend to abuse power are more at risk than those who do not; psychosexual immaturity can direct sexual attraction towards other immature people, i.e. minors. It does not follow, however, that every victim of abuse, every strong leader and every immature person will become a sexual offender.

45. Despite this, the general remark can be made that the more mature and integrated a person is, the less likelihood there is of abusive behaviour. Consequently, the process of selection and training of candidates for priesthood and religious life must be seriously scrutinised and upgraded. The present shortage of priests and religious cannot be allowed to lead to a lowering of standards.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

46. The whole question of sexual abuse by priests and religious will be better handled if there is a better understanding of the issues by the whole Catholic community. Some of the areas in which this community understanding would be most useful are:

- accepting the fact of abuse and the consequences it has for victims, naming it for what it is and placing the blame on the offender, not the victim;
- looking for warning signs that abuse might be occurring and learning how best to intervene;
- never protecting an offender;
- learning what is entailed in the care of victims of sexual abuse, what to do and what not to do to assist in their healing;
- learning how to assist in the healing of whole communities and parishes;

COMMITMENT

47. The bishops and religious leaders of the Catholic Church in Australia commit themselves to the principles presented in this document. They invite the whole Church to assist them in offering whatever healing is possible to victims of abuse and in preventing any further abuse in the future.

**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS
INSTITUTES**

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS RESEARCH PROJECT

INTERIM REPORT MEETING

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1995

**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE AUSTRALIAN CONFERENCE
OF LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTES**

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS RESEARCH PROJECT

INTERIM RESEARCH SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The starting point for the current research project is the resolve of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes to address as clearly and as comprehensively as possible the criminal sexual abuse of children by priests and religious.

The research team has been aware of a sense of urgency because of the current climate in society and in the Church about pastoral sexual abuse; it has also been conscious of the range of behaviours and of difficulties implicit in the phrase "sexual disorders".

After meeting with groups of professional people in consultations in every state, consulting with clinicians, and making a comprehensive review of literature both clinical and pastoral, we are able to state that we consider a programme to be feasible and to have theoretical and practical support.

This summary will give some further shape to a possible model.

SOME DEFINITION OF TERMS

There are some clarifications that need to be made as a background to reporting on what has been undertaken in relation to those terms of reference.

The expressions "child abuse", "sexual abuse", "sexual assault", "sexual misconduct" "sexualised behaviour", "sexual contact" can all be used to distinguish accurately between modes of behaviour. Writers from Church perspective use the terms "clergy sexual abuse", or more recently, "pastoral sexual abuse" to identify the special dimensions of breach of trust that are

associated with offenders who are religious or ministers of the Church.

Some of the distinctions made by Jan Craney may be helpful:

The specific psychiatric conditions seen as operating in cases of child sexual abuse are, **paedophilia**, characterised by recurring urges or sexual activity with a pre-pubescent child, and **ephebophilia**, in which the object of recurring sexual urges or activity is a post-pubescent juvenile. In much of the commentary on clergy sexual abuse, paedophilia is used to cover both conditions. Both of these conditions in turn are examples of a larger class of sexual disorders called **paraphilias**, in which sexual arousal follows a "non-normative pattern ... which may interfere with the capacity for reciprocal affectionate activity", and which includes sexual activity with non-consenting persons. The issue of consent is frequently contested by perpetrators of child sexual abuse, who claim that children willingly participated. In legal terms, consent is not possible while a child is a minor. Sexual activity with a minor is an illegal act.

Paedophilia and ephebophilia can be homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual. They can also be divided clinically into two groups: **fixated** (or **exclusive**), in which a person always requires paraphilic fantasies or stimuli for sexual arousal: and **regressed** (or **non-exclusive type**), in which paraphilic urges are periodic and may occur during periods of stress, and sexual arousal with adults is sometimes possible. The prognosis is said to be poor for fixated paraphilias, but more favourable for regressed, which may respond to treatment according to the addiction model.

...The emphasis on paedophilia and ephebophilia in the literature on clergy sexual abuse obscures an important reality discussed by Canice Connors, president of the St. Luke Institute Maryland, which treats clergy with sexual problems. In the largest study of sexually disordered or dysfunctional clergy yet undertaken, involving 500 priests and brothers over a ten year period, only 44 were diagnosed as paedophiles. 185 were diagnosed as ephebophiles, 142 as compulsives, who experience sex as beyond the pale of free will, and 165 as persons with **unintegrated sexuality**, who have avoided or postponed incorporating a sex drive or identity into their conscious selves.

Whether the orientation and behaviour be fixated or opportunistic, the literature and the experience of practitioners highlight some common characteristics. Such people are adults who have sought out and enjoyed a high level of trust from the children against whom they have offended. Most of them tend to be people who would prefer to be with children rather than adult peers, though this is not exclusively the case.

Because fixated persons have from a very early age tried to fight their deep-seated desire for intimacy with children, they invariably fantasise, on a regular basis, about their encounters with children, even though one may assess their behaviour as spasmodic or opportunistic. The obsessed or fixated person certainly fantasises consistently about sexual encounters with children. Both the fixated and the opportunistic person would fantasise about sexual encounters with children much more than the homosexual or heterosexually oriented person would fantasise about encounters with peers.

At the same time, colleagues in consultation and writers on offenders highlight the reality that most such men are skilled at masking and concealing both their fantasies and their activities, and go to great lengths to minimise the outward signs of sexual maladjustment. More importantly, they have a highly developed ability, both internally and socially, to deny their sexual maladjustment as a disorder, to the point that their behaviour is quite amoral. It becomes almost impossible for such persons to rationally analyse their strange sexual urges; irrationality underpins fantasies and behaviours, which make little sense even to them. For the person with paraphilia, not only does the behaviour not make sense to him, but the very irrationality enables him to minimise any sense of guilt, and to grossly understate any dealing that there may be with victims or communities .

Literature suggests, and the consultations that have been held confirm, that denial is a key aspect of any person with paraphilic tendencies, and becomes a key component of personality. It is this denial that explains the offenders inability to manifest any sense of understanding response to either victims or communities. Most importantly, it seems to be universally agreed that such a person will minimise the scope and extent of his actions and do this so convincingly that the most astute observer, even a therapist, can be deceived.

Because there is such clear agreement about the limited options and negative prognosis for the minister with fixated paraphilic behaviour, we would conclude that the most critical component of any programme for offenders is a highly professional assessment procedure.

No assessment strategy, except those made in hindsight, can be a guarantee that the person so

assessed is definitely not fixated or obsessed. Nevertheless, a person who is assessed as less than fixated could move into a programme based on a strategy that would give the professionals associated with such a person further opportunity for assessment, by testing the more optimistic diagnosis over a longer period of time(as much as twelve months)

The person assessed from the outset as fixated would benefit from an intervention that simply enables him to move into a role completely removed from children and young people. It has to be noted, though, that those with whom we consulted, on the whole doubted that such a role exists for a diocesan priest, although community life may provide that option in some religious congregations.

In the light of the research undertaken thus far, there are a number of clear additional statements that can be made:-

1. Some models of priesthood, workloads, life style, etc., do create stress in ministers. But stress in itself is not, and cannot be, an explanation for gross sexual maladjustment.
2. Other addictive behaviours, such as alcohol, substance abuse, gambling, can be associated with, but are not causal of, gross sexual malfunction.
3. There is no evidence to identify the discipline of celibacy as related to criminal sexual offence. But there is some support for a view that some men are attracted to a celibate lifestyle as a possible "remedy" for perceived problems and tendencies.
4. Any sexual relationship, not simply criminal sexual offences, that results from a pastoral care role, is by definition unprofessional and an abuse of a sacred trust. Any priest or religious who stays in a sexual relationship with another adult, while holding a pastoral position in the Church, is in an abusive relationship.

The programme under consideration could be appropriate to assist priests who are in abusive, adult sexual relationships as well as those with paraphilic behaviour. But it is not recommended that this programme should be used for priests and religious with other

addictive behaviours such as alcohol abuse. Programmes for non-sexual addictive behaviours are currently available in Australia, notably through Catholic Health Care institutions.

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

The research brief refers to "treatment " and that was received with caution by many of those consulted. "Treatment" can be misconstrued to imply "cure", whereas for most clients of the programme, a form of reality therapy is envisaged which entails confronting people with the reality of their future as priests and religious. This is not to say, as indicated above, that for the opportunistic offender, there may not be a more optimistic prognosis. But such a prognosis must never be presumed at the outset.

The following classifications of persons would be suitable candidates for a programme.

1. Persons who believe that their fantasies/behaviours are paraphilic in nature, (or in the case of heterosexual/ homosexual priests and religious, adult oriented). Their behaviour is abusive in nature, but they have not been accused of offences or identified as offenders. Enrolment into a programme so as to minimise risk of any future sexual abuse to others would be very acceptable. It has been suggested that such candidates for a programme hold the best prospects for a positive outcome.
2. Persons who have been accused of an offence against children, or of sexual abuse against adults, who admit to such abuse, where the victim has not proceeded to take legal action in either criminal or civil jurisdiction.
3. Persons who have been charged with an offence against children, have been convicted of such an offence by a criminal court and have been granted a bond, because of special circumstances or because of minimal evidence against them.
4. Persons who have been convicted of an offence against a child or young person, have

been sentenced to gaol and have completed a term in prison

Note A programme could not offer admission to a person who has been alleged to have committed an offence against children or young people, who has categorically denied such an offence in all forums.

It should be noted that a person may, on legal advice, deny in criminal court having committed an offence; he may privately admit that there is truth to the allegations. Such a person could be a suitable candidate for a programme, but only after acquittal in the criminal court.

Scope of the Programme

A programme suitable to the needs of priests and religious, and of the Church, would have the following components.

Assessment a sense of knowing the nature of the behaviour of the offender as a starting point.

Placement of the person in a programme framework really suited to particular needs.

Review of progress of intervention and therapy at regular intervals

Outplacement transition from programme to ordinary living as priest or religious

Assignment and Supervision to the extent that return to ministry is appropriate, assistance with assignment - ongoing counselling in all cases.

Research an important function of providing better knowledge and management of sexual offence by priests and religious. In time, a resource body for the Church to ensure validity and accountability of programmes.

Recommendations on the Nature of the Programme

1. **A three- tiered model** to allow for the accommodation of:
 - residential possibilities in the case of multiple disorder.
 - a non-residential outpatient type programme for most clients
 - a research function which would have professional credibility, offer an educational network and be a consultancy resource for the Church
2. **The residential requirement would be met by an existing facility**, either of the Catholic Church or of the Health Care sector.
3. Persons in the normal operation of the programme would live in **private accommodation and attend day sessions**. Such a model would probably suggest, though not demand, situation of the programme in a metropolitan setting.
4. As would be clear from all the foregoing, the programme would have a **specific sexual disorder focus**.
5. The programme should operate in a setting of professional rooms and draw its image from **professional practice** more than from Church sponsorship.
6. The programme would be managed by a **clinical director** who would
 - establish protocols and procedures especially in relation to bishops and religious leaders
 - have responsibility for client assessment and programmes
 - be initially responsible for the research aspects of the programme
7. The programme would be managed by an **independent Board**, answerable to the Bishops and Religious Leaders, with function of overseeing the whole programme but quite politically and professionally separate from it.
8. **Costs** associated with such a programme would be considerable, but ones principally associated with the salary of a professional clinical director and staff for the programme

and the research. One estimate suggested an amount of financial outlay of some \$500,000 over a period of five years. Much of this, however, would be cost recoverable on a fee-for-service basis. Details of financing the programme would be more closely looked at in a later stage of planning.

9. **Timing for implementation** If decision were to be arrived at by April 1996, it would be feasible to have programme availability by 1997.

COMPLETION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

To complete the research project, it was proposed that bishops and congregational leaders would be consulted individually on the recommendations above. The result of those individual consultations would be incorporated into the material of a final report.

The full research report would be circulated by the next meeting of the Australian Bishops' Conference, containing final proposals for discussion and decision.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS RESEARCH PROJECT

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS

As part of the research project methodology, a series of Consultation were held between late August and early November, 1995, with professionals associated with intervention or therapy for victims or perpetrators of sexual offence by priests and religious in Australia.

The meetings were convened, with members of the research team, in each of the capital cities, with local priests acting as the convenors. Two smaller meetings were held by arrangement, one in Bathurst and the other as a teleconference with Darwin.

In all, eight consultations were held, with some 64 professional people contributing from particular perspectives as follows:-

Psychiatrist	4
Psychologist	11
Therapist (Church agency or other)	30
Clergy/ Religious Leader	19

Our overall impression from the series of meetings was a conviction of the amount of expertise and good will that we found, coupled with endorsement of and support for the research project. Identification on a national scale of the personal resources that are available to regional reference groups would be justification in itself for the effort made in conducting the consultations.

A complete set of minutes of the consultations will be incorporated in the final report of the research project, along with lists of those who participated in each of the meetings.

In what follows, an attempt has been made to summarise and draw together key aspects of

comment.

GENERAL BACKGROUND COMMENTS

Every group without exception stressed the need to keep a three-fold perspective of Victim - Community - Offender in all considerations of sexual abuse. Even treatment programmes for offenders should be answerable to the rights and the needs of victims and communities. In terms of justice, (since rarely has it been found that disclosures and accusations are without foundation), the needs of the offender are subsequent to those of people directly and indirectly harmed by him.

Expressions such as "take responsibility for his actions", "be accountable for the effects that his actions have had on victims" were frequently used. Many offenders have little or no experience of dependency, especially that of a child, and their view of themselves (and their God) can be quite narcissistic and self-referrent. And yet, resolution after offence is not in the hands of the offender.

Whatever can help an offender realise the true state of the victim is to be encouraged. There is a pattern of damage caused to victims and their families that is of such a proportion that it finally compels disclosure. Experience shows that those who become the victims of fixated offenders are mostly damaged, non-assertive, vulnerable persons for whom the realities of subsequent disclosure of offences are a further ordeal. "He must be stopped!" is their common theme.

Many statements were made about the reality of the "chain of offence" where fixated abuse of children is concerned. Most paedophiles have hundreds of offences; one clinical figures alleges that 30% of those who have been abused become abusers themselves.

"How the Church positions itself in respect of the perpetrator is enormously significant. Parishes and Communities frequently know about offences, quite apart from disclosure or accusation."

One sad effect of the present climate in the Church is that many "faithful" priests and religious

have quite consciously adopted protective and safe personal behaviours, distancing themselves from personal contacts. Some go as far as to question being a priest whilst priests are abusive.

The existence of institutions in the English speaking world, notably in England and America, that offer programmes for priests and religious, has led a number of bishops and religious leaders to send offenders overseas. Whilst such a programme might be helpful at some stage in the therapy of particular offenders, it is not a recommended option; programmes are not well known, there is not careful verification of the qualifications and experience of directors and staff, the bishop or leader is not able to accompany and support the person in his "journey", costs of programmes are hard to justify.

PROPOSAL TO SET UP A PROGRAMME

Two consultations in particular explored the range of behaviours in cases of sexual offence and stressed the need in any programme planning to know exactly what personal issues were to be dealt with. Personal sexual orientation is most significant, not simply behaviour.

Frequently, comments were made about the lack of "cure" for paedophilia; the priest or religious who is a true paedophile was so when he entered the priesthood or religious life. This comment will be returned to in dealing with return to ministry.

The setting up of a programme was endorsed almost universally. But programme was not necessarily a physical institution. Opinions varied about whether such a programme should be residential or not, whether it should deal exclusively with sexual disorders or have a wider scope. There was agreement that it should include, assessment, intervention, education (especially research) and supervision. It should concentrate on clear programmes not just private therapy. It should have ability to gain professional credibility and should openly relate to other bodies such as the criminal justice system. At the same time, as sponsored by the Church, it should reflect what Catholics believe as the basis of its work.

Particular emphasis was given to:

- the importance of the **language** of such a programme. Distinction to be made between the language of experience, the language of assessment, the language of therapeutic intervention.
- the need for more information about **prevalence** in the Church. What are the statistics of offence in Australia? Are priests and religious over-represented among offenders? What are the facts on offences by women?
- the **Church distancing itself from the programme** and the therapy process. this was urged so that the process could be rigorously professional, and so that no accusation of "defending its own " could be levelled.
- the value to be gained by making some **parallels** between child sexual assault by priests and religious and work being done **in the area of family sexual assault**.
- the place in the programme for **group therapy** as distinct from personal intervention. Opinions differed according to the background of the commentator. Both approaches seem to have validity according to circumstances. There was a strong agreement that programmes have to suit individual people and be personalised for them.

OTHER AREAS OF COMMENT

The participants of the consultations reinforced the view that there is no basis to link offences with celibacy. What may be more relevant are the issues that surround the sexual development of persons who enter seminaries or religious life with quite an amount of immaturity, and who do not ever fully integrate their sexuality and their lifestyle. That whole area is seen as a further one for serious research.

For whatever reasons, perhaps some associated with the sacrament of reconciliation, it was claimed that priests do not talk to each other about sexuality as part of their own personalities.

There was not one consultation meeting where return to ministry by offenders was not raised. Not only in terms of protocols, but also from professional standpoint, a true paedophile may not function as a priest or a religious engaged in duties where children are. Issues of care and protection demand that "basis of probability" and not "beyond reasonable doubt" operate. The possibility that was entertained, under strict conditions, was that of delayed return to ministry.

A final important issue, not limited to this specific research project, was "supervision" and "ongoing education", especially for priests. Supervision is to be understood in the sense in which it is used in Health and Social Welfare professions, where it has not only the notion of accountability, but much more those of resourcing and support. It was also suggested that a clear Code of Ethics for Priests and Religious has much to commend it.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS RESEARCH PROJECT

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE SEARCH AND REVIEW

The particular nature of the research project suggested that the review be made under two headings:-

- Clinical literature
- Church/pastoral literature

A summary of the clinical literature will be made by Professor Blaszczynski, as part of the presentation to be made on Wednesday, 29th November. The criminal and juvenile justice systems, our statutory health departments, have experience and programmes in dealing with sexual disorders, which is comparatively well documented.

An increasing volume of publications, books, pamphlets, journal articles, along with tapes and videos, reflects in all Churches the growing awareness of, and concern about, pastoral sexual abuse. There is very little material that predates the beginning of the eighties, but with the attention given in society at large in the late eighties and nineties, to abuse and violence against women and particularly children, sexual abuse by clergy has been very publicly discussed and written about. "Priests and Paedophilia: a silence that needs breaking", an article by Canice Connors in Vol.166 no.16 of *America*, in May 1992, urges Catholic church leaders to openness with their communities about abuse so that true Gospel perspectives can operate.

Much of the writing has been anecdotal, simply retelling the experiences of individuals and the Churches. It has stressed the fact of abuse and the harm done to victims and communities. Since the later years of the eighties, from the side of the Church, an amount of the writing has been about "the aftermath" of abuse, as one writer expressed it, about management by Church officials when disclosure is made, about protocols and procedures with offenders. An example of such writing would be the book by Jason Berry, **Lead Us Not Into Temptation: Catholic Priests and the Sexual Abuse of Children**, published in 1992, and dealing with cases in Lafayette, Louisiana.

In the 1990s, against a background of protest and agitation by victims' advocate groups, various initiatives have been undertaken and written about. Church communities, such as the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, in June 1992, made public statements about pastoral abuse, Codes of Ethics for ministers, and care of both victims and offenders. **"From Pain to Hope: Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Child Sexual Abuse"** dealt with care for both victims and priest offenders, admission of candidates to seminaries, and policies for the Canadian Church.

At the same time, several centres have been developed which offer clinical services for clergy and religious, either as residents or outpatients, some from specifically Catholic spiritual perspective, others from a more general Health care model. These have been written about, without much clinical evaluation of programmes. Father Canice Connors, referred to above, an advocate of a proactive stance by the Church, is the Director of one of the better known of these centres, St.Luke's Institute in Maryland.

Most recently, along with greater focus on post-offence intervention for offenders, there is increasing attention being given to issues of education of priests and religious, pre-ministry and inservice, admission to priesthood and religious life, the physical and mental health of clergy, and supervision in ministry.

A comprehensive review of Sexual Abuse topics appeared in the Fall and Winter Issues of Theology Digest:

Ann Wolf **Sexual Abuse Issues: an annotated bibliography**, *Theology Digest*, 41:3, 41:4, (Fall, Winter, 1994)

Only a minimal amount of such literature deals specifically with programmes of intervention in cases of child sexual assault by ministers, and it seems that the interim recommendations of this research project would break new ground in proposals for such offenders.

Most recently, there was published here in Sydney, this year, **When Ministers Sin**, a work by

Thea and Neil Ormerod, that is both exploratory and anecdotal, in the first part of which there are two chapters "The Abusive Minister" and "Perspectives on Church Response". The particular relevance of this study is that it necessarily is a commentary on our own Church situation as seen by two people, husband and wife, with quite different perspectives on the Australian Church and its responses.