

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the findings of three empirical studies which together examine relationships between religiosity and sexual misconduct. In the first study archival data from 111 incarcerated adult male sexual offenders were analysed for associations between self-reported religious affiliations and official offence histories. Four categories of religiosity were devised according to self-reported continuities and discontinuities in life-course religious affiliations: non-religious, dropouts, converts, and stayers. ANCOVAs indicated that “stayers” (those who maintained religious involvement from childhood to adulthood) had more sexual offence convictions, more victims, and younger victims, than the other groups.

In contrast to the population of study one, all of whom had been convicted of sexual offences, the second study aimed to clarify whether there is also a link between religiosity and sexual misconduct within a population that has not been convicted of sexual offences. It also aimed to identify which aspects of religiosity relate to sexual misconduct. Extending the findings of the first study, study two examined associations between one aspect of religiosity, religious orientation, in conjunction with self-control, moral beliefs and self reported misconduct (including sexual misconduct) in 163 adult male university students. Participants were assigned to one of four religious orientation groups: extrinsic (n = 39); intrinsic (n = 25); indiscriminate (n = 36); and non-religious (n = 63). Participants with an intrinsic religious

orientation reported higher self-control and stronger moral beliefs, and were less likely to engage in nonsexual, non-violent misconduct (illicit drug use, wilful damage and theft). Participants with an extrinsic religious orientation were found to have lower self-control and weaker moral beliefs, and were more likely to engage in sexual misconduct. Significant predictors of nonsexual misconduct were low self-control and weak moral beliefs. Significant predictors of sexual misconduct were low self-control and extrinsic religious orientation.

The third study applied a qualitative phenomenological design to illustrate relationships between religiosity and situational and dispositional factors in a small selective sample of adult male clergy and lay religious leaders who had committed sexual offences in a church setting. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four men, three of whom were serving post-prison community orders and the other who was currently incarcerated for two life terms. This phenomenological analysis identified a number of meanings participants attached to their sexual offending, revealing the following themes: situational factors, cognitive distortions, precipitators to offending, religious influence, seminary experience, personality factors, church as institution, and preventative features. Results are discussed in terms of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime and the constraints offered by the social bonds of religion and moral beliefs.

Taken together, these studies suggest that religiosity, in particular extrinsic religious orientation, may be a significant element in some sex

offences, particularly when carried out in a religious context. The findings also suggest that institutional based opportunistic factors involved in sexual offending may require a treatment focus. The findings reported in this thesis will be of assistance to the criminal justice system in understanding, explaining and managing sexual offenders of this particular group and aid therapists in providing appropriate treatment for such offenders. Finally, methods of clinical training and intervention at the seminary and denominational level aimed at prevention are recommended.

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Signed: _____

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

“THE WAY OF THE WICKED IS AS DARKNESS: THEY KNOW NOT AT WHAT THEY STUMBLE”

(Proverbs 4:1819)

BACKGROUND

It has been estimated in Australia that one in three girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused in some way before they reach the age of 16 (Najman, Dunne, Purdie, Boyle, & Coxeter, 2005). However, less than 35% of these child sexual assaults will be reported to authorities. It is also clear that the majority of perpetrators of sexual abuse are men and that the victims are predominantly female and more likely to be pubescent (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005).

Few groups have been the subject of notoriety as have child sexual offenders. The portrayal of these offenders in the media and the recognition of the impact of their crimes on victims have led to an increase in public concern. Numerous aetiological factors have been identified in research but the degree of the interaction of these factors in the manifestation of sexual abusive behaviour remains unclear. For instance there is some consensus that dispositional characteristics of the offender (psychological, emotional, cognitive), interpersonal relationships (family, friends, romantic) and

victimisation history (physical, sexual, psychological) all play a part in the development of child sexual offending behaviour (Lee, Jackson, Pattison & Ward, 2002; Marshall, 1989; Smallbone & Dadds, 2000; Starzyk & Marshall, 2003; Ward, Keenan, & Hudson, 2000). More recently researchers have begun to investigate the influence of situational and opportunistic factors in the perpetration of child sexual abuse (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND AIMS OF THESIS

The overarching research question for this thesis is, to what extent do individual dispositional (e.g. religiosity) and situational factors (eg. opportunity) interact in the perpetration of sexual misconduct? This question is addressed over three studies. Specifically, the thesis poses the questions: is religiosity differentially associated with sexual and nonsexual misconduct? If so, to what extent do internal controls (self control level and moral attitudes) and external social controls (religious orientation) inhibit this misconduct? In addition the third study addresses key questions about clergy and place the analysis in the Australian context by posing the questions: what factors are present in cleric and religious leader sexual offending, how do these characteristics interact with situational and dispositional features, and what preventative methods may be effective in preventing recidivism in this specialised population?

To address the research questions, this thesis focuses on the significance of religiosity in those who have committed sexual and non-sexual

offences. It specifically examines the attitudes, beliefs and life course religious ideals of sexual offenders who have received a custodial sentence and are still incarcerated or currently on parole. To further delineate between religiosity and unlawful sexual misconduct, a number of non-offending adults are investigated. In light of the current research and literature produced as a consequence of the recent crisis in the churches, this thesis ultimately investigates ways to understand and deal with the recently identified phenomenon of clergy sexual abuse.

Given the comparatively recent identification of clergy sexual abuse and the nascency of research in the field, little is known about whether religiosity itself impacts on sexual offending. This thesis aims to extend the focus of previous research by considering individual religiosity and, consistent with the general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), individual levels of self control. Analyses will embrace dispositional as well as situational perspectives. In order to understand the underlying concepts and motivations behind the influence of religion on sexual offending, analyses also address individual-level religious orientation in offending and non-offending, as well as cleric and non-cleric populations.

The first study examines associations between individual level religiosity and offending behaviour in a general sample of incarcerated sexual offenders, none of whom had offended in a church or other institutional religious setting. The reason for researching this particular group was to investigate whether religiosity in general has an impact on sexual misconduct rather than

religiosity found within a religious setting. The respondents were identified as belonging to one of four groups: non-religious (those without religious affiliations), drop-outs (those that had a religious childhood but disengaged as adults), converts (those that had no religion in their childhood but did as adults) and stayers (those who had both a religious childhood and adulthood. It was hypothesized that, since the weight of evidence in the literature suggests that religiosity may exert a deterrent effect on general criminal behaviour, there would be an inverse relationship between religious affiliation and offending behaviour.

Specifically, it was expected that offenders who reported continuity of religious affiliation from childhood to adulthood would have fewer sexual and nonsexual offence convictions, and fewer sexual offence victims, than those who reported no religious affiliation. Given anecdotal evidence that many sexual offenders undergo religious conversions after being convicted of their sexual offences, it was expected that 'converts' might have fewer sexual and nonsexual offence convictions. It was reasoned that religious conversion may be partly a result of offenders trying to come to terms with behaviour that they themselves may see as 'out of character'. Finally, although there were no specific expectations about the relationship between religiosity and the age of sexual offence victims, it was decided to examine this association. Contrary to the hypothesis it was discovered that there was a positive relationship between religiosity and sexual offending. In fact the study found the higher the level of religiosity the greater the number of victims and the younger the

age of victims. This first study has been published in *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* in July 2006.

To examine whether this phenomena of a link between religiosity and sexual offending is particular to convicted offenders, the second study attempts to determine whether the same link occurs within a population that has not been convicted of sexual offences. To this end, study two investigates 162 adult male university students. Unlike much of the earlier research which has investigated the influence that religiosity has on the desistence from criminal behaviour, the second study aimed to identify whether a particular facet of religiosity, extrinsic or intrinsic religious orientation, is a factor in sexual misconduct. Participants were assigned to one of four religious orientation groups: extrinsic, intrinsic, indiscriminate and non-religious. For the purpose of the study extrinsic orientation is defined as religious affiliation for personal gain while intrinsic orientation is defined as religious affiliation for altruistic fulfilment.

Germane to the second study was the application of the principles of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime. This theory proposes low self-control, a behaviour pattern set early in life through ineffective socialisation, as the central explanatory factor for participation in criminal or deviant acts. Gottfredson and Hirschi suggest the link between weak social bonds and deviance is the result of the same underlying factor, low self-control. That is, low self control is likely to have a negative effect on developing social bonds and individuals possessing low self control are also

unlikely to maintain stable friendships, are less likely to be reliable in the work arena, and are likely to reject conventional social bonds (Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, & Silva, 1999).

Personal investment in the church community has traditionally been viewed as a strong social bond, although Longshore, Chang, Hsieh, and Messina (2004) found that such bonding measures explained only a moderate proportion of the variance in deviant outcomes of adult male offenders. More specified internal constraints (moral beliefs) mediated the relationship between low self-control and drug use and not the social bonds of religious commitment or involvement. The second study accordingly examines the importance of internal constraints (moral beliefs and low self-control), together with external constraints (religious orientation), as predictors of participation in unlawful activities, including sexual misconduct, in a sample of non-offenders. The study relied on the respondents' self-reported acts of delinquency and criminal behaviours. To that end, it considers victimless crimes, such as drug and alcohol abuse and wilful damage, as well as victim crimes, such as sexual misconduct and assault.

Results indicated that participants with an intrinsic religious orientation reported higher self-control and stronger moral beliefs, and were less likely to engage in nonsexual, victimless crimes (illicit drug use, wilful damage and theft). Participants with an extrinsic religious orientation were found to have lower self-control and weaker moral beliefs, and were more likely to engage in sexual misconduct. Significant predictors of nonsexual misconduct were low

self-control and weak moral beliefs. Significant predictors of sexual misconduct were low self-control and extrinsic religious orientation.

Whereas the previous two studies consider the link between individual religiosity and sexual misconduct the third study investigates specifically leaders within religious institutions. This study therefore explores in some depth the commonalities of perceptions, attitudes and reactions towards offending held by clergy and lay religious persons who have committed sexual offences. In keeping with the general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) and social control theory (Hirschi, 1969), this third study also examines the part played by self-control, individual religiosity and situational factors in sexual misconduct perpetrated in a religious environment.

The third study contributes new knowledge to the problem of sexual impropriety by clergy and religious representatives and ultimately informs prevention efforts. Clergy sexual abuse of children first came to widespread public attention in 1984, although it was as far back as the early 1970s that the Vatican received warnings about potential trouble with paedophilic priests (Berry, 2000). Cleric sexual misconduct is now considered one of the biggest crises in the history of Catholicism, at least since the Reformation, and it has ultimately resulted in far reaching systemic policy changes within the church (Plante, 2004). There are also major implications for other denominations and faiths and the impact has already impinged on pastoral training and on how denominations conduct their ministry.

METHOD

The thesis as a whole uses a multi-strategy research design. While quantitative methods have generally been accepted as the ideal methodology for positivist scientific research, qualitative research methods have recently gained more attention (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley, 2003). Both qualitative and quantitative designs effectively complement each other in the three Studies reported in this thesis. By combining both methods, specific variables such as self-control, moral beliefs, religious orientation and offence-related factors could be measured objectively, while the perceived meaning and situational context of each offence might be examined using qualitative designs.

Study one and two used a quantitative correlational design. Study one involved analysing archival data from 111 incarcerated sexual offenders while study two examined and extended these findings on 163 non-offending adult male university students. This quantitative methodology is best for samples greater than 100 and allows the results to be generalised to a larger population. This format of combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches is becoming increasingly common (Smith, 2003) and consensus now indicates that both approaches can be combined successfully (Patton, 1990). In particular, while qualitative and quantitative research investigates similar topics, each addresses a different type of research question. When studying sexual crimes, for instance, quantitative studies are suitable to answer questions about frequency, age, number of victims, the place where these crimes occur, and so on; qualitative studies might address questions about the

origin and subjective experience of such crimes. Results of these two studies provided input for the development of the final qualitative study. This third study used a qualitative analysis derived from phenomenological psychology to focus on the experiences, perceptions and meanings that clergy and religious representatives develop.

Phenomenological methods are well suited to studying personal experiences about which little are yet known (Colaizzi, 1978). Through this method, deep and detailed explanation and description of experience can be undertaken while also avoiding any coercion or force of the phenomenon through the data. Rather, phenomenology allows the experience to speak for itself. The rich descriptions enable the researcher to expand the understandings of the experience. These descriptions also allow for some limited generalisation to other participants and settings. The trustworthiness of the study was strengthened by choosing participants who have personally experienced the phenomenon. Dependability was enhanced by the multiple analyses of the data, in bracketing personal bias, and in seeking member checks to verify the study's findings. Credibility was strengthened by use of peer review to ensure objectivity and accuracy of the findings. The method entailed alternative sources of information gathering involving in-depth qualitative interviews with clergy and lay religious leader sexual offenders in an attempt to clarify further the findings of the first two studies, gain insight into this specialized population, and analyse the underlying concepts surrounding such sexual abuse. Generally case study methodology is useful

for studying and exploring, in depth, a phenomenon such as clergy sexual misconduct in order to develop a comprehensive understanding and to identify key processes, concepts, and hypotheses (Giorgi, 1997).

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis as a whole and integrates the three Studies into the research question: to what extent do individual level religiosity and other dispositional factors and situational factors interact in the perpetration of sexual abuse. Chapter two reviews the literature on the aetiology of sexual abuse and examines previous research within a number of significant areas in the realm of religiosity and sexual behaviour. Here a relationship is drawn between the behavioural correlates of religiosity on a number of sexual and non-sexual unlawful behaviours and introduces the control theories of crime as an explanation for offending behaviour. Finally chapter two addresses the more recently identified phenomenon of cleric sexual offending and looks at dispositional and situational ecclesiastical factors.

Chapter three reports the first study carried out on archival data of incarcerated sexual offenders. In analysing this data the association between self-reported religious affiliations and official offence histories became increasingly apparent. Chapter four, the second study, is an investigation of the link between religiosity and sexual misconduct within a non-convicted population.. This study surveyed university students to examine associations between religious orientation, self-control, moral beliefs and self reported

unlawful conduct. The chapter concludes that while intrinsic orientation protects against a number of unlawful behaviours, extrinsic orientation presents as a risk factor in the commission of unlawful sexual offending.

Chapter five, the third study, is a qualitative analysis a sample of religious leaders' attitudes and beliefs. This final study goes on to devise a number of situational and dispositional themes apparent in the perpetration of sexual offences occurring within a church related environment.

Finally outlined in detail in chapter six is a general discussion and conclusion combining the findings and analysis of all three Studies and drawing together the commonalities of religiosity and sexual offending across the spectrum of offenders and non-offenders. This chapter also addresses the limitations of the three studies, design complications, application of the findings as well as suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND RELIGIOSITY

“THE FURTHER THE SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION OF MANKIND ADVANCES, THE MORE CERTAIN IT SEEMS ... THAT THE PATH TO GENUINE RELIGIOSITY DOES NOT LIE THROUGH THE FEAR OF LIFE, AND THE FEAR OF DEATH, AND BLIND FAITH, BUT THROUGH STRIVING AFTER RATIONAL KNOWLEDGE”

Albert Einstein

This chapter reviews literature on the aetiology of sexual misconduct as well as religiosity and its behavioural correlates. It discusses the relationship between sexual and non-sexual misconduct and religious affiliations. To understand this relationship control theories of crime will be applied to the phenomenon of sexual abuse. As well as the general link between religiosity and sexual misconduct this chapter also considers the extent to which individual levels of religiosity and dispositional and situational factors interact in the perpetration of sexual misconduct.

THE AETIOLOGY OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A wide range of research has offered several theories on the characteristics and motivations of those who engage in sexual misconduct (Finkelhor, 1984; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Ward & Marshall, 2004). There are many aetiological theories about such misconduct and, as they are typically very complex and numerous, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to address each of these theories in great detail.

Traditional theories have focused on single factor explanations such as an individual's dispositional factors. Here it has usually been assumed that pathological motivations are internally driven and explain the development of sex offending behaviours (Becker & Murphy, 1998). Some researchers suggest that biological factors, such as high testosterone levels, increased sex drive and aggression contribute to why individuals engage in sexual misconduct. Other biological theories suggest that some individuals are predisposed toward problematic sexual behaviors because of physiologically predetermined sexual appetites and preferences (Marshall & Serran, 2000).

Behaviour theorists claim that an individual's sexual interests become strengthened through certain types of reinforcers. For example when someone masturbates to fantasies that are deviant it strengthens their arousal to those inappropriate fantasies, which may result in sexual misconduct (Laws & Marshall, 2003). Other behavioral theorists suggest conditioning over time can result in the development of sexual offending behaviour. These theorists believe that individuals can learn deviant sexual interests in the same manner as they learn socially acceptable means of sexual behavior. For instance, domestic violence in the home serves as a model for hostile and aggressive behaviors toward women, by youth who witness such abuse and who may learn to behave in similar ways (Laws & Marshall, 1990).

An alternative explanation for sexual misconduct stresses the role of societal structures, norms and messages. These theorists argue that men are socialized to be aggressive and to dominate women and children, which in

turn encourages male violence (Sanday, 1981; Warshaw and Parrot, 1991). Similarly some theorists state desensitizing messages of violence in television or video games may condone violence (Purvis & Ward, 2005). Others argue the sexualised portrayal of women and children in media may contribute to sexual violence (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990).

Another theory of the aetiology of sex offending centers around intimacy and attachment issues (Smallbone & Dadds, 2001). More specifically, it has been suggested that different types of problematic attachments may lead to a variety of problems related to intimacy in adult relationships. Ultimately these intimacy deficits may lead individuals to engage in sexually abusive behaviours (Marshall, 1989). Theorists have suggested that insecurely attached persons may want to be emotionally close to others but avoid it out of fear of being rejected or hurt. In turn, some of these individuals may attempt to establish “romantic” or close relationships with children (with whom they may feel more “safe”). Those with dismissive attachment styles may have no desire whatsoever to become close or intimate with others and may even harbor negative, angry, and hostile feelings toward others and may act out their hostility in sexually aggressive ways (Mulloy & Marshall, 1999).

While many aspects of these single factor theories continue to be influential today, none can fully explain the variation in individuals who engage in sexual misconduct. More contemporary theories take into account the interaction of multiple factors in the perpetration of sexually abusive behavior. The integration theory views sexual misconduct as the result of a

combination of biological, developmental, environmental and cultural influences, individual vulnerabilities and situational factors (Marshall & Barbarbee, 1990). It suggests that negative developmental influences that occur early in life, such as exposure to violence, has a significant impact on a number of areas resulting in the inability to form meaningful relationships, to problem solve, and to manage emotions. It also affects self-esteem and self-control levels (Levin & Stava, 1987; Kalichman, 1991). Because of these vulnerabilities, further adjustment difficulties become complicated and lead to peer rejection, social isolation and increasing difficulty dealing with hormonal changes and emerging sexual feelings. Inappropriate deviant fantasies may then be reinforced.

The relapse prevention model is one of the most common multifactor theories (Hudson & Ward, 2000). The model shows how sex offending is the end result of a chain of events. It begins with the person experiencing some type of negative emotional state; this is followed by deviant fantasies and the use of cognitive distortions to justify these fantasies (Ward, Hudson, Johnston & Marshall, 1997). In turn, the fantasies lead to covert planning about an offense. And finally, after disinhibiting himself in some way, the individual commits a sex offense. (Pithers, Marques, Gibat, & Marlatt, 1983).

The model suggests that a number of precursors are commonly associated with offending behaviors for most individuals. Included among these precursors are family dysfunction, childhood maltreatment, sexual anxiety, and marital conflict. Anger problems, assertiveness and social skills

deficits, impaired empathy, emotional management difficulties, personality disorders and substance abuse are among the more immediate factors preceding an offense (Geer, Estupinan & Manguno-Mire, 2000). The relapse prevention model has been challenged in recent years, because it assumes that the sequence of emotions, fantasies, thoughts, and behaviors is applicable to all individuals (Ward, Polaschek, & Beech, 2006).

It is important to understand the circumstances under which an offence takes place and also how the offender creates and perceives these circumstances (Marshall, Serran, & Marshall, 2006). There is no single pathway that explains sexual misconduct for all offenders. Instead any explanatory model of sexual misconduct must take into account individual variability as well as situational pathways. The situational approach to understanding crime has recently been applied to the perpetration of child sexual abuse and empirical evidence indicates that opportunity and other environmental aspects mediate the likelihood of sexual abuse against children (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). Considering this, one of the most current theories, recognizes that not all individuals follow the same “path” to offending. These multiple pathways are influenced by the complex interaction of interpersonal emotional, biological, physiological, cultural, and environmental variables (Ward & Siegert, 2002; Ward et al., 2006). The Pathways Model suggests that the extent to which persons experience difficulties in four clusters of psychological problems—cognitive distortions, emotional management difficulties, intimacy and social skills deficits, and

deviant or unhealthy sexual scripts—largely explains the primary reasons that they engage in sex offending behavior. Therefore depending upon what their main deficits are, these individuals fall into one of five pathways: multiple dysfunctional mechanisms pathway, deviant sexual scripts pathway, intimacy deficits pathway, emotional dysregulation pathway and antisocial cognitions pathway. The Pathway theory differs from some of the other aetiological theories in that it does not assume homogeneity of offenders.

The third study uses qualitative methodology to investigate the various pathways clergy and lay religious members may have taken to ultimately sexually offend and specifically to see what effect their religious orientation had on their offending behaviours

CONCEPTUALISING RELIGIOSITY

Religiosity is expressed in many different ways and defining it as a construct remains complex. Indeed, many researchers refrain from giving any formal definition to the term religion (Hood, et al., 1996). The word “religiosity” has meaning on many levels. Religiosity is often seen as tradition, institutionalisation, hierarchy, and ritual expression of one’s spirituality. On the other hand, spirituality is viewed as a more immediate, personal relationship with God (or higher power), sometimes encountered through meaningful ritual but not requiring the actual practice of or participation in religious activities (Kelly, 1995). In the broadest sense religiosity can be found both within the individual and the social sphere (Spilka, Hood, & Gorsuch, 2003).

A major part of the thesis concentrates on the internalisation of religion as represented by religious beliefs, behaviour, attitudes and experiences that characteristically describe inner religious faith. One way to operationalise the construct of religiosity is to measure arguably superficial but tangible religious indicators such as church attendance or stated beliefs. These basic indicators may be quantifiable aspects of individual piety, although the religious perspective adopted by an individual has more subtle distinctions. Some individuals reject church rituals but still ascribe to religious values and beliefs. Others routinely attend church and church activities but otherwise have little involvement in religious or spiritual values.

In recent years the media attention given to sexual misconduct with the church has resulted in many Australians reassessing their connection with religious institutions. The church's management of sexual misconduct within their boundaries has seen the attention centre on the manner in which the church used its power and influence at these times with parishioners questioning the accountability of their church (Dowling, 2002). However, despite persistent media reports of declining religious identification among Australians, recent data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) indicate that approximately 69% of Australians identify with some form of Christian denomination, while another 15% associate with other religions. The Australian Community Survey, carried out on 8500 Australians, discovered that two-thirds claim a spiritual life is important to them with 33% praying or meditating at least once a week (Kaldor et al., 1999).

Seventy-four percent of Australians still report that they believe in God and describe themselves as religious. This rate of religious affiliation has remained stable over the past several years, despite church participation dropping 5% during the past 20 years.

While church attendance in mainstream Christian denominations has declined in Australia, a converse trend has seen church attendance at fundamental and charismatic based religions increase by similar rates. Speculation suggests that dissatisfied mainstream parishioners may be exiting their conventional faith and moving across to alternative, charismatic religions. This ambiguity in displays of religiosity is evident in the latest National Church Life Survey (NCLS) (2001), which surveyed 435 000 Australians from 19 denominations. Of these churchgoers, only 8.8% reported participating in weekly church attendance.

Nonetheless, quantifying religious behaviours and experiences has proved difficult. Researchers have often found it necessary to steer away from long and complex questionnaires that are difficult to quantify and have measured religious commitment as a singular, rather than as a multidimensional, construct (Wulff, 1997). Such practices may have resulted in misrepresentation and erroneous findings. Merely counting church attendance, for example, may measure a valid facet of religious behaviour but does not adequately quantify religious experience or commitment (Benda, 2002; Fulton, 1997). Instead there appear to be important individual differences in how some people live their religious beliefs. It is evident that

many deeply religious people are extremely charitable. However, despite teachings that encourage altruism in many religions, research consistently indicates that some who consider themselves very religious display intolerance and unconcern for others (Ryckman, Thornton, Van Den Borne & Gold, 2004; Fisher, Derison, Polley, Cadman & Johnston, 1994).

BEHAVIOURAL CORRELATES OF RELIGIOSITY

Religiosity as a protective factor

Notwithstanding the conceptual and measurement problems outlined above, a substantial number of studies have found religious involvement to be an important protective buffer from adverse experiences. In a review of 669 studies, Johnson, De Li, Larson, & McCullough, (2002) found that higher levels of religious involvement were associated with reduced hypertension, fewer reported incidents of depression, reduced alcohol and drug use, and a reduced likelihood of suicide. Likewise those who have greater religious commitment also report lower rates of anxiety (Baker & Gorsuch, 1982; Bergin, et al., 1987), greater self-esteem and better psychological functioning (Ball, Armistead & Austin, 2003).

Religious affiliation also appears to be a protective buffer against harmful mental and physical health deterioration (Plante, Yancey, Sherman & Gueitin, 2000). Westgate (1996) explored the relationship between depression and spiritual wellness in a number of studies. Four components of spiritual wellness were identified: meaning in life, intrinsic values, transcendence, and

spiritual community. Westgate found a negative correlation between depression and at least one of these four aspects of spiritual wellness in nine out of the 16 studies reviewed.

Religiosity has also consistently been negatively related to the use of illicit drugs (Gorsuch, 1995) and sexual promiscuity. For instance, conservative religious unmarried university students have been found to be less permissive regarding premarital sex (Clayton, 1972; Woodroof, 1985). Likewise married religious respondents were more likely to avoid extramarital sex (Bell, 1974).

Similarly, religion and spirituality have been used to predict mortality. A meta-analysis of the relationship between religious involvement and mortality, comprising nearly 126,000 participants, indicated that people who scored higher on religious measures had 29% higher odds of survival at follow-up than those lower in religious involvement (McCullough, Hoyt, Larson, Koenig, & Thoresen, 2000).

In addition to these protective health factors, evidence suggests that an individual's social bonds, such as involvement in religious conventions or attachment to family and friends, act as an agent of social control, promoting conformity and inhibiting deviance whilst protecting youth from delinquent behaviour (Cochran, Wood & Arneklev, 1994; Durkheim 1951; Johnson, 2002; Johnson, Sung Joon, Larson & Spencer, 2001; Longshore, et al., 2004). A number of empirical findings show an inverse relationship between religion

as a social bond and delinquent or deviant behaviours such as substance abuse (Burkett & Ward, 1993; Strawser, Storch, Geffken et al., 2004), alcohol use (Wills, Yaeger & Sandy, 2003) and petty larceny (Agnew, 1991, Regnerus, 2003). In their review of 40 studies conducted between 1985 and 1997, Johnson, De Li, Larson and McCullough (2000) found religiosity to be linked with lower levels of delinquent behaviour in 80% of the studies. However, these findings have been contested, with a number of studies showing no, or even a positive, relationship between religiosity and criminality (Evans, Cullen, Burton, Dunway, Payne, & Kethineni, 1996; Benda & Corwyn, 1997).

Religiosity and crime

To understand the link between religiosity and sexual misconduct it is first necessary to consider the effect of religiosity on criminal behaviour in general. Religiosity has been of concerted interest for delinquency and crime researchers, at least since Hirschi and Stark (1969) published their seminal “hellfire and delinquency” paper. However, the direction and magnitude of the effects of religiosity on crime continue to be contested. Hirschi and Stark’s findings that church attendance and beliefs in supernatural sanctions were unrelated to delinquency were followed by a number of investigations that, by contrast, reported significant negative associations between religiosity and crime (Albrecht, Chadwick, & Alcorn, 1977; Baier & Wright, 2001; Cochran & Akers, 1989). Other researchers have concluded that, consistent with Hirschi and Stark’s findings, religious affiliation does not have a

significant deterrent effect on unlawful behaviour (Evans, et al., 1996; Benda & Corwyn, 1997). Once again, Johnson, Sung Joon, Larson, and De Li (2001) suggest that this disagreement about the religiosity-criminality relationship is due largely to the conceptual and methodological problems with the construct of religiosity. Many of the studies have not used religiosity measurement scales, but instead have relied merely on one or two questions about church attendance or belief in God.

The relationship between religiosity and crime may be mediated by offence-type and gender. In a meta-analysis of 60 studies, Baier and Wright (2001) found support for the deterrent effects of religiosity on ascetic behaviours (socially undesirable behaviours which violate church law) such as gambling, premarital sexual intercourse, and illicit drug use. However, religiosity appeared to serve as a weaker deterrent on serious personal or property crimes such as murder and theft. Similarly, religious teachings appear to impact on an individual's attitude to crime. Conservative Protestants, for example, possess higher levels of perceived wrongfulness of crimes, and place less distinction on the differences between crimes. Cheating on taxes may thus be considered as morally wrong as violent crimes (Curry, 1996).

Moving beyond the individual level religiosity-criminality relationship, Ellis and Peterson (1996) compared the crime rates of 13 countries. Their findings suggest that more religious societies, measured by church membership and attendance, tend to have lower rates of crime than do less religious societies with this negative relationship most evident for property

crime. Therefore it can be concluded that religiosity may serve as a protective factor against the perpetration of non-sexual crime. However this does not appear to be the case for sexual misconduct.

Religiosity and sexual behaviour

Thornton and Camburn (1989) argued that because most religions disapprove of premarital sex, religious behaviours may be a better predictor of sexual behaviours and attitudes than religious group membership. Students with higher levels of religiosity have been found less likely to be sexually active (Zaleski & Schianffino, 2000), to display more conservative attitudes and behaviours towards sex (Thornton & Camburn, 1989) and to feel premarital sex or abortion is unacceptable (Sheeran, Abrams, Abraham & Spears, 1993; Stevens, Caron, & Pratt, 2003). Likewise, groups such as Catholics and conservative or fundamentalist Protestants are less likely to be sexually active (Beck, Cole, & Hammond, 1991; Brewster, Cooksey, Guilkey, & Rindfuss, 1998). Conversely, youth who never attend religious services report having more than three times as many sexual partners as do regular attendees.

Nicholas (2004) found in a study of 1292 university students that those who reported greater involvement in religious activities were less likely to have been exposed to almost all types of material involving sexual acts such as stories, films and photographs, and were more likely to disapprove of almost all types of this sexual material. Hardy and Raffaelli (2003) claimed that

teenagers who display higher levels of religiosity also tend to delay sexual involvement compared to those with lower levels of religiosity. However, perhaps as a consequence of methodological limitations, such as religiosity measurement variations, the literature on this construct has not been consistent. While most studies have found that religiosity is negatively associated with age at first intercourse, some studies have found either no relationship, or a relationship based on the condition that the individual's peers attend the same church (Holder et al., 2000; Mott et al., 1996). In general however, most research indicates that there is a direct correlation between religiosity and sexual behaviour.

Religiosity and sexual misconduct

Much of the available research into the relationship between religiosity and unlawful conduct has focused on delinquent behaviour. Very little attention has been given specifically to unlawful sexual behaviour. Research into the relationship between religiosity and sexual offending has a much shorter history, and seems to have emerged largely as a response to a heightened social awareness of sexual offences committed by active and sometimes prominent members of religious institutions. Recent attention on ecclesiastical sexual misconduct has focussed on perpetrators of abuse in all denominations: Anglican (Blair, 1999; Gearing & Griffith, 2003), Catholic (Plante, 1999), Lutheran (Sevig, 2002), Hindu (Rodarmor, 1983), Buddhist (Adam, 1998), and Rabbinic (Gross-Schaefer, 1999; Eden, 2002). Some of this

research suggests that sexual abuse by priests and male members of religious orders follows a different pattern to that of other offenders.

Although in the last five years there has been a substantial increase in research into the causes and implications of sexual misconduct by clergy (Plante & Daniels, 2004), relatively little is yet known about the impact of religious experiences and activities on sexual offending. As noted above, religious involvement is thought to foster strong social networks that constrain at least some criminal behaviours. Religious individuals tend to be bonded to religious institutions that provide a form of informal social control over their behaviours and are guided by sanctions derived from their religion. To understand the influence religious attitudes have in the perpetration of unlawful behaviour it is worthwhile considering the control theories of crime.

CONTROL THEORIES OF CRIME

Control theories of crime attempt to explain which factors influence antisocial or conforming behaviours. The underlying assumption of control theory is that every person has the inherent motive to deviate from societal rules. As explained by Hirshi (1960:31), “we are all animals and thus naturally capable of committing criminal acts”. The question then, according to control theorists, is not why people commit crimes but rather why *not*? Two central perspectives have been the social bonding theory (Hirschi, 1969) and the general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Social Control Theory

At the time that Hirschi was developing his social control theory in the 1960s, support for social institutions, such as religion, the family, and educational institutions, was declining. The advent of rock and roll, drugs, the counter culture and the civil rights movements had encouraged people to break from conventional social norms (Lilly, Cullen & Ball, 1995). From Hirschi's point of view, the most noticeable feature of the 1960s was the collapse of the conventional family. His theory attributed society's rising problems to family breakdown and he focused on the role played by social relationships, which he termed social bonds (Hirschi, 1969). Rather than focusing on an individual's personality as a source of criminality, Hirschi's focus was predominantly on the role of social bonds and institutions.

An individual's social bonds, such as involvement in religious conventions or attachment to family and friends, have long been considered to promote conformity and inhibit deviance (Johnson, Sung Joon, Larson & Spencer, 2001; Longshore, et al., 2004). Hirschi's early social control theory posited that offending and other deviant behaviour is a result of weakened social bonds. These social controls, found in family, school, work, peers and societal groups, act as informal agents that restrain people from committing crimes. Individuals lacking social ties are considered not bonded and to have less to lose and therefore little to deter them from criminal activities. Hirschi (1969) considered social bonding a complex concept comprising four main elements: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. The stronger

each element of the social bond the less likelihood of deviation from the norms and rules of society.

Attachment refers to the extent to which a person is connected to others. Hirschi believed as the individual increases attachment to others, the likelihood of becoming involved in delinquent acts decreased. An individual's principal attachments are with the parents, followed closely by attachments to peers, teachers, religious leaders, and other members of a community. As one of the most prominent social institutions, the Church has long been considered a key agent of social control. Empirically, participation in religious activities have been found to be a persistent inhibitor of adult crime (Evans et al., 1996) and positively associated with pro-social values (Donahue & Benson, 1995). However, in their meta analytic review, Baier and Wright (2001) found that the protective effects of participation in religious activities are most evident for ascetic behaviours (socially undesirable behaviours which violate church law) such as gambling, premarital sex, and substance use. On the other hand religious participation was found to be a weaker deterrent for more serious personal crimes.

By commitment Hirschi referred to the rational component in conformity; the fear of law-breaking behaviour. When an individual considers committing deviant or criminal behaviour, they also must consider the risks of losing prior investment in conventional behaviour. Therefore, if an individual develops a positive reputation, earns an education, or raises a supportive family, he/she is likely to suffer considerable loss in violating societal laws

(Hirschi, 1969). These commitments throughout a lifetime all ensure that this person is committed to conventional values and has much to lose by violating laws.

Hirschi believed that those involved in conventional activities have diminished opportunity for deviant acts. A child "swimming in the community pool, or doing his homework is not committing delinquent acts" (1969:187). This concept of involvement has led to the creation of many programs that focus on positive recreational activities to occupy the leisure time of adolescents.

Finally, Hirschi viewed the element of belief as one of a common value-system within the society whose norms are being violated. A person is more likely to conform to social norms if that individual believes in them. Hirschi predicted that individuals would vary in the depth and degree of their belief, depending on the level of attachment to systems representing the beliefs in question (Lilly et al, 1995).

Though Hirschi's (1969) version of control theory remains prominent, there have been many criticisms some of which have been voiced by Hirschi himself. His support of this theory has diminished over time, and eventually led to his and Gottfredson's (1990) development of the general theory of crime, arguably one of the most influential theories of crime in the last two decades.

The General Theory of Crime

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) sought to provide a general theory that would explain the aetiology of the full range of criminal and delinquent acts. Their general theory of crime presents an aspect of control theory that recognizes individual self-control, rather than societal control, as the key mechanism of behaviour restraint. This theory proposes that low self-control, established early in childhood by lack of discipline and parental supervision, results in weak inhibitions when individuals encounter tempting criminal opportunities. A growing body of empirical evidence has demonstrated considerable support for the general theory of crime (Brownfield & Sorenson, 1993; Grasmick et al., 1993; Forde & Kennedy, 1997; LaGrange & Silverman, 1999; Pratt & Cullen, 2000).

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that a lack of self-control alone is neither sufficient nor necessary for crime to occur. Rather, likelihood of criminal behaviour is mediated at an individual level by the presence of criminal opportunity. They state that the perspective is not meant to predict any single type of activity, since most deviant behaviour, by its very nature, is impulsive and opportunistic. According to the theory, individuals' opportunities for crime change depending on time and context, but their predisposition towards such behaviour remains persistently stable over the life course (Arneklev, Grasmick & Bursik, 1999). Therefore, all else being equal, low self-control and a poor bond to society should predict a variety of deviant and criminal conduct (Polakowski, 1994). Nevertheless lack of self-

control does not mean that one is destined to become deviant. Such circumstances will however, produce conditions that are favourable for delinquency.

The core argument of the theory is that when there is opportunity to commit crime those who have lower self control are more likely to be involved in criminal acts. Despite this link between opportunity and low self control, many empirical tests of self-control have not included formal tests of opportunity (Pratt & Cullen, 2000). Self control and opportunity are often linked to criminal behaviour. As noted by Piquero and Benson (2004), opportunity to offend is not constant across the board for all offenders. Some professions or organisations contain more opportunities than others and individuals within these groups are exposed to unique opportunities whilst holding positions of trust. For example, white collar crime requires a job whilst child sexual abuse requires an available child. Therefore, low self-control without opportunity would almost certainly result in a lack of a crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Self-control

The primary emphasis of the general theory of crime is on the internal trait of self-control. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) describe self control as a unitary construct that has multidimensional manifestations of observable characteristics. They define self-control as the differential tendency of people to avoid criminal acts whatever the circumstances in which they find

themselves. They argue that low self-control involves six trait-like characteristics that, once established, tend to remain stable across the life course. Those with low self-control are viewed as impulsive, tending to seek immediate gratification. They usually lack tenacity and persistence, instead preferring simple tasks. Often they are risk takers, being drawn toward activities that are adventurous and exciting. Individuals with low self-control will prefer physical activity to contemplation and will usually be insensitive to the needs of others. A final defining feature of low self-control is low tolerance for frustrations, with conflict usually handled through confrontation (see Pratt & Cullen, 2000, for a meta-analysis of research on self-control). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) take this concept a step further claiming that human nature is basically hedonistic and individuals are inherently self-serving, pursuing their own interests unless socialized not to.

Substantial research on the measurement of self-control has supported the unidimensionality of the trait (Piquero & Rosay, 1998) with many of these studies using a unidimensional scale developed by Grasmick and Tittle (1993) (see Longshore, Turner & Stein, 1996 for exceptions). Grasmick and Tittle (1993) contend that low self-control can be determined by an individual's self-reporting of his/her tendency to be impulsive, to prefer simple to complex tasks, to prefer risk taking and physical over mental pursuits, to be self-centred and to be unable to control their temper. A growing body of research has shown the self control scale to have good

validity and reliability across gender groups (Piquero & Rosay, 1998), age groups (Burton, et.al., 1999) and offence type (Longshore, et.al., 1996).

Empirical support for the general theory of crime is mixed, but self-control does appear to be a valid predictor of future criminal behaviour, although it only accounts for a small percentage of the total variance. Longshore's (1998) test of self-control and criminal opportunity found that self-control predicted only three to eleven percent of the variance in property and personal crimes. Despite relatively small proportion of variance, the general theory of crime is considered sound.

Criticisms of the General Theory of Crime

There are two main criticisms of the general theory of crime: first, that the theory is tautological and second, that it does not adequately explain propensity for white collar crime.

One of the most prominent criticisms of the theory followed Gottredson and Hirschi's assertion that low self-control traits are similar to criminal behaviour. Self-control is not defined separately from the propensity to commit crimes and analogous behaviour. Akers (1991) argued that this lack of separation of self-control and criminal behaviour was a major weakness, leading the theory to be tautological. For instance, the terms criminality and low self-control are used synonymously, which is similar to saying low self-control causes low self-control, or criminality causes criminality. Therefore, if the most valid measure of self control or

criminality is the sum of crime or equivalent events observed for an individual, the result is empirically tautological because the independent and the dependent variables are measured by the same events. To avoid this tautology, Gottfredson and Hirschi suggest a measure should be used that taps into an individual's self-control traits without including criminal behaviour in the measurement.

Another criticism is that white-collar crime is not adequately explained by the theory, because one of the major characteristics of low self-control is the need for immediate gratification and white-collar individuals have already proven that they can endure delayed gratification in the time it took to achieve an advanced education (Benson and Moore, 1992:270). Regardless of some of the criticism, most studies generally support the theory's foremost conclusion that low self-control is related to criminal conduct (Lilly et al., 1995).

Longshore, et al. (2004) argued that both Hirschi's (1969) and Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) theories can be combined into a model in which social bonds mediate the relationship between self-control and social deviance. In their study, involving 1038 adult male offenders, bonding measures were found to explain only a moderate proportion of the variance in deviant outcomes, and internal constraints (e.g. moral beliefs) mediated the relationship between low self-control and deviant behaviour. A number of studies have also found that moral beliefs inhibit delinquent and criminal behaviour (Bachman, Paternoster & Ward, 1992; Elliott and Menard, 1996;

Evans, et al., 1997; Piquero & Tibbets, 1996). Morality therefore has become a major factor in determining the relationship between self control and deviant behaviours (Longshore et al. 2004)

MORALITY

Researchers have debated the concept of morality for many years and have determined that there is more to morality than merely acceptable standards of behaviour. To be moral is not a private act but rather, according to the moral philosopher Kurt Baier (1995), can be characterized as representing the good of all people alike. Thus when individuals reason, they take into account what is the best thing to do. They act morally because it is rational to do so even when one's personal interests are outweighed by the welfare of others. As an extension of morals, acting in an ethical manner requires a consistency between an individual's moral standards, actions, and values. Moral development involves examining for any inconsistencies and then modifying moral standards and behaviours so that they remain consistent. Moral standards become inconsistent with each other when we apply them differently in diverse situations.

Guidano (1987:175) suggested that personal morality involves a "sense of responsibility and the need to sacrifice in order to face responsibility." This sense of responsibility is expressed by seeking justice, equity and truth. Individuals often feel compelled to live up to their internal standards of right and wrong despite the presence of external sanctioning

agents (Bersoff, 1999). In broad terms, morality can be defined as a commitment to promote or protect the welfare of others; being able to self-sacrifice in the service of human welfare. (Hart, Akins & Ford, 1998).

Kohlberg (1981) developed a theory of moral development which delineated between moral judgement and moral reasoning. His theory suggested that moral judgement occurred when making concrete moral decisions (i.e. moral beliefs) while moral reasoning concerned the structure underlying these decisions. The theory suggests that during adolescence this structure develops from a somewhat simplistic egotistic method to a more complex social orientation. Once in adulthood, this social orientation can develop into a more moral orientation which is structured by moral principles. However, Kohlberg thought such principled moral orientation is only reached by a small percentage of people.

Moral principles do not always motivate moral action, and those who value moral responsibility do not necessarily act in a responsible manner (Batson, et al., 1997). Despite holding certain moral standards, people can adopt an unethical course of action and compromise their own image of themselves. At times such as this, a person may overlook moral dictates, instead being overpowered by other motivators. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli., (1996) found that males rather than females were more likely to use disengagement strategies in efforts to protect themselves from self-censure and to justify to themselves the rightness of aberrant behaviour. They had greater readiness than females to provide moral

justifications for detrimental conduct, to mask such conduct in euphemistic language, to minimize its injurious effects, and would be more likely to blame or dehumanise victims.

IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Aside from morality, one of the main tenets of control theories is that being a member of a religious or other such social institutions promotes conformity and inhibits deviance. However, paradoxically members belonging to institutions remain vulnerable to being victims of abuse, particularly sexual abuse. Although child sexual abuse was initially considered a problem confined to the family, it is now known to occur within the broader society and its institutions (Wolfe et al, 2002). The perpetrators of this abuse manage to enact the abuse even in the confines of the protective settings offered by such institutions. Institutional exploitation occurs not only in residential and foster homes and group or personal care homes, but also within the broader areas of day schools, churches, and various recreational and club environments (Green, 2001). It has been estimated that up to 9% of all child sexual abuse allegations occur to children being cared for by some form of institution (Gallagher, 2000). However, Gallagher cautioned that these figures were likely to be an under-representation of the true extent of the problem. There is now greater awareness of such abuse and many institutions have devised systems for reporting and investigating claims as well as screening applicants who work in these environments.

Much emphasis has been given by the media to sexual abuse cases in institutional settings (Gallagher, 2000). It appears difficult for people to believe the trust that is often placed in respected public institutions can be violated. However it is evident that this trust has been misplaced because sexual abuse has been perpetrated by respected people such as priests, teachers, community leaders and caretakers. There is growing literature specifically addressing abuse by members of institutions and whether their abuse has commonalities with abuse perpetrated within the family context (Groze, 1990; Powers, Mooney & Nunno, 1990).

As this thesis addresses the association between religiosity and sexual offending it is fundamental to investigate the dynamics of individual abusers within religious institutions. Religious organisations are powerful institutions based on complex belief systems. They provide moral, ethical and spiritual guidance for individuals. Religious leaders wield a great deal of power and are considered trustworthy by virtue of their affiliation with their institution.

THE CLERGY AS PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

In recent years, the problem of sexual abuse by clergy and other religious leaders has surfaced in the media and the courts. The sexual abuse by clerics has served as a catalyst for intensive inquiry into clergy as perpetrators and into the response by the authority structure of the Church.

In his study involving eight clergy who had engaged in sexual behaviours with adult female counselees, Benson (1992) found a number of

factors impacted on the likelihood of misconduct. All participants revealed a chronic and pervasive lack of emotionally intimate personal relationships and had themselves been emotionally abandoned by their caregiver in childhood. In addition these clerics held a number of dispositional characteristics which revealed a limited ability to control their sexual impulses and were more likely to display a narcissistic personality.

Empirical investigations of perpetrators of sexual abuse against children in all major denominations suggest that sexual abuse by priests and other male members of religious institutions may follow a different pattern to that of other sexual offenders. Whereas over 60% of all victims of non-cleric sexual abuse are girls, in the case of cleric sexual abuse only 10% are likely to be female. Instead the clerics are more likely to offend against adolescent males over the age of 13 years (Plante, 1999; Warberg, Abel & Osborn, 1996). Sexual offending against this age group of pubescent or post-pubescent minors is termed *ehebophilia* and is dissimilar to *pedophilia* in that *pedophilia* manifests as sexual arousal to prepubescent children. Indeed, a discussion paper on sexual abuse by priests commissioned by leaders of the Catholic Church in Australia concluded that most clergy offending can be described as homosexual *ehebophilia* (Towards Understanding, 1999). This is an important distinction and categorising such sexual behaviour is an essential step in understanding the aetiology and targeting the assignment of preventative resources. For instance the number of true clergy *pedophiles* within the Catholic Church is

estimated at 0.2% to 1.7% compared to those clergy who are inappropriately sexually attracted to adolescents (4-8%) (McGlone, 2004).

Generally, ephhebophilic offences are deemed to have differing motivations and modus operandi than those carried out by pedophiles. In a study of 168 convicted sex offenders, Danni and Hampe (2000) were able to differentiate and classify the perpetrators based on characteristics of the offence. Pedophiles were found to prefer victims who were pre-pubertal, were more likely themselves to have been abused before the age of 14 and were motivated to seduce the child. Conversely, those in the ephhebophile category preferred their victims to be post-pubertal and at an age similar to the age when the offender himself was happiest sexually. Unlike a pedophile's modus operandi of seduction, the ephhebophile was found to seek a reciprocal relationship with their victims. In addition, Danni and Hampe (2000) found the ephhebophile's behaviour was most likely to manifest when the offender was unable to cope with external stressors and so offending was often precipitated by factors such as stress at work, financial problems, unemployment and so on.

Homosexual ephhebophiles in the general population appear to differ from cleric homosexual ephhebophiles. For instance, the non-cleric offenders are more likely than heterosexual ephhebophiles to engage in frequent paraphilic acts, have more victims and more frequently recidivate (Haywood & Green, 2000). This has not been found to be so with cleric homosexual offenders; although such findings should be interpreted with

caution as clerics have also demonstrated more frequent and pervasive denial.

Wasyliw et al, (1998) found unique patterns of denial, minimisation and cognitive distortions among cleric offenders. This group is more likely to display extreme minimisation of and lack insight into personal problems. Unlike non-clergy, clergy are less likely to be sociopathic or to display psychopathologies, although they are more likely to indicate increased sexual conflictedness on the MMPI (Bryant, 1999). McGlone (2001) found in his study of 158 offending clergy (composed of pedophiles and ephebophiles) and 80 non-offending clergy that a greater proportion of pedophiles had dependent and schizoid features than did the ephebophiles. Such differences between clerics and non-clerics may indicate a different aetiology of offending.

Cowan (2002) found a common theme of maternal/paternal abandonment, lack of childhood play, deep loneliness, and fear of women within the psychosexual history of the cleric offender. In addition, Rossetti (1996) reported five other psychological risk indicators in clerics who display a propensity towards sexual misconduct: confusion about sexual orientation, childish interests/behaviours, paucity of peer relationships, extremes in developmental sexual experiences, and lastly, an excessively passive, dependent, or conforming personality. As with child sexual abusers in general, alcohol plays a significant part in cleric offending. Loftus and Camargo (1993) reviewed 111 Roman Catholic clerics who had sexually

abused children and found that 32.4% were diagnosed with alcoholism. Similar to the general population of sexual offenders there is, for clergy, a significant association between abuse in childhood and becoming a child sexual abuser. Haywood et al. (1996) examined 157 cleric and non-cleric child sexual abusers and concluded that suffering sexual abuse as a child was a predictor for both groups in contributing to child sexual offending. Perhaps not surprisingly, Bryant (1999) found that approximately 50% of sexually offending priests had also been abused as children.

While dispositional features do explain individual variations in sexual offending they do not account for the situational demands or opportunities present in all incidents of misconduct (Marshall, Serran, & Marshall, 2006). Opportunities and environmental conditions have been shown to impact on decision to perpetrate sexual misconduct (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006). The Church and other religious settings provide unique situational influences associated with sexual offences. Wortely and Smallbone's (2006) model of situational prevention of child sexual abuse suggests that environments such as the Church evoke offence related motivations and presents opportunities to those who have a propensity to abuse children. Indeed while the vast majority of priests apparently never abuse children, the small minority who do have had easy access to children.

Blair (1999) describes a fourfold category of clerics who are vulnerable to committing professional sexual misconduct: The first are clerics under

stress and lacking skills to identify dynamics in relationships. This parallels with non-cleric sex offenders who have been found to use sex as a coping strategy when under stress (Marshall, Marshall, Sachdev & Kruger, 2003). The second are those who are predators and immune to the feelings of those they have exploited. The third are those who are naïve, misunderstanding the boundaries and lack awareness of concepts of power and transference. Finally, the fourth group are those clerics who offend because they are depressed. This depression may have been present sub-clinically for years as a result of longstanding self esteem impairment or may set in after initial denial system is disturbed and shame and guilt set in.

In the course of cognitive behaviour treatment of clergy, Green (1999) found that seminary training had failed to address the most basic scenarios and possibilities of what could go wrong during human interaction. Likewise, Noyes (1997) revealed a deficit in formal or familial training and education of the cleric regarding sexuality. If sexuality was covered it was addressed from a moral viewpoint and customarily did not focus on relationships or intimacy.

CONCLUSION

This chapter identified the protective factors offered by religious affiliations in a number of emotional, mental and social arenas. The literature indicates the vulnerabilities and risk surrounding some sexual behaviour, including unlawful sexual conduct. This susceptibility by a

specific group of religious individuals is particularly noticeable within the environment of religious institutions. It became evident that although religiosity afforded some form of protective factor against a number of behavioural acts, this protection did not extend to sexual behaviour, especially not sexual misconduct

In reviewing the literature it is evident that a link exists between religiosity and unlawful sexual behaviour. However, the literature also indicates the need for uniform measures of operationalising religiosity in order to draw valid generalisable conclusions from the data. The chapter identified a dearth of research in relation to religiosity in the context of sexual offending.

The three studies comprising this thesis aim to address the above areas of concern and accordingly the research problem has been identified as: to what extent does individual level religiosity and other dispositional and situational factors interact in the perpetration of sexual misconduct. The first study explores the extent that life-course religious affiliation impacts on perpetration of sexual misconduct.

Chapter 3

STUDY ONE - Religious Affiliations among Non-cleric Sexual Offenders

“GIVE ME A CHILD UNTIL HE IS SEVEN AND I WILL
GIVE YOU THE MAN”

Jesuit motto

This chapter details the first of three studies conducted sequentially over the span of the thesis. Study one aims to provide a foundation on which further information about religiosity and sexual offending can subsequently be built. The focus here is directed by the question: to what extent does life-course religious commitment impact on sexual offending behaviour? The chapter outlines the method, and reports quantitative analyses of archival data obtained. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the key themes that emerged from the findings.

Little is known about the relationship between religiosity and sexual offending. Given the focus in the last decade on sexual misconduct within the Church, the bulk of research has focused on characteristics of clergy who sexually offend (Birchard, 2000; Gross-Schaefer, 1999; Haywood et al., 1996; Saradjian & Nobus, 2003). No study to date has investigated the religiosity-sexual offending relationship in the general offender population.

This study examines associations between religiosity and offending behaviour in a general (i.e., non-cleric) sample of sexual offenders, none of whom had offended in a church or other institutional religious setting. It was hypothesized that, since the weight of evidence suggests that religiosity may exert a deterrent effect on general criminal behaviour, there would be an inverse relationship between religious affiliation and offending behaviour. Specifically, it was expected that offenders who reported continuity of religious affiliation from childhood to adulthood would have fewer sexual and nonsexual offence convictions, and fewer sexual offence victims, than those who reported no religious affiliation. Additionally it was expected that 'converts' might have fewer new sexual and nonsexual offence convictions compared to those with no religious affiliation. Given that previous research (Silverman & Oglesby, 1983) has found many sexual offenders undergo religious conversions after being convicted of their sexual offences. It was reasoned that this type of religious conversion may be partly a result of offenders trying to come to terms with behaviour that they themselves may see as 'out of character'. Finally, although there were no specific expectations about the relationship between religiosity and the age of sexual offence victims, Bolkas' (2000) study suggested sexual offenders with child victims admit to being drawn to religious organisations to gain access to victims. Therefore the relationship between religiosity and victim age was examined.

METHOD

Participants

The sample consisted of 111 adult males serving prison sentences for sexual offences and who had been accepted into a specialized treatment program for sexual offenders. Participants' ethnicity, education level and marital and employment status are summarized in Table 4.1. The mean age of participants at the time of their current sentence was 38.5 years ($SD = 14.2$), and at the time of their most recent sexual offence 32.7 years ($SD = 11.3$). Of the 111 participants, 71 (64%) had a previous official history of non-sexual offences, and 43 (38.7%) had a previous official history of sexual offences.

Most offenders reported some current identification with a Christian denomination: 27% Anglican, 28% Catholic, 10% Uniting Church, 3% evangelist, and 3% other denominations. Almost one quarter (24%) did not identify with any religious grouping. In general these offenders had tenuous ties to conventional society; the majority were single or separated (69%), did not complete high school (68%) and lacked skilled employment or were unemployed at the time of incarceration (59%).

Table 3.1
Sample characteristics of non-cleric sexual offenders (n = 111)

	n	%
Ethnicity		
Non-indigenous Australian	75	65
Indigenous Australian	17	15
Other	23	20
Highest level of education achieved		
Primary school	8	7
Junior Secondary	78	68
Senior Secondary	18	16
Tertiary	11	9
Marital Status at time of index offence		
Single	28	24
Married or De-facto	34	30
Separated	52	45
Widowed	1	1
Employment at time of index offence		
Unemployed	14	12
Retired	4	3
Unskilled	54	47
Trade	23	20
Professional	11	10
Self employed	9	8

Measures

One of the earliest tasks in the Sex Offender Treatment Program was for the participants to prepare a written autobiography, giving answers to standard questions about certain events in their lives as children, adolescents

and adults. It was the answers to these questions which formed the basis of the following constructs.

Religiosity

The independent variable was offenders' self-reported religious affiliations. Current literature suggests that religiosity is best measured on multi-item dimensions and would ideally include religious activity (e.g., attendance level at religious services and social events; reading religious material and listening to broadcasts), religious salience (the influence of religion in daily life and extent that religious beliefs have daily impact) and "hellfire" beliefs (specific beliefs in and fear of the supernatural sanctions such as God's punishment, evil people will suffer, and so on) (Baier & Wright, 2001). These researchers argue that religion consists of beliefs, values and spiritual experiences that go beyond the one-dimensional concept of church attendance.

For the present study, data on religious behaviour and experience in childhood were obtained from participants' responses to the following questions contained in the autobiography outline: *"What was the religious, spiritual and ethnic/cultural background of your family?"*; *"Did your family participate in spiritual or religious practices? If so how often?"*; *"What Church or spiritual group did your family belong to?"*; and *"How important was religion in your family"*. Data on religious behaviour and experience in adulthood were obtained from their responses to the following questions: *"Do you belong to a church?; If so, what*

denomination?; “Have you been Born Again?; “Do you believe in a hell where people are punished forever for their sins?; “Do you feel that you have lived by the principles of your faith? If not, what principles have you not lived by?; and “In what way does your religion guide your sexual activities?;”.

Responses to these questions were rated on two 4-point Likert-type scales – one for childhood experiences and one for adult experiences - ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (very important). The scores on both childhood and adulthood religiosity were then combined to construct a trend variable based on dichotomous low/high groups. Those registering either ‘not important’ or ‘somewhat important’ were placed in the low religiosity group. Those scoring either ‘often’ or ‘very important’ were placed in the high religiosity group. Thus participants were placed in a high/low childhood religiosity group and high/low adult religiosity group. Offenders who recorded a high level of religious affiliation in both childhood and adulthood were labelled “stayers” (n = 23). Those recording a high level of religious affiliations in childhood but in not adulthood were labelled “drop outs” (n = 27). Respondents who registered a low level of religious affiliations in childhood but high level as an adult were labelled “converts” (n = 16), and finally those who reported low level of affiliations as a child and adult were labelled “non-religious” (n = 45).

Offence variables

The dependent variables in the current study were the number, age and gender of sexual offence victims, number of previous sexual and non-sexual offence convictions, and number of current sexual and non-sexual offence convictions. Official records were used for measures of past criminality.

PROCEDURE

Treatment program files for all offenders involved in the Sex Offender Treatment Program between 2000 and 2004 were examined. An informed consent form had been signed by the men originally before they commenced the Treatment Program giving permission for their data to be used for future research purposes.

RESULTS

Preliminary analyses revealed a significant age difference between non-religious, converts, dropouts, and stayers ($F(3,107) = 4.27, p = .001$). Post hoc analysis showed that stayers ($M = 46.52$ years, $SD = 13.81$) were significantly older at the time of sentencing than were the non-religious ($M = 34.40$ years, $SD = 13.76$), $t = 3.43, p < .001$. Age was used as a covariate for all subsequent analyses.

Two ANCOVAs were computed to compare the four religiosity groups on the number of victims and the age of the youngest victim (see Table 3.2). The groups differed in the number of victims after controlling for offenders' age at the time of sentencing, $F(3,106) = 3.90, p < .01$. Tukey post-hoc

analyses revealed that stayers had more victims (\underline{M} = 3.87, \underline{SD} = 2.05) than all other religious groups: non-religious (\underline{M} =1.93, \underline{SD} =1.53), dropouts (\underline{M} = 2.14, \underline{SD} =1.40) and converts (\underline{M} =2.00, \underline{SD} =1.32). Although non-religious' youngest victims were on average almost twice the age of stayers' youngest victims, within-group variance was too great to produce a statistically significant difference, $F(3,106) = 1.37$, ns.

Table 3.2
Mean (SD) number of victims and age of youngest victim, by religiosity group (n=111)

	Religiosity group			
	Non-religious n = 45	Stayers n = 23	Dropouts n = 27	Converts n = 16
Number of victims	1.93 (1.53)	3.87*** (2.05)	2.14 (1.40)	2.00 (1.32)
Age of youngest victim	18.09 (15.71)	9.52 (5.23)	16.70 (13.74)	15.50 (6.42)

*** $p < .001$

Comparisons of the four religiosity groups on number and ages of victims were conducted separately for those who had offended against child victims. Results are summarized in Table 3.3. Again controlling for the age of offenders at the time of sentencing, ANCOVA revealed significant differences in the number, $F(3,74) = 3.83$, $p < .01$, and ages, $F(3,74) = 3.27$,

$p < .05$, of victims. Stayers had both more ($M=4.30$, $SD=2.04$) and younger ($M=8.00$ yrs, $SD=3.27$) victims than did the other groups.

Table 3.3.

Mean (SD) number of victims and age of youngest victim, by religiosity group, for offenders against children only (n = 79)

	Religiosity group			
	Non-religious n = 31	Stayers n = 20	Dropouts n = 17	Converts n = 11
Number of victims	2.13 (1.48)	4.30** (2.04)	2.70 (1.49)	2.36 (1.43)
Age of youngest victim	10.26 (3.49)	8.00* (3.27)	9.76 (3.28)	12.00 (2.28)

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

Just over one third (38.7%) of the sample had previous convictions for sexual offences, and almost two thirds (64%) had previous convictions for nonsexual offences. Percentages of non-religious, stayers, converts and dropouts with previous convictions for sexual, non-sexual, and any offences are shown in Table 3.4. Fewer converts (14%) had previous convictions for sexual offences, compared to the other groups, $\chi^2 (3, N=111) = 10.15$, $p < .02$. The groups differed in the percentages of offenders with previous nonsexual offence convictions, 43.7% of non-religious had nonsexual offence histories compared with 19.7% of stayers, although this difference was non significant ($\chi^2 = .84$, $df=3$, $p > .80$).

Table 3.4.

Percentages of offenders with prior offending histories, by religiosity group

	Religiosity group			
	Non-religious n = 45	Stayers n = 23	Dropouts n = 27	Converts n = 16
Previous sexual offences	23.3	27.9	34.9	14.0*
Previous non-sexual offences	43.7	19.7	22.5	14.1
Any previous offences	40.2	20.7	24.1	14.9

* $p < .02$

Finally, the groups differed in the total number of sexual offence convictions after controlling for offenders' age at the time of sentencing, $F(3,111) = 2.99, p < .05$ (see Table 3.5). Post hoc analyses showed that the stayers had significantly more sexual offence convictions than the other religious groups. Although the converts had on average almost three times more non-sexual offence convictions than any of the other religious groups, once again within-group variance was too great to produce a statistically significant difference, $F(3,111) = 1.82, ns$.

Table 3.5.

Mean (SD) number of sexual and non-sexual convictions, by religiosity group (N=111)

	Religiosity group			
	Non-religious n = 45	Stayers n = 23	Dropouts n = 27	Converts n = 16
Sexual offence convictions	8.47 (10.97)	19.39* (14.97)	8.78 (8.61)	9.08 (9.73)
Non-sexual offence convictions	7.49 (8.46)	8.87 (14.78)	8.51 (16.12)	21.19 (48.97)

*p < .05

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to examine whether sexual offenders' commitment to religion impacts on the extent of their sexual and nonsexual offending. In accordance with the bulk of previous literature which suggests an inverse relationship between religiosity and criminality, it was anticipated that offenders with a continuity of religious affiliation throughout life and those who converted to religion as adults would have fewer sexual and non-sexual convictions and fewer victims than those with no religious affiliation. The findings provide unexpected evidence that religiosity in sexual offenders is positively related to the number of their sexual offence victims and the number of their sexual offence convictions.

Stayers, who reported regular church attendance, belief in supernatural sanctions (e.g. “God will punish sinners”) and religious salience in their daily life, were found to have more victims, younger victims and more sexual offence convictions than all other groups. They were much more likely to have a prepubescent child victim (average age under 10 years) while all other groups had victims at least of adolescent or young adult age (15 years and above). This group also averaged almost nine separate non-sexual offence convictions. With the exception of the *non-religious*, all groups recorded a similar number of non-sexual offence convictions, indicating extensive criminal versatility. This finding is consistent with growing evidence suggesting many sexual offenders do not restrict their criminal activity to sexual misconduct (Smallbone & Wortley, 2000; Soothill, Frances, Sanderson & Ackerley, 2000). The two groups who reported religious affiliation during childhood, *stayers* and *dropouts*, both had more extensive sexual offending histories.

It had been assumed that those who had converted to religion while incarcerated possibly may do so as a form of repentance for having committed an act that they considered out of character. However, it was the *converts* in this study who recorded on average two to three times more non-sexual convictions than the other groups. On average, the *converts*’ child victims tended to be older and this trend away from younger child victims may be indicative of more generalist but persistent offending behaviour. Contrary to expectations, the *converts* did not have fewer sexual and nonsexual

convictions. This finding is perhaps not surprising after all. These offenders do not appear to be converting because they view their sexual offending as out of character. Rather their conversion to religion may reflect an offence burnout effect. By means of conversion to religion, this group may be endeavouring to exit the offending pathway, perhaps by seeking to establish new attachments to social institutions.

The *non-religious* made up the greatest percentage of offenders with a non-sexual offending history. As a group they were more likely to record generalist offending behaviour and consequently had the greater likelihood of having non-sexual offence convictions. This group, characterized by their lack of prior or current religious affiliation, comprised the youngest offenders, while their sexual offence victims were likely to be the oldest. This offender youthfulness and older victim age suggests that the *non-religious'* sexual offending behaviour possibly occurs as part of a more general pattern of antisocial behaviour. Compared to those who offend against children, the general sex offender is less likely to target younger victims but is more likely to act impulsively and aggressively, displaying antisocial behaviour, low self-control and criminal versatility (Kalichman, 1991).

The final group, the *dropouts*, reported salient religiousness and active religious participation in church activities in childhood, but as adults they did not identify with any religious beliefs. Of all the groups, the *dropouts* were slightly more likely to have been convicted in the past of a sexual offence, but the average number of convictions per person in this group was less than half

that of the *stayers*. This finding raises questions regarding the differential effect of early childhood religious and spiritual exposure on sexual and non-sexual offending behaviour.

Religion has been largely considered a social bond (Hirshi, 1969), promoting conventional values and often deterring behaviours considered deviant either indirectly through socialization mechanisms such as the prevalent church community norms or internal individual expectations (Smith, 2003). In this study the social bonds of religious commitment did not have the anticipated inverse effect on criminal behaviour suggested by prior research. In their recent study of self-control, social bonds and adult male offenders, Longshore, et al. (2004) found that social bonds appear to mediate the negative relationship between low self-control and drug use. However the influence appeared to be through internal restraint (moral belief) rather than investment in a conventional lifestyle (religious commitment). Due to the nature of the available data this first study was unable to measure levels of self-control or moral beliefs. However, both of these factors will be addressed in the next study in order to explain the influence control factors exert on sexual offending behaviour.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion this first study has highlighted a number of future directions. Although it hints at a specific relationship between religiosity and

sexual offending it is unclear to what extent and why this occurs and the current findings raise more questions than answers. Study one was based on a sample of convicted offenders who have already been incarcerated for their sexual offending behaviour. A clear link was found within this group between religiosity and sexual offending. The validity of these findings needs to be tested further with studies based on a sample of non-offenders using more exhaustive measures. Consequently the next study will investigate a group of men who belong to an adult university population to identify, whether religiosity also has an effect on their sexual behaviour without resulting in sexual convictions. Furthermore the second study aims to determine whether religious orientation, as an aspect of religiosity, has an impact on sexual misconduct

Chapter 4

STUDY TWO - Religious Orientation, Self-control, Moral Beliefs, and Misconduct among Male College Students

“MY FAULT, MY FAILURE, IS NOT IN THE PASSIONS I HAVE, BUT IN
MY LACK OF CONTROL OF THEM.”

Jack Kerouac

Study one presented unexpected evidence of positive relationship between strength of religiosity and number of sexual offence victims and a negative relationship with victim age among incarcerated sexual offenders. However as incarcerated individuals are an atypical of it is unwise to extrapolate the findings based on their data to conclusions about the general population. This second study therefore, considered a more representative sample of non-offending males to investigate whether religious orientation is differentially associated with sexual and nonsexual misconduct, and if so, to what extent do internal controls (self control and moral beliefs) and external social controls (religious orientation) inhibit this misconduct? The chapter outlines the methodology; quantitative analysis of psychometric testing gathered on adult university students and discusses a number of key themes that have been identified.

Diverse studies have been carried out on young people and sexually coercive behaviours, particularly amongst tertiary education students. Female university students appear particularly vulnerable to sexual assault while male students constitute a particularly high-risk group for committing sexual assault (Kendler, Liu, Gardner, et al., 2003; Loewenstein, Nagin & Paternoster, 1997). Approximately 70% of unmarried undergraduate students report being sexually active, however, due to methodological issues, the actual percentage of this self reported sexual activity that is voluntary as opposed to coercive is uncertain (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Patrick et al., 1997; Prince & Bernard, 1998). Participants are often reluctant to discuss sexual behaviour and are likely to respond in socially desirable ways or misinterpret certain questions (Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004). For example, Sanders and Reinisch (1999) found over half of 599 male American college students reported that oral-genital contact did not constitute “having sex” and 20% considered that penile-anal intercourse was not sex.

Such findings may indicate that often neither the perpetrators nor victims of sexual assault accurately label their experiences as coercive violations. Despite this, approximately 10% of American college women report being raped; 11% have experienced attempted rape with threats or force, and an additional 35% report some other form of non-consensual sexual contact (Fisher, Cullen and Turner, 2000). Of greater concern are the findings regarding sexual assault on university campuses. In their landmark study of 2972 undergraduate men, Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski (1987)

revealed that approximately 33% stated they would engage in sexual misconduct if guaranteed they would not be punished for their actions.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Despite its frequent occurrence, sexual misconduct as an offence is not often addressed by criminological theories. While the failure to deal with the issue of sexual misconduct may be a reflection of the inadequacy of the available theories it may also be partly due to underreporting by victims. Rape, for instance, is the most underreported offence. It is estimated that only 10% of rapes come to the attention of the authorities and very little is known about the other 90% of sexual offences (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). Even less is known about the rates of sexual misconduct against children. As a consequence of this underreporting it is difficult to gain a clear picture of the prevalence and incidence of sexual misconduct. In the 1996 Australian Women's Safety Survey 16% of women reported having been sexually assaulted after the age of 15 years. Of those assaulted, only 15% had reported the offence to the authorities (ABS, 1996). The odds of the woman reporting the offence decreased with the closeness of the victim-offender relationship.

In the first study it became evident that a systematic relationship existed between individual offenders' life-course religious affiliations and extent of their sexual and nonsexual offending histories. In particular, offenders who had maintained religious affiliations from childhood to

adulthood were found to have been convicted of more sexual offences, to have offended against more victims, and to have offended against younger victims, than were those who either had no current religious affiliation or those who had recently converted to a religious faith.

MEASURING RELIGIOSITY

The findings of earlier studies have been influenced by methodological limitations and vague definitions of religiosity which have resulted in wide variations in findings. In an early response to methodological inconsistencies, Allport and Ross (1967) developed a religious orientation scale (ROS), distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic orientation towards religion. These orientations emerged from Allport's (1950) original constructs of mature and immature religiosity which were intended to transcend specific denominations by describing basic ways that people experience their religion. Intrinsic religiosity corresponds to Allport's 'mature' religiosity, and he proposed initially that it contrasted with extrinsic religiosity on a single, bipolar dimension. Such polar opposites, he thought, explained the paradox of how religion could be linked on one hand with bigotry and racism and on the other hand with love and kindness. Over time this concept became one of two independent continua, resulting in a fourfold typology of intrinsic (high intrinsic, low extrinsic), extrinsic (high extrinsic, low intrinsic), non-religious (low on both) and indiscriminate (high on both). Batson and Ventis (1982) later devised a third orientation, Quest, to address what they believed to be an orientation which was determined by existential drives.

Intrinsic Orientation

Intrinsic orientation is often viewed as religion being deeply personal to the individual with the respondent 'living' their religion and being wholly committed to their religious beliefs (Maltby & Lewis, 1996). Those who hold intrinsic religious values are described as being driven by an internalisation of religious values and sentiments which are associated with a more mature and tolerant self in relation to other. These individuals display a genuine devout faith as well as loving and caring for others. They will use religious teachings to inform their everyday interactions with other people. It is the strong personal convictions that matter most to an intrinsically religious person, with the social aspects of religion being less important. Those who are primarily intrinsically religious are able to accept religion in general but still are able to criticise it. Some evidence suggests that individuals with an intrinsic orientation are more competent at coping with stressful life events than those who are extrinsic orientated since this orientation leads them to find meaning in what has happened (Bergin, Masters, & Richards, 1987). The intrinsic orientated individual will build on high and consistent standards of moral and ethical action. Allport and Ross (1967) associated intrinsic orientations with universally compassionate people (see table 4.1 for research findings on differences between intrinsic and extrinsic orientation).

Extrinsic Orientation

In contrast, those who are primarily extrinsically orientated are said to use religion as a vehicle for furthering self interests and are shown to be

associated with prejudicial attitudes. These individuals adopt a self-serving, instrumental approach to religion, using their religion in a utilitarian way to satisfy non-religious needs. This is especially relevant when addressing social needs or as a method of providing social status, solace or security. They identify with a religious reference group without much thought and more as a matter of course. A number of studies have suggested that extrinsic orientation can be divided into two dimensions: extrinsic-personal (use of religion as personal security or protection), and extrinsic-social (use of religion as a means to achieve social rewards) (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 1997; Maltby, 1999).

Table 4.1.

Attributes of Intrinsic and Extrinsic orientation as reported in literature

Intrinsic Orientation	Extrinsic Orientation	Reference
Negative correlation with prejudice	Positive association with prejudice	<i>Allport & Ross, (1967); Duck & Hunsberger, (1999)</i>
Internalise & conform to religious teachings about sexuality	Decreased sexual restraint Increased mate poaching	<i>Rowatt & Schmitt, (2003)</i>
Negative correlation with attitudes towards sexual fantasy, petting, masturbation, oral sex, homosexuality, frequency of sex behaviours	Positive correlation with adultery and pre-marital sexual permissiveness	<i>Leak, (1993)</i>
Show Principled moral thinking on Kohlberg's level	Show Conventional moral thinking on Kohlberg's levels	<i>Kohlberg, (1981)</i>
Positive association with mental health & self esteem		<i>Ryan, Rigby, and King, (1993)</i>
Improved psychological adjustment		<i>Watson, Morris, and Hood, (1994)</i>
	Positive association with anxiety and depression	<i>Bergin, Masters, and Richards, (1987).</i>
Internal locus of control	External locus of control	<i>Strickland & Shaffer (1971); Jackson & Coursey, (1988)</i>
Higher Self-Control, Personal and Social Adequacy		<i>McClain (1978)</i>

Greater sense of responsibility, greater internal control, more self-motivated, and do better in their studies	Dogmatic, authoritarian, and less responsible, less internal control, less self-directed, and to do less well in their studies	<i>Wiebe & Fleck (1980)</i>
More conscientious, dependable, disciplined, consistent	More self indulgent, indolent, undependable	<i>Donabue (1985)</i>

However, there remain some limitations with Allport and Ross' operationalisation of the extrinsic orientation construct. Hoge and Carroll (1973) complained that the extrinsic scale lacks definition of what is being measured and did not tap into extrinsic religious motivation. Other studies have found the intrinsic scale to be positively related to measures of social desirability and unconscious self-deception (Leak & Fish, 1989) or even fanaticism of the 'true believer' (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). More recently there has been a call to abandon the general-measure labels with the suggestion that the intrinsic scale measures purely religious commitment while the extrinsic scale may be more a measurement of personality.

Quest Orientation

To counter criticisms that the ROS fails to measure Allport's facets of mature religion that encompass self-doubts, tentativeness and a continuing search for religious truth, Batson and Ventis (1982) developed the Quest scale to measure a third type of orientation. The Quest scale is said to capture the desire to face existential questions, passionate inquiry and doubt. Those scoring higher on the Quest subscale than on the other subscales are more likely to experience conflict in the sense of troubling doubt and confusion. While the Quest construct has been lauded as an important theoretical

innovation, arguments continue about the psychometric properties of the scale. Validity concerns are that the scale may be multidimensional, measuring agnosticism or dissatisfaction with religious orthodoxy and issues with conceptual relevance (Beck & Jessup, 2004). For instance, passionate inquiry and doubt may better describe an intellectual curiosity rather than religiosity per se.

However, despite the years that have passed and a number of theoretical and methodological criticisms of Allport and Ross' intrinsic/extrinsic orientations (see Gorsuch, 1984; Kirkpatrick & Hood, 1990), the orientations remain a dominant construct still depicted as the single most influential perspective in the empirical psychology of religion (Donahue & Benson, 1995) and the ROS one of the most widely employed measures of religiosity today. Together, these more definitive measures of religiosity have increased the accuracy of linkages between religious affiliation and behavioural outcomes (Beck & Jessup, 2004).

Religious orientation and sexual behaviour

Religious orientation has been shown to account for unique variance in several aspects of sexuality. Intrinsically religious individuals are more likely than extrinsically religious persons to internalize religious teachings about sexuality and conform to their churches' moral expectations. For instance, as extrinsic orientation increases, sexual restraint decreases and socio-sexuality and mate-poaching increase (Rowatt & Schmitt, 2003). Zaleski and

Schianffino (2000) investigated the extent to which religious identity acted as a protective buffer against sexual risk-taking behaviour in college students. They found that greater intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity was associated with less sexual activity, but when these students have sex they are also less likely to use a condom. Overall, research into religious affiliation and sexual behaviour has produced mixed results with some studies failing to find differences in sexual behaviours based on specific religious affiliation (Studer & Thornton, 1987; Thornton & Camburn, 1989).

Religious Orientation and Crime

Some interesting research has been conducted on the relationship between religious orientation and crime. Brinkerhoff, Grandin and Lupri (1992) found that the intrinsically orientated had a lesser tendency to commit acts of violence. Hummer et al., (2004) identified that religiously-involved individuals are also less likely to carry or use weapons, to fight, or to exhibit violent behaviour. In addition, urban areas with higher rates of congregational membership and areas with higher levels of religious homogeneity tend to have lower homicide and suicide rates. However, once incarcerated, intrinsic religious orientation was one of the constructs that predicted inmates who would receive an infraction for violating prison rules (Pass, 1999). Conversely, Koenig (1994) found a positive relationship between intrinsically orientated imprisoned men and positive forensic factors (first prison term, fewer disciplinary actions). According to Koenig these intrinsic men were also rated

as better adjusted and behaved. Considering the somewhat contradictory findings of the two researchers it is important to remain wary of stereotyping extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientation as opposite ends of the personal morality spectrum.

A number of studies have investigated offenders' conversions to religion after being incarcerated for sexual crimes (Silverman & Oglesby, 1983). Bolkas (2000) argues that while most of his 42 incarcerated participants were ostensibly Christians pre-imprisonment, his findings suggest they were extrinsically religious rather than intrinsically devout. Of those Bolkas interviewed, 62.5% had been convicted of a sexual offence against children and many admitted they were drawn to the church to prey on children. Almost half of his participants became 'sincere' Christians only after arrest and imprisonment. Motivation for these conversions from extrinsic to intrinsic appears to sometimes arise from a need of the offender to seek forgiveness, hope and guidance and to deal with their own shame, guilt and remorse.

However, Freeman-Longo and Bays (1988) show that many sex offenders become overly religious after they are caught. They conclude that the offenders merely use religion and spirituality as a device to justify and minimize their deviant sexual behaviour. Common cognitive distortions displayed in such situations include: *"God has forgiven me why can't you"*, *"God has cleansed me of those sinful desires"*, *"I don't need treatment, because God has cured me"*, and *"I am no longer a sex offender – I'm saved and forgiven."* One possibility not

investigated by Freeman-Longo and Bays is that religious orientation may be driving such cognitive distortions. The self-serving comments made by participants to minimize their offending appear more indicative of an extrinsic orientation in which individuals adopt a much more instrumental approach towards religion and shape their religious attitudes to suit their immediate needs.

Given the evidence that much previous research into religiosity has been fraught with vague definitions of religiosity and methodological limitations, this study attempted to capture the multidimensionality of religiosity. Detailed measurement of religiosity was performed by evaluating both adult religious orientation as well as childhood religious experiences. These more definitive measures of religiosity and attitudes helped to refine the aspect of religious affiliation that influences unlawful behaviour in a population of male college students (Beck & Jessup, 2004). Germane to this study, is the application of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) general theory of crime which applies low self-control and poor social bonds (namely weak attachment to religious commitment and low endorsement of conventional moral beliefs) as predictors of misconduct.

Several hypotheses were advanced following the findings of the first study:

1. Religiosity, in particular those participants having life long affiliation with a religious bond, will be positively related to

sexual misconduct and negatively related to non-sexual misconduct.

2. Since the weight of evidence suggests that current religiosity as a social bond serves as a deterrent to unlawful conduct, there will be an inverse relationship between individual level religiosity and unlawful behaviour as measured on Intrinsic/extrinsic orientation.
3. Stronger individual level religiosity (as measured on Intrinsic/extrinsic orientation) will be associated with higher moral beliefs and greater self control.
4. Those respondents with higher self-control and greater moral beliefs will be associated with fewer acts of misconduct as predicted by the general theory of crime.
5. Self-control theory and religious orientation will help to predict sexual and non-sexual misconduct.

METHOD

Participants

The sample consisted of 163 adult male psychology and criminology students who were studying at an Australian University and who received course credit for participating. The mean age of participants was 22.59 years

(SD = 7.10 years) and the majority (72.4%) were single. Sixty percent of the sample indicated some form of religious affiliation.

PROCEDURE AND MEASURES

Participants were informed that the research involved questions about their moral beliefs and attitudes and about their involvement in unlawful behaviours, including sexual misconduct. Due to the sensitive nature of the questions, the testing rooms were large enough to ensure privacy when completing the questionnaire. Participants signed consent forms indicating that they understood their participation was anonymous, confidential, and could be discontinued without penalty. No identifying information was obtained from the participants and they were given as much time as needed to complete the measures. Five measures were used – childhood religious commitment, adult religious commitment, self-control, moral beliefs, and unlawful behaviour (see appendix B for full copy of questionnaire).

Materials

Religious commitment measures the stake in conventional conformity and in this study measurements were obtained for both childhood and adulthood religious commitment.

Childhood religious commitment

Childhood religious commitment was measured with the following item: “To what degree was your childhood religious?” Possible responses ranged from 1= not at all and 4= very.

Adult religious commitment

The Commitment to current religiosity was measured on the Age-universal I-E Scale-12 (Maltby, 1999). This scale is a revised and modified version of Allport and Ross’s (1967) Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) and is designed to measure both intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation. Since its inception a number of revisions have been made to improve the psychometric properties of the ROS, and in particular, to extend its validity across age, race and non-religious groups (Gorsuch & Venable, 1983). Maltby and Lewis further amended the scale in 1996 to include simpler language. To counteract the preconceived assumptions of religiosity found in the earlier scales, this revised scale changed the response options from a 5-point likert scale to response options of “yes”, “not certain” and “no”, making the scale appropriate for use with religious and non-religious samples. This newer version has shown good reliability for university students (.88) as well as adults (.89). Six items measure intrinsic orientation (eg. “It is important for me to spend time in private thought and prayer”), three measure extrinsic-personal (eg. “What religion offers me most is

comfort in times of trouble and sorrow”) and three measure extrinsic-social (eg. I go to church because it helps me make friends”).

For group comparisons Hood’s (1970) classification based on median splits of the intrinsic (Median=4) and extrinsic (Median =3) orientation scores was adopted. This yielded, four groups: intrinsic (*high on intrinsic, low on extrinsic*), extrinsic (*high on extrinsic, low on intrinsic*), non-religious (*low on both*) and indiscriminate (*high on both*). For regression analyses continuous scores of both the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions were used.

Self Control

The Self-control Scale (Gasmick et al., 1993) comprises 24-items yielding 6 subscales. The response format is a five point Likert scale. Stronger agreement indicates lower self-control. The six subscales are: 1) impulsiveness (e.g., “I act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think”); 2) preference for simple tasks (e.g., “when things get complicated I tend to quit”); 3) risk seeking (e.g., “I sometimes find it exciting to do things that may get me into trouble”); 4) preference for physical activities (e.g., “I almost always feel better when I am on the move than when sitting and thinking”); 5) self-centeredness (e.g., “I look out for myself first even if it makes things hard on other people”); and 6) volatile temper (e.g., “I lose my temper pretty easily”). Cronbach’s alpha for self-control was .88, which is comparable to previous reports (Benda, 2002; Tittle, Ward & Gasmick, 2003).

Gottfredson and Hirschi identified that certain groups are characterised by higher levels of self-control with restricted variances, which limits the ability to detect the impact of the trait on behaviour. University students are an example of such a group as entry into tertiary studies often indicates a level of academic success and persistence not usually consistent with low self control. However, as we will see, in this study it appears the university students varied sufficiently on the self-control measure and restricted variance was not a major problem.

Moral beliefs

Conventional moral beliefs were measured by a composite of four items used in earlier studies by Massey and Krohn (1986) and Longshore, et al. (2004): moral belief in the law (1. *Many things called crime do not really hurt anyone*, 2. *“Even though it is against the law, it’s okay to sell alcohol to minors”*), parental rules (3. *When parents set down a rule children should obey*) and acceptance of social mores (4. *It is okay to sneak into a football game or cinema without paying*). Responses were scored on a five point likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All items except for ‘parental rules’ were reverse scored and summed to form a score ranging from 0 to 16. Higher total scores indicate stronger moral beliefs. This construct represents adherence to a general belief that the rules of conventional society are binding. Scale reliability was generally good, with a Cronbach’s alpha co-efficient of .82.

Misconduct

The National Youth Survey (NYS) (Elliot et al., 1987) measures self-reported nonsexual misconduct, sexual misconduct, property offences and drug use behaviours. Participants were asked whether they had ever committed any of 34 different unlawful behaviours. Responses were dichotomised (0=no, 1=yes) and then summed to obtain individual scores. The measure also yields a composite score (general crime) score ranging from 0 to 34. Scale reliability was generally good, with a Cronbach's alpha co-efficient for the general crime scale of .87. Cronbach's alpha for the 11-item non-sexual assault subscale was reliable at .61, for the 15-item property crime subscale .81, and the 11-item drug subscale .79 (See appendix "F" for individual offences included in each subscale and accompanying frequencies). For some of the analyses a high/low classification of misconduct was devised on the basis of median splits.

RESULTS

One hundred and forty two participants (87.1%) reported having engaged in theft, 104 (63.8%) had committed wilful destruction, 130 (79.8%) had used illicit drugs, 94 (57%) had been involved nonsexual misconduct, and 23 (14.1%) in sexual misconduct.

For the initial analyses and to establish some continuity with the first study, categories were once again formed based on degree of childhood and adulthood religious commitment. Students were placed in a high/low

childhood religiosity group and high/low adult religiosity group. Students who recorded a high level of religious affiliation in both childhood and adulthood were labelled “*stayers*” (n = 57). Those recording a high level of religious affiliations in childhood but in not adulthood were labelled “*drop outs*” (n = 11). Respondents who registered a low level of religious affiliations in childhood and a high level as an adult were labelled “*converts*” (n = 43), and finally those who reported low level of religious affiliation as both a child and adult were labelled “*non-religious*” (n = 52).

All variables of interest were entered into a Pearson Product moment correlation matrix (see table 4.2). Moral belief scores were moderately correlated positively with intrinsic religious orientation, age, and childhood religiosity and negatively with low self control, sexual misconduct and general crime as expected. Correlations between low self-control and other variables of interest were largely as expected. A small positive correlation was obtained between low self-control and extrinsic religious orientation. Extrinsic religious orientation was in turn positively correlated with sexual assault. These correlations suggest those holding higher moral beliefs were also more likely to be intrinsically orientated, older and have a childhood influenced by religion. Those with higher moral beliefs were also likely to have greater self-control and be less likely to commit acts of sexual misconduct and other non-sexual misconduct. Conversely, those who identified as extrinsically orientated were more likely to have low self-control and to participate in acts of sexual misconduct.

Table 4.2.
Correlation Matrix of variables of Age, religiosity, self-control, moral beliefs and misconduct.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	22.59	7.10							
2. Childhood Religiosity	1.40	.91	.13						
3. Low Self-Control	41.09	12.97	-.18*	.05					
4. Moral beliefs	10.35	2.79	.27**	.24**	-.43**				
5. Extrinsic	3.17	3.45	.01	.37**	.16*	.08			
6. Intrinsic	4.97	4.49	.27**	.49**	-.13	.38**	.24**		
7. Sexual misconduct	.17	.43	.04	.12	.38**	-.19*	.24**	.05	
8. General Crime	8.44	5.79	-.01	.01	.38**	-.39**	-.03	-.19*	.18**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Preliminary analyses revealed a significant age difference between *non-religious, converts, dropouts, and stayers* ($F(3,159) = 3.05, p = .05$). Post hoc analysis showed that *converts* ($M = 24.07$ years, $SD = 9.01$) were significantly older than were the *non-religious* ($M = 20.22$ years, $SD = 3.30$). Analyses also revealed a significant age difference between intrinsic, extrinsic, indiscriminate and non-religious ($F(3,159) = 4.91, p < .01$). Post hoc analysis showed that intrinsic ($M = 25.65$ years, $SD = 9.84$) were significantly older than were extrinsic ($M = 21.13$ years, $SD = 4.54$) and non-religious ($M = 20.66$ years,

$SD=4.40$). For that reason, age was used as a covariate for all subsequent analyses.

The first hypothesis to be addressed was whether key findings from the earlier study would be replicated, specifically whether life-long religious affiliations would be systematically related to the extent of participants' involvement in sexual and nonsexual misconduct.

Four ANCOVAs were computed to measure the affect of the religiosity group (independent variable) on number of unlawful behaviours: drug, wilful destruction, theft, sexual misconduct, and general crime (dependent variables) (see Table 4.3). The groups differed in the number of illicit drug behaviours, $F(3,159) = 7.77, p < .001$, number of wilful destruction acts, $F(3,159) = 6.24, p < .05$ and overall general criminal acts, $F(3,159) = 3.26, p < .05$. Tukey post-hoc analyses revealed that *stayers* had fewer illicit drug and wilful destruction behaviours than the *dropouts* and *non-religious*. The *stayers* also reported fewer general criminal acts than the *non-religious* and the *dropouts*, who reported almost twice as many criminal behaviours. *Stayers* were also more likely to commit sexual misconduct, $F(3,159) = 1.54, p < .05$.

Table 4.3.
Mean (SD) number of acts of misconduct, levels of self control and moral beliefs by religiosity group (n=163)

	Religiosity group			
	Non-religious <i>n</i> = 52	Stayers <i>n</i> = 57	Dropouts <i>n</i> = 11	Converts <i>n</i> = 43
Drug offences	3.65 ^a (2.25)	2.05 ^{***} (1.79)	4.82 ^a (3.31)	3.16 ^a (2.21)
Wilful destruction	1.27 (1.07)	1.05 ^{**} (1.06)	1.82 ^b (1.54)	1.05 (1.24)
Theft	3.05 (2.26)	2.56 (2.21)	3.91 (3.45)	2.95 (2.29)
Sexual misconduct	.08 ^c (.27)	.25 ^{**} (.47)	.09 (.30)	.16 (.48)
General Crime Score	9.19 ^d (5.34)	6.94 ^{**} (5.15)	12.27 ^d (8.38)	8.52 (5.92)

^{**}*p* < .05 ^{***} *p* < .001

a=Stayer's were involved in sig. fewer illicit drug offences than all other groups

b=Stayer's were involved in sig. fewer wilful destruction offences than the dropouts

c=Stayer's had sig. greater number of acts of sexual misconduct than the non-religious

d=Stayer's had sig. fewer general overall unlawful acts than the dropouts

Further comparisons were conducted on individual-level religious orientation. Here data obtained from the age-universal I-E 12 scale identified four religious orientation groups: extrinsic, intrinsic,

indiscriminate and non-religious. The second hypothesis addressed whether the social bond of current religiosity (as measured on the intrinsic/extrinsic scale) served as a deterrent to misconduct.

Three one-way ANCOVAs were computed to compare the independent variable of religious orientation group (intrinsic, $n = 39$; extrinsic, $n = 25$; indiscriminate, $n = 36$; and non-religious, $n = 63$) on the dependent variable of type of misconduct: sexual, nonsexual, and other (non-violent and nonsexual) misconduct (see Table 4.4). The groups differed in their involvement in sexual misconduct, $F(3,159) = 4.66$, $p < .01$, and other misconduct, $F(3,159) = 3.92$, $p < .01$. Tukey's post-hoc analyses revealed that the extrinsic group was more likely to report sexual misconduct than both the non-religious and indiscriminate groups. The intrinsic group reported significantly less involvement in 'other' acts of misconduct than did the non-religious group.

The third hypothesis suggested that stronger individual level religiosity (as measured on Intrinsic/extrinsic orientation) would be associated with higher moral beliefs and greater self control. To test this hypothesis two one-way ANCOVAs were computed to compare the four religious orientation groups on self-control and moral beliefs (dependent variables) (see Table 4.4). The groups differed on self-control, $F(3,159) = 4.28$, $p < .01$, with Tukey's post hoc analyses showing that the extrinsic orientation group reported significantly lower self-control than the intrinsic orientation group. The groups also differed in their moral beliefs, $F(3, 159) = 9.49$, $p <$

.001, with the intrinsic group expressing stronger moral beliefs than both the extrinsic and non-religious groups.

Table 4.4.

Acts of misconduct, self-control, & moral belief means (SD) by Religious Orientation

	Religiosity group			
	Intrinsic <i>n</i> = 39	Extrinsic <i>n</i> = 25	Indiscriminate <i>n</i> = 36	Non-religious <i>n</i> = 63
Sexual misconduct	.18 (.38)	.44 ** (.77)	.11 ^a (.32)	.01 ^a (.27)
Violent crime	.82 (1.09)	1.44 (1.66)	1.14 (1.48)	.98 (1.18)
Other crime	5.36 * (4.09)	7.92 (4.84)	6.86 (5.17)	8.73 ^b (5.42)
Low Self-Control	35.59** (9.19)	46.72 ^c (13.87)	41.44 (14.81)	42.05 (12.51)
Moral Beliefs	11.92 *** (2.59)	9.80 (2.77)	10.94 ^d (2.55)	9.25 ^d (2.56)

NOTE: Lower scores on self control indicate greater levels of self control.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

^a=Extrinsic's numbers of sexual assault sig. greater than both Indiscriminate and Non-religious

^b=Intrinsic's had sig. fewer numbers of other crimes than Non-religious

^c=Intrinsic's level of self-control sig. greater than Extrinsic

^d=Intrinsic's level of moral beliefs sig. higher than both Non-religious and Indiscriminate

The fourth hypothesis addressed whether greater self-control and moral beliefs would be associated with fewer acts of sexual and non-sexual misconduct. To test this hypothesis, a high/low classification of misconduct was devised on the basis of median splits. Table 4.5 shows a comparison of

self control and moral belief percentages between those labelled delinquent (high misconduct) and non-delinquent (low misconduct). The delinquent group (67.1%) was significantly more likely to score lower on self control χ^2 (1, N=163) =12.44, $p < .001$ and was more likely to have low moral beliefs, compared to the non-delinquent group, χ^2 (1, N=163) = 7.58, $p < .01$.

Table 4.5.

Frequency distributions of self-control and moral beliefs among delinquent and non-delinquent groups

	Self Control		Moral beliefs	
	High %	Low %	High %	Low %
Delinquent	32.9	67.1***	42.7	57.3**
Non-delinquent	60.5	39.5	64.2	35.8

** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

The final hypothesis tests the ability of self-control theory and religious orientation to predict acts of sexual and non-sexual misconduct. Two sequential multiple regression analyses were computed to examine the contribution of religious orientation, self-control and moral beliefs to misconduct (see table 4.6). For the purposes of these analyses, continuous scores on intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientation for all participants (N = 163) were used. The two criterion variables were nonsexual misconduct and sexual misconduct. The overall model accounted for 22% of the variance in nonsexual misconduct, $F(4,158) = 10.84$, $p = .001$, and 19% of the variance in sexual misconduct, $F(4,158) = 9.06$, $p = .001$. The significant univariate predictors of nonsexual misconduct were low self-

control, $t = 3.44$, $p < .001$, and moral beliefs, $t = -3.30$, $p < .01$. The significant univariate predictors of sexual misconduct were low self-control, $t = 3.95$, $p < .001$, and extrinsic religious orientation, $t = 2.33$, $p < .05$.

Table 4.6.
Summary of Regression Coefficients for Low Self Control, Moral Beliefs, Religious Orientation on Non-sexual and Sexual misconduct

Predictors	R ²	F	Beta	t
Nonsexual Misconduct				
	.22	10.84		
Self Control			.28	3.44***
Moral Beliefs			-.25	-3.03**
Intrinsic orientation			-.04	-.58
Extrinsic orientation			-.04	-.57
Sexual Misconduct				
	.19	9.06		
Self Control			.32	3.95***
Moral Beliefs			-.09	-1.09
Intrinsic orientation			.09	1.08
Extrinsic orientation			.18	2.33*

(* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$)

DISCUSSION

This study examined five hypotheses. First, given results of study one, it was anticipated that those with life-long religious affiliations would

commit more acts of sexual misconduct than any other group but perpetrate fewer acts of non-sexual misconduct. The findings support this first hypothesis and provide evidence that life-long religiosity in this group of college males (*stayers*) is positively related to participation in sexual misconduct and negatively related to non-sexual misconduct such as drug, theft, wilful destructive and other non-sexual misconduct. Apparently, as implied in previous studies, life-long religious affiliation does appear to have some deterrent effect at least against ascetic behaviours such as illicit drug use but not on sexual misconduct (Baier and Wright, 2001).

Second, it was proposed that the social bonds of current religious orientation would prove a deterrent against general misconduct. The findings support this second hypothesis to some degree with type of religious orientation influencing perpetration of general misconduct. However, it was intrinsic not extrinsic religious orientation that appeared to provide protective features against commission of misconduct. Those endorsing intrinsic orientation were more likely to have greater self control and moral beliefs, and commit fewer acts of sexual and non-sexual misconduct than all other groups including extrinsic.

The third hypothesis, that stronger individual level religiosity would be associated with higher moral beliefs and greater self-control, was partially supported in this study. However, it was the intrinsic group not the extrinsic group that was defined by higher moral beliefs and self-control.

The fourth hypothesis proposed that, consistent with the general theory of crime, higher self-control and greater moral beliefs would predict fewer unlawful delinquent acts. The findings support this fourth hypothesis with low self-control and moral belief levels both proving to be significant predictors of delinquent or unlawful behaviour in this sample of university students. The results suggest those in the non-delinquent group scored higher on self control and moral beliefs.

The final hypothesis tested the ability of self-control theory and religious orientation to predict participation in sexual and non-sexual misconduct. The findings here offer support for the overall model which suggests low self-control and low moral beliefs to be the strongest predictor of non-sexual misconduct although in the case of sexual misconduct the model is improved with the addition of extrinsic religious orientation as a predictor.

At first glance, the absolute prevalence of unlawful behaviour found in this sample appears high (see Appendix F). However, while most of the sample reports being involved in some kind of misconduct during their adolescence (i.e. 6.1% steal a motor vehicle, 19.6% steal over \$50, 57% use acts of force), the number of participants committing more serious offences was in fact very low. It would also seem that this misconduct was transient and on the whole limited to one or two incidents. Such findings are consistent with Moffitt's (1993) assertion that transient involvement in delinquency is more or less universal amongst adolescents but generally this

involvement is adolescent-limited. Accordingly, participation in delinquent acts (largely involving property offences) tends to drop off dramatically in late adolescence and most adolescents desist from this behaviour once they have formed stronger stakes in conformity (i.e. employment, university study, stable relationships). Generally speaking, prevalence of involvement in violent acts was low and that of sexual misconduct even lower. Nevertheless, there was sufficient variance in misconduct to enable testing of prediction models.

The results further support the assumption that those respondents who endorse an intrinsic orientation also have higher self control and moral beliefs whilst maintaining fewer acts of non-sexual misconduct. It is likely that self-control and the social control feature of religious orientation are dependent on each other. In explaining the interdependency self control and social bonding on crime, Longshore et al., (2004) suggest the mediating role occurs mostly in the form of the internal constraint construct of moral belief. However, in this study, lower moral belief was a predictor only in the instance of nonsexual misconduct. The construct did not account for sexual misconduct.

Perhaps surprisingly the relationship between extrinsic religious orientation and sexual misconduct was also accounted for by the level of self control. It would seem that religiosity, specifically extrinsic orientation, does indeed tell us something about sexual behaviour, at least among young university students. In particular, in this study the greater the identification

with extrinsic goals towards religion either for social or protective benefits, the greater the likelihood of sexual acting out either through using force to gain sexual favours or attempting/succeeding in forcing someone to have sex against their will.

CONCLUSION

Results are consistent with past research showing that low self-control is a relatively good predictor of unlawful/delinquent behaviour. In addition, this study explored and supported the importance of moral belief as a social bonding constraint which impacts negatively on non-sexual misconduct. Conversely, another individual quality that of extrinsic religious orientation, has been identified as being predictive of measures of sexual misconduct. These results are consistent to a degree with the findings of study one in which religious affiliation among incarcerated offenders was systematically associated with their sexual offending history. However, the earlier study did not measure different religious orientations.

This second study, albeit with a non-offending population, did measure religious orientation and sexual behaviour and the findings indicated that there appears to be a distinct disparity of sexual behaviour between those holding an intrinsic as opposed to an extrinsic orientation. Whether a specific relationship exists between religious orientation and sexual behaviour as distinct from sexual offending remains unclear.

Nonetheless, this finding that there is a link between religious orientation and sexual behaviour is sufficient to warrant further investigation into the aetiological importance of religion to the study of sexual offenders and more importantly those sexual offences committed by those perceived to be the most religious members of the community, the clergy and other religious leaders. It is possible that research of a qualitative nature with cleric sexual offenders will enable a greater understanding of the mechanisms at play and may further explain differences between individual level religious beliefs and the influence of situational variables on opportunity to offend. The subsequent study will investigate these features in a qualitative research with cleric sexual offenders. Another important contingency not yet investigated is the impact of situational variables on opportunity to offend, and these too will be addressed in study three.

Chapter 5

STUDY THREE- A Qualitative study of Religious Leaders who have Committed Child Sexual Offences

“WHOEVER WISHES TO KEEP A SECRET MUST HIDE THE FACT THAT HE POSSESSES ONE.”

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

The previous two studies in this thesis have established an unexpected relationship between religiosity and sexual misconduct in an incarcerated as well as a non-offending adult population. Study one showed that incarcerated sexual offenders' life-course religious affiliations were associated with their sexual offence convictions. It became evident that those offenders who had maintained religious involvement from childhood to adulthood had more sexual offence convictions, more victims and younger victims than other groups. Subsequently, study two further investigated not only whether the unexpected results were able to be replicated in a non-offending population but also sought to define the internal religious drives of this group. The second study, therefore, addressed religiosity, self-control, moral beliefs and self reported misconduct (including sexual misconduct) in a sample of not convicted university students. It concluded that there was a direct link between religiosity and sex offending, particularly by the group with an extrinsic religious orientation.

Very little research has examined this link between individual religiosity, self control, opportunity and sexual offending. Although much has been written on the inverse relationship between religiosity and criminality (Baier & Wright, 2001), no studies to date have investigated these factors in a sample of clerics or religious representatives. Study three investigates this link.

THE CHANGING FACE OF CONTEMPORARY RELIGION

In recent decades the Church has undergone unprecedented changes. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the declining numbers of clergymen. For instance, in the five years between 1968 and 1973 the Catholic Church in the United States were so severely effected by resignations that up to 96% of newly ordained priests were required to fill the vacancies made by mass resignations of priests (Schoenherr, 1993). The Australian experience has been similar with a steep decline in new vocations and an overall decrease of 80% of seminarians from 1965 to 1995 (McGillion, 2003). However, in Weigel's (2002) analysis of the recent history of the Catholic Church, vocations to the priesthood in the US have turned upward in the last few years with the reform of the seminaries, although absolute numbers may fall drastically in the decades ahead due to the large number of elderly priests. Despite these declining candidates for ecclesiastical and seminarian training since the 1960s, the 1991 census still counted 12400 ministers of religion in Australia with the rate of sexual offending among this population estimated at 4% (McGlone, 2004).

More recently, many denominations are filling this shortfall of clerics with lay ministers. For instance, more than 3300 American parishes are led by pastoral administrators, nearly half of whom are lay, a third of whom are women religious (Sisters), and nearly 20% of whom are permanent deacons. These non-priest parish administrators are now performing many of the functions traditionally associated with a parish's pastor and his associates (Feuerherd, 2003). Meanwhile, over the past three decades enrolment in lay ecclesial ministry programs has more than tripled, adding support for a changing face to contemporary ecclesiastical systems (Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 2007).

BACKGROUND

Clergy sexual abuse of children first came to widespread public attention in 1984, although it was as far back as the early 1970s that the Vatican received warnings about potential trouble with paedophilic priests (Berry, 2000). It was during the 1970's that Catholic treatment centres for priests with "psychosexual disorders" began appearing around the world. In 1984 in the diocese of Lafayette in the United States, a parish priest, Father Gilbert Gauthé, was arrested and charged with multiple counts of child sexual abuse (Berry, 2000). Soon after Gauthé's arrest, two other priests of the diocese were charged with similar sexual crimes against children. Lafayette's management of its abusive priests later proved to be paradigmatic. However, 2002 saw the Boston Archdiocese crisis and the discovery that a number of churches and institutions had covered up

incidents of child sexual abuse. These incidents marked a turning point in the churches' response to sexual abuse by clergy. The crisis focused on the mishandling by diocesan bishops of allegations of abuse, in particular that of Cardinal Bernard Law (Belluck, 2002). Law, the Archbishop of Boston, had reappointed priests in dioceses other than their own despite their having been accused previously of sexual abuse.

As a result, in 2003, the Boston Archdiocese paid \$85 million to 54 claimants of sexual abuse by clergy. The Portland Archdiocese, which had already paid compensation of over \$53 million, declared bankruptcy when confronted with a further \$155 million in new claims. Other Archdioceses soon did the same (Rabinowitz, 2005). More recently, the Los Angeles Archdiocese agreed to settle on payments of \$758 million to victims of past sexual abuse within the Catholic Church (Flaccus, 2007). While payouts in Australia will most likely never come in range of those of North America, by 2006 in Australia the Anglican Church had paid approximately \$15 million in compensation to clergy sexual abuse victims (Rowbotham, 2006).

Cleric sexual misconduct is now considered one of the biggest crises in the history of Catholicism, at least since the Reformation, and it has ultimately resulted in far reaching systemic policy changes within the church (Plante, 2004). A John Jay College report (2004) found that by the end of 2002 in America alone, 4392 priests and several bishops had been accused of sexual misconduct with children. There are also major implications for other denominations and faiths and the impact has already impinged on pastoral

training and on how denominations conduct their ministry. As a consequence of this sexual abuse the perception of priests as trusted moral role models has been seriously challenged. Those non-offending clergy have suffered the parishioners' lack of faith and consequently their credibility has been undermined, their morale diminished, and their integrity and commitment wavered (Cozzens, 2000).

CLERGY MISCONDUCT

Research indicates that sexual misconduct with adult parishioners is at least as prevalent among clergy as it is among mental health professionals (Cooper-White, 1991). In his study of 300 clergy, Blackmon (1984) found that 37% reported engaging in sexual behaviour inappropriate for a minister and of these 13% reported sexual intercourse with a church member other than their spouse. Sexual contact between clergy and parishioner whilst in a professional relationship is considered exploitive and abusive and compromising effective pastoral relationships (Compliment, 1997). Such contact is problematic from a moral ethical standpoint as well as from a professional perspective as once sexual contact occurs the nature of the pastoral relationship is violated.

Haywood, Kravitz, Wasyliv, Goldberg, and Cavanaugh, (1996:1241) claim "non-cleric sexually abusive behaviour may be influenced more by psychiatric disorders and by antisocial personality traits, whereas cleric

sexual offences may be related more to psychosexual adjustment and developmental issues and less to severe mental disorder”.

SITUATIONAL FACTORS IN CLERGY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

An array of unstructured activities often enable opportunities for adults to engage emotionally and privately with vulnerable children and adults, who in turn place special trust in religious leaders (Parkinson, 2001). Clergy are almost the last helping professionals in the unique position of visiting clients/parishioners in the privacy of their homes presenting opportunities not available to many other professions.

Heterogeneity of clerics

“In the first year, there were about twenty. Some already with university degrees, one with a doctorate. Some can only be described as barely literate. Some had professional experience...others were direct from school or even minor seminary. Some few had come from the Anglican Church – recent converts. Several were refugees from Vietnam sent on to London by the Bishop of Oslo...” (Potts, 2003:3).

As Potts, an ex-priest, describes his cohorts during seminary training, the heterogeneity of future ecclesiastical members is evident. The Church, as a social services institution, is overflowing with such diversity. As in other such institutions, its members struggle with “doing good” while at the same time “being good” (Balboni, 1998). Priests and ministers are expected to be “holy men” emanating trust. With the abuse of trust subsequent to the child

abuse scandals of the past three decades, many Churches of different denominations developed policies and procedures to deal with the issue of sexual abuse (Blair, 1999; Parkinson, 2001). These procedures endeavoured to repair previously damaging sexual misconduct policies evident in the ecclesiastical cultural environment; secrecy, denial and reassignment of clergy-perpetrators to other parishes. As sexual misconduct was seen as a 'moral failure', the primary focus of these earlier policies was on spiritual transgression and involved extensive prayer, spiritual direction and psychological treatment (Berry 2000). Not surprisingly, recent years have seen screening measures devised for clergy, other staff and volunteers (Blair, 1999), with potential clerics from many denominations now undergoing psychosexual assessment. Many also now require reference letters in support of their application.

These present policies focus on the handling of abuse claims and outline a pathway for victims and a method of disciplining offenders (Parkinson, 2001). While these new procedures assist decision-making subsequent to an offence occurring or screen out possible deviant dispositions, other multiple-systemic factors incorporated in church life, that possibly underline the current crisis and contribute to the propensity for clerical misconduct, are not addressed. These factors include ecclesial patterns of communication, operation, discipline, and clergy formation by the seminaries (Friberg & Lasser, 1998). In the past, when the leadership in the hierarchy failed to act appropriately to claims of abuse, the congregation

was further traumatised. As a result, the mission of the congregation was often diminished for decades. Psychiatrist and former Benedictine monk Richard Sipe (1995) suggests a typical pattern of sexual networking exists within the church hierarchy. It begins with the priest becoming sexually involved with a seminarian and then the younger cleric following his elder up the diocesan hierarchy. This bond of secrecy introduces the opportunity for blackmail, with those in authority unable to take action against others because they themselves have been compromised.

Cleric work stressors

In recent years, most mainstream denominations have reported declining numbers of church members, of clergy entering the seminaries and reduced church incomes. Cultural changes within the church have included debate around and rejection of traditional philosophies of knowledge and values, all of which have impacted strongly on Christian churches and parish numbers. Although this has resulted in clergy having greater numbers in their care, the extra workload has in fact contributed to increased social isolation. In a study of 142 Roman Catholic priests, Virginia (1998) found significantly greater emotional exhaustion and greater depression (72%) in priests serving in parishes, as opposed to cloistered priests. Such stress is challenging the emotional, spiritual and psychological boundaries of vulnerable clerics. Research points to an alarmingly high rate of clergy burnout. A study by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) found that up to one-fifth of all Synod parish pastors exhibited advanced stages of

burnout (Klaas & Klaas, 1999). Many clergy describe working up to 62 hours per week, experience their work as perpetually unfinished and as having intangible results. Indeed in this study, spirituality alone has been shown as significant in predicting burnout even when controlling for personality and work environment (Golden et al., 2004). Given this environmental context of work-related stressors, Wicks (2003) suggested a correlation between clergy burnout and clergy sexual misconduct, at least with adult parishioners. He proposed that burnout results in a vulnerability to counter-transference in counselling sessions.

Seminary recruitment and training

A consistent theme in determining the difference between clergy and non-clergy offenders has been the hypothesis that some aspect in the training, recruitment process, and enforced celibacy cause arrested adolescent sexual development in some clergy (McGlone, 2004). Earlier recruitment procedures between the 1960s and 1980s for priesthood selection may have figured in particular aspects of the offending clergy's propensity towards sexual abuse. Often there was no preliminary screening at all for candidates, but rather students were admitted on the basis that they had an interest in becoming a priest (Murphy, Buckley & Joyce, 2005). During this time, entry to priesthood was possible for candidates as young as fourteen years through a junior institution and often involved complete isolation from families, the community and mixed gender interactions

(Parkinson, 2001). These circumstances give rise to the explanation that the offending clergys' sexual attraction to adolescent boys reflects an arrested stage of psychosexual development, an immature stage when many boys experience a period of same-sex attraction. Bennett (2004) suggested that those seminarians not emotionally or psychologically developed prior to entering the seminary, remained underdeveloped and were ordained as 'emotionally adolescent' priests. Seminarians were often unprepared for the challenges of priesthood including having to live living a chaste and celibate life (Bennett, 2004).

In addition, Plante (1999) suggested that the seminaries earlier failure to discuss sexuality resulted in a closed environment of secrecy and rigidity. According to Coleman, president of the St Patrick's seminary, the Church would benefit "from more open discussion of sexual matters, especially between priests and bishops" (Lattin, 1999).

In 1992, Pope John Paul II prepared one of the longest papal documents in Catholic history in an effort to address the growing Catholic problem of priestly training. The Pastores Dabo Vobis ("I Shall Give You Shepherds") explored the crisis of priestly identity, the reform of seminaries and the renewal of priestly life (Weigel, 2002). Pope John Paul II urged a more demanding training program for seminarians, principally in philosophy and theology. Seminaries began to reject entry of candidates with a doubtful sexual past. The reduced number of abuse allegations from this time onwards has been attributed to these reforms (Weigel, 2002).

In his 1972 report to the Synod of Bishops, Baars surveyed 1500 priests, many of whom suggested their seminary training had offered little to prepare them for a lifetime of celibacy. More recently, in the aftermath of the crisis caused by the sex abuse allegations and the integration of the papal reforms, the Catholic Church has begun seminary training that provides candidates for the priesthood with skills to deal with a life of celibacy. However this training has been surprisingly deficient in addressing self-awareness and relationship issues. Birchard (2000) found that clerics attribute sexual abuse primarily to factors such as ambiguous personal boundaries, neediness of the cleric, and absence of awareness training. Indeed, in Birchard's (2000) study, 91% of clerics nominated the absence of awareness training as the single most important factor they believed contributed to the likelihood of sexual abuse. These clerics saw the need for seminary training to be more comprehensive and particularly to address sexuality/celibacy issues. The curriculum and method of teaching is often insensitive to the widely varying needs of the students (Potts, 2003). According to Hall, (1997:252) that although there have been some recent improvements, there...

“...remains a substantial gap in traditional seminary training. Pastors typically take only one to two counselling courses throughout their seminary training. Furthermore, there is a lack of emphasis on relationships in general, and especially on understanding one's self and developing in the area of relational maturity. Ironically, the very thing that is emphasised least in the seminary can be tied to almost every problem the research indicates is prevalent among pastors (e.g. burnout, sexual misconduct, unrealistic

expectations, feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, loneliness, isolations, and poor marital adjustment).”

It is therefore evident that the perpetration of sexual abuse against children by those in religious institutions appears to follow a different pattern to other sexual offenders. Sex offences by clergy or religious leaders differ in some crucial ways to non-cleric sex offences and a number of dispositional characteristics of the offender (psychological, emotional, cognitive), interpersonal relationships (family, friends, romantic), victimisation history (physical, sexual, psychological) religious orientation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and situational factors (work stressors, seminary recruitment, pastoral opportunities) have been found to play a part in clergy sex offending. Given these characteristics it is therefore unclear whether clergy sexual abuse results from unique situational factors, or whether there may also be an individual-level relationship between religiosity and sexual offending.

In keeping with Gottfredson and Hirschi’s (1990) general theory of crime, this qualitative third study will also consider the role of internal controls (e.g. low self control) and external social controls (e.g. religious orientation, opportunity) play as a factor in the abuse by this specialised population. In addition, the study will address preventative factors as self-reported by the participants including strategies that may have prevented this abuse from occurring. This final study will take a phenomenological approach to describe the lived experience of those clergy and religious leaders who have offended sexually and identify systemic and situational themes that emerge from their experiences.

METHOD

Participants

A sample of 4 convicted clergy or lay religious leader sexual offenders, aged between 52 years and 68 years, was recruited from custodial and community correctional centres within Queensland, Australia. Of these men, two were single, one separated and one married. Two of the men indicated they were homosexual whilst the other two identified as being heterosexual. One of the participants was on the waitlist for mandated sexual offender treatment whilst the remaining three had all completed such treatment after being convicted of sex offences against children (range =2–62 victims). The victims were made up of both boys and girls, aged 1-16 years and none were the participants own biological children.

On the basis of the inclusion criteria and to maintain privacy, potential participants were identified and solicited individually by the Department of Corrective Services research staff. The potential participants were then given information about the study and consent forms explaining the voluntary and confidential nature of the investigation. By signing the consent form, interested clients indicated their willingness to be contacted by the investigator. Of the 14 clients who were targeted by Department of Corrections, only eight had offended in a religious setting and were considered suitable for the study. These eight men were contacted initially by the correctional staff. Of these, three responded with interest. Using the technique of ‘snowballing’ a further two potential participants were

identified by those already participating. Of these two, one agreed to participate in the study.

PROCEDURE

Before each interview began, participants were informed that they were free to withdraw at any time and that their decision to participate would have no bearing on their treatment or on the course or disposition of any criminal proceedings. It was made clear that no-one in the court or correctional system would be informed of their participation. However, due to the sensitive nature of the interview, participants were told that although they would not be asked for identifying details about their offences or victims, the interviewer was ethically obliged to report any information they revealed about crimes against children not yet known to the authorities, including the identification of a child or actions that might place a child at risk for abuse.

Interview segments conducted in the correctional setting, either community or custodial, were an average of two hours in length and were audio-taped for later transcription. All identifying information was removed from the written data. Reflective listening, clarification and prompting communication skills were used for clarification and to facilitate the discussion. Participants discussed their ideas freely and with minimum influence from the researcher. It was important to involve the participants at this stage of the analytical process. They were asked to validate their experiences by making comments if they wished to add any or mark

sections of text they wanted withdrawn on a copy of the transcript. Feedback demonstrated that the participants felt their transcript accurately represented what was said and was a true presentation of their experience.

Qualitative data collection and case study analysis

To ensure rigorous deductive interpretation it is crucial to give explicit definitions and adhere to coding rules for each deductive category. Just as quantitative researchers employ a variety of methods to establish reliability and validity, so too must qualitative researchers address the concept of rigor. Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest four criteria to establish rigor, or trustworthiness, of a qualitative study: confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability. These four criteria parallels a necessary component in a quantitative study and include specific methodological strategies for ensuring rigor, such as the audit trail, member checks, categorising, peer debriefing and negative case analysis. Since qualitative studies rest upon a different philosophical foundation and collect different types of data, rigor must be established with methods consistent with a qualitative design.

This thesis has employed several devices that are well accepted in qualitative research to reduce bias and enhance rigor. Respondents were interviewed over a period of time (prolonged engagement) and consulted about interpretations of data (member checking). Negative case analysis also improved trustworthiness of the research. With a re-examination of every

case, after the initial analysis was completed, to ensure the characteristics of the emergent themes were applicable to all cases. Triangulation was also used to increase validity by using additional quantitative forms of data as well as qualitative.

Three key issues emerge in the design of this research program: the principle of triangulation, the methodological assumptions that underpin qualitative and quantitative methods and the use of phenomenological theory to link the research.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a technique for improving the rigor of findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) in qualitative research and may be achieved in one of four ways: different sources of information, different methods, different investigators and various theories. Using different methods, such as in these three studies, allows for an examination of the research problem from alternate angles (Patton, 1990). Qualitative data provides much needed insights with many advantages found in the qualitative design. However one result is that researchers bring biases to their studies (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992), although Moustakas (1994) argues that researchers' own experiences are essential to the project as a whole. The phenomenological researcher must fully explore and describe her own experience with the phenomena in order to be able to engage in trying to understand another's experience. Therefore, efforts to understand and interpret the research were affected by my

background and ideas. I brought certain biases to this study as a psychologist. Therefore, although I read from a forensic psychologist perspective, care was taken to treat the text as naïve, and to seek divisions that occurred through the participant's perspective as narrated.

Data analysis in qualitative study

The qualitative analytic process is a recursive one with the analysis beginning at data collection and continuing throughout the study. It is based on reduction and interpretation of the data (Creswell, 1998). The goal of analysis is to develop thick descriptions that portray the lived experiences of those experiencing a particular phenomenon. Coding by concepts accomplishes this goal with several themes emerging. These themes can be generalized to major topics which then remain the focus of the study.

Colaizzi (1978) described a method of data analysis that provides a rich description of the essential structure of a phenomenon. His approach is particularly suited to the aims of this thesis because of its descriptive nature. Colaizzi's method comprises seven stages: a sense of the whole is accomplished by first reading the verbatim transcript of each participant; significant statements relevant to the phenomenon under study are extracted from the transcript and meanings formulated; meanings are then organized into themes which evolve into theme clusters and then theme categories; these results are then integrated into a rich description of the lived experience; the structure of the phenomenon is formulated; and finally

validation is sought from the participants to compare the results with their lived experience. Creating formulated meanings is a critical step of data reduction, preserving the meanings evident in the significant statements and uncovering the latent aspects of experiences that were not explicitly stated in the interview. The formulated meanings and thematic clusters give rise to the narrative description of the phenomenon.

Phenomenological Theory

When human phenomena such as sexual crimes are studied it is important to choose a research strategy that compliments the phenomena under study. Phenomenology is an inductive descriptive research approach particularly suited to psychology. The focus of study is the lived experience which aims to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the respondent. Phenomenology is concerned with the primary reality, the phenomena itself as it appears (Smith, 2003). There are a number of approaches used by phenomenologists but the one used here is Husserlian transcendental (descriptive) phenomenology.

Husserlian Phenomenology

Husserl's philosophy had major impact in the field of qualitative research by emphasizing description of the individual's lived experience. Husserl (1925/1977) established that the human experience is a system of interrelated meanings bound up in the totality labelled 'lifeworld'. Therefore, human meanings are the key to studying the lived experience. Husserl

believed in phenomenological reduction; that reflection on existing beliefs allowed for unadulterated phenomena that were otherwise unobtainable (Cohen & Omery, 1994). In this instance, the third descriptive study will investigate the lived experience of clergy and lay religious leaders who have committed sexual offences and Husserlian phenomenology, with its descriptive orientation, is best suited for this purpose.

In-depth interviews

In-depth or unstructured interviewing is a type of interview often used in qualitative research. Here researchers hope to elicit information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation; it can also be used to explore interesting areas for further investigation. This type of interview involves open-ended questions, and probes when necessary to obtain further data. The approach to conducting the qualitative interview in this study was the "guided interview". When using this approach, a basic checklist is prepared to make sure that all relevant topics are covered. The interviewer is still free to explore and probe. This type of interview approach is useful for eliciting information about specific topics while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters traced out by the aim of the study.

One purpose of the interviews in the third study will be to develop a perspective and understanding of clergy's view about their offence and the impact their religious orientation and ecclesiastical position had on their

behaviour. Because the interviews will acknowledge the connectedness between the individuals and their faith, they should be a rich source of information about the ways perceptions of religion mediate the men's experiences with regard to offending. They provide space for the men to talk about aspects of their private lives and how these aspects related to their experiences. The men who consented to be interviewed in-depth indicated that they appreciated having an opportunity to reflect upon their experiences, revisit their struggles and express their views. Consider, for example, the following testimonials:

“I've been in here (prison) for seven years...apart from the police you're the first person I've spoken to about what happened.”

“I think it's important for me to be able to talk about my side of what really happened. No-one really wanted to hear before now”

There are several advantages to qualitative research: flexibility, it allows for conceptual development throughout the investigation; the data gathered needs not always prove preconceived hypotheses; it provides the possibility of investigating not just variables but essential elements and people as a whole; and the integration of data can be carried out from the point of view of the informants themselves. This last point is important because the way people talk about their lives is significant just as the language they use reveals the world that they see.

Case studies rest on the assumption that information gathered from the experience of a small number of cases can provide relevant information

about a larger population. In this instance, time was initially spent establishing rapport with each participant because the purpose of a phenomenological interview is to gain understanding. One of the objectives of this study was to have the participants speak as freely as possible and, to enable this, data were collected using non-directive semi-structured interviews. Previous studies have shown that this type of interview is efficient in gathering data in a population of sex abusers (Li, West, and Woodhouse 1993). An interview guide was used for the in-depth, open-ended interviews; this guide denoted a level of structure to the interview despite the conversational appearance of the interview.

The interviews were conducted by the present author and each lasted between 120 and 150 minutes. Three participants were interviewed twice and one participant was interviewed four times. Understandably, the participants were very wary about being audio-taped and initially only two agreed to have his interview audio-taped. However, after the first interview the other two participants became confident enough to agree to audio-taping. As stated in the consent form, these tapes were later transcribed and then erased. To maintain anonymity the identity of the participants' parish or seminary was not recorded. Transcription was performed by the researcher, and this enabled her to have the opportunity of increased time with the data. For those non-taped interviews, numerous notes were made throughout and after the initial interview. During later interviews the participants re-visited the questions and this was captured on audio-tape.

Immediately after each interview the researcher recorded her initial thoughts and impressions about the interview. The transcripts were analysed in accordance with the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and proceeded through the stages outlined in figure 1 (Willig, 2001).

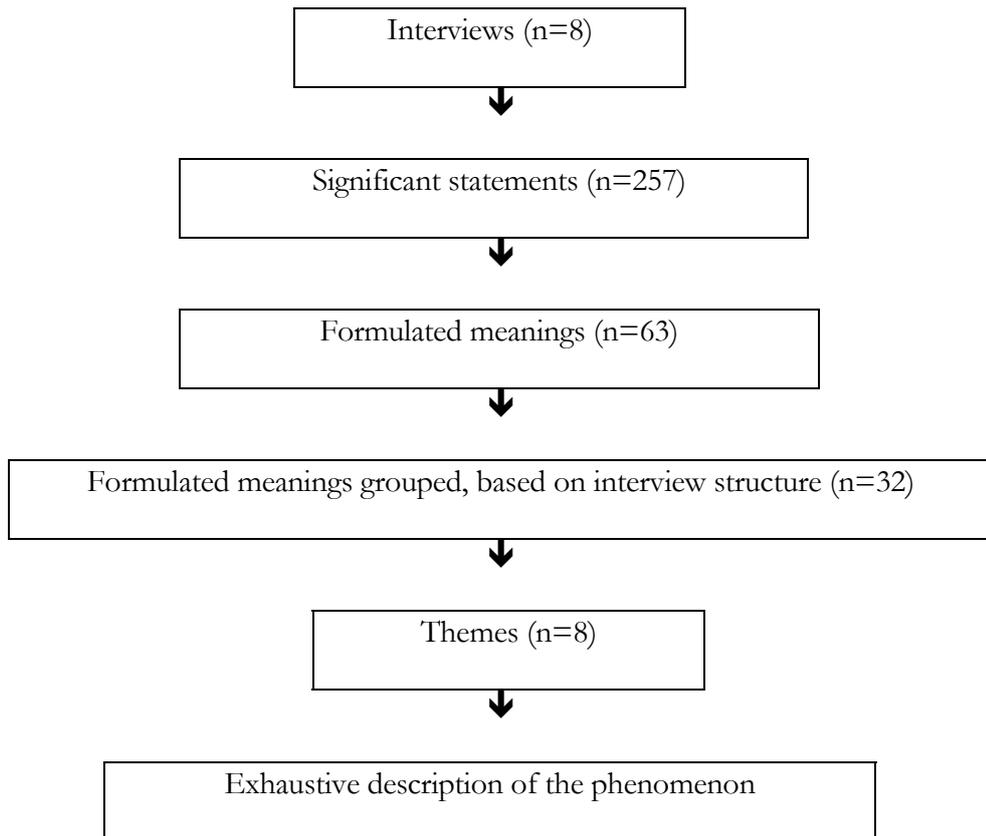


Figure 2. Summary of qualitative data analysis

In phenomenological interviews, a large amount of information is accumulated that must be managed by the process of data reduction. Interview transcripts were analysed individually and each read several times before their significant statements were extracted (see table 5.1).

Table 5.1:

Example of how significant statements were identified and extracted from Jaces' interview (Transcript 2, page 18, lines 1-4).

Statement	Significant statement
<p><i>Yeab, as far as my relationship with God goes, I worry, <u>I've let Him down</u>, and you can't deny what I've done was wrong. <u>I've ruined my witness and his witness through me</u>. And one thing that concerns me a lot is if I actually <u>turned any of my victims away from the church....I feel I've been forgiven by God.</u></i></p>	<p><i>I've let Him (God) down; I've ruined my witness and His witness through me. It concerns me if I've turned any of my victims away from the church</i></p>

Once significant statements were identified and extracted, themes and their meanings were then identified. This is a precarious step as the researcher must be cognisant of contextual factors that the meanings, such as jargon and strong emotion. See Appendix “G” for an illustration of the process of creating meanings from significant statements. Formulated themes were then tentatively organised into clusters that represent specific themes and explored in more detail. Each theme’s relation to other themes was then also examined for interrelatedness. Finally themes were integrated across transcripts to allow identification of shared themes which captured the essence of the participants’ experience of formation and offending (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). As such, the themes and comparisons were text-based. Interviews were organized by means of cross-case analysis, where each theme emerging from the content analysis was compared vertically (within each participant's data) and horizontally (between

participants). Data analysis focused on patterns or recurrent themes emerging from the data rather than on predetermined categories. After an initial review of the different themes mentioned by the participants, efforts were made to reduce the number of these themes by collapsing them into the broader categories listed in Table 5.2 (Schneider 1999).

Table 5.2:
Classification themes used to Code the transcript dialogue from the structured interviews

<p>1. Situational factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral activities Burnout symptoms Opportunity 	<p>2. Cognitive distortions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious Victim acquiescence Love relationship
<p>3. Precipitators to offending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental state Fantatising Church based activities Grooming behaviours Low self-control 	<p>4. Religious influence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family life Strength Weakness Guilt and remorse Religious orientation
<p>5. Seminary experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sexuality Seminary life Curriculum Supervisors Entrance criteria 	<p>6. Church as institution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hierarchy Abandonment
<p>7. Personality factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childhood abuse Social isolation Sexuality Shyness Family 	<p>8. Preventative features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fear of capture Victim non-compliance Help-seeking behaviour Increased supervision and media attention

This systematic method was in itself a technique to enhance the rigor of the research. Padgett (2004) recommends several strategies such as negative case analysis to improve trustworthiness of the research. In the present study, negative case analysis involved a re-examination of every case, after the initial analysis was completed, to ensure the characteristics of the emergent themes were applicable to all cases. Further, rigor was ensured with member checking, which involved a second interview with respondents to review the accuracy of facts and observations and to give them the opportunity to further clarify statements or provide additional information (Creswell, 1998). To ensure transferability so that other researchers can apply the findings to their own, the findings will be presented with ‘thick’ descriptions of the phenomenon.

MATERIALS

In order to ascertain the respondents’ degree of past unlawful behaviour, they were required to complete the National Youth Survey (Elliot et al., 1987)

Unlawful behaviour

The National Youth Survey (NYS) (Elliot et al., 1987) has been adjusted from that used in study two in order to apply to an adult sample and to include adult workplace crimes and white collar crimes. Respondents were asked whether they had ever committed any of 40 different deviant and criminal acts either during adolescence or during the past year.

Responses were dichotomised (0=no, 1=yes) and then summed to obtain individual scores. The measure also yields a composite score (general crime) score ranging from 0 to 40.

RESULTS

First, a description of the study sample will be summarised quantitatively. Second, the emergent themes will be stated and samples of dialogue that capture each theme displayed. The articulated experience of how the participants constructed their reality and made meaning of their experiences produced rich material from which to draw inferences about why these four highly religious men became sexually involved with those in their care. Finally, qualitative themes will be presented in a conceptual map (visual display).

Demographic characteristics

The sample consisted of four adult male sex offenders who participated in semi-structured face to face interviews. To protect their anonymity some of their identifying characteristics have been changed (eg. ages have been generalised, childhood towns and parishes removed, and number of years ordained has been altered). A total of 8 interviews were conducted. Table 5.3 displays demographic characteristics and offence histories for each participant.

While sexual offenders are often defined by their offence and assigned into a separate category to other offenders in many respects they are no different to other offenders and indeed they regularly engage in a range of other criminal behaviours. Such versatility is increasingly being viewed as evidence that these offenders are both generalists and specialists and that their index offences do not therefore necessarily predict future offences (Soothill, et al. 2000). However, perhaps not surprisingly given the specialised population under study, the general crime score for all four participants was low and consisted mainly of petty incidents. For example, Jace's score of 1 can be attributed to speeding over 30kms and Karl's score of 5 to illegal parking, speeding over 30kms, urinating in a public place, and not returning surplus change.

Somewhat more unexpectedly was the participants' response to the two questions in the amended National Youth Survey which addressed sexual offending. Despite all being incarcerated at some point for child sex offences, none of the men considered that they "had used force to obtain sexual favours" or "had or tried to have sex with someone against their will". Their explanation of their behaviour was that their victims had not been forced nor objected to their attentions. Had this been so, they stated, then the men themselves would have ceased the sexual activity.

Table 5.3:

Demographic characteristics of Cleric and lay religious leader participants

Participant	Age	Educ.	Marital Status	Age at 1 st Offence	Victim Gender	No. of Victims	Age of Victims	Sentence	General Crime Score (/ 40)
Karl	60s	Year 10	S	27y	Male	4	12-17y	6y	5
Rev. Pete	60s	Tertiary	M	31y	Male	2	10-14y	5y	4
Jace	50s	Year 12	Div.	15y	Female	62	1-15y	Life x 2	1
Fr. Kant	60s	Tertiary	S	29y	Male	9	12-15y	6y	3

Karl, Rev. Pete and Fr. Kant had previously attended court ordered sex offender treatment although Jace was still awaiting such treatment after being on the list for two years. This delay was due in part to his sentence of two life terms and perhaps the belief by correctional authorities that there remained ‘plenty’ of time for him to engage in a treatment program. The four participants are presented here by brief narrative summaries:

Participant 1 - *The ‘church volunteer’* – Karl

Karl, in his 60s, is a single man who volunteered for many years at a Catholic orphanage. He was found guilty of 27 child sex offences against four boys under 15years. Included in these charges was that of maintaining a sexual relationship with a 12 year old boy from the orphanage.

Karl reports a poverty-stricken childhood with an alcoholic father and a long-suffering mother. When Karl was still young his father left the home, never to be heard of again. Karl’s mother then had to support her two

children, Karl and his younger brother. He describes a childhood lacking in intimacy or closeness and reports being infatuated at the age of 14 years with the family priest. Karl was raised as a Catholic and attended regular church sessions, sometimes twice weekly. Sexual issues were never discussed at home but he describes his first sexual experience, with his priest showing him how to masturbate. Karl recalls this experience as a pleasant one and one that continued for a number of years. As an adult, Karl began frequenting public toilets and partaking in anonymous sex with other males. He states he was initially confused about his sexuality but believed he was homosexual. At the age of 22 years, Karl began seeking sexual connections with young adolescents. Initially, these connections were satisfied by 'street' kids who were eager to exchange sexual favours for money or gifts. He was sexually attracted to males who were about 13 years of age and reports excitement at teaching them sexual pleasure. Karl continued to attend church and feel wholeness in his religion. He believed he must spread the 'good' of himself as if called by the Lord.

When he was 25 he began volunteering at the local Catholic orphanage on weekends and after work. Very soon he was drawn to a quiet lad of 12 years, whom Karl states, "*would always find a way to spend time with me*". Karl groomed 'Tom' slowly, bringing him gifts and bestowing special time on him. They would attend mass together and Karl would bring gifts also for the nuns who ran the orphanage. "*They thought I was a pretty good bloke*" he says. Before long Karl had introduced sexual activities to Tom

which included masturbation and oral sex. As their relationship continued over the years, this contact developed into penetrative sexual activity. Tom moved in to live with Karl with the nuns' blessing when Tom was 14 years old. Tom was of small stature and grateful for the attention Karl gave him. Karl recalls these years as the best ever -*"it was heaven"*. Tom left Karl's residence at 19 years of age and the two continued contact even after Tom married and had his own children. At times Karl would also mind Tom's children.

Twenty years after their first contact, Tom reported the abuse to the police and Karl was arrested. He was sentenced to six years incarceration. As a result of this, his mother and brother have disowned him and Karl has had no contact with them since his incarceration. He is no longer a church-goer, exclaiming that the church has let him down; *"I do not need to be in a special place to worship the Lord. There is a lot of corruption in the church."*

Karl professes his love for Tom even now.

Participant 2 - *The Minister* – Reverend. Pete

Reverend Pete, in his 60s, is a married Anglican priest who had maintained a sexual relationship with two brothers 10 and 12 years of age. His sexual contact with adolescents began prior to his ministry life and, he claims, ceased before he was ordained. He pleaded guilty to a number of sex

charges, including nine counts of sodomy and 17 of indecent dealing, against five boys aged 10 to 14 years.

Reverend Pete recalls a physically abusive childhood and was often severely disciplined by his distant father. Once he reached about four years of age, he recalls his grandfather started to sexually abuse him. The abuse was kept secret and this silence caused great pain and confusion for Rev. Pete.

Reverend Pete did not commence his working life with the church but claims in his thirties he felt a “*divine call from our Lord*” to work in the ministry. He initially became a lay assistant pastor with his church. During this time he describes himself as being lonely and unable to meet a partner. He also was plagued by sexual thoughts of young boys although at this stage he had not acted on this obsession. Once he sought advice from his superior about his sexual preoccupation and was given ways to distract himself from sexual thoughts and told to forget about it. He was told that it would be best for all concerned to not talk about it and better not to get everyone upset, or in other words, according to Reverend Pete, not ‘*rock the boat*’. Reverend Pete became more frustrated, unable to deal with his loneliness and confused mind and whilst still a layman, he began to abuse his first victim.

Despite knowing his behaviour was wrong, he states he could not stop himself from thinking about and abusing his boys. Reverend Pete

attributes his fall from grace as a consequence partially of his failed attempt at communicating his inappropriate sexual thoughts with his supervisor. Reverend Pete had earlier began running a youth group which allowed him exposure to a number of young adolescents. He encouraged behaviour such as skinny-dipping and playing strip poker amongst the boys. He befriended the boys' parents and was a regular visitor to their home. He began fondling the boys, first over their clothes, then under them, starting with back rubs but progressing further when there were no objections. Not long after, at the age of 35, he also enrolled in a seminary. Reverend Pete recalls his entry into seminary and the interview he had with a psychiatrist as part of his ordination selection. He openly indicates a self-awareness that he must keep his past inappropriate sexual activities and desires silent in order to be accepted as a suitable candidate.

Reverend Pete was one of the older students in his year, and at the seminary he met the sister of a seminarian friend who was to later become Reverend Pete's wife. He does not recall any sexual development training whilst at the seminary training college but does remember that the seminarians were all encouraged to mix within their circle and not with the outside community.

Several years later, after being a parish priest for some time, the family of the boys complained to the church authorities about Reverend Pete. Following investigation by the church, Reverend Pete was allowed to remain in his position of parish priest with the added conditions that he have

supervision when dealing with young boys and that he receive counselling for his problems. Reverend Pete continued in his role of parish priest until his arrest by police some years later. It was at this point the church revoked his licence to officiate.

While Reverend Pete knows his acts were a sin against his God, and a crime in society, he believes that he has been open all along about his previous sexual behaviour since it was first brought to the attention of the church and has repented for his sins. He claims that much of what the boys alleged did not occur and denies any of the sodomy complaints. Reverend Pete strongly believes he has paid the consequences as has his wife. After apologising to the family, his victims and his God, he feels he has made his peace.

Participant 3 - *The 'trusted religious leader'* – Jace

Jace, in his 50's, is divorced male who held the position of religious leader to a number of groups within his church. He pleaded guilty to 118 child sex offences, over a period of three decades, with 62 victims ranging in age from 1 to 15 years. Jace was sentenced to two indefinite life sentences.

Jace, the son of a church deacon, was one of three children and had two younger sisters. He experienced no physical, sexual or emotional abuse within his family whilst growing up. Jace experienced his childhood as very religious, reporting that the whole family attended Baptist church weekly,

sometimes morning and night. However, it was not until the age of 18 that he states he made a real commitment to the church. Until this time he would attend religious services with the family unit as was expected. Jace experienced intense shyness as a youth. He found it difficult to mix with girls and felt apprehensive around them. However, he felt less judged by the younger ones and as an adolescent was attracted to 10 to 11 year old girls. He was involved in mutual masturbation as a young child with other children, and at the age of eight years recalled being sexually abused by the father of these children. This abuse went on for 18 months.

Jace remembers his first victim as being his seven year old sister when he was 15 years old. Over the next several years, his sexual offences involved mainly voyeuristic behaviour and videotaping girls. He continued to feel apprehensive around girls of his own age, and as he got older this attraction for his ideal opposite-sex partner of around 11 years of age remained. In fact, Jace describes his first kiss as being at the age of 21 with a 12 year old girl at the Scripture Union Leadership camp. *"I still remember her name and I still remember her face"*, he claims.

Jace spent much of his spare time outside of work participating in religious activity groups with children. Initially he attended scripture reading groups which involved a range of age groups and later leadership camps for the Baptist church, a role that involved Jace as leader at overnight camps for young children. After being denied access to leadership camps following a

complaint by a past victim he had abused, Jace became a Boys Brigade leader, and finally a coach for the gymnastics club.

He married in his late 30s and had two children. The marriage dissolved 12 years later, at the time of his first conviction. He continues to have a strong faith but puzzles over his life of sexual offending, stating that he is “*Christian in all ways... in all ways except that area of my life. In that sexual area of my life and I found it vary hard to control*”. He describes his attempts to gain psychological help during his offending years as being mostly futile as therapy was usually only available to those already convicted. Consequently, Jace continued to offend until the day he was caught.

His parents, now in their 70s, continue to support Jace and visit weekly at the correctional facility, with Jace phoning them daily.

Participant 4 - *The Priest* – Father Kant

Father Kant, in his 60s, was an ordained Catholic priest. He pleaded guilty to sexually abusing nine boys, between 12 and 15 years of age, whilst in his care over a number of years. At the time of his offences he was in his late 20's and was a parish priest and school chaplain.

Father Kant was the seventh child in a family of eight. He grew up on a poor dairy farm but with parents he describes as “*saintly*” and church-going people who took an active role in the congregation. “*I came from a very traditional Catholic family; we prayed the rosary every evening as a family*” he

explained. His family, particularly his mother, was pleased when he decided to become a priest. He recalls being sent off, at his own insistence, to minor seminary when he was 14 years old and describes it as a school to prepare teenagers for Catholic seminary and later priesthood.

He recalls as a young seminarian completing his internship at the age of 23, the time an older priest held him down and had oral sex with him. He felt violated and uncertain about his future. This was his first sexual experience and he feared from his response that he may be homosexual. Around this age, he started fantasising about young boys and thought it may be part of his developing homosexuality or a stage he was going through. Father Kant did not know who to speak to about his own abuse; he was too embarrassed to be open with his supervisor. No one seemed to listen to his futile attempts to find reassurance. He pushed on, determined to exemplify his own priestly expectations but recalls later reading reports that his attacker had been charged with sexual offences against another child.

Father Kant described symptoms similar to 'burn out' leading up to his offences:

"...I think I was disillusioned by it all...I never expected when I first began my career that I would get caught up in so much of the mundane matters, you know...committee meetings, so many of them...the bureaucracy of the church, and the day in day out dealing with little issues. I became bored and angry. I had lost my joy...my love of serving God".

In retrospect, he views his behaviour as an attempt at reducing the stress build-up. He was overworked, had little free time, he was isolated from any appropriate intimate relationships and instead searched for intimacy with those who were inappropriate. He describes 'falling' into sexual misconduct with his victims. He initially paints a picture of wanting to be 'matey' with the boys, taking them out, teaching them to drive, and going camping. Father Kant would purchase alcohol and cigarettes and distribute them to the boys whilst on camping trips. The close camaraderie that followed and the disinhibition often led to mutual touching and masturbation. At other times, he would drive boys home from church functions in the parish van and pull up along the way. Leg patting eventually led to fondling. However, he refuses to label this as grooming behaviour.

Following complaints to the authorities, Father Kant was removed from parish work and assigned to a role behind the scenes with no direct access to children. Father Kant does express much regret over his offences and he became tearful when he described the effects the abuse had on the victims. Despite this, Father Kant believes God forgives him for his sin. He continues to worship and feel at one with God.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

A number of common themes and experiences emerged from the stories of the four religious representatives. Some notable differences also emerged, indicating the importance of recognising the heterogeneity even in this small group. Eight tentative themes were identified for each case by

extracting the most salient issues for each man. The substantive categories were *situational factors*, *cognitive distortions*, *religious influence*, *preventative factors*, *the Church as institution*, *the seminary experience* (relevant to two of the four men), *personality factors*, and *precipitators to offending*. Each of these categories comprised up to five grouped meanings. Over the course of the study, the tree holding the coding scheme evolved. This occurred because if something did not fit easily into an existing category, a new category was added (Creswell, 1998). It is possible that these themes could have been recoded and collapsed. However, because this study was exploratory in nature, the decision was made to display all 31 grouped meanings across the eight categories for a rich description (Colaizzi, 1978) (see Table 5.2 for details of all grouped meanings).

Theme 1 – Situational factors

Situational factors are the relevant situational influences to the men's offending behaviour. These factors either provide opportunities for the offence to occur or present behavioural cues, social pressures and environmental stressors that precipitate an offending behaviour (Wortley, 2001). The situational factors in this theme are: Pastoral activities, burnout and opportunities.

Pastoral activities

The men shared a common theme of using pastoral activities to gain access to children. It is not uncommon for the religious offender to target those families that show deep faith in the church. The general consensus amongst the men was that children from these devout families are less likely to tell anyone about the abuse, and if they do are less likely to be believed by their caregiver. Father Kant explained:

“You have to remember that these were boys from very religious backgrounds. The Church and God were important in the lives of their families.”

The victims’ often devout attitude made it easy for their abusers to control them with suggestions, such as that to truly experience God’s love they needed to be open to touch.

The sexual abuse of these children commonly occurred on church property: church offices, church-owned cars and residential dwellings, as well as in church homes or even the homes of trusting families of abused children. The participants in this study would often invite a young child for weekend trips, to sleepover at the rectory, and to accompany them on outings which might otherwise be forbidden or would normally arouse parental suspicion. The two priests in this study appear to rationalise their increased contact with the families as being part of their pastoral duties:

“I had been a friend of the family for ten years; I would sometimes eat at their place, maybe relax and then play with the children. I helped the mother go through a divorce and move house. You have to remember all these roles were required of me as a pastor”.
(Reverend Pete)

“I would drive the children home from a church function in the parish van. Once I had dropped off all the other children, I would drive to an empty block nearby ...and I guess then I would start fondling...he didn't say to stop, so I think I just convinced myself he was fine with it.”(Father Kant)

The men would manufacture many excuses to be alone with a child (or group of children). Often the religious based camps or activities were used to get closer to their victims. For instance Jace explained:

“One girl on that leadership camp... she reckons from when she was about four I used to carry her home at night times sometime when she'd gone to sleep. Maybe I did ...I don't know...it started when she was about seven. I was 27.”

Similarly, Reverend Pete suggested he used fun pastoral activities to encourage closeness:

“We would have a great time wrestling together and skinny dipping. I'd take them fishing and teach them bush living. Some times we'd play cards...that sometimes led to strip poker”

Burnout symptoms

Burnout occurs with too much stress for too long, too few rewards, too many unrealistic expectations, too little role definition, too little appreciation, and too much criticism (Grosch & Olsen, 2000). Working up

to 60 hours every week, the pastors worked hard in their ministerial role and took their duties seriously. They worked diligently for their congregation but often felt unrecognised for their efforts. Pastors often become enmeshed with their congregations, making it difficult to create boundaries between home and work. Father Kant explained:

‘I’ve read a little bit about it over the years...I think I suffered from Church-burnout... I just didn't want to think about religion or about Christianity at this time; I just was too overwhelmed. I felt strongly that if I was to survive...then I had to get my life sorted. I also felt that I no longer had what it took to be a Christian.

Blackmon (1984) found that of 300 active ministers, 75% had experienced periods of high stress and 33% had seriously contemplated resigning from their vocation. Interestingly he also found that 13% of these clergy admitted to having sexual intercourse with a member of their church other than their wives. Studies suggest a complex relationship between situational and personal factors which impact on clergy burnout. Situational factors include physical isolation, repetitive nature of ministry, role conflict and ambiguity, poor support, institutional rigidity, and blurred boundaries between professional and personal life. Personal issues such as anger, low self esteem, frustration, poor time management and loneliness all appear to impact of susceptibility to develop burnout among clergy (Rassieur, 1982; Willimon, 1989).

The diversity of the today’s seminarians was seen as a positive by the men, who indicated such life experience in a number of stressful

occupations before entering the seminary would more likely protect the priests from work burnout once in the ministry. However, given the shortage of priests and the decrease in those now completing ordination, cases of burnout among clergy was thought likely to increase by Father Kant as he described his time in the seminary:

“When I went through seminary training we were a group of about 60 now I think the average number each year is seven.”

Despite the rewards generated by their chosen career paths, Reverend Pete describes the pitfalls:

“You know one of the most rewarding things about being a priest is being able to be part of a faith community. It is humbling to be invited into families at the times in their life that are monumental...you know we preside over weddings and baptisms and times of grief and heartbreak. (Long pause)... I think though this intensity also adds to stress and burnout”.

The men perceived difficulties in spiritual practice, citing frustration issues over parish time management and guilt over personal and congregational expectations. The open-ended nature of the job also meant the men were pressured by a job role that never ended. Mounting demands and expectations resulted in the cleric having less time for personal devotion although there was often the growing perception of the need for such devotions.

“I did neglect my own spiritual need. There was so much time pressure ...so much pressure from my parish duties that I found myself reading the bible for sermon preparation only. I wasn't addressing my own needs.” (Father Pete)

The men often reported feeling overwhelmed at work:

“I was working long hours, I would still...still find the time to visit the orphanage and drive the kids around in the bus...I do remember feeling constantly overwhelmed though.... Running between the two...so eventually small issues became difficult to handle and the big ones...well they were near impossible” (Karl)

Even before he started offending, Father Kant describes being weighed down with responsibilities:

“Worst of all was the deep sense of failure... (Pause)... and futility of it all. In spite of everything that had gone well ... (indistinct)... the church, I had lost confidence in my leadership ability. This resulted in a dark time for me.”

Opportunity

The men were unanimous that opportunity was a major factor in their victim selection and they would take advantage of overnight stays away from the child’s home to facilitate the sexual abusive situation. The men were ever ready to satisfy their needs as Reverend Pete explains:

“I didn’t start out with the idea of sexually abusing him...I have to say I had not even thought of it when we went on overnight camps. It just seemed to happen. ..but I am very sure I did not plan it...He would come to my hut for counselling, I would rub his back and it just went on from there.”

It was a similar story for Karl:

“A lot of it was opportunistic; there were occasions where I probably deliberately set out to, possibly to go after someone. You know I thought I might have had a chance, you know.”

Jace too believed opportunity played a large part in his offending:

“I thought it was an opportunity to film and I put the camera there and forget about it and see what happens, sort of thing. I guess on a lot of occasions I’d done that on a number of occasions with other people getting changed.”

Despite being aware that their actions were illegal and morally wrong, the men often seemed unable to resist the temptation and acted impulsively with little control over their actions:

“I knew it was wrong, that I shouldn’t be doing this. At the time the incident occurred, because the crutch of her togs was a little loose, it was a spur of the moment thing. I didn’t consciously plan on doing it.” (Jace)

Victims were usually children from single parents or orphans with little capable guardianship and lack of supervision. They were described by the men as being needy, isolated and lonely. In some instances the organisations who employed the offender appeared lax in recognising the extent of the abuse, and even when aware conspired to keep the allegations quiet by accepting the denial of the alleged perpetrator.

Theme 2 – Cognitive Distortions

The men experienced cognitive distortions that were products of their offending rather than the cause. These cognitive distortions hindered their ability to respond rationally to their sexual offending and allowed the men to continue their sexual behaviour without qualm. Nobus (2003) suggested clergymen will use their religious role and relationship with God within their distorted beliefs and that these beliefs are predominantly concentrated in the

areas of giving permission to self to offend, reducing guilt afterwards and maintaining a positive sense of self. Such distortions of thought serves as a protective function by allowing the offender to justify his ongoing sexual abuse without the anxiety, guilt and loss of self esteem that usually results from such breaking of societal norms. It is evident that a number of different cognitive distortions were used and have been categorised into three groups – religious, victim acquiescence and love:

“Religious” cognitive distortions

Religious cognitive distortions included those that attributed sovereignty to God as He is viewed to control all things and therefore His decision was not to intervene in the offence. Father Kant describes his thoughts about God’s role in his offending:

“...But I believe God had already planned my life and allowed my sinful behaviour to run its instinctive course...I know now that that does not lessen my own responsibility in what happened. But I do believe God knew what was going to happen and permitted it to happen”

Likewise Jace explains how God would need to play a part in his healing:

“God still needs to help me with sexual healing...it is here that I’ve had my most challenging issues...I just don’t know how it all happened”

Often the men would use religious justification that the boy needed to feel God and the men themselves could do this as they were vessels of God:

“I suppose I just always thought I was a nice guy, religious, spreading my goodness by being kind, even once I had chosen Tom as my special friend I told myself it was because he needed extra care, to feel Gods love and have some love in his life, after all he had no parents”.
(Karl)

Their offending did not always challenge their religious stance as any cognitive dissonance between their religious morals and their behaviour was dealt with by rationalisation:

“I think that back then I did not feel a lot of conflict between my offending and my religion because I truly believed I was just making Tom feel loved, really just doing the Lord’s work”
(Karl)

Rev. Pete was certain that his vocation arose out of God’s decision that serving Him would help diminish the inappropriate sexual urges:

“I became convinced that God was calling me to be a Priest to take away my feelings towards young boys” (Reverend Pete)

However, two of the men were unable to rationalise the conflict between their religious beliefs and subsequent abusive actions. They felt in control in all areas of their religious values except one, sexual deviancy:

“That’s where I had the real conflict. I’m Christian in all ways, in all ways except that area of my life. In that sexual area of my life and I found it vary hard to control.” (Jace)

“One area that I had trouble with in my faith was my sexuality. It was one area that I had much trouble controlling. As far as my faith goes in all other area’s I was strong.”
(Reverend Pete)

“Victim acquiescence” cognitive distortions

All the men were adamant that there was no force in their sexual offence and they were merely giving the child the attention they sought. As the victim did not vocally refuse their advances the men assumed that the child received pleasure from the act.

“She seemed to treat it as matter of fact, like “I’ll do it” no complaints. And I asked her before I did anything. I’d say “can I take a photo”? (Jace)

It started as massaging and tickling and touching. He seemed to enjoy it and never said no. I wouldn’t have done anything if he’d said ‘no’. I never forced him. I thought he wanted to be close as well. (Karl)

In Jace’s situation he assumed that as the eight year-old was looking at his body then she must desire him in a sexual manner. In this particular case it was this point at which he states they began their relationship.

At times the offenders denied they were doing harm if the child was a prior victim of sexual assault and as such did not refuse. Jace, for instance, was able to rationalise that his sexual abuse would not hurt his 12-year old victim because she had been sexually abused by her father in the past and was currently being abused by a family friend.

“Love relationship” cognitive distortions

Some times they convinced themselves they were involved in intense friendships. Karl claimed that during the whole duration of his offending it never occurred to him that his behaviour was inappropriate and not to mention illegal.

“...you must realise, I felt such profound love for this boy...being with him was like I imagine heaven to be....I was angry that I'd been labelled a paedophile because I really loved him. I wasn't a predator like you read about” (Karl)

One common thread was the men's desire to form a genuine family around themselves, one that they did not have when growing up. They often sought appreciation and affection from the victims and their families. Sometimes the victim appeared to satisfy the offender's need for intimacy and closeness. Father Kant explains this best:

My happiest was when I spent time with him; he really had a way of making me feel loved and special.

While none of the participants in this study denied the sexual activity had taken place, they nevertheless minimised the severity and harm whilst justifying the activity. Such patterns of dysfunctional thinking serve to protect the men from negative feelings of shame and guilt about themselves and function as a facilitator in maintaining sexual offending behaviour (Marshall, Anderson, & Fernandez, 1999).

Theme 3 – Precipitators To Offending

The men experienced a number of prompts and environmental cues in the lead up to committing their offence. These cues ultimately resulted in recidivist behaviour and are noted as: mental state, fantasising, church based activities, and grooming behaviours.

Mental state

Often preceding the offending behaviour the men experienced a self imposed isolation in which they became more and more withdrawn:

“I was finding my attraction to young boys a problem in the early days, nothing happened...you know...but I was becoming more and more occupied with it” (Reverend Pete)

“A confusing and unhappy time for me. I was having trouble meeting anyone... I would say I was very lonely...needing some affection and love. I felt an emptiness, but didn’t know what it was” (Karl)

Jace reports becoming increasingly obsessive:

“It was filling my life and becoming more of an obsession, sort of thing, and I didn’t want it getting any worse than that. I was 31 years old” (Jace)

Father Kant became increasingly depressed:

“I think I became depressed, feeling hopeless. The only bright spot was the times I ran the youth camps. I felt accepted then, not so pressured” (Father Kant)

Once a decision had been made to sexually approach the victim, the men report feeling accepted and whole, sometimes for the first time ever:

“I felt accepted...they don’t care who you are; they don’t judge you or anything. The more I looked at girls, the more I wanted to do it” (Jace)

Fantatising

In the lead up to their offending behaviour, the men would progressively resort to fantasising and increased masturbation:

“I saw masturbation as the answer, you couldn’t get any diseases, I didn’t need to face men or women, both of which scared me. I obsessed about masturbation. I loved to show off my erect penis to them” (Karl)

“I’d fantasise about boys in the street that I’d seen, try to look up their shorts or look at their penis.” (Reverend Pete)

Even though Father Kant felt his fantasising was immoral and shameful, he still gained sexual pleasure from it:

“I had been fantasising about young boys since I was in my early twenties. I thought it was just a stage I was going through. ... I didn’t really understand it but I was ashamed by these thoughts. I didn’t act on these fantasies, not at that point anyway. I would masturbate though to the fantasies. It obviously wasn’t very healthy.” (Father Kant)

Church based activities

As their initial offence drew closer the men became more involved in church based activities that put them in contact with vulnerable youth:

I suppose I was isolated. I didn't mix much but really just lived for the time I could spend with Tom. I was volunteering more and more at the orphanage. Every spare moment that I wasn't at work. (Karl)

"I was with a group of young people from our church; you know Scripture Union reading at our church... They organize camps and plan activities for children over the holiday period, games, singing and bible readings." (Jace)

Grooming Behaviours

As with many child sexual offenders, the participants in this study engaged in targeting and grooming of potential victims. At times they spent some time planning how to carry out their offence, and were apparently exceedingly skilled at choosing victims and in grooming their families.

"I'd make them feel special, teach them to drive and buy them presents. I know now this was my grooming behaviour." (Karl)

Regardless of her parents' trust and confidence, Jace offended against his victim during the time he spent building up parental rapport:

"She was seven years old. I used to go up to the beach every year so I was able to see her regularly...she started writing letters to me and I wrote back. As she got older I would ring her up and visit her a few times as well and her parents got to know me and trust me with her." (Jace)

Often children who had difficulty fitting in with the group were singled out by the offender and made to feel special:

“One of the nights on the camp, there were the 12 year old girl butts . . . , and boys’ butts you know, they (the girls) came down and visited the boys. One girl there was left over and she came up and started talking to me and I ended up kissing her. That’s all that happened but it was my 1st kiss. I still remember her name and I still remember her face” (Jace)

All the men had caregivers believing in their good character and innocence. This successful grooming of caregivers transpired through legitimate activities and common interests which enabled them to gain access to children without raising suspicion. Farther Kant would offer to take parishioners’ sons out for ice cream. Whilst out he would rub the youngster's leg and eventually this would progress to touching under his clothes. Karl made a point of being friendly with the nuns in the orphanage and bringing them and the other boys’ gifts. Reverend Pete recalled how the sexual abuse would often begin with "wrestling" with the boys whilst on camp, an activity the parents supported.

Low self-control

The men on a whole would have had to hold a certain level of high self control to realise their respective achievements in life, for instance their successful education and career. However, although not formally tested, it appears that the men did sometimes display a number of behaviours that are

known to be associated with low self-control: impulsivity, self-centred behaviour and risk taking. Much of the men's offending appeared to occur impulsively, with little apparent conscious planning on their part. Reverend Pete explains:

"I didn't start out with the idea of sexually abusing him...I have to say I had not even thought of it when we went on overnight camps. It just seemed to happen..."

Even their moral and spiritual values offered no guarantee or protection from acting out sexually. Jace reported being able to impulsively push aside his religious values if an opportunity presented itself:

"It was just something that happened while I was out there. You know the opportunity was there, temptation. I guess I wasn't thinking of my religious beliefs at that point. It was just an action, a spontaneous action that occurred you know. You did it and then your beliefs come in and you think "oh, what have I done?" (Jace)

With a degree of self-centeredness the men attempted to explain the effects of their offending on themselves:

"I've paid a high price for my crime...my reputation, my income, my family and spiritual integrity... I don't feel I will ever finish paying for what happened. Don't I ever deserve a future happiness?" (Reverend Pete)

"Some good has come of it (being found out)... I'm better able to set boundaries now; I think I have better self awareness and awareness of other people's feelings" (Karl)

"...she said because of me she'd gotten into drugs and into all these bad relationships....She got herself pregnant and now she was blaming me for everything" (Jace)

Jace began to feel invincible, taking more and more risks by not actively hiding the video tapes he filmed of his victims from his wife:

“I had them in my computer room, stacked in the cupboard sort of thing. My wife wouldn’t normally go in there”

Cohen and Felson’s (1979) Routine Activities theory provides an explanation for the perpetration of unlawful acts by these men despite their apparent higher levels of self control. These theorists’ perspective on crime takes the focus away from the offender and redirects it towards the unlawful act. Cohen and Felson viewed three crucial components as necessary for predatory crimes: a motivated offender, suitable targets, and the absence of a capable guardian. When a motivated offender identifies a suitable target the presence or absence of a capable guardian becomes a determining factor in the actual commission of a crime. In this study the men had particular access to opportunities for explicit and private sexual contact with young people. In the trusted role of either parish priest or religious leader, these men were allowed unsupervised privileges not often afforded to secular community men.

Theme 4 – Religious Influences

There was evidence of a number of positive as well as negative religious influences in the life of the men. All had a strong religious family

life and strength of religious belief. However religious influences also resulted in intense feelings of guilt:

Family life

Each of the men had a strong religious upbringing with regular church attendance. They recalled intense presence of God in their childhood and a respect for Him that appeared embedded in their identity.

"I truly believed I was just making Tom feel loved...really just doing the Lord's work. I suppose I justified it that way. I consider Jesus a friend, even speaking his name now...it is with reverence and gives me a sense of having a conversation with someone I trust implicitly" (Karl)

God appeared to be an attachment figure for them representing, in part, the paternal absence or unavailability in their lives:

"As I became more and more involved in my parish, I sensed God was calling me... (Pause)... I sensed a divine call from our Lord to serve in the ministry of His Church. I thought if I could serve Him I might find the dignity and respect I think I'd been missing in my life." (Reverend Pete)

For some their time in prison allowed for further religious development and a resolving of conflict following earlier behaviours that were inconsistent with their own religious beliefs:

"If I was released today...you know...my faith has changed; it has developed a lot since I've been in here. I feel I have dealt with that sexual area to a very large extent." (Jace)

Strength

Despite the stressors and expectations placed on each man through their religion, they all had strength of religious belief. Those who were priests gained much satisfaction from their day to day pastoral activities:

“I think back to the beginning, often...I’ve always had a strong affection for church...and I remember what I loved about the ministry. I loved to say mass, to preach, I loved it all...but I gave in to my desires, my fantasies and that was my undoing.” (Father Kant)

However, they were well versed in their own failings and warned:

“Even as priests...we are human and we are going to fail at times...that is a certainty.”
(Father Kant)

The men also seemed to gain strength from their God and were able to draw on that strength and faith in times of need:

“I had to rely on God’s strength. I am only human... I am painfully aware of my own spiritual poverty... I only have God’s love and kindness to draw upon and it is Him that makes me strong.” (Reverend Pete)

Guilt and Remorse

When their offences were exposed the men’s character appeared shattered. They attached embarrassment and shame to their sexual attraction towards children.

“I was so shamed...incredibly ashamed. I was seen as a teacher, someone who functioned on moral traditions and had certain expectations. But really I carried out an act so despicable and still I suffer such shame and guilt over it. It took me a long time to realize that I preyed on those boys and, well...the ongoing harm my behaviour must cause them and their families...well, it's unimaginable”. (Reverend Pete)

“For a long time I was able to block it out...my behaviour...I sort of lived in two separate worlds. It wasn't until much later that I allowed myself...ummm, to admit the truth. It was an area in my life that caused me much pain and internal conflict.” (Father Kant)

With offending came remorse, the men identified what they considered an offending cycle in their actions, vowing often that they would not be ‘tricked’ again by their desires:

“(Afterwards)...I would tell myself it would never happen again, that I'd be stronger. I'd make an effort for a while but it wouldn't last. It was a cycle, a real cycle.” (Father Kant)

“Quite often after I did do something, you know, I did ...I'd be that disgusted with myself that, you know. I was actually in tears at times.” (Jace)

“We are all sinners, no matter what our calling in life. As an offender myself, I know how easy it was to fall into that trap...all those in authority have a responsibility to protect and nourish children as they grow up. In the case of clergy, I feel it has an added impact...It is a real betrayal of their ... own faith and responsibility. The clergy's own faith and witness should be reflected in the way they live their lives. The offending behaviour, gives the community a bad and wrong idea about Christianity.” (Jace)

“With God's blessing I feel that I have confronted my past sins and now made peace...although I'm not sure I will ever be free...” (Father Kant)

Religious rituals, such as confession or praying, appeared to give the men some release from guilt and enabled them to gain some measure of comfort from religious traditions:

“After being with the boys I always went to a priest and confessed my sin. Somehow I would feel lighter, relieved”. (Father Kant)

“I would feel so bad afterwards...I would need the forgiveness immediately...I would hold the Bible with him and we both prayed for forgiveness from God. (Reverend Pete)

They often feared the damage their behaviour may have done to the child’s spiritual self and future interest in the church:

“I hope that anybody who has been harmed by me will experience the mercy, the forgiveness, the compassion of God.” (Father Kant)

“As far as my relationship with God goes, I worry; I’ve let him down.... I’ve ruined my witness and his witness through me...one thing that concerns me a lot is if I actually turned any of my victims away from the church.” (Jace)

However, despite these intense negative feelings and shame ascribed to their sexual offending the men continued to offend.

Religious orientation

While all the men argued their faith was central to their life it was also evident that, as would be expected in those with extrinsic religious drives, they also appeared to use their religion for personal or social ends. Karl,

Reverend Pete and Father Kant's comments are reflective in part of their appearing to use the church as a way to deflect their attraction to young males as well as a way to meet and socialise with potential partners. Reverend Pete explains his motivation to return to the church after some years break was partly for extrinsic needs of social satisfaction:

"I was having trouble meeting anyone... (Long pause)...I always found it difficult to mix with women, or know what to say... I felt an emptiness, but didn't know what it was"

Father Kant used his religious beliefs and strength of prayer to absolve himself from the consequences of his offending. He uses his religion to give himself comfort in times of sorrow and trouble:

"I pray everyday that anybody who has been harmed by me will experience the mercy and the compassion of God" (Father Kant)

He also used his access to spiritual youth camps as a means to gain access to potential victims. It was here that he gained satisfaction and purpose:

"I think I became depressed, feeling hopeless. The only bright spot was the times I ran the youth camps. I felt accepted then" (Father Kant)

Reverend Pete saw his religious commitment as a way to earn respect and absolve his own responsibility in the larger scheme of his offending:

“I thought if I could serve Him I might find the dignity and respect I think I’d been missing in my life... I became convinced that God was calling me to be a Priest to take away my feelings towards young boys” (Reverend Pete)

Suggestive of a Quest orientation (see page 152), Karl and Rev. Pete indicate they are currently disillusioned with the Church and continue to question its purpose.

Theme 5 – Seminary Experiences

Whilst only two of the four men were ordained priests and so this seminary experience category is limited to these two, it is important for the context of the thesis to consider their formation process. A seminarian’s spiritual director may know something of his candidate’s sexual life and orientation but this knowledge is privileged information and can not be used in any type of evaluation. Such processes raise issues when deciding on an individual’s suitability for priesthood. It is therefore easy to hide behind the seminary’s culture of confidentiality and secrecy unless the candidate’s problematic behaviour comes to the attention of the seminary authorities from outside sources (Cozzens, 2000).

Sexuality

Both Fr Kant and Rev. Pete saw seminary training as deficient in sexuality and boundary violation issues.

“We had little training in the way of personal development and sexuality issues, certainly not a lot on boundary violations.” (Reverend Pete)

“There wasn’t enough training to prepare us for celibacy – no where near enough. The topic of sexuality was hardly ever mentioned....not really. If we did discuss it ...it would have only been superficial. There were no discussions about homosexuality.” (Father Kant)

With the Church touting homosexuality as a mortal sin, Father Kant endured a lot of confusion around his own sexuality.

“Before I was ordained, the only thing religion taught me about sexuality was that it was sinful... you know, a mortal sin really...a lot of my ambivalence came from this mixed message”. (Father Kant)

The Church’s focus on the threat of women and heterosexual acting out to a celibate vocation sometimes enables the Catholic perpetrator to rationalise their offending with a boy as sinful but not a breaking of the celibate vow.

Seminary life

Farther Kant highlighted the diversity in today’s seminarians and the lack of homogeneity amongst the group as opposed to seminarians in the past:

“you’ve got to realise that today’s seminarians are different than those of some years ago. Today they often have life experience first and a greater level of maturity comes with those older students. I think the seminarians of yesterday were more immature....Today they have had jobs before entering, some have been teachers or lawyers or businessmen”. (Father Kant)

“I sensed a divine call from our Lord to serve in the ministry of His Church. It was a life where I thought I could have dignity and respect.” (Reverend Pete)

The men found seminary life as a place where most people who wanted to evade reality could comfortably escape:

“Seminary was not difficult as long as you obeyed the rules. Life was spent mostly in silence or studying. Really, we were all very submissive. It was really a way to escape from life.” (Father Kant)

Curriculum

In his doctoral study, Compliment (1997) found nearly 50 % of 160 priest participants stated that their seminary training was inadequate in preparing them both in terms of their professional role as a minister and in standards of professional conduct. Importantly, seminary training needs to prepare the seminarians in the nature of the power, authority and responsibility of their role within the parish. More critically, an area most often overlooked that requires addressing is that of the seminarians’ sexual and emotional needs. The men in this study complained that their theological training failed to prepare them for the many important practical needs of their parish and once ordained they were dispersed into the community without skills to manage a parish:

“We were trained in how to explain and understand the Bible but were sent out unsupervised into the parish...once in the role...then you gained counselling experience or admin skills. All in all, our training was too academic...” (Father Kant)

There was a general consensus that the educational content was unsatisfactory with the teachers being those who were unable to ‘make it’ as parish pastors. However, as seminarians the men saw benefit in studying and developing their knowledge of Christ.

“Seminary encouraged real study and meditative thinking. Even our awareness of the meaning of Christ’s life was tested well”. (Reverend Pete)

Supervisors

The men found it difficult to confide in their supervisor, either because the supervisor did not want to hear or for fear that it would impact on their ordination and lead to devastating vocational consequences. Rev. Pete describes how his unsuccessful effort in this regard resulted in him shutting down the communication channels.

“But I couldn’t tell anyone else...if it got out then it would affect my evaluation and maybe influence my ordination. I feared it may be used against me...That’s why there was so much secrecy” (Father Kant)

“After my first failed attempt at communicating my confusion with my supervisor, I felt that nothing could be done and there was no point in talking about my behaviour.” (Reverend Pete)

Ironically, he now muses that had he had a wiser supervisor perhaps he would have found another outlet rather than resort to abusing youngsters.

Entrance criteria

In recent decades a number of denominations have demanded that new candidates of formation undergo psychological or psychometric testing before being approved for the seminary. While on the surface this appears a method of curtailing those with psychological issues or dysfunctions from entering the priesthood, our participants questioned the efficacy of selecting candidates on this basis:

“I think the psychological testing has limitations. For a start, they don’t always pick up every dysfunction and they surely cannot predict how that person may develop in the future. No, not always....In my opinion, anyway. In my case I hadn’t offended before I joined the seminary, that didn’t start until much later. You can’t convince me that any entry testing would have shown how I’d react”. (Father Kant)

Similarly, Rev. Pete recalls his entry into seminary and the interview he had with a Psychiatrist as part of his ordination selection. Despite holding an attraction to young boys, he did not confide this to the Psychiatrist.

“I knew that I wouldn’t be accepted into the seminary if I was to mention my previous sexual experience with the lads, I think my desire to serve God was stronger...I thought I could change... (long pause)...change that aspect of my life that was so wrong”. (Reverend Pete)

Theme 6 – The Church as Institution

The institutional nature of the Church was also evident in the men's responses. The traditional hierarchical structure of the church was seen as negative by the men. The men also held the opinion that the institution had abandoned them in their time of need.

Hierarchy

The men spoke about loyalty to the Church but of also about being unable to discuss their sexual concerns with anyone else within the Church due to the culture of secrecy that permeated the Church. They often believed ecclesiastical authorities were more concerned about image and avoiding conflict than caring about the seminarians' needs:

“We priests were at the coalface; it was up to us to stick together...I felt responsible to protect this institution and its reputation. The whole culture encouraged secrets.” (Father Kant)

The Church routinely isolated its young priests and promoted the development of an in-group culture; one of group loyalty for self protection:

“As young priests we were encouraged to keep our friendships within the clergy...all my friends were priests. This caused a chasm between the priests and those in our congregations” (Reverend Pete)

Abandonment

Some of the participants appeared deeply hurt at the way they were treated by the Church and peers during and after the legal processes associated with their offending. There were feelings of abandonment by a system the men had lived and supported for much of their lives:

“The minister did come and visit me about twice, while I was in prison.... his wife visited my wife a couple of times as well. I haven’t had any contact with the church after I was arrested. I know my wife did approach the minister there, but the impression I got is he wasn’t really interested. He was more interested in the victims rather than my wife.” (Jace)

Rev. Pete believed the church hierarchy were unwilling to support ‘people such as we are’. He gave examples of his reception once released from incarceration and a phone call he received from the Diocesan Protocol Officer who forbade him attending the Sunday services. His rector was told that if Rev. Pete did attend he was not to be given communion.

Jace spoke of the far reaching effects of his offending on his family and the lack of support offered by his Church:

“Even my mum and dad had problems.... they had to resign their membership. They’d been there for about 30 years. Dad was an elder and deacon and board member.” (Jace)

The men felt that due to the Church establishment’s lack of support and their stance on many contemporary issues that the system is unravelling and becoming irrelevant to many people:

“I believe the Church’s place in society has changed dramatically during the twentieth-century...it is simply not a factor any longer in most people’s lives. This disheartens me”
(Reverend Pete)

Theme 7. – Personality Factors

Throughout the interviews a number of critical factors impacting on the men’s offending became evident. These factors were combined together under the theme of ‘personality’

Childhood abuse

All of the men indicated they were abused, emotionally abandoned, or exploited by a parent or parent surrogate. Their sexual boundaries were often violated early in life by someone close to them.

“Dad walked out when I was about 8 and was never heard from again. Even today, I don’t know what happened to him...but for a long time I felt abandoned. Even my own dad could not accept me.” (Karl)

“Well, as I said I was very naïve. Ummm...there was this priest, he was older than me...we were alone and he held me down and had oral sex with me... (Pause)...I felt violated and confused...umm... this was my first sexual experience ...I hadn’t even begun masturbating at this point. I responded to him and that got me scared that I was a homosexual” (Father Kant)

“My father was a harsh man...quite dismissive. I remember getting lots of beltings from him...for no reason...sometimes I couldn’t sit down afterwards, I remember blue and black bruises on my legs...it’s sometimes sad to think about the little boy I was.” (Reverend Pete)

Jace experienced early abuse by a neighbour at the age of eight, and began his own offending at the age of fifteen against his younger sister. From this point he drifted into his life of adult offending but remains confused about the age he first started offending, appearing to mislabel early childhood sexual play at four years of age as offending behaviour.

None of the men reported their victimisation to law enforcement authorities or anyone else.

Social isolation

The men spoke of deep loneliness and emotional isolation during their childhood. They often had difficulty establishing male friendships or peer interactions and struggled forming healthy sexual relationships. It became apparent that their inability to recognise appropriate boundaries led to boundary violations.

Reverend Pete describes often experiencing loneliness and vulnerability. In the role of pastor he took on the responsibility of the salvation of this 'flock' and it seems that he has taken care of his unfulfilled emotional needs through his sexual encounters with others.

"The isolation of being a priest can be incredibly hard to bear...ummm..." (Father Kant)

“When I think back now, I didn’t have any social life...well adult social life that is. I found it hard to mix with others, especially with my attraction to men. I always felt threatened by women. I still don’t really know how to mix ...” (Karl)

“I was emotionally and physically lonely over many years... (Long pause)...I truly believed I was deeply in love with him and he in turn loved me because he was also lonely. He was so alone.” (Reverend Pete)

Sexuality

All of the participants appeared to have laboured with deep feelings of sexual inadequacy and had limited insight into their behaviours.

“I always found it difficult to mix with women, or know what to say...so I hungered for someone to share my life with but wasn’t sure how to go about it...you can’t really hang out in bars” (Reverend Pete)

“I never really got along with...ah...girls, or had much interaction with girls at all. Even at high school my mates were going out with girls and had girlfriends and would go to school dances and things like that. Never happened for me.” (Jace)

Those who identified as homosexual struggled to come to terms with this apparent ‘anomaly’ to their sexuality. In the case of Father Kant, he carried the added guilt of his ‘mortal sin’:

“I was a homosexual; we’d been so indoctrinated about the sin of homosexuality. I was sure Satan would be waiting for me....When I told my spiritual director about it (relationship with another seminarian) he palmed me off. He was quite dismissive. It was as though he found it too difficult to deal with so he just refused to acknowledge it... all the time I felt like I was committing a mortal sin.” (Father Kant)

Karl, who was raised as Catholic, continues as a man in his 60s to conceal his homosexuality, seemingly fearful to communicate this important fact to his dear female friend:

“From quite young, maybe 14 years, I was confused by my homosexuality. I knew it was a sin to God. I had to hide my attractions to other boys. I knew it was wrong... (Now), I have a good female friend, she’s been very supportive and knows my history but I haven’t told her I’m homosexual and I worry about her hoping for a relationship with me” (Karl)

Shyness

All reported a degree of shyness in their personality, and sometimes would befriend those who they perceived to be experiencing more suffering or in more need than they were

“I had a couple of good friends, although I was shy as a kid and overweight, there were two boys I would spend time with...I made friends with them because they were teased and bullied by the other kids...I felt they needed me” (Reverend Pete)

The men were often shy, passive and lacking social skills. Child sexual offenders in particular are more likely than other types of offenders, to be lonelier and to lack intimacy (Marshall, 1989; Seidman, Marshall, Hudson & Robertson, 1994). The men were uncomfortable mixing or socialising, even as youngsters, and described wearing a ‘mask’ to be accepted by others but still never fitting in:

“I never felt accepted for me because... really...no body knew the real me. I think that’s why I found it difficult to mix and would stay alone...that way I didn’t have to pretend.” (Karl)

“I would describe myself as somewhat reserved...shy. I remember I never felt very comfortable with girls, even though there were plenty in my family...other girls were different.” (Father Kant)

“I think in my case I had more trouble relating to my peers than most normal people would. You know as a result of that I did focus my attention more on children.” (Jace)

Family

The participants' experience of their family life during their childhood has shaped their personality and formed many of their values and beliefs about the world. All but one of the men described a poverty stricken childhood and having to compensate for those who let them down:

“We were quite poor...there was not a lot of money to go around with that number of children. We always wore hand me downs...grew our own food, had chickens...that sort of thing...” (Father Kant)

“I wouldn't describe it as very happy, not at all...my father was an alcoholic and mum had to work to make money for us to survive. Well...all I could see was mum worn out from working two jobs and my brother and I also working to help the family stay together” (Karl)

Three of the men reported on paternal issues and struggled to come to terms with what they considered emotional abandonment by an indifferent and sometimes physically abusive father.

“(My father) was unpredictable. He was also very emotionally critical... He was a pretty frightening man, strong as well” (Reverend Pete)

“My father was never proud of me, we didn't ever talk” (Karl)

Sometimes the men remembered their mother or grandmother as gentle and caring figures whom fostered some enduring qualities in them. But it was often the perceived rejection from their fathers that led to a craving for warmth and a vulnerability to childhood sexual abuse.

“I craved it...craved affection...I think because I was rejected by my dad. So I would never complain, any affection was good affection” (Father Kant)

“He would tell me he loved me so much, that part I liked, really liked it. I needed to be told that...but it took a long time for me to realise that...I thought for a long time that that was how he showed he loved me. I thought everyone’s grandfather did the same thing...I think he was just unable to control himself...in that sexual part of his life.” (Reverend Pete)

Theme 8 - Preventative Features

In the interest of preventing future child abuse the participants were adamant that a number of factors may have led to them ceasing their offending.

Fear of capture

A strong motivator to restrain from future offending was described by the men as fear of capture. By reliving past experience within the criminal justice system the men could self-restrain their desire to offend:

“I feared) getting caught. If I’d been caught in the earlier stages, and had to go to court etc, and put in an appearance there, even if I was released on bail or suspended sentence, something like that then I think that would have given me enough control.” (Jace)

“I really am just a paedophile and I always will be. I’ll never be cured, it’s something inside of me, even now I have to avert my eyes when I’m in the shops if I see a young boy and in my head I make the ewah, ewah, ewah sound which reminds me of the police coming to take me to jail, it’s very effective because I never want to go back there. But it’s hard, kids are everywhere.” (Karl)

“Now I use my own fear of going to jail to keep me away from young boys. (Father Kant)

Victim non-compliance

All the men strongly agreed that had the victim refused to participate or had they stated ‘no’ then the offence would not have occurred:

“Yes, some girls I would avoid, I don’t know why, maybe because I thought they would tell or something... If they’d said “don’t do that”. Yes that would have stopped me, I guess I would have made out “oh, sorry about that”, like it was an accident or something.”” (Jace)

“He didn’t say to stop, so I think I just convinced myself he was fine with it. I thought he was enjoying it, or feeling close like me” (Father Kant)

“Well I wouldn’t have offended if Tom had said no. I would not have forced him that’s for sure. He didn’t complain at the time, it was later.” (Karl)

Help-seeking behaviour

One of the men, in particular, felt that had his early attempts at seeking help for his urges been successful, he would not have offended.

“I tried ringing up a few help line groups from the phone book. All of them said they’d had nothing for me, I was the perpetrator. They were more for the victims. There are courses but they were only in the jails.” (Jace)

Increased supervision and media attention

The men also agreed that the escalating attention placed on child sexual abuse issues by the media would have helped them resist the urge to sexually offend:

“I think as I said, South Bank was a real hunting ground, so to speak, for me. I don’t know but even making some warning signs, or security guards, cameras, or observers.”
(Jace)

“I think the media attention is protecting some kids, I’d say so.” (Karl)

Preventing recidivism

All the men agreed that the victim impact statements were very powerful in making them aware of the consequences to their offending behaviour. These statements, they believe, will stop them from re-offending:

“It wasn’t until I read the victim impact statements I truly realised the damage I had done...I was shocked...” (Karl)

“I think one thing that has really effected me and would have gone a long way towards stopping me re-offending was actually reading the victim impact statement. Knowing the damage...Ok, I was thinking the girls aren’t even aware of what’s happening. But reading those were effective.” (Jace)

DISCUSSION

This qualitative phenomenological study was undertaken to comprehend the lived experiences of clergy and religious leaders who have sexually offended against children. Four men participated in one-on-one semi-structured interviews revealing their personal and sometimes painful memories. Interviews were transcribed and reviewed by the researcher. Themes and categories were then developed. This section summarises and discusses the main findings of the study and integrates it into existing literature. Implications for treatment, education and research are presented.

Discussion of Demographics

In many respects this target group of religious men did not differ markedly from the general population of child sexual offenders (Haywood, 1994) although they tended to more educated and older, at least at the time of apprehension. For example, three of the men were in their late twenties and early thirties at the time of their first sexual contact with a child which is similar to the average age found for first contact for sexual perpetrators in a general offender population (Smallbone & Wortley, 2000). All had, at one time, experienced sexual abuse themselves as children. There is some support for the existence of a cycle of abuse in which the abused becomes the abuser. Various studies have found the rates of childhood sexual victimisation up to 70 percent compared with 15 percent of the non-offending community (Lambie et al., 2002; Starzyk & Marshall, 2003).

Criminal versatility was not evident in the group under research in this study. Apart from the odd speeding or alcohol offence, none of the men admitted to previous criminal behaviour either as adults or as youth. All participants had general crime scores that were exceedingly low compared to the general population. According to Wortley and Smallbone (2006) such specialist persistent sexual offenders are more likely to have been: sexually abused themselves as children, younger at their first sexual contact with a child, and to have male victims who are more likely to be extra-familial victims. Compared to versatile persistent offenders, Wortley and Smallbone suggest this specialist group tends to have more frequent and extended sexual contact with their victims, indicating perhaps that they are more interested in forming an emotional relationship with the child. Ward et al., (1996) indicate this emotional attachment towards the victim may be an offshoot of the offender's attachment style. They found child sex offenders report significantly more fearful/preoccupied attachment styles than other sexual offenders. Those with this attachment style have a greater negative view of self and may engage in sexual abuse in an attempt to have intimacy needs met without fear of rejection.

Discussion of the Lived Experiences of Religious Offenders

Eight themes emerged through the data analysis. Following is a description of each theme and the participants' corresponding perspectives.

Theme 1 – Situational Factors

The participants' responses suggest that situational factors impacted on their decision to offend. Situational factors were grouped into a number of categories: pastoral activities, burnout, and opportunity.

Pastoral Activities - Cues

These findings are consistent with literature on situational crime prevention. For example Wortley (2001) suggests several ways that situations may actively encourage criminal behaviour. One of these is the cues some situations present that prompt the individual to offend. Other situations can actively induce disinhibition and encourage perpetrators who would normally not offend to commit offences. The regular church-based camps that most of the participants in this study attended would fit this category, and the men appeared to become quite disinhibited whilst providing care-giving services to youth on camp. Wortley (2001) argues that altering the immediate environment, such as arranging supervision on camp, would reduce opportunities and other situational pressures.

Burnout- environmental stressors

Little is known about how religious attributes effect burnout, although many studies suggest clergy are particularly susceptible to severe stress or burnout (Jerden, 1980; York, 1988). This theme supports research findings that clergy suffer exceptional levels of stress. Blaikie (1979) found Australian clergy cited inadequate training, and insufficient time to meet commitments

as the main cause of stress. In her doctoral study also on Australian ministers, Miner (1996) indicated two-thirds of the 363 ministers studied cited interpersonal issues as the most stressful events in their ministering role. Other identified problem areas for clergy include frustration, loneliness, social isolation, and diminished marital adjustment (Ellison & Mattila, 1983; Warner & Carter, 1984). According to Hall (1997), an area that remains lacking in the current research is an assessment of pastors' spirituality as it related to personal and interpersonal functioning.

While stress from pastoral duties may produce clergy burnout, sexual offending behaviour adds its own stress for the cleric. The whole issue becomes cyclical for the offending cleric; with increased stress from pastoral duties resulting in vulnerability for burnout symptoms, which in turn creates a sense of hopelessness and need for intimacy for which the cleric may seek relief by offending. Once the offence has occurred the cleric experiences a number of emotions; guilt and remorse, fear of capture, and shame, all of which in turn adds to the stress load and potential burnout effect (Grenz & Bell, 2001).

Opportunity

Goddfredson and Hirschi (1993) argue that opportunity acts in conjunction with low self-control in order to facilitate criminal behaviours and crime. The men in this third study have used the institutions in which they worked to gain greater proximity to children and have had almost limitless opportunity to make use of the existing environment of secrecy to

perpetuate the abuse. In this instance opportunity is linked to availability of victims, which provided them with extended time with the child away from adequate supervision or guardianship (Clarke, 1995). The men would make use of target locations which they had valid access to: victim's home, overnight camps, vehicles, and church organised activities. Such methods have been the modus operandi for a number of individuals who work in organisations such as faith based institutions and schools. Recent media attention has raised awareness of possible infiltrations and resulted in improvements in environments once rife with sexually abusive opportunities. Many such organisations now take greater care in staff selection, supervision and transparency of practice (Nolan, 2001) and many now have devised and published a child protection policy

Theme 2 – Cognitive Distortions

This theme supports current trends in the literature. Sexual offenders are noted for their use of cognitive distortions to justify their socially unacceptable behaviour. The men as a whole appeared to minimise their offending, believing that they had not used force or attempted to have sexual contact against someone's will despite being incarcerated at some point for sexual offences against children. They also attempted to justify their behaviour with statements suggesting the child victims enjoyed the attention and showed no distress (Ward, 2000). The men believed had they done so they would have ceased such sexual activities. This type of belief is not uncommon to sexual offenders, with more than one-third of such

offenders claiming their innocence (Marshall, 1994) and many justifying their actions by maintaining their victims enjoyed the assault (Scully & Marolla, 1985).

Ivey and Simpson (1998) used an empirical phenomenological method to find meanings and themes in the general description of the essential meaning of paedophilia. They found the paedophile was unable to discriminate affection from sex, and that this enabled him to see the child as an extension of himself. Interestingly, while he judged his experiences as immoral, he was also able to justify his behaviour through the belief that the child desired sexual contact and had actually initiated contact themselves. Comments such as *“the child enjoyed my attention”*, *“he didn’t resist so he really wanted it”* and *“having sex with children is a good way to teach them about sex”* are not uncommon among child sexual offenders (Abel, Becker, & Cunningham-Rathner, 1984).

Ward, Keenan and Hudson (2000) suggest that a pervasive deficit in sexual offender’s theory of mind results in preferential child abusers having trouble understanding the behaviour of other people at an abstract level. For instance the offender may interpret the victims’ behaviour as signifying a desire for sex, as did Karl and Jace. It is expected the men would have enduring difficulties with empathy, and experience well entrenched cognitive distortions such as ‘children enjoy and want sex with adult men’. Believing their offending behaviour is simply a form of affection is a common form of denial reported among clergy (Freiberger, 1996).

Sometimes their behaviour is viewed by themselves as merely playfulness or wrestling as in Rev. Pete's story, or health related, as in Karl's priest abuser who demanded he check Karl's penis for abnormalities and function. The men presented themselves as blameless and at times harmless, minimising their behaviour as just 'playing around'. Benson (1992) found that cleric participants were unable to reflect on their own affective experiences during the time they were engaged in sexual activities with female counselees.

In addressing cognitive distortions that are specific to a religious population, Freiburger (1996:62) found that clerics often blame their church for *'not picking them up when they are down'* and *'blaming the priesthood for their fall'*. They will rationalise their behaviours at the time of offending and attribute spiritual purpose to what they have done. Wasyliv, et. al, (1998) found unique patterns of denial, minimisation and cognitive distortions among cleric offenders. As identified with the group of religious representatives in this study, cleric offenders are more likely to display extreme minimisation of and lack insight into personal problems.

Theme 3 – Precipitating Features

This theme supports current trends in the literature in addressing precipitators to child sexual abuse (Ward, Hudson & Keenan, 1998). Prior to each of the men carrying out their sexually abusive acts, they experienced a number of internal triggers and were even able to identify an offence cycle. As they were interviewed it became obvious from their recollections that

preceding the offence they experienced a number of antecedent conditions. The men described progressively becoming more isolated and depressed, withdrawing and increasingly resorting to fantasising (Swaffer et al, 2000). The men would also manipulate situations to enable increased exposure to young people, usually through religious based activities such as camps, boy's brigade or scripture meetings.

A substantial amount of grooming behaviour was evident in the men's pre-offence behaviours. Grooming is a premeditative behaviour that is intended to manipulate the potential victim into compliance. The men used several well known strategies to groom their victims (Terry & Tallon, 2005). For instance Karl used emotional manipulation when playing the paternal role with Tom while Jace used verbal coercion when convincing his victim to gradually undress for the video camera. Another common form of manipulation used by the men was that of seduction, with the bringing of gifts and disguising the sexual advances as game playing/wrestling such as occurred with Rev. Pete. As evidenced by the participants' responses, grooming victims for abuse requires varying degrees of effort and consequently the men are likely to target vulnerable children. Unfortunately those children targeted in the instance of clergy offenders have often made easy targets due to the parental religious expectations that the cleric or religious representative is a trustworthy 'representative' of God. Grooming behaviours in this instance are particularly insidious. To the family, the clergy offender is seen as a spiritual authority and a father figure (Smith, 2000). They

are often granted immediate trust in a way other professionals are not, even to a point where they may be invited on family vacations or requested to preside over all family events (Fortune, 1999). Many parishioners would not question the authority of the minister who is seen as their moral guide.

Impulsiveness is perhaps the most crucial personality dimension that predicts offending behaviour (Pratt & Cullen, 2000). The men's self-reported descriptions of impulsiveness were drawn from their qualitative interviews. They all claim they acted impulsively and did not take into consideration the personal or professional consequences of their sexual abuse. Benson (1992) suggests his cleric participants displayed a lack of control of their sexual impulse with female counselees, hinting perhaps at impulsivity factors. Given these men's successful education and career, their low criminal versatility and their low general crime scores, it is a reasonable expectation that, on the whole, they would have higher levels of self control. However, self-control theory argues that a lack of self-control alone is neither sufficient nor necessary for crime to occur, but rather that the likelihood of criminal behaviour is mediated on an individual level by the presence of criminal opportunity (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Most unlawful behaviour is impulsive and opportunistic, and an individuals' opportunity for crime is dependent on time and context as well as their predisposition towards such behaviour (Arneklev, Grasmick & Bursik, 1999).

Certainly a precipitating factor for all the men in this study was a number of behaviours which indicate periods of low-self control. They undoubtedly acted with impulsivity, often taking advantage of situations to create opportunities to offend regardless of the risk. Similarly, they appeared to perceive few risks to their offending often stating they were not aware that a particular act was illegal. They displayed a degree of self-centeredness regarding the impact the crime had on themselves or family despite the obvious long-term effects on the victims. Given these behaviours it would seem that while the men may usually display a high level of self restraint commensurate with their standing in the community, when presented with an opportunity they gave in to low-self control urges.

Theme 4 – Religious Influences

Existing research appears to neglect the impact that religion has on the individual's decision to offend and the execution of the abuse. Little has been documented on this aspect. All participants described a high level of religious upbringing, some even attending church services twice daily. The men indicated that they gained intense strength from their faith in times of need and despair. However, this strength was challenged by the tremendous guilt and remorse experienced subsequent to the abuse.

Given the men's voiced remorse and guilt it is not surprising to find that earlier research has identified that extrinsically orientated individuals display higher feelings of guilt and self-rejection than other religious

orientations (Watson, Morris & Hood, 1988). Undoubtedly, in non-offending situations this extrinsic orientation becomes maladaptive and impedes healthy functioning.

Few previous studies on sex offending populations have explored the perpetrator's level of religiosity, and in particular no study of general or cleric perpetrators of sexual abuse have analysed the contributory factor of individual level religiosity by way of religious orientation. It would seem that religiosity, specifically extrinsic orientation, does indeed tell us something about sexual behaviour among this small group. In this third study the men displayed greater identification with extrinsic goals towards religion; either for social or protective benefits. Two of the men also expressed a Quest-like orientation towards religion, suggesting their faith was driven by self doubts, tentativeness and a continuing search for religious truth. However, allowing for the retrospective nature of the study it is unclear if this Quest-like orientation only occurred after the men had been apprehended and incarcerated for sexual offences or whether they held a Quest orientation before commencing their offending behaviours. For instance, Spilka, et al. (1987) found Quest orientation to be positively correlated with religious conflict and concluded that this religious orientation could be representative of troubled faith, or alternatively, an expression of an enlightened and constructive deviance.

Theme 5 – Seminary Experiences

The seminary training two of the men received offered no or little formal training in healthy understanding of sexuality. In the case of Fr. Kant and Catholicism, women were viewed with fear and suspicion and relationships with other males discouraged to avoid latent homosexuality. Research suggests that should mandatory celibacy impede psychosexual development then clerics' failure to integrate psychosexual and spiritual life becomes an obstacle for ongoing spiritual development (Dandurand, 2001). The Church's often unwillingness to address sexuality related issues has, in the past, impeded the psychosexual development of their seminarians. The Catholic Church's position, in particular that all sexual sin was serious, all mortal and equally bad, has been blamed in part for some of the cognitive distortions held by offending priests.

It is possible that Father Kant's entrance into the celibate lifestyle of the priesthood and Reverend Pete's decision to join the Anglican seminary after his sexual offending experiences were attempts to control their deviant desires through religion and the structure of the Church. In his study of 70 clerics who had sexually offended, Freiburger (1996) found that 69% had begun abusing children before their religious training and 23% of them had chosen their religious career in the hope religion would take away their abusive actions.

Former Archbishop of San Francisco, John Quinn, indicated that many seminaries in the past had reinforced a complete absence of comment on sexual matters except for outlining certain moral principles and to explain the consequences of violating celibacy (Quinn, 1993). With the church holding control of the psychosexual development of their seminarian students, individual clerics are not accountable for ongoing psychosexual issues and some, like the men in this study, fail to take responsibility of this developmental area. *“Because seminary formation is intended in part to be a time for encouraging and embracing the celibate life, and unspoken permission exists to continue avoiding issues related to sexuality”* (Dandurand, 2001: 285). The seminarian’s frustration with the lack of autonomy and lack of intimacy may be expressed through improper sexual activities (Cozzens, 2000).

In an attempt to ensure the appropriateness of the formation content, the admission procedures to judge their ability to screen out unsuitable candidates and to address the moral laxity that appeared to have made its way into the seminaries and seminary teachings, the Vatican visited the U.S. seminaries in 2005. However, Cozzens (2005) believes the Vatican failed to address two important issues needed to improve seminary education: the discipline of mandated celibacy for diocesan priests and the moral teaching that continues to view all sexual sins as equally serious. With any sexual sins viewed as a ‘mortal sin’, Cozzens states that such continued sexual morality

prevents any candid communication from occurring and any chance of alarming behavioural signs failing.

Theme 6 – Church as Institution

The Church as an institution has often defended its image. Traditionally clerical culture was closed and secretive. Unfortunately such an environment favoured paedophiles and their activities. In the early days many of the clergy who sexually offended received a type of institutional protection from the Church and the problems they caused solved, at least on the surface, by geographical re-location to another parish (Berry, 2000). Predictably, the ecclesiastical institution defended themselves against threats to their image of integrity and retrospectively rushed to defend themselves against claims of neglect by their parishioners. Often there was a code of silence in order to uphold the image of the Church, one in which a priest would not criticise another priest. As in Father Kant's case, many clerics who experienced abuse themselves by other priests did not come forward because they did not want to cause trouble for themselves or for the Church (Sipe, 1995). However, with the coming of the more recent cleric sexual abuse scandals the bishops adopted a 'zero tolerance' policy towards suspected child sexual abusers (Feuerherd, 2003). Suddenly the Church authorities were removing suspects with a determination that did not take into consideration the clerics rights for a fair hearing.

The systemic structure, at least of the Catholic Church, served as a protective measure for Father Kant, who was safeguarded from having to reveal his own homosexuality to himself or his family and friends. The silence held by the Church on such matters encourages those who are homosexual, and raised with the social taboo against their own sexual orientation, to seek refuge within the Church. The Catholic Church's teaching that homosexual relationships are morally wrong means their homosexual clergy must remain celibate whether ordained or not. *"Ordination provides a comfort zone for some priests, relieving them of the pressures of family and society to not appear as homosexual"* (Dandurand, 2001:283).

Theme 7 – Personality Factors

The men in this study had all suffered some form of sexual abuse during childhood. While this early sexual experience was not always unwelcome or distressing, it appeared to have the effect of reducing their awareness of boundary violation. Previous studies have indicated that between 50% and 80% of clergy abusers have themselves experienced sexual abuse during childhood (Sipe, 1995). Smallbone and Dadds (2000) argue that children who experience child abuse may develop a disorganized attachment style that determines their behaviour when under high levels of stress. In adulthood, those with disorganized attachment styles are more likely to sexually abuse when in stressful situations where they also have close proximity to a potential child victim. Irons and Laaser (1994) found themes of abuse and rigidity in the childhoods of 25 clergy referred for

sexual misconduct. These specific clergy experienced little insight into these problem areas, had received little appropriate training in transference and counter transference, and no training in domestic and sexual abuse issues. Similarly the men in this present study also appeared unaware of the impact their own childhood traumas had on their professional lives.

The men were vulnerable in their loneliness. They were unable to relate to their peers and turned to the children or their parishioners for support. The literature demonstrates that sexual offenders in general have been shown to have deficits in the manner in which they relate to others; especially women (see literature review by Geer, et al., 2000). They may choose children as sexual partners because children are less socially demanding. For those with priestly duties, they may have presided over many family events: weddings, funerals, baptisms, but in essence they remain removed and were not participants. Sometimes this distance results in an overwhelming need for unrequited closeness, a closeness or intimacy that the vulnerable may satisfy by turning to inappropriate behaviour to satisfy their needs (Plante et al., 2000). Many have been sheltered from life experiences and know little about human psychology and sexuality. It is clear from the men that they suffer much confusion in their own sexuality and their own sexual needs. Karl, raised as Catholic, concealed his homosexuality from friends and family throughout his life and even continues today as a sixty year old to hide this important aspect of his sexuality from those dear to him. The men display no comfortable

acceptance of self and no understanding of their own sexuality. This core element in relating to others can only be arrived at once they accept a sense of personal identity (Bryant, 1999).

The men appear to have even entered the priesthood to avoid sexual problems and almost by default have found themselves lured into the warmth and affection often given unconditionally by children. A number of Catholic cleric offenders view women as a threat to their celibacy and rationalise that homosexual acting out with a boy while sinful is not threatening to their priestly vows (Loftus, 1999). Those who have the right combination of factors: low self esteem, loneliness, unable to relate to peers, psychological immaturity, and impulse may find themselves slipping into boundary violations in a state of unawareness (Plante, 1996). For instance Frieberger (1996) found that only 24% of his 70 cleric perpetrators believed their offending was lacking in morality, suggesting a severe lack of insight and understanding.

Theme 8 – Preventative Features

The men in this study suggested a number of situational factors that would have made it more difficult for them to offend or perhaps even prevent the offence from occurring in the first place. Whilst situational crime prevention relies on reducing opportunities for crime, applying situational dynamics to sexual offences is somewhat more difficult than the conventional methods such as target hardening which is used in crimes like

property theft (Clarke, 1995). Target hardening as a method usually involves obstructing offenders in their criminal behaviour with the use of physical barriers such as locks to protect the proposed object of their offence. In the case of sexual abuse this target hardening can include a number of strategies to protect children. In this study all the men indicated that had the child said 'no' or had been perceived as likely to 'tell' then the men would not have continued on the path of offending, at least with that child. Smallbone and Wortley (2000) found that the most successful tactic for potential victims when approached by a perpetrator was being assertive and saying 'no' as the child's reaction to potential perpetrators can significantly affect the offenders' subsequent behaviour. Such outcomes suggest that encouraging confident and assertive children by teaching protective strategies may ultimately reduce the emotional response the perpetrator is seeking and assist in prevention of sexual abuse (Wortley & Smallbone, 2006).

Additional preventative measures the men suggested may have proven effective in reducing their sexual abuse and parallels with situational prevention methods recommended by Wortley and Smallbone (2006) includes increasing risk of capture by extending guardianship (teaching parents to recognise grooming behaviours), strengthening formal surveillance (instigating protocols for contact with children) or increasing natural surveillance (awareness signage in parks etc as suggested by Jace).

CONCLUSION

This phenomenological study was undertaken to understand the lived experiences of clergy and lay religious leader sexual offenders. This group of religious men shared a number of commonalities; eight categorical themes were identified from their stories: Situational factors, cognitive distortions, precipitators to offending, religious influence, seminary experience, personality factors, church as institution and preventative features. To date, no prior research has been conducted directly addressing the impact of religious orientation on the perpetration of clergy sexual abuse. In particular in this study three of the men identified a number of behaviours and attitudes that are consistent with extrinsic religious orientation; whether for social or protective benefits. Two of the men also displayed Quest-like orientation suggesting their faith was driven by self doubts, tentativeness and a continuing search for religious truth. In this small group, as for the participants in study one and two, it would seem then that religiosity, specifically extrinsic orientation, is connected in some way to unlawful sexual behaviour. However as the clergy are specifically different to those participants in studies one and two, caution is required before assuming that the results of these studies will automatically explain the link between religiosity and sexual offending in this group.

Although the four were raised in households with strong religious values and practices, all the men indicated a degree of emotional neglect, paternal abandonment, or sexual abuse during their youth. These

experiences appeared to shape their future interpersonal relationships which brought about a blurring of boundaries as adults. Such violation of boundaries ultimately contributed to their unlawful behaviour. Despite their offences, compared to the general sexual offending population, the men were less likely to have a history of criminal convictions and there was little evidence of criminal versatility in this specialised group. Apart from a few unlawful acts such as speeding or drink driving, their sole offence appears to have been the unlawful sexual behaviour for which they were incarcerated. However, there may be another possibility for the lack of criminal versatility in this group. For instance, it is quite likely that these men lived in social situations that made detection of criminal behaviour unlikely and commission of less serious offences may have remained undetected. Taken at face value, given their successful education and lack of criminal versatility it is not surprising to find that the men all held a reasonably high level of self control. However, they did display some of the characteristics of individuals with low self-control. The men were often impulsive and opportunistic in their trusted role of either parish priest or religious leader and used this role to gain access to opportunities for sexual contact with young people.

While reliving their experiences the men identified several themes which defined their offending behaviour. A range of situational and dispositional factors influenced their opportunity for perpetrating child sexual abuse and a number of these warrant further investigations, in particular religious based activities. Similarly, it became evident that the two

participants who were priests believed the Church authorities had ill equipped them for a life-time serving God. While the seminary prepared them well in theology and for pastoral duties the men considered it failed, in the main, to address interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. More importantly, despite recent attention on the formation of priests within the Church, there continues to be the need for discussions and frankness on sexuality, transference, counter transference, boundary issues and ethics, all of which should be offered in the seminary curricula. Whether it was a conscious decision or not these men made a vocational choice that they hoped would control their impulses but in reality placed them in more vulnerable position to offend.

Chapter 6

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

“WE DANCE ROUND IN A RING AND SUPPOSE, BUT THE SECRET SITS
IN THE MIDDLE AND KNOWS.”

Robert Frost

Fuelled by media attention, recent research into sexual offending by clergy and other religious leaders has produced an increase in the empirical knowledge base. However, much remains unexplained and this thesis has sought to extend the knowledge of the link between sexual offending and religiosity. Chapter one identified the research question: to what extent do individual dispositional (e.g. religiosity) and situational factors (e.g. opportunity) interact in the perpetration of sexual abuse. Chapter two contained a review of the research literature rooted in the social control theories of unlawful behaviour and in particular that of sexual misconduct linked to religiosity. The following areas were examined: aetiology of sexual offending, behavioural correlates of religiosity, emergence of clergy sexual offending and the subsequent response from the Church, conceptualisations of the control theories of criminal behaviour, aspects of ecclesiastical factors and implications of these factors in the perpetration of sexual abuse.

The next three chapters consisted of three studies that tested the hypotheses and provided the subsequent results. Taken together, these studies provide a picture of the connection between religious experiences and sexual misconduct among three disparate groups of men. A summary of the results of the three studies is reported in the following section, followed by discussions of their consistency with previous research, inherent limitations of this research as well as strengths and design complications. Applications for the findings in terms of prevention and treatment of child sexual offences and directions for future research are also addressed.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The hypotheses for this research were somewhat exploratory as very little previous research was available on the relationship between religiosity and sexual offenders to give direction to this thesis. The first study demonstrated that incarcerated men who have life-long religious affiliation were more likely to have had greater sexual offence convictions, more victims, and younger victims, than other groups. This group of *stayers*, who reported regular church attendance, belief in supernatural sanctions (e.g. “God will punish sinners”) and religious salience in their daily life, were much more likely to have prepubescent child victims (average age under 10 years) while all other groups had victims at least of adolescent or young adult age (15 years and above). It became evident in this analysis that religious affiliation across the life-course did indeed impact on offending behaviour. Aside from the findings discovered for the *stayer* group, those who were never connected

with religion, *non-religious*, made up the youngest of the groups and had the greatest number of non-sexual offences. Contrary to Hirshi's (1969) social control theory, the social bonds of religious commitment, at least in the case of sexual offences, did not have the anticipated inverse effect on criminal behaviour.

Study two also indicated that life-long religious affiliation does not have a deterrent effect against sexual misconduct but does appear to have some deterrent effect against ascetic behaviours, such as illicit drug use. Furthermore, as in the first study, the *stayers* in this group of university students had a greater propensity for sexual misconduct than all of the other groups. This being so, the second study then explored the impact of low self-control and religious orientation on both sexual and non-sexual misconduct. The research clarified which aspect of religiosity appeared to be the critical factor in sexual misconduct. The individuals in study two who identified as having extrinsic religious orientation were found to have lower self control, lower moral beliefs and committed more acts of sexual misconduct compared to those with intrinsic religious orientation. Consistent with the hypothesis and Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) assertion, low self-control was a significant predictor of delinquent or unlawful behaviour in the sample of university students in this study. When both constructs of low self-control and low moral beliefs were taken into account they enhanced the prediction of acts of non-sexual misconduct. However, these factors were not the keys for predicting those who were

likely to participate in acts of sexual misconduct. Instead it appeared that a combination of extrinsic religious orientation and low self-control explained this propensity for sexual misconduct. Therefore, as in the first study, this second study showed that religiosity did not insulate against sexual misconduct and in fact extrinsic religious orientation in this group of university students presented as the most likely risk factor.

As with the first two studies study three indicated that, with cleric and lay religious leaders the continuing social bonds of religious affiliation do not protect against unlawful sexual activities but do protect against general criminal behaviour. Here too, extrinsic orientation appeared to be a risk factor for unlawful sexual behaviour. However, due to the small number of participants in the final study it was not possible to make inferences about religious orientation as a predictor in cases of cleric sexual abuse. Similarly, in support of the general theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), a number of low self-control traits were implicated in the clerics' sexual offence history. In addition this third qualitative study identified a number of factors that impacted on the cleric and religious lay leaders' offending behaviour. While each of the four men interviewed in these case studies was unique, they also shared several similar lived experiences in childhood and adulthood that impacted on their offending. As the men recounted their experiences eight categorical themes could be identified from their stories: situational factors, cognitive distortions, precipitators to offending, religious influence, seminary experience, church as institution, personality factors and

preventative features. These themes were congruent, on the whole, with other research literature that has explored lived experiences of sexual offenders.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The main purpose of the three studies was to examine whether sexual offenders' commitment to religion impacts on the extent of their sexual and non-sexual misconduct. The findings are contrary to Hirshi's (1969) Social Control Theory which predicts that individuals with strong social bonds are usually immersed in time consuming activities such as church attendance, are more insulated from criminal involvement and less likely to commit crimes. Research during the intervening years has provided support for Hirshi's theory (Agnew, 1991; Sampson & Laub, 1990, Sampson & Laub, 2004). However, much of this research has focused on juveniles, not adults, and the crimes have not been consistent in their seriousness. Tests of social control theory have rarely been applied to more serious offending; rather, the theory has been used to explain desistance from minor forms of criminal involvement (Alarid, Burton & Cullen, 2000). Accordingly, this thesis tests the social control theory, in terms of religious affiliation, with serious sexual misconduct.

The association between religiosity and sexual behaviour

The findings of the three studies appear to point unanimously to a relationship between religiosity and sexual misconduct. Study one found life-long religiosity linked with sexual misconduct and this connection was

further refined in studies two and three which found particular religious orientation to be the defining difference between those who participate in sexual misconduct and those who do not. Specifically, intrinsic orientation appeared to be a protective factor whilst extrinsic orientation presented as a risk factor.

Religious orientation

Individuals with intrinsic orientation are committed to their religion with a genuine devout faith and internalise much of its beliefs and practices (Allport & Ross, 1967). Those with intrinsic orientation are also able to apply their views trans-situationally. For instance Rowatt and Schmitt (2003) found intrinsically religious individuals were more likely than extrinsically religious persons to internalize religious teachings about sexuality and conform to standards set by their religion. Extrinsically orientated individuals conversely, have less sexual restraint and are more likely to indulge in mate poaching. They identify with their religious reference group without much thought and more as a matter of course. Similar to the men in the third study, those with extrinsic religious orientation will often use their religion for self serving, utilitarian purposes (Allport & Ross, 1967).

Religious cognitive distortions

Possible explanations for the relationship between strength of religiosity and age and number of victims in study one remain complex. First, specific

spiritual cognitive distortions that allow the individual to justify their offending may be present in this sample. However, no studies have been carried out on cognitive distortions linked to religiosity amongst the general population of sexual offenders. On the other hand Saradijan and Nobus' (2003) work on clergy offenders found religious beliefs removed inhibitions and were instrumental in facilitating offending behaviour against children. According to Saradijan and Nobus' (2003) statements such as "*I would go to a priest and confess my sins and promise not to do it again*" reduced inhibitions against acting out with a child while "*God has called me to be a priest. I believe this fully. When he called me, he knew what I was like, what my needs were and how I could have them met.*" successfully reduced internal responsibility. Pro-offending thinking was supported with beliefs such as "*How could it be that bad if He (God) allows it?*" Participants in Saradijan and Nobus' (2003) study were exclusively clergy. Perhaps those incarcerated offenders in study one who hold strong religious beliefs and who may have life-long exposure to the dynamics of the church community may hold similar cognitive distortions held by clergy in Saradijan and Nobus' study.

Certainly a number of cognitive distortions were found among clergy or religious lay leaders in the third study. These clerics often presented themselves as blameless and harmless, they minimised their behaviour as just 'playing around' and would 'blame' the Church for lack of support and the reason why they 'fell'. They also rationalised and attributed their offending behaviours to spiritual purposes. These findings are somewhat

consistent with earlier research which suggests extrinsically orientated individuals are more likely to have an external locus of control (Jackson & Coursey, 1988). As such these individuals believe their destiny is controlled by external forces, a suggestion perhaps that supports the argument that those with external orientation would be more likely to use blaming and justification as a means of explaining their offence.

Ward, Gannon, and Keown (2006) have suggested a model, the Judgement Model of Cognitive Distortions, to provide a broader perspective on cognitive distortions and explain how beliefs and their associated values serve as the basis for sexual offending actions. The model allows for analysis at the micro-level (focuses on the offenders' beliefs, values and actions), meso-level (focuses on the individuals' plans for living and the immediate environments in which these plans are implemented) and macro level (focuses on the offender and his personal, cultural and social environment). Ward et al., argue that all offence-endorsing statements reflect varying combinations of these beliefs, values and actions and each type of distortion will influence the other. Importantly all three need to be targeted by clinicians. A critical part of treatment of child sexual offenders is to address these thinking errors and encourage the individual to recognise and challenge these errors (Beech & Fisher, 2002).

Religious opportunities

An alternative explanation for the positive relationship between religious affiliation and sexual offending may be found in current research indicating a peak in sexual offending once offenders' reach their late 30's (Hanson, 2002). It has been suggested that this peak is the result of increased opportunities (eg. greater access to victims as offenders become fathers, attain trusted positions in the workforce or family). It is possible that situational dynamics within the Church community may lead to a rise in opportunities for both clergy and non-clergy in unsupervised access to vulnerable victims. It is a reasonable assumption that the *stayers* in the first study possibly continued to offend because the proximate causes of the crime, such as environment, lack of supervision, and continued opportunities, were not disrupted (Sampson & Laub, 2004). Godfredson and Hirschi (1993) argue that opportunity acts in conjunction with low self-control in order to facilitate criminal behaviours and crime. A number of situational factors influence opportunities for child sexual abuse. Certainly in the third study, all of the clerics and religious lay leaders cited religious opportunities and environmental stressors as contributing factors to their offending. All used their religious institutions to gain greater closeness to children and create opportunities to abuse their victims away from adequate supervision or guardianship (Clarke, 1995).

Low self-control

In the sample of university students in the second study, the consequence of low self-control on participation in non-sexual misconduct is consistent with the claim by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) that the propensity for unlawful behaviour can be explained, to a large degree, by weak self control. Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime extends Hirschi and Stark's [1969] (2002) earlier social control theory which contends that weak social bonds affect an individuals' likelihood of deviating from the laws of society, while strong social bonds protect against criminal behaviour. Gottfredson and Hirschi suggest the link between weak social bonds and deviance are both a result of the same underlying factor, low self-control. Individuals possessing low self control are also unlikely to maintain stable friendships are less likely to be reliable in the work arena and more likely to reject conventional social bonds (Wright, et al., 1999).

While self-control level has not been specifically addressed in previous studies on religious orientation, many earlier findings on behaviour and religious orientation indicate low self-control features in those identifying as extrinsic. For instance, the extrinsically orientated have been associated with prejudice (Allport & Ross, 1967; Duck & Hunsberger, 1999), decreased sexual restraint and increased mate poaching (Rowatt & Schmitt, 2003), adultery and pre-marital sexual permissiveness (Leak, 1993), and have been noted to be

undependable and indulgent (Donahue, 1985). Certainly in study three, a number of low-self control traits were implicated in the clerics' sexual offence history. These men described being impulsive, risk taking and self-centred, at least in their endeavour to find victims and offending opportunities.

Morality

In study two, those with high moral beliefs and intrinsic religious orientation were less likely to participate in non-sexual misconduct compared to those with extrinsic religious orientation. The connection between high moral belief and intrinsic orientation is not surprising as the internal constraint provided by strong moral beliefs is very similar to the internalisation of an intrinsic religious orientation. However, moral beliefs in themselves did not prevent the propensity to participate in sexual misconduct. It appears therefore that moral beliefs per se are not the distinguishing factor in whether a person sexually offends.

This finding appears contradictory in that the four religious men in the final study, who have committed sexual offences against children in their care, are men who have all expressed high levels of moral principles in other areas in their lives and who have spent years of training in ethics and moral theology. To help explain this apparent inconsistency between moral beliefs and moral action we look to recent literature in the field of moral psychology. Much research in moral psychology has occurred in past

decades around Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral reasoning and the suggestion that moral knowledge and moral judgement are reached primarily by a process of reasoning and reflection. Kohlberg's rationalistic view still leads contemporary thought on morality and the "*consensus that morality lives within the individual mind as a trait-like cognitive attainment...a set of knowledge structures about moral standards*" (Haidt, 2001: 817). Interestingly, in combining religiosity and moral reasoning, Kohlberg (1981) maintained that religiosity and morality are inherently unrelated because they are two distinct areas of human concern. Similarly, Wahrman (1981) argued that the religion-morality relationship can be best explained by dogmatism, while Ji (2004) found students with intrinsic and Quest orientations were more likely to engage in principled moral reasoning. However, Kay (1999) found that in order to remain consistent with their religious ideology, the more conservative religious individuals were less likely to use principled moral reasoning.

This weak relationship between moral reasoning and moral action has been debated by many contemporary theorists. Bandura (1999) suggested that while people usually refrain from behaving in ways that violate their moral standards by a self-regulatory process involving self-sanctions, they also have the ability to disengage moral actions from moral standards. A variety of psychosocial mechanisms operate to selectively disengage moral self-sanctions from injurious conduct and detrimental affects (Bandura, 2002). Such behaviour enables those highly moral individuals to perpetrate atrocities in certain circumstances, such as when a trusted priest sexually

violates a child in his care. By minimizing the harmful consequences, diffusing responsibility, and attributing blame to their victims the men in study three have employed a number of cognitive functions to enable moral disengagement from their actions.

Addressing preventative features

During recent years the Church has responded actively to the sexual abuse of children and many denominations have adjusted policy and procedures with regard to sexual abuse by clergy based on earlier research (Hanson, Pfäfflin, & Lütz, 2004; Marshall, 2004). Consequently, Church policies are being regularly reviewed and refined as further sexual abuse research data comes to light. Within this context, a number of institutions have acknowledged their responsibility and have made some form of restitution to those victimised by their clergy, while others have sought to take proactive measures to protect against future cases of misconduct. For instance, the United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada currently run a program intended to enlighten seminarians and clergy to issues of sexual ethics and appropriate boundaries in clergy-congregant relationships (Sawchuk, et al., 2007). However, many of these programs target the clergy-female parishioner boundary issues and not so much child sexual abuse concerns.

The ultimate responsibility falls to the Church and its training institutions to not only regulate and screen those who enter the field but

also to maintain and ensure the appropriateness of seminary school in addressing sexuality and boundary issues. Importantly, future clergy should receive training concerning the dynamics of psychotherapy and issues of transference and counter transference. It became apparent that the men in study three had not adequately addressed their issues of self-awareness, sexuality and boundaries which ultimately resulted in a breach of ethical expectations in their field. Essentially, early detection and diagnosis of sexually dysfunctional behaviour and identification of problematic sexual behaviour needs to occur.

Finally, poor stress management techniques appear to have exacerbated the situation for the four men in study three. Earlier literature indicates clergy dealt better with stress than most professionals. More recently, however, studies describe an alarming spread of burnout in the profession. Religious leaders are often "on-call" for a wide variety of needs and demands. From this perspective, burnout is the result of external systemic factors such as bureaucracy, poor administrative support, and difficult work conditions (Grosch & Olsen, 2000). Thus stress management training needs to be offered during seminary formation. It is imperative that these issues be undertaken in sufficient quantities in seminary school and graduate training programs.

At a time when debate is raging over the nature and function of ordination, some ecclesiastical institutions are finding an alternative path for lay ministry and many churches are viewing some of the laity as a huge

untapped resource. With the shortage of priests, there are more and more liturgies being celebrated on Sundays in the absence of a priest (Hitchcock, 1998). The two men in study three who had not been ordained held many of the attributes that are sought in lay ministers and it is questionable whether the psychological testing now being adopted for ordained priests also applies when assessing the suitability of such laity to the priestly duties. According to Bryant (1999) the majority of priests who offend against children do so after ordination. It is rare for the abuse to manifest at the time of any pre-evaluation or screening that may be carried out before acceptance into seminaries. Markham and Mikail (2004) suggest it would be wiser to focus on risk factors such as history of sexual victimisation, impulse control, substance abuse problems, psychological immaturity and difficulties with maintaining adult relationships. However, one must be cautious if attempting to attribute the entire cleric's dysfunctional behaviour to the few short years he spent in seminary formation. To do so would fail to take into account other mitigating factors.

LIMITATIONS

Although there is a link between religiosity and sexual misconduct in all three studies, any attempt to extrapolate from one study to the next in this thesis must be done with caution as the disparate nature of each group of participants limits the generalisability of the results.

This thesis has largely considered the impact of religious orientation on sexual offending. Results indicate that religious orientation serves as either a

risk factor or protective factor in all forms of offending. As religiosity is multidimensional further research of other dimensions is warranted before definite conclusions can be drawn. In study one, although there were significant effects of religiosity on sexual offending, the data do not allow for an examination of just how religiosity is associated with an increased number of victims as well as a younger age of victims. The data in this study was limited to that available in the correctional facilities' archived personal files of the participants as personal contact was not permitted. There may be other possibilities that would explain some of the positive relationship between *stayers* and levels of sexual offending. For instance, it may be that the *stayers* were more likely to live in social situations that made detection of criminal behaviour unlikely and so those who committed fewer and less serious offences remained undetected. Conversely, those who were repeat offenders may have been more likely to be apprehended and incarcerated for their offences. More detailed data collection on social environment would make this possibility an avenue for further research.

In study two, the variables of the model left much of the variance in self-reported misconduct unexplained, although given the sample of university students this model may still be a modest predictor. As a group, university students must have displayed at least a certain level of self control to have succeeded academically to this point. It is therefore quite possible that such a non-random sample may have biased and distorted the results with higher levels of self control. In addition the data do not allow for an

explanation of just how religious commitment reduces the individual's likelihood of delinquent acts. This information could be gained by scales that measure negative emotional variables such as shame and embarrassment or positive variables of pride or conviction (Johnson, Sung, Larson & De Li, 2001). Further, this particular study did not account for opportunity and measuring this construct would likely have added to the model strength.

In study three the small number of participants limits the ability to generalise the findings to other clergy members who offend. This study sought to explore cleric sexual offending against those under the age of consent; the results may therefore not be applicable to clerics who commit sexual offences against adults or who commit other types of criminal acts. The participants were all volunteers; the findings may be applied with caution to those who did not or would not volunteer in such a study. In addition, the participants were not randomly selected but purposefully selected. Although in this study extrinsic religious orientation has been recognised as a factor in the aetiology and perpetration of sexual abuse by clerics and lay religious leaders, there is a scarcity of empirical research on this issue and further investigation is required.

Common to all three studies are the inherent limitations when using retrospective self-report methodologies. Such methodology relies on retrospective recall of events by the participants and inaccuracies due to time lapse or perception distortion are possible making it impossible to distinguish

whether beliefs or experiences came first. Most self-report measures are transparent and this is a very real limitation when assessing sexual offenders.

DESIGN COMPLICATIONS

A number of design complications became apparent as the thesis progressed. Given the sensitive nature of this research and the tendency for clergy to present themselves in a more positive light (Rediger, 1990) it was difficult to recruit participants for study three. Despite the guarantee that no participant or their parish would be identified in the study it quickly became clear that there were problems of access in this specialised population. Many in faith-based communities are unwilling to discuss or report on such issues. Many have been 'burnt' previously by the media or other investigators. While the initial aims of study three were to highlight the stories of clergy, it soon became apparent that the potential participant criteria would have to broaden. Therefore it was decided to include participants who had a strong religious faith, who had been in a position of trust within the church and who had used this position to create opportunities to offend against children. It was felt the rationale for this action could be justified by the increasing numbers of contemporary lay clergy who are now supplementing the ever diminishing numbers of ordained clergy within the church. These lay clergy are often such men as those interviewed for study three; they have a strong religious calling, are in a trusted position of leadership within their community church but have not yet gone through the ecclesiastical formation process and have not been ordained.

APPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS

The incidence and prevalence of sexual abuse continues to attract concern in the criminal justice domain. Cleric and high profile religious offenders have been of particular interest to researchers during the past ten years. It is becoming increasingly evident that misconduct carried out within the boundaries of religious faith has far-reaching emotional influences, impacting not only on the victim and their faith but also the parish, cleric colleagues and family of the offending clergy. Identifying the critical factors that contribute to sexual abuse and integrating both situational and dispositional aspects contributes to the current knowledge of this understudied group of offenders. Recognition of factors that support and perpetuate offending informs the development of appropriate programs designed to overcome some of the structural and procedural limitations in seminaries and dioceses.

The results of the three studies in this thesis have implications for the development of services for any religious population. Empirically formed policy is more likely to reduce the risks to the community of sexual recidivism. This in-depth study of the ecclesiastical-related experiences of clergy sex offenders has the potential to provide corrective services psychologists with important information about effective interventions to prevent relapse. The overall aim of exploring the lived experiences of this specific group of sex offenders is to contribute towards the development of prevention strategies.

At an institutional level, by understanding the experiences of these men as well as their identified risk factors, it should be possible to guide effective future training of seminarians and clergy. A number of institutions have already acknowledged the need to take proactive measures and protect against future cases of sexual misconduct by maintaining mandatory programs for seminarians. However, the majority of these programs aim to address inappropriate adult-adult and cleric-parishioner boundary regression. It is also necessary during clergy formation in seminaries and theological colleges to tackle sexuality, ethics, moral beliefs-action discrepancies and boundary violations with regard to children and adolescents. With further research, these results should also be able to add to the understanding of selection criteria by identifying risk factors in the life of the potential applicant and allow for these during the selection process. The findings will also allow for more effective treatment within corrective services by defining descriptive characteristics of this specialised population as well as offence focused treatment in order to prevent re-offending.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Sexual offences against a child have profound emotional and psychological influence on victims, church leadership, and on secular society. This thesis explored religious affiliation and orientation in relation to sexual offending that occurs within a religious arena. It argued that type of affiliation and orientation along with level of self control and situational factors indicates a possible explanation of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. Preventative

and desistance strategies were suggested in order to possibly reduce the phenomena. However, there remains a considerable gap in the knowledge about such perpetrators and the current research leaves several questions unanswered. As such these questions invite exploration of new foci of study in this area.

First, the data in study one was based on archival documents and did not include interviews with offenders. To further understand the anomaly of a positive relationship between religiosity of the participants and their greater number and younger victims it would be useful to investigate the presence of specific religious based cognitive distortions amongst a similar incarcerated population. Such a study may provide an empirical base to create relapse prevention strategies amongst this specific group.

Second, study two indicated apparent higher levels of self-control and stronger moral beliefs to be associated with fewer acts of non-sexual misconduct while low-self control and extrinsic religious orientation were associated with greater sexual misconduct amongst university students. Replication of this study on a similar size sample of clergy and religious leaders who have not offended may give greater understanding of the impact of religiosity on sexual offending.

Third, an avenue for further research would be to explain the influence control factors and moral beliefs exert on non-sexual misconduct but why those same factors do not impact on sexual misconduct. A possible

future area of focus then could be on the measurement of moral disengagement in order to explain the discrepancy between moral attitudes and moral behaviour. Such a study could also be carried out with a large group of clergy and religious leaders who have not offended.

Fourth, although the results of the third study provides some indicators of characteristics amongst clerical sexual abusers, it is essential that future research compares a larger sample which consists of both offending and non-offending clergy. An examination of the risk and protective factors that exist in both groups would allow for the development of a profile of this specific group in order to assist both clinicians and researchers.

Fifth, further qualitative and quantitative research is needed in examining the risk factors in a large sample of clergy sexual offenders in the context of their offending behaviour. In addition it is reasonable to expect protective factors to have a deterrent effect on offending behaviours and future research aimed at identifying such protective factors would prove useful. While phenomenology does not solve problems it does impart meaning and understanding the meaning of their lived experiences to these men may lead to greater awareness and ultimately greater prevention of child sexual abuse.

CONCLUSION

This thesis began with the observation that sexual abuse in a religious environment presented considerable questions about the way religion is

experienced and its influence in offending acts. Media coverage and accounts have elevated awareness of the prevalence of clergy child sexual abuse and more recent empirical research has helped illuminate our understanding of its aetiology and the maintenance of sexual offending behaviours. However there remains a marked lack of understanding about the role religiosity plays in sexual offending behaviour and this specialised group remains an important understudied population. This thesis has looked at whether religious orientation is differentially associated with sexual and non-sexual misconduct in three different groups of males: incarcerated sexual offenders, adult university students and cleric sexual offenders. It also addressed the extent internal controls (self control level and moral attitudes) and external controls (situational factors) inhibit misconduct.

The results of the thesis indicated a number of implications for religious communities and provide empirical information about the dynamics of religious beliefs and situational factors which contribute to sexual misconduct. In all three groups, religious commitment and religious orientation were indicators of protection against non-sexual misconduct but the nature of that religious orientation indicated a risk factor in sexual misconduct. Importantly in the final study, describing the lives of clergy and lay religious leader sex offenders, as construed by the offenders themselves, enabled an exploration of their unique perspectives on experiences that contribute to unlawful sexual misconduct. Since there may be unique situational influences on sexual misconduct within religious institutions (e.g.,

unique pastoral relationships with vulnerable children and their families), it was important to consider the more stable, attitudinal dimensions of the problem as well as the situational dimensions.

What is learnt from the particularities of these specialized cases can be used for purposes such as (a) feedback to the individuals or institutions studied; (b) part of an analytic strategy that compares case study material with what research and theory tell us, so as to expand current knowledge and understanding; and (c) as a source of concepts and hypotheses that can be tested and implemented in other settings for research purposes or practical applications.

Learning more about contextual and situational factors associated with sexual abuse in these institutions will assist the development of appropriate treatment regimes as traditionally regimes only focused on dispositional factors (Birkbeck and LaFree, 1993).

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APPENDIX “A”

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS For *Study 2*

Who is conducting this research:

Dr. Stephen Smallbone School of Criminology Griffith University, Mt. Gravatt Campus Ph: (07) 3875 3452	Donna Eshuys School of Applied Psychology Griffith University, Mt Gravatt Ph: (07) 3875 3242
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Why is this research being conducted?

The incidence of sexual abuse has steadily continued to climb over the past 10 years even given the low numbers of reported offences. However, until improved identification of perpetrators, their victims and circumstances surrounding the offence, the prevalence of sexual abuse may continue to expand. The purpose of the following research project is to learn more about sexual behaviour and victimization, unlawful behaviour and religious beliefs. This research is being conducted by Donna Eshuys as a part of a PhD in Forensic Psychology at Griffith University. Dr. Stephen Smallbone, a senior lecturer in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University is supervising this research. The outcome of this research will attempt to provide a better understanding of the prevalence of sexual victimization/perpetration and unlawful behaviours amongst university students in the context of their religious beliefs/values.

What you will be asked to do

Participation in this research includes completing a questionnaire that has four subsections. This questionnaire will take about 20 minutes to complete. The first subsection of the questionnaire will ask participants about their participation in a number of unlawful behaviours, the second will question their attitudes and responses to certain events. The third will ask students about their religious values and beliefs. The final subsection explores responses to questions about sexual experiences.

The expected benefits of the research

In future, when complete, this research will attempt to fill some of the gaps currently present on perpetration of sexual assault and unlawful behaviour in young people and provide an understanding of the prevalence of such behaviours, the protectiveness of religious values and an individual's likely response to situational stressors.

Risks to you

Some individuals may find responding to questions about sexual activities distressing, especially if they have experienced abuse in the past. If you do feel any distress following participation in this research you can contact any one of the following providers of counselling services:

Griffith University Student Services – Counselling Services (Ph: 3875-5669)

Lifeline Counselling (Ph: 131114)

Men's line Family or Relationship Counselling (Ph: 1300 789 978)

Your Confidentiality

Participants are instructed to place completed questionnaires in a sealed envelope distributed with the questionnaire by the researcher. The envelope can then either be placed in the locked box at the 4th floor office of the School of Applied Psychology or in the locked box in the research room in which you are completing the questionnaire. Participant's responses on the questionnaires will not be identifiable, nor will anyone other than the trained research staff listed above see how participants have answered questions. Basic demographic information including sex and age are included on the questionnaire but are not specific enough to breach anonymity. You will not be identifiable in any publication or reporting resulting from this research.

Voluntary participation

Participation is purely voluntary, and participants may discontinue participation at any time, without any penalty or explanation.

Concerns about ethical conduct

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. If you have any complaints regarding the ethical conduct of this research please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Griffith University (ph: (07) 3875 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au)

Feedback to participants

Feedback will be provided to participants of the study upon completion and will be accessible from the Griffith University Library; again participants will not be identifiable from these results. If you have any concerns or questions in relation to this research please do not hesitate to contact either Donna Eshuys or Dr. Smallbone (on the telephone numbers listed above).

Thank you for your assistance with this research project.

Donna Eshuys

APPENDIX 'B'

STUDY 2 and 3

Experiences and Values Questionnaire

How old are you?.....years months

Do you identify with a particular denomination? If so please name which one.

YesNo

To what degree was your childhood religious? (*circle number below*)

1	2	3	4
Not at all	some	often	extreme

What is your present marital status? (*circle answer below*)

Single married/ de facto divorced widowed

You will now be asked about aspects of your behaviour, attitudes, sexual experiences and religious beliefs. Some questions may make you feel uncomfortable. Please remember that you have the right to refuse to answer any question.

Research has shown that many people go through a period of joining in unlawful or irresponsible behaviour especially when during adolescence. Have you **ever done** any of the following acts when you were younger or now as an adult? If so **write the number** of times in the appropriate column (leave box blank otherwise).

Have you ever...

	As a youth	During past year
1. Avoided paying at restaurants, cinemas etc		
2. Filed an insurance claim that you knew was false		
3. Did not report all your income on your tax returns		
4. Claimed an undeserved deduction on your income tax		
5. Parked your car illegally		
6. Failed to return too much change given by mistake		
7. Knowingly bought, held, or sold stolen property		
8. Taken someone else's vehicle without their permission		
9. Taken anything worth \$5 or less from your job		
10. Taken anything between \$5 and \$50 from your job		
11. Taken anything worth \$5 or less from someone else		
12. Taken anything between \$5 and \$50 from someone		
13. Damaged property belonging to family or friends		
14. Damaged property belonging to an employer		
15. Broken into a building/vehicle		
16. Stolen or attempted to steal a car		
17. Been drunk in public		
18. Been rowdy or unruly in a public place		
19. Urinated in a public place		
20. Made obscene/dirty phone calls		
21. Driven more than 30 km over the speed limit		
22. Driven a car while drunk		
23. Bought alcohol for someone under 18 years		

	As a Youth	During past year
24. Had marijuana		
25. Used hallucinogens/LSD		
26. Had amphetamines (speed etc)		
27. Had heroin or cocaine		
28. Sold marijuana		
29. Sold hard drugs (cocaine, heroin)		
30. Been involved in a gang fight		
31. Used physical force to get money from family		
32. Used physical force to get money from work mates		
33. Used physical force to get money from someone else		
34. Used physical force to obtain sexual favours		
35. Hit or threatened to hit a family member		
36. Hit or threatened to hit someone at work		
37. Hit or threatened to hit friend/partner/spouse		
38. Had/tried to have sex with someone against their will		
39. Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting/killing them		

Attitudes

Below are some statements about attitudes that many people hold. Please circle the number which corresponds with your view on the statement.

0=strongly disagree 1=disagree 2=undecided 3=agree

4=strongly agree

I act on the spur of the moment without thinking	0	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---	---

I frequently try to avoid tasks that I know will be difficult	0	1	2	3	4
If I had a choice I would rather do something physical than something mental	0	1	2	3	4
I look out for myself first, even if it makes things hard on other people	0	1	2	3	4
I lose my temper pretty easily	0	1	2	3	4
When things get complicated I tend to quit	0	1	2	3	4
Sometimes I take a risk just for the fun of it	0	1	2	3	4
I almost always feel better when I am on the move than when sitting and thinking	0	1	2	3	4
I often do whatever brings me pleasure at the moment, even at the cost of future goals	0	1	2	3	4
I sometimes find it exciting to do things that may get me into trouble	0	1	2	3	4
I like to get out and do things more than read or contemplate	0	1	2	3	4
If things I do upset people it is their problem not mine	0	1	2	3	4
When I'm really angry other people better stay away from me	0	1	2	3	4
I'm more concerned about what happens to me in the short run than in the long run	0	1	2	3	4
I dislike really hard tasks that stretch my abilities to the limit	0	1	2	3	4
Excitement and adventure are more important to me than security	0	1	2	3	4
I try to get things I want even when I know it's	0	1	2	3	4

causing problems for other people					
When I have a serious disagreement with someone it's hard for me to talk calmly without getting upset.	0	1	2	3	4
I believe in a strict interpretation of right and wrong	0	1	2	3	4
I have always believed firmly in a firm set of moral-ethical principles	0	1	2	3	4
My goal in life is to enjoy it rather than live up to some abstract set of moral principles	0	1	2	3	4
There are only a few things that I would never do	0	1	2	3	4
My ideas of right and wrong are quite flexible	0	1	2	3	4
There are many things I would not do because I believe they are wrong	0	1	2	3	4
Morality is not as black and white as some people think	0	1	2	3	4
In certain circumstances there is almost nothing I would not do	0	1	2	3	4
I would rather die than commit a serious act of wrongdoing	0	1	2	3	4
I feel a strong need to live up to my moral values	0	1	2	3	4
I believe you can't judge whether something is right or wrong without knowing the motives of the people involved and the situation in which they are acting	0	1	2	3	4
I never worry about what to do, I believe life will take care of itself	0	1	2	3	4
I am immediately aware of it if I have done something wrong	0	1	2	3	4

What is right or wrong depends on the situation	0	1	2	3	4
I believe that moral values are absolute	0	1	2	3	4

Religious values

Think about each item carefully. Does the religious attitude or behaviour described in the statement apply to you and your experiences? Circle the corresponding number.

	No	Not Sure	Yes
1. It is important for me to spend time in private thought and prayer	1	2	3
2. I try to live all my life according to my religious beliefs	1	2	3
3. I enjoy reading about my religion	1	2	3
4. It doesn't matter much what I believe as long as I am good	1	2	3
5. I often have a strong sense of God's presence	1	2	3
6. Prayers I say when I'm alone are as important as those I say in church	1	2	3
7. I attend church once a week or more	1	2	3
8. My religion is important because it answers many questions about the meaning of life	1	2	3
9. My whole approach to life is based on my religion	1	2	3
10. I go to church because it helps me make friends	1	2	3
11. I go to church mainly because I enjoy seeing people I know there	1	2	3
12. What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow	1	2	3

13. Prayer is for peace and happiness	1	2	3
14. I pray mainly to gain relief and protection	1	2	3
15. I was not very interested in religion until I began to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of my life.	1	2	3
16. I have been driven to ask religious questions out of a growing awareness of the tensions in my world and in my relation to my world.	1	2	3
17. My life experiences have led me to rethink my religious convictions	1	2	3
18. God wasn't very important to me until I began to ask questions about the meaning of my own life.	1	2	3
19. It might be said that I value my religious doubts and uncertainties	1	2	3
20. For me, doubting is an important part of what it means to be religious	1	2	3
21. I do not find religious doubts upsetting	1	2	3
22. As I grow and change, I expect my religion also to grow and change	1	2	3
23. I am constantly questioning my religious beliefs.	1	2	3
24. I expect my religious convictions to change in the next few years.	1	2	3
25. There are many religious issues on which my views are still changing.	1	2	3

STUDY 3

**Semi Structured interview questions for face to face interview
(interviewer prompt only)**

1. Tell me about your life when you were a child? What is your earliest memory? *(Prompt for information about parental and sibling relationships, any experience of physical or sexual abuse).*
2. How would you describe yourself as a person?
3. What made you decide to follow a religious life?
4. How was life for you during your seminary studies? *(Prompt for information about the presence of the church)*
5. Describe when your legal problems first began.
6. Tell me about your life in the weeks before you first committed the offence. *(Prompt further with questions about work stress, relationships, leisure, finances, alcohol and drug use).*
7. What part did the church play during this period?
8. Describe any plans you put in place leading up to offending *(focus here is on overt goals to commit the offence).*
9. Tell me about when you first started to think about ...*(victim)* in a sexual way.
10. How did you first approach *(victim)* *(explore how he communicated his intent to the victim)*
11. Describe for me how your role as cleric influenced opportunities for sexual offending? *(Prompt whether participant found himself trying to orchestrate these situations on a more regular basis).* How would you describe your meetings with children.

12. Tell me about where the offence took place. If I was a fly on the wall...what would I have seen?
13. Explain your thoughts as you committed the abuse.
14. What were some of the strategies you used to manage the situation after the offence? (*think here about any normalising behaviour – behaviour that tries to convince the act had been consenting*)
15. Tell me about things that would have made it more difficult for you to carry out the offence?

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS***The influence of dispositional and ecclesiastical dynamics in offending behaviour*****Who is conducting this research**

Dr. Stephen Smallbone
School of Criminology
Griffith University, Mt. Gravatt Campus
Ph: (07) 3875 3452

Donna Eshuys
School of Applied Psychology
Griffith University, Mt. Gravatt Campus
Ph: 0403 466 998

Why is this research being conducted?

The incidence of sexual abuse has steadily continued to climb during recent years even given the low numbers of reported offences. A specific group that has been of particular interest to researchers over the past 10 years has been that of clergy or high profile religious individuals. It is becoming increasingly evident that misconduct carried out within the boundaries of religious faith has far reaching emotional influences, impacting not only on the victim and their faith but also the parish, the offender's colleagues and family of the offender. The purpose of the following research project is to learn more about the dynamics of religious beliefs and situational factors present in ecclesiastical culture which contribute to sexual misconduct, *from the perspective of the offender*. This research is being conducted by Donna Eshuys as a requirement for a PhD in Forensic Psychology at Griffith University. Dr. Stephen Smallbone, Associate Professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University is supervising this project.

The expected benefits of the research

In future, when complete, this research will attempt to fill some of the gaps currently present on perpetration of sexual misconduct within ecclesiastical situations and provide a better understanding of the prevalence of such behaviours. The overall aim is to contribute towards the development of prevention strategies and assist in advancing seminary educational curriculum.

What you will be asked to do

Participation in this research will involve you completing a short questionnaire that has three sub-sections. This questionnaire will take about 30 minutes to complete. The first section of the questionnaire will ask you about your participation in a number of illicit behaviours, the second will question your attitudes and responses to certain events. The third will ask you about your religious values and beliefs. You will also get the opportunity to discuss with the interviewer your perception of the mechanisms to your offending behaviour, and the degree to which the church, your seminary training and dynamics within the church did or did not figure in your misconduct. The time involved in this semi-structured part of the interview will vary dependent on your own level of disclosure.

Risks to you

Some individuals may find responding to questions about sexual activities distressing, especially if they have experienced abuse in the past. If you do feel any distress following participation in this

research you are encouraged to discuss your feelings with a prison counsellor or visiting prison ministry chaplain. Alternatively if you are with community corrections you are encouraged to contact either of the following organisations, both of which provide free personal and confidential counselling:

Centacare Brisbane - ph: 0732504305

Lifeline Counselling Centre – ph: 07 32501900

Your Confidentiality

There is the possibility that you may disclose details of an offence for which you have not yet been charged or sentenced. In order to avoid this, you will be cautioned at the commencement of the study regarding the limits of confidentiality. You are encouraged to avoid giving identifying details of previous offences as the interviewer is legally and ethically obliged to report any identifying information revealed about previously undetected criminal activities. Your responses on the questionnaires will not be identifiable, nor will anyone other than the trained research staff listed above see how you have answered questions. Basic demographic information including sex and age are included on the questionnaire but are not specific enough to breach anonymity. All information collected will be stored in a de-identified form in a locked, secure filing cabinet and will be destroyed after a period of 5 years. You will not be identifiable in any publication or reporting resulting from this research.

Voluntary participation

Participation is purely voluntary, and you may discontinue at any time, without penalty or explanation. Should you agree to participate there will be no negative or positive influence on matters such as your length of sentence or your parole. The interviewer will ask permission to audiotape your interview. As you are aware the circumstances leading up to your offence are very complex and the need to audiotape is merely to accurately transcribe details you believe were important. The audiotape will be erased after transcription and you are encouraged not to identify yourself on the tape to ensure further anonymity. Please note that you can decline the request to audiotape but still participate in the interview and study.

Further questions

If you have any concerns or questions in relation to this research please do not hesitate to contact either Donna Eshuys or Dr. Smallbone (on the telephone numbers listed above). You may also wish to contact me via

your prison psychologist or community correctional officer and have them mail the Department's research unit (research@dcs.qld.gov.au) to pass your contact details on to me. I will then make arrangements to see you

Concerns about ethical conduct

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. If you have any complaints regarding the ethical conduct of this research please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Griffith University (ph: (07) 3875 5585 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) or raise your concerns with an Official Visitors to your correctional centre;

Feedback to participants

Feedback will be available upon completion of the study and a summary report of the overall results will be forwarded to the psychologist in your Correctional centre who will then notify you. Alternatively, if you are a community client, the summary will be forwarded to your supervising officer and you will be offered it on your next visit. The entire dissertation will be available from the Griffith University Library; again participants will not be identifiable from these results

Thank you for your assistance with this research project.

Donna Eshuys

APPENDIX 'E'

EXPRESSION OF CONSENT For 3rd study

The influence of dispositional and ecclesiastical dynamics in sexual offending behaviour

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package, and in particular that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will consist of two parts: completing a questionnaire which has three subsections of approximately 30 minutes in total and a semi-structured interview of indeterminate time. These sub-sections ask participants about their unlawful behaviours, responses/attitudes to certain events, and about their religious beliefs.
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction and if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand the risks involved and that the interviewer is legally and ethically obliged to report any information revealed about crimes against children not yet known to the authorities, including the identification of a child or actions that might place a child at risk for abuse or maltreatment;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that I am encouraged to access the prison counselling services or request other counselling should I become distressed after completing the interview;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on 3875-5585 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of a project;
- I understand that feedback on the study will be available for participants once the thesis is complete and submitted to the Mt Gravatt Campus Library

Please strike through the option you oppose:

- I ***agree/disagree*** for the interview to be *audio taped* to facilitate the collection of information with the understanding that all information which I provide will be held in confidence and will be destroyed after transcription. I am aware that I will not be identified in the thesis, summary report, or any publication. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.
- I ***agree/disagree*** that the researcher can access my personal data, namely Sex Offender Treatment files and Criminal History, currently held at Department of Corrections. I understand this information will be held in confidence and will be non identifiable in any way after collection.

Signature:.....

Date

Research Team:

Dr. Stephen Smallbone
School of Criminology
Griffith University, Mt. Gravatt Campus
Ph: (07) 3875 3452

Donna Eshuys
School of Applied Psychology
Griffith University, Mt. Gravatt
Ph: (07) 3875 3242

APPENDIX 'F'

Table 7.1.
Prevalence of Self-Reported Criminal Behaviour amongst 163 University students

<u>Property crime subscale (15 items)</u>	%
1. Avoided paying at restaurants, cinemas etc	22.7
2. Knowingly bought, held, or sold stolen property	45.4
3. Taken someone else's vehicle without their permission	21.5
4. Taken anything worth \$5 or less from your job	57.1
5. Taken anything between \$5 and \$50 from your job	33.1
6. Taken anything worth over \$50 from your job	10.4
7. Taken anything worth \$5 or less from someone else	50.9
8. Taken anything between \$5 and \$50 from someone else	30.7
9. Taken anything worth over \$50 from someone	12.9
10. Damaged/destroyed property belonging to family	42.9
11. Damaged/destroyed property belonging to an employer	17.2
12. Purposely damaged/destroyed property belonging to spouse/ partner/friend	16.0
13. Broken into a building/vehicle	26.4
14. Stolen or attempted to steal a car	6.1
15. Thrown objects at cars/property	41.4
<u>Drug crime subscale (9 items)</u>	
16. Drunk alcohol before the age of 18 years	79.1

17. Driven a car while drunk	41.7
18. Bought alcohol for someone under 18 years	45.4
19. Had marijuana	55.2
20. Used hallucinogens/LSD	21.5
21. Had amphetamines (speed etc)	24.5
22. Had heroin or cocaine	10.4
23. Sold Marijuana	21.1
24. Sold hard drugs (cocaine, heroin)	4.3

Violent crime subscale (8 items)

25. Been involved in a gang fight	13.5
26. Used physical force to get money from family	4.4
27. Used physical force to get money from someone at work	.6
28. Used physical force to get money from someone other than work or family	5.5
29. Hit or threatened to hit a family member	35.0
30. Hit or threatened to hit someone at work	12.9
31. Hit or threatened to hit friend/partner/spouse	23.3
32. Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting/killing them	9.8

Sexual crime subscale (2 items)

33. Used physical force to obtain sexual favours	8.6
34. Had or tried to have sex with someone against their will	7.4

APPENDIX “G”

Table 7.2.

Mean and standard deviation item score - Low Self-Control

Item	University Sample	
	Mean	SD
Impulsivity		
I act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think	1.71	1.19
I'm more concerned about what happens to me in the short run than in the long run	1.72	1.09
I often do whatever brings me pleasure at the moment, even at the cost of future goals	1.45	1.09
I don't devote much thought and effort to preparing for the future	1.82	1.08
Simple Tasks Component		
I frequently try to avoid tasks that I know will be difficult	1.89	1.11
I dislike really hard tasks that stretch my abilities to the limit	1.36	.95
The things that are the easiest to do bring me the most pleasure	1.90	1.15
When things get complicated I tend to quit	1.28	.97
Risk taking Component		
I sometimes find it exciting to do things that may get me into trouble	2.07	1.08
Excitement and adventure are more important to me than security	1.86	1.07

I like to test myself every now and then by doing something risky	2.28	1.22
Sometimes I take a risk just for the fun of it	2.26	1.09
Physical Activities Component		
If I had a choice I would rather do something physical than something mental	2.09	1.08
I like to get out and do things more than read or contemplate	2.26	1.08
I almost always feel better when I am on the move than when sitting and thinking	2.41	1.05
I seem to have more energy and a greater need for activity than most people	2.30	1.02
Self-Centered Component		
If things I do upset people it is their problem not mine	1.29	1.00
I will try to get things I want even when I know it's causing problems for other people	1.28	.92
I'm not very sympathetic to other people when they are having problems.	1.77	1.16
I look out for myself first even if it makes things difficult for others	1.35	.98
Temper Component		
When I have a serious disagreement with someone it is hard for me to talk calmly without getting upset.	1.84	1.15
When I'm really angry other people better stay away from me	1.58	1.10
I lose my temper pretty quickly	1.62	1.20
Often when angry at people I feel more like hurting them than talking about why I am angry.	2.00	1.09

APPENDIX “H”

Table 7.3:
Process of creating formulated meanings from significant statements

Significant Statements	Formulated meanings
<i>I've let Him (God) down; I've ruined my witness and His witness through me. It concerns me if I've turned any of my victims away from the church</i>	My behaviour has destroyed my religious strength and maybe that of my victims
<i>I thought, OK, they're getting changed, they don't know about it (video camera) and it's not hurting anyone.... I'm not touching, not interfering the girls aren't aware of anything</i>	My behaviour is not harmful if the girls remain unaware of it.
<i>I am totally aware of my own spiritual poverty... I only have God's love and kindness to draw upon and it is Him that makes me strong</i>	Without God I am weak
<i>I was in my own position of trust and I abused that trust...apart from the victims themselves there have been a lot of other victims as well. Their parents...my own parents, my wife and kids.</i>	I was in a position of trust and abused this. Many people in my life suffered because of my actions.
<i>You've got to realise that today's seminarians are so different than those of some years ago. I think the seminarians of yesterday were more immature. Today they have had jobs before entering, some have been teachers or It's very different today to back then, different expectations...</i>	Seminarians of my generation were more immature and less worldly than contemporary ones.
<i>I believe God ... planned my life and allowed my sinful behaviour to run its course. I know now that that does not lessen my own responsibility But I do believe God knew what was going to happen and permitted it to happen.</i>	My behaviour was predetermined by God and he allowed it to continue. I may have been responsible but he allowed it to happen.