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A PSYCHODYNAMIC ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS CONFRONTING

ANGLICAN PAROCHIAL CLERGY

[VOL. ONE]

BY

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***THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE PHD IN PSYCHOTHERAPY AND
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Detur soli Deo gloria

ABSTRACT

The Anglican Church of England has experienced change, within itself as an institution and without in the national perception of its credibility. These changes have taken place especially during the latter part of the 19th Century right up to the 21st Century. This research will offer some understanding of the changes that have taken place. However, the bulk of the research will be concerned with the effect that these changes have wrought on the Church of England's workforce - that is, the ordained clergy.

Aims:

The aim of the research is to explore the dynamic relationship between the institution of the Church of England and the life of its ordained clergy. This is accomplished by investigating six pertinent areas of their lives:-

- Why they were ordained
- Their view of authority
- What it means to be a priest
- Personal relationships

- Working within the parish
- Emotional and spiritual health

Hypotheses to be Investigated:

1. "The lack of respect for the Christian Gospel and the more constraining conditions of service within the modern culture, as well as the fact that the media and the greater freedom of the wider society often seek to denigrate traditional values, may be seen to cause the Anglican parochial clergy a loss of confidence and may have an adverse effect on their psychological health."
2. "The dis-ease within affects not just the clergyperson's work and his/her own spiritual journey but also has an effect on every aspect of his/her life" and
3. "The reaction of the clergyperson to the modern-day culture depends more on their own internal emotional strength, or ego identity, than on the changing cultural values."

Methodology:

The research has been carried out using mainly a qualitative approach. This has been important, for it has allowed the clergy themselves to give voice to their perception of their lives. Though being aware of some of the inherent problems with a largely qualitative research methodology, the data collected during the semi-structured interviews have provided rich material to give insight into the problems being considered.

Results:

As a result of the data collected, it has been highlighted that many of the clergy struggle in the positions in which they find themselves. Even if they have experienced a clear call from God to offer themselves for the ordained ministry, they have many grievances. Several of the clergy spoke of the authority of the Church, as represented by the Bishops, having neither the time nor the interest in having a caring pastoral role with the clergy. Clergy are often unsure what it means to be a priest and it appears in the data that the more insecure the clergy feel, the greater the need to occupy an authoritarian stance themselves. The married clergy experience at least as much; if not considerably more, stress than single clergy, for they

have to balance the needs of their spouse and children as well as the parishes.

It was not easy for many of the clergy to speak of their leadership styles within the parish. Several of them felt insecure and unsure of themselves in such exposed roles. Exploring their sense of spiritual and emotional health at the end of the interviews highlighted the fact that if they felt unsure of their roles, unsupported by families and the Church hierarchy, uncared for in their parishes, then they would experience both emotional and spiritual disturbance.

Conclusion:

The research concluded that the hypotheses suggested at the beginning had a basis of reality. The fact that the media and the national culture are largely anti Church establishment does have an effect on the clergy. They feel a sense of dislocation from the rest of the nation and wonder if their identity has any credence within the culture they live and work in. Those clergy who were able to survive, and appeared to do so with seeming success, also exhibited a greater sense of ego integration. As will be seen,

this has implications for the selection of those for training for ordained ministry.

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PREFACE

Institutions that aim to be relevant in this new Millennium are likely to experience internal change of earthquake proportions. This has occurred within the Anglican Church of England. The historical and sociological changes in the nation have moved the Church from centre-stage to very near the edge. In spite of this, the Church is fodder for the media and the Press at every opportunity.

Falling Church attendance, ordination of women priests and the misdemeanours of some clergy are broadcast far and wide. The pressures from within, and those exerted from without, take their toll on the workforce; that is, the ordained clergy. Nowhere is that force felt more keenly than by the parochial clergy. This research is exploring the psychotherapeutic needs of these Anglican parochial clergy, who are not only engaged in, but also affected by, the earthquake.

Earthquakes crack structures and tear them up. The symbol of the Christian faith, and therefore the clergy, is the cross - a symbol of

brokenness and a symbol of seeming defeat. Yet in spite of the cracks and the fragmentation, the Church and the Christian faith aim to offer a message of hope.

In exploring the psychotherapeutic needs of clergy I looked at why they wanted to be ordained, whom they saw had authority over them, the view of their priesthood, family relationships, their work style in the parish and their spiritual and mental health. Themes of dis-integration and falling apart were woven throughout the material.

The research has been a painful experience for those who took part, as well as for me. I have been a clergy wife for over thirty years and to see, hear and feel the pain of the cracks within the clergy has been profoundly moving. It has, however, been the courage of light shining through the cracks of vulnerable men and women that has also been seen and heard.

This work may well be about reparation. That is not only the psychotherapeutic task but also the task allotted to the Christian Church. Restoring the image, whether of a cracked pot or a fragmented person, is the aim of every psychotherapeutic endeavour. If, through the work of this research, the Church and the hierarchy are more able to see and

understand the psychotherapeutic needs of their workforce and provide some specialist help and backup, then the endeavour will have been worthwhile.

Introduction

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.....
My words echo Thus; in your mind.
But to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves
I do not know.

[Eliot, T. S. 1963 p.189]

Politicians, the Royal Family and those known to the public through the entertainment business, have cause to fear the probing eye of the Press, (as Robin Cook, the present Foreign Secretary, found to his cost when a book written by his former wife was published. The journalistic headlines on the 11th January 1999 brought attention on him that was unlikely to improve his standing in the eyes of the nation.) But it is not just the well known in the secular world that the Press seems to target. Over the last twenty years those in sacred employ, that is the ordained clergy, have had the light focussed on them when misdemeanours have occurred. Therefore any Incumbent of the Church of England, informing his Bishop that he is about to leave his wife to make a relationship with his female warden, can expect to see his name in print at some stage. The emotional turmoil, which the journalistic headlines ignore, is germane to the focus of this dissertation.

Marital breakdown amongst clergy is no longer a rare occurrence. Every year it is said that each of the Church of England dioceses will see the break up of the marriage of at least one of their clergy. There are no official statistics on marriage breakdown amongst the clergy. However, a national charity, (which has asked not to be named), giving grants to deserted and divorced wives of clergy revealed the following sums disbursed:- [Kirk & Leary, 1994 p14]

Year	Sum Disbursed
1989	£40,877
1990	£68,727
1991	£90,170
1992	£99,208
1993	£90,711

Whereas in 1975 this charity dealt with two cases of deserted wives, by 1994 they had one hundred and forty cases on their books.

It is pertinent to ask two questions: What is the problem for the Church of England clergy that has caused an increase in marriage breakdown? Is this the only problem facing them at this moment or are there other symptoms of dis-ease amongst their number?

The Media:

To judge by the headlines in the national Press it would seem that the Church of England, and the clergy serving the Church, are experiencing a crisis within their work, their faith and their homes. Whilst acknowledging the media's tendency to sensationalise, there is nevertheless cause for concern in such communications:

'Carey urges clergy to cast dull sermons into the wilderness...' [*Times* 23:4:97 p.6]; 'Clergy's abused wives speak out...' [*Independent* 21:4:97 p.3]; 'Vicar acquitted of stealing cheques...' [*Times* 25:1:97]; 'Drink aid for Vicar...' [*Express* 25:2:97 p.19]; 'Shoplifting priest faces ban from pulpit...' [*Sunday Telegraph* 16:3:97 p.1]; 'Bishop insists on men only to take hospital communions...' [*Guardian* 17:1:98 p.11]; 'Bishops call for ban on ordination of gay priests...' [*Times* 1:8:98 p.2]; 'Gays can make better parents says churchman...' [*Daily Mail* 27:11:97 p.2]; 'Everyday another church is closed...' [*Independent on Sunday* 19:10:97 p.11].

Many think that the clergy in the Church of England feel under threat of attack from all sides. The national Press writes about the clergy in

anything but flattering terms. The saga of the 'Duelling deans face new demand to quit...' ['*Mail on Sunday*', 9th March 1997], was fodder for most of the media paparazzi during the 1990's. This is not to say that the Anglican Church does not deserve this adverse publicity. The reason it finds itself highlighted in the press is often because of the misdemeanours of its clergy and adherents in some form or another and people rightly have an expectation that the clergy will act in ways fitting to the sacred, rather than the secular, world. Also, the Anglican Church is still the national State Church and the Archbishop of Canterbury is second in importance only to the Queen herself. Therefore, when Archbishop George Carey makes any comment, whether it is 'off the cuff' or a well thought through speech, the Press is there to report it.

What is happening within the Church of England? More importantly, what is happening amongst those who serve the Established Church, the clergy? Has it always been like this, or is this a recent phenomenon?

Historical Changes:

Hastings (1987), in *A History of English Christianity 1920-1985*, traces the changes in the Anglican Church over the greatest part of this century. His particular interest is to explore the change in status and role of the

Anglican clergy. He looks at the influence the Church has had in politics up to the Second World War and the gradual eroding of that influence since then – politically, socially and spiritually. Alongside this, Hastings notes the greater professionalism of the cleric, the emphasis on a call to vocation and the implementation of, as well as necessity for, a rigorous theological training from the 1930's onwards.

Since those early years of this century, the state of the Church of England and its ministers of religion have changed out of all recognition. Churches were comparatively full Sunday by Sunday and the parish church and its incumbent were accorded a central place in the community.

People often went to church not only seeking spiritual solace or pastoral care by the clergy or their erudition but because they had nothing else to do. The many varied distractions at the end of the last millennium and the beginning of this new one – the television, Sunday shopping and all kinds of leisure pursuits, did not exist. Going to church was a way of passing time in a busy but physically hard way of life, of meeting neighbours – in short, of having a chance to socialise. The best Sunday

clothes were worn to visit a building of distinction and reverence, as well as to feel inspired by the Cranmerian¹ language. However, the clergy themselves were often seen to be largely ineffectual and more occupied in studies of flora and fauna or historical interests, rather than the needs of their parishioners.

No longer are the majority of Anglican churches even half full on Sunday. 'The number of people attending Anglican services has fallen disastrously...' [*Daily Mail* 7:2:97 p.16] is often broadcast in the press. Little or no mention is made of churches where attendance is high. The clergy could be excused for finding such headlines depressing. Recent research considers some of the reasons behind the decline in numbers.

Sociological Changes:

Grace Davie, (1994), in *Religion in Britain Since 1945*, cites three areas of change in post-war Britain which have had a profound effect on the Anglican religious life of the country. She explores the economic and social transformation in the country, demographic changes and the fact of a large influx of immigrants. These variables combined to change the

¹ Book of Common Prayer 1662

religious face of the country for all time. For, as she says, 'patterns of religiosity are undoubtedly moulded... by what is going on around them.'

[Davie, p.18]

Because of the change in Britain from being a largely industrialised nation to a consumerist one, Davie believes that the resultant changes in patterns of behaviour 'colour the existence of churches and other organisations.'

[Davie, 1994, p.19]

Patterns of work have affected location of residence, which has seen a move out of the centre of cities into more rural areas. This has resulted in villages becoming small towns, an almost complete reversal of the Industrial Revolution, where whole rural communities moved into the towns to live and work in the nineteenth century. It was this population explosion in the towns and cities that produced the prolific church building programme by the Victorians. Now, with the move of the population out of the urban areas, the churches are left largely as empty edifices to a bygone age.

The demographic fact that 'we live in an ageing society in which the nature of family life, including the traditional codes of morality, are altering

rapidly' [Davie, 1994, p.3] also has affected the Anglican Church. The complexity of family life - comprising as it does single parent families, those who are unmarried, those married, divorced and re-married, those co-habiting, gay couples with children - i.e. in addition to traditional 'nuclear' families - has brought a host of searching questions to the forefront never experienced by the clergy before the war.

But it could be argued that it is the presence of a now pluralistic society, which has the most profound effect on the religious life of the country. 'The arrival of significant numbers of black Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus has... brought a new dimension to post-war British religion.' [Davie, 1994, p.25] This, coupled with the influx of many Irish, Poles, and those from other European countries, has shifted the religious beliefs away from a more predominantly Anglican religion to a multi-faith society. Thus the Anglican Church, which has been the established Church of England since the time of the Reformation², has found itself challenged by the drift away from orthodox³ Christianity. This drifting away was halted

² 16th Century

³ A trinitarian faith

for a short time in the 1950's, during the celebrations of the coronation of Elizabeth II in June 1953. This act 'brought together the Church of England, the monarchy and the nation in an act of sacralization.' [Davie, 1994, p.31] which nevertheless had no real lasting impact. The funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, in August 1997 had a similar, albeit brief, unifying influence between the Church and people.

Doctrinal Changes:

In recent times the Archbishop has found himself under enormous pressure with regard to such vexed questions as the ordination of gay clergy in stable same-sex relationships. The '*Church Times*' reported 'Outrage: gay rights protesters challenged Dr. Carey in the garden of Lambeth Palace on Sunday'. [Church Times, 25th April 1997], with a picture of the Archbishop and his wife looking shocked and angry. The gay issue appeared to be the sole preoccupation of the Bishops in the recent Anglican Lambeth Conference of 1998.⁴ The fact is that the Anglican Church itself has also been through a period of profound change and upheaval, especially with the historic admittance of women to priestly

⁴ A meeting of Anglican Bishops throughout the world held every ten years in Canterbury

ordination in 1994. This has shaken the very foundations of the institution, which has seen little change of constitutional significance since the Reformation. The debate engendered was thought by many, (and some still feel it may), to be one that would tear the Church apart. The fact that this has not yet happened has been due to the compromise by the whole establishment.

But it is not just internal disagreements about the ordination of women to the priesthood that have affected the Church. Arguments within the established Church, among the leaders, about foundational doctrinal issues – such as the Virgin Birth, the Deity of Christ, and the bodily resurrection of Jesus – have brought division to the Church and confusion and lack of confidence to many parochial clergy. Often these clergy, whatever their churchmanship, feel angry and unsupported by some bishops and theologians who seem to deny the tenets of the faith they preach faithfully every week.

Domestic Changes:

Added to this is the growing debate on the rights of the individual; there is much to alarm the ordinary clergyperson. For these debates are now

looking at conditions of service and whether in this day and age anyone has the right to a job for life. The loss of the clergy freehold, once much reviled in such books as Anthony Trollope's '*Barchester Towers*', [1857] has brought dismay to clergy households. No longer is every ordained person assured of finding not only a job but a house as well. Now there is more emphasis on accountability and managerial structures, as seen in the Turnbull Report (1997)⁵ - principles already entrenched in business and commerce. These ideas are becoming more influential in the Anglican Church.

Living in a multi-racial, multi-religious society - where the Christian faith is one of many faiths, it seems that the clergyperson can no longer rely on or enjoy the dignity and respect afforded to them earlier in this century, except in some rural areas. Churches are often seen as historic monuments to be preserved for posterity rather than places of worship for this present generation.

Congregations are demanding more of their clergy and higher performance rates in terms of new members added to the congregation and a responsible attitude to resources. Because of loss of revenue by the church

⁵ Authorized by General Synod in response to the need to streamline the Church of England

Commissioners, churches are having to harness the resources they have more carefully and wisely. This means a cutback in paid ordained personnel, following the Sheffield Report [1974]⁶. The market economy is affecting Church life – and so the clergyperson.

The debate on equal opportunities has affected the Church not just in the admission of women to the ordination of the priesthood. The Gay Christian Movement is, at this moment, fighting it strongly in the corridors of power and at General Synod.⁷ They believe biblically, as well as socially, that gay Christians have as much right as heterosexual Christians to be ordained priests. This once seemingly straightforward debate, which could be answered by quoting St. Paul in Romans 1: 27, [*The Holy Bible – New International Version* 1992 p1303], now has the appearance of a colossus as argument and counter-arguments rage. Those who adhere to a Pauline doctrinal base believe that genital homosexual acts are a perversion of God's will. They believe that God only blesses the sexual relationships of a heterosexual married couple. All their arguments they take from the Bible. For those within the Gay Christian Movement the Biblical evidence speaks of a God of love who accepts all, whatever

⁶ Authorised by General Synod to investigate parochial requirements and the deployment of clergy

⁷ The governing body of the Church of England

their sexual orientation, in loving committed relationships. it is extremely hard for two such opposing views to reach a consensus.

Just from these few pages it will be seen that Anglican clergy are under extreme pressure. The pressure is not just to do with doctrinal questions but is sociological and emotional as well. A clergyperson's faith does not seem to shield them from the winds of change blowing in this generation.

Personal Understanding of the Changes:

A result of these storms may be an increase in depression and mental instability amongst clergy and their spouses and a loss of confidence in themselves, the Gospel and the Church. This question is one of the motivational forces for such a research project. The other motivation for this research is that I myself have been part of the established Church for over thirty-eight years, having married one of its clergy in the early 1960's. The following discourse adds my own understanding of the changing face of Anglican ministry in the light of personal experience.

During the 1960's the preoccupation amongst Anglican parochial clergy seemed to be largely to do with churchmanship. The focus of the clergy

appeared to be on where their theological and doctrinal roots derived from. At that time there were broadly three strands to Anglicanism:-

- [1] The Anglo-Catholic, whose belief derived from tradition passed down through the Roman Church and then retained within the Church of England at the time of the Reformation, and Holy scriptures. Added to this, the worship of Mary, an ontological view of priesthood and the supremacy of the Pope as the successor to St. Peter the disciple, remained important.
- [2] The Liberal view of theology grew, especially during the nineteenth century, out of the liberal German theologians who were grappling with doctrine during the Enlightenment period from a scientific understanding. Liberals were seen by Anglo-Catholics and the rest of the Church of England to believe nothing and to be sceptical about everything. From a liberal perspective there was a need to bring to bear an open mind which inquired into every doctrine with an academic rigour not used before.

For the Liberal clergy there were more questions unanswered than certainties to be relied on.

[3] The third group of note was the Evangelical wing of the Anglican Church. In England at that time it was a comparatively small group of dedicated men who held that the Bible was the word of God and that it contained all that was necessary for doctrine and instruction in daily living. The Evangelical often felt marginalised and squeezed between the powerful Anglo-Catholic and vociferous Liberal groups. Because they were in the minority, leaders within the Evangelical wing set up support groups, called Eclectics,⁸ whose sole aim was to give the clergy confidence in the message they had to proclaim and expertise on how to achieve that.

Thirty years on the scene is very different. The Evangelical group has grown beyond what would once have been seen to be possible. They are no longer in ghettos, but many occupy roles of leadership and influence in the national and wider Church. Due to the ordination of women, which became law in 1994, the Anglo-Catholic wing has shrunk, with some adherents moving to the Roman Catholic Church. The remaining Anglo-Catholics have been left feeling rather confused as they try to reconcile their own view of doctrine with the wishes of the Church of England's

⁸ Started in 1955 by Prebendary John Stott when Rector of All Souls, Langham Place London

Synodical Government. The Liberal element, though smaller, is still influential, as many liberal clergy hold teaching and lecturing posts within the diocesan structures and so have a wide area of influence.

For each group doctrine continues to be of major importance in the life of the clergy as they struggle to interpret what they see as the revealed word of God so that it is seen to be relevant to the man/woman in the street.

The Psychological Effect on Clergy:

However important the doctrinal debates and the fluctuations in the churchmanship lobbies continue to be, there has arisen another phenomenon that is of particular importance. This is the psychological effect that being a clergyperson in this generation has on the clergy, irrespective of the theological position to which they adhere. For, whatever the doctrinal basis of belief, this has to be lived out in the real world, amongst real people and in real situations. Although a belief system is vitally important, it is also how the clergy live that out within their families, congregations and community and the effect that the 'world' has on them which is of great interest.

In every congregation the man or woman in the pew will often accord his Vicar/Rector enormous respect and will accept the teaching as though from God himself. This puts the clergy in a very powerful position. However, this power produces its own stress. To whom does the clergyperson go with his/her fears, his/her doubts? How safe is it to show vulnerability?

The nature of the work, which is seen to be about proclamation of the Gospel and pastoring and caring for all within the parish boundaries, inevitably causes stress. The clergyperson is like the mouse on the wheel – going round and round, always trying to be God's representative to the needy and yet, from time to time perhaps, feeling within a deep sense of not being good enough themselves or ever doing enough.

In studying the problems confronting the clergy, questions to be addressed are what makes a person wish to become an ordained clergyperson at the interface, representing God's power on one hand, with an awareness of their own frailty on the other? How much is that to do with someone's faith and how much is it a result of a particular upbringing? These are questions that need exploration.

The problem of suffering, which can be used as an intellectual discussion topic amongst theological students, takes on a different hue when face to face in the pastoral situation with a life-threatening disease, a fatal accident or an 'Act of God'. Then, the well-worn evangelical line that 'original sin' is responsible for human misery cuts little ice when talking to the grieving parents at the bedside of their dying child.

The way to become a Christian, especially for the Evangelical, is through Jesus Christ alone. Where there is uncertainty and doubt, in what way can the clergy keep their evangelical zeal? Or do they, in these circumstances, as so many do, lose their first theological intensity and rigidity rather than lose their faith altogether?

For the evangelical man with a pastor's heart, he would stress the love of God rather than the judgement and condemnation of God. However, for the man who finds conflict and uncertainty difficult, a more rigid espousal of the tenets of evangelical faith as set out in the Bible would be sought. He would be concerned about how the Christian should live, rather than looking at any frailty, weakness, self-doubt and need they may have.

Few of the clergy from the latter group enter into pastoral relationships. Instead, they put all their energy into a preaching and teaching ministry. The former clergy, however, often see the main bulk of their work as encompassing a pastoral counselling concern and so being involved in 'at the deep end' of a parishioner's pain and distress.

What causes the difference in approach and practical application? When both start from a similar doctrinal base, is there a tendency towards rigidity for one and an open acceptance of others for the other, or how much stems, as Freud said, from Man's need to 'recover the intimacy and intensity of the child's relation to his father'? [Freud, S. 1961 p.24]

Clergy also struggle with the nature of the priesthood and its meaning within the context of parish ministry. The notion of the priest as Christ's representative carries with it very powerful images of being different from the laity. The more collaborative approach to priesthood and the notion of the 'priesthood of all believers', [Holy Bible - NIV 1973 p.1406], can appear threatening to the status of the ordained priest.

Questions of how to cope with inevitable failure behind the image of priest are seen in other areas as well. The paradox of having power and yet

experiencing one's own vulnerability is not just a problem for the clergyperson. The feelings of never being a good enough priest have echoes resounding in the life of their spouse and family. Just as the disease within affects not just the work of the parish clergyperson but their own personal spiritual journey, so the inner traumas affect every aspect of the life of the clergyperson.

Because of the psychological effect on clergy, exploring their psychotherapeutic needs is the main reason for this research. Extra pressure seems to have resulted in an increase of clergy marriage breakdowns, clergy burnout and clergy leaving the full-time ministry.

By considering the psychotherapeutic needs of clergy, these areas of concern may be highlighted in the hope that the church hierarchy will look even more closely at ways of catering for and responding to the emotional and psychotherapeutic needs of their workforce.

The Focus of the Research:

Studying the whole body of Anglican Clergy in the Church of England is not possible. Many clergy do very different types of job with varying

pressures. Extra-parochial clergy usually live in their own homes, paid for by a higher salary than parochial clergy, and with a mortgage. The pressures on such clergy spouses are less evident, as the spouse is not seen to be part of the clergy ministry and so has few, if any, expectations laid on them. They can seek their own employment without comment from a congregation and may choose whether they wish to show any interest or support for their partner's work.

It is in the parish situation that the whole family is exposed, putting added pressure on the clergyperson. What work the wife, and it is more often the clergy wife, does and how that affects her husband's work and the congregation, will be discussed in the market place. The way the clergy couples bring up their children, how they cope with teenage rebellion, is often clear for all to see and remark upon.

The use of the vicarage, how hospitable or not, welcoming or not, and how much the wife is involved in the life of the church, seems to be part of everyone's business. For the wife, it can feel intrusive and impertinent. More often, a wife can feel lonely and isolated, finding it hard to find her own role in the area, let alone the possibility of finding friends who care about her in her own right and not because she is the Vicar's wife.

For this reason, this research will concentrate only on parochial clergy – and only on those who have the Bishop's Licence to officiate as incumbents within their own parishes. That is, those clergy who receive authority from their Bishop to exercise ministerial leadership within the parochial community. This will not include interviewing the clergy spouse, as the research will concentrate on the incumbents' perception of his/her work, faith and family life. Work done by Kirk and Leary (1994) has examined data from interviews with clergy spouses.

One of the hypothesis to be explored is that:-

'The lack of respect for the Christian gospel and the more constraining conditions of service within the modern culture, where media and the greater freedom of the wider society often seek to denigrate traditional values, may be seen to cause the Anglican parochial clergy a loss of confidence which is often seen to have an adverse effect on their psychological health.'

The focus of the research will concentrate on a psychodynamic analysis of the problems confronting clergy within their work, family and leisure activities, looking at how this affects their view of themselves and their own

spirituality. The area of spirituality may also be one of conflict within the three main traditions of the Anglican Church caused by the increased debate on hermeneutics due to more academic rigour within a greater intellectual competence. This, linked to Church of England leaders disagreeing on vital doctrinal issues and the often-felt ridicule by the media of Christian views and values, does not promote confidence for the clergy preaching, often within a multi-faith context, what he/she sees as the true gospel.

The research will study conditions of service - that is, the possible loss of the freehold, finance and work patterns, accountability, housing and relationships with the congregation and community. Also, issues such as gender, sexuality and concerns of intimacy will be explored. Although much of the above is seen to be about existential concerns, the research will be looked at from a psychodynamic perspective. This means that the research will concentrate on the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy as they cope with the pressures and stress of the external world and their own internal world, in which they work and minister and interact.

A psychodynamic approach owes its origins to Freud and his aim to 'bring into consciousness the repressed material which was held back by

resistance' [Sandler, Dare, Holder, 1992 p.15]. It is this repressed material which often becomes the source of some of the dis-ease within the clergyperson coping with adverse situations. For, within a conflict situation, the clergy often find themselves reacting in an atypical fashion that they have neither learned at theological college nor that they feel is part of the role of the man or woman of God.

Freud's dictum 'that somehow our behaviour is influenced by ideas of which we are totally unaware' [Kline. 1984 p.4] is an experience often at variance with the clergy's initial desire to be faithful to their ordination vows. The pressure of living a life dedicated to God may appear very different from how the rest of the community lives. They do not wish to be over-influenced by the world around so there is often much confusion within the individual as well as within the clergy family. By keeping a focussed psychodynamic perspective, the research will explore the unconscious processes at work within the clergy psyche and so aim to understand their psychotherapeutic need to combat a reaction to what often feels like a hostile environment.

The research will look at clergy concerns related to spiritual, social and emotional needs in the light of their unconscious desires and resistance.

This exploration will take place through in-depth interviews with a sample of incumbent clergy. Other hypotheses to be explored in this research are:-

'The dis-ease within affects not just the clergyperson's work and his own spiritual journey, but also has an effect on every aspect of his life' and

'The reaction of a clergyperson to the modern-day culture depends more on their own internal emotional strength, or ego identity, than on the changing cultural values.'

The research will rely primarily on a qualitative approach. This will be informed by Freudian concepts as interpreted later through the object relation school with reference to such practitioners as Klein, Mahler, Winnicott, Bowlby and others. It is research that inevitably will expose vulnerability in many of the participants.

Because of this, the dioceses from which the clergy involved in the research have come will not be revealed. The need for and responsibility to ensure confidentiality for the participants has been paramount. Without that assurance it would have been impossible to have such co-operation and openness. Respect was given to those who did not wish to take any part in the research.

This research will be carried out from a psychodynamic perspective because a person's experience of being in the world often has its roots in the past, but the methodological approach will be phenomenological, in order better to explore the clergyperson's subjective reality within the everyday world they inhabit.

Using this method of research, the aim will be to indicate that a multifaceted society has a psychologically detrimental effect on parochial Anglican clergy and makes it difficult for them to live and work effectively in their environment.

The hypotheses will be broken down into many questions. Already there has been a brief scrutiny of the ways society and the environment have changed over the last fifty years and why that makes it particularly stressful to the modern clergy. In the research, economic factors, which affect not just clergy's living standards but those of the congregation and the community within which the Church ministers, will be explored.

Questions to do with the rise in importance of other faiths and of no faith, and their impact on what was once seen to be a Christian country, will

explore the lack of confidence and confusion that many clergy experience as they preach what is, to them, the authentic Gospel. Within the context of a deep cynicism about religion, as well as apathy, questions related to the responsibility of some of the Church hierarchy in repudiating some of the traditional beliefs in public will need to be asked, and their own accountability to the clergy who feel so undermined.

Specific questions related to living in a tithed house, which parishioners see as 'their property', are crucial to understanding the stress often experienced by clergy families who feel exposed and isolated in their ivory towers. The fact that vicarages and rectories, in size and facilities, bear no relationship to the vast number of dwellings in the parish causes added feelings of isolation. 'What is it like to live in a tithed⁹ property and what effect does it have on family life?' is one of the questions in the research.

There are other stressful areas for clergy. Questions to do with a person's own individual needs will expose the possibility of a clergyperson's being able to say 'no' to what may be seen as God's will when they know they need to be with the family. The pressure from a congregation to be

⁹ Owned by the benefice but administered by the Church of England

available twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week will need to be explored also.

A close look at the clergy's perceived status and role of their spouse will be vital in studying the pressure on the incumbent via his/her spouse and children living in such an exposed environment. The isolation of the clergyperson who is there to minister to the needy, that is all those desiring help at whatever time of day and night, will need to be addressed.

There are questions about the clergyperson's own vulnerability in the intimate contact with the emotionally insecure and the fear of being drawn into liaisons that can sometimes lead to infidelity to their marriage partner. As already stated, there has been a marked increase in clergy marriage breakdown over the last twenty years and the causes will need to be highlighted. In spite of this increase in marital breakdown, clergy marriages appear very resilient if a comparison is made of the one in two marriage breakdowns in the rest of the population.

The Context of the Research:

The research shows that the national, historical and sociological changes over this last century have profoundly affected the lives of the Anglican clergy. It was also important to look at the context in which the research was carried out.

1. *Wealth/Poverty*

This enterprise highlighted certain differences between the northern and southern dioceses. In the north there is a small area of middle England, with professional people and wealthy churches. However, as the Bishop said, 'in the west there is rural poverty of a kind I've never seen before... in the east, urban poverty.'

A large percentage of the northern parishes I visited were very poor, with extremely high unemployment figures. In the southern diocese I saw no real poverty. In fact, many of the parishes visited were middle class communities. Many clergy, however, had multiple benefices with people in the area living there only at the weekend. The southern Bishop said,

'because there is not a lot of lay help... our clergy have a tremendous amount of isolation to deal with.'

It is a known fact that it is hard for Bishops to find Curates or Incumbents willing to go to the north to work because of the poverty and the often attendant violence in the different areas. It has been shown in the research that at least one northern clergy family has experienced a lot of violence in their parish.

2. Culture

It is not only the north/south divide that affects the clergy. Even though there are differences to do with culture and economics, an equal number of clergy from both dioceses appeared in the interviews as being depressed or having had their marriages ended. However, in the north no-one spoke of feeling irrelevant as they did in the south and there was a great sense amongst the modern Catholics of supporting each other. The Church is still seen as part of the community in the north, alongside the pub. That was not evident in the south.

Several clergy in the south expressed the feeling that the communities they ministered in had no interest in whether the Church was there or not. They felt the institution they represent and the gospel they preach is irrelevant to the way people now lived their lives.

3. *Declining Numbers*

Another of the great effects on the clergy appears to be the view of the Church held by the media. 'New figures claim churches will be empty by 2020' [Church of England Newspaper, 3rd December 1999, p.1] As a headline it is not encouraging to hard working clergy who feel their whole enterprise is an irrelevance to the community.

Because success is measured so often by the numbers who attend church and the financial viability of the church, those with small congregations, and no financial or other resources, felt that their own endeavours appeared futile. Though, as this research shows, there are some churches with large congregations, vibrant worship and a commendable outreach policy, many of the clergy were struggling with multiple benefices and inadequate assistance. As the southern Bishop said about such priests,

‘many have a horror that they might not get their pay... because the place isn’t viable.’

Wasted Effort

It is not the fear of not being paid that is the only problem the clergy face. It is their own feelings of having failed that seem to be the hardest to cope with. They look at all the effort they expend in time and energy and balance that against the effect on their own health and family life and wonder if it has been worth it. It is then that their feelings of anger and frustration find an outlet in their cry that the hierarchy does not care enough or show adequate support. As one priest said, ‘it would be good to know the Bishop cared enough to know what is going on.’ The institution of the hierarchy, however, also has its own preoccupations.

4. The Reality of the Church

The Church of England aims to present to the nation a united and ordered Church. The public national acts of worship are well orchestrated with the gloriously robed hierarchy, the pristine choristers and the beautiful music. This seeming perfection, however, contrasts sharply with

the 'mess' of the headline in *The Times*, 'Bishop's wife runs away with a Vicar'. [The Times, 28th September 1999 - p.4] The Church then feels it becomes an object of derision by the press. On one hand it propounds a gospel of change where commitment and fidelity are seen to be biblical principles, especially for leaders. On the other hand, the media ferret out again and again the misdemeanours and inconsistencies of the clergy, making all that they appear to stand for an empty shell. Yet it is this dissonance at the heart of the Established Church that highlights the profound problems of the Church. It is this that brings into focus the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy.

In embarking on this research, I shall explore how the change in the status and role of Anglican parochial clergy in England and the context within which they live out their lives have affected their psychotherapeutic needs. A clergyperson's view of what priesthood means to them and how they experienced their call to the vocation of ordination will be scrutinised.

It is hoped that by investigating the lives of the clergy it will be possible to begin to understand their psychotherapeutic needs within the new millennium.

Chapter II

Literature Review

'One of the major difficulties in assessing and fostering psychological research on Christian ministry stems from the fact that the ongoing research is both diverse and scattered across a wide range of journals.'
[Francis, L. J., and Jones, S. H. 1996 Preface]

The previous chapter explored the changing face of the Church of England's ordained ministers over this last century. Hastings offered a historical perspective as he highlighted major world events, such as the two World Wars, which had an impact on the Anglican clergy. Grace Davey has added to the understanding of declining church attendance and numerical decline in those being ordained by examining socio-economic changes that have occurred in Britain. Anthony Russell has sought to complete the debate in his trilogy, *'The Clerical Profession'* 1980, *'The Country Parish'* (1986) and *'The Country Parson'* (1993). Russell has combined both an historical and socio-economic understanding of the ministry of the Church of England with a 'contemporary debate about the nature of the Church's ministry'. (Russell, A. 1980. p.ix) He has sought to embrace the two former disciplines within a theological framework.

Though there is a need to understand the theological perspective when examining the ordained parochial ministry, yet that will not be the focus of this research. This research will be rooted in an exploration of the therapeutic needs of the Anglican parish priest at the beginning of this new century.

Christianity has, from the time of Christ, been largely seen to have the answers to people's material, spiritual and emotional needs in the western world. Freud, among others, challenged that. Freud was 'a convinced, consistent, aggressive atheist...' he argued that 'religion and science are mortal enemies'. [Freud. 1961 pxxiii].

As well as being the father of psychoanalysis, Freud constantly explored disciplines such as philosophy, metaphysics and religion. 'Freud's roots were in science. He was dependent on the physiology of his day and on the concepts of the Helmholtz school in both physics and physiology.' [Meissner. 1984 p.196] As a consequence, Freud attempted to base his theory of the mind on scientific principles. However, this metaphysical approach was unable to be sustained within the clinical framework that he worked in.

In his consulting room Freud interpreted the symptoms and the dreams that his patients brought him. As a result of this Freud 'took psychoanalysis out of the realm of science and planted it firmly in the humanities. The differences between these two disciplines are

fundamental. The humanities are concerned with “interpretation”, while science seeks “explanations”.’ [Meissner. 1984 p.197]

It was because Freud came from a scientific background that he was so sceptical about a religion that believed in a deity that could not be measured scientifically.

Though brought up in a Jewish environment and experiencing much anti-Semitism in his life, he explored other faiths and especially Christianity, of which he was very critical. As he began to look at religion psychoanalytically, he wrote his critique in his book, *‘The Future of an Illusion’*. He believed that ‘God was the exalted Father and the longing for the father was the root of the need for religion’. [Freud. 1961 p28].

Freud saw religion as an illusion, which satisfied a need for a long-lost ideal father. He argued forcibly that because it could not be proved that there is a God, then it is an affront to human reason and intelligence to give one’s life to an illusory deity.

Though Freud did not espouse any religious dogma, he did have a view of humanness. He said 'that there are present in all men destructive, and therefore anti-social and anti-cultural, trends and that in a great number of people these are strong enough to determine their behaviour in human society'. [Freud. 1961 p8].

Unlike the Christian, Freud had no concept of original sin. The Christian believes that from the time of Adam and Eve every human being is born a sinner. 'Sin entered the world through one man.' [Holy Bible 1992 p1307] It was through the death of Jesus, God's Son, that humankind was saved, 'through the obedience of the One Man (Jesus Christ) the many will be made righteous.' [Holy Bible 1992 p1307] There was an answer within the Church's teaching for the depravity of people. Freud, however, had no belief in God, let alone in one who could save. His views undermined the central theologies of the Christian Church.

Freud's views had, and continue to have, a great impact on the Christian religion and therefore on Anglican clergy. This has been partly because the

Church is no longer seen as the only dispenser of emotional and spiritual truth. It is also because Freud's concepts and those espoused after him have filtered into the people's consciousness and become part of a worldview of humanity. The Church had previously seen itself as the regulator of the innate destructiveness of human beings. Through the offices of confession and absolution embedded in the heart of the sacramental ritual, the saving power of the gospel offered deliverance and hope to a world torn apart by greed and violence.

Freud said that psychological discovery showed 'that man is equipped with the most varied instinctual dispositions, whose ultimate course is determined by the experience of early childhood'. [Freud. 1961 p10]. He, and other psychotherapists after him, saw people as having what Michael Balint described as 'a basic fault'. [Balint. 1992] Freud would understand this fault, or propensity to destruction, weakness and helplessness, as arising from the traumas of early existence within the matrix of family life. The need for a god to be worshipped, said Freud, was only so that it was possible to 'reconcile men to the cruelty of fate, particularly as it is shown in death', and then the god would 'compensate them for the sufferings and privations which a civilised life in common has imposed on them'. [Freud.

1961 p22]. That is, the early trauma caused by a human person's propensity to destruction needed a god who would compensate them throughout their life and offer eternity for those who strove hard enough.

Freud believed that much of the conflict experienced centred around what he came to describe as the Oedipus complex. It was through the little boy's desire 'to have intercourse with his mother and possess her completely, and get rid of the father in some way', [Sander, Dare, Holder. 1992 p7], that the child's love for his father brought up an almost irreconcilable conflict. The longing for love and acceptance and the deep desires of the libido, with the fear of rejection or bodily damage, or what Freud called the castration complex, produced such intense feelings that the child could only repress them into the unconscious and defend against any knowledge of them. He posited that this was true for the girl child, with the wish being 'to be possessed by the father and to be rid of the mother'. [Sander, Dare, Holder. 1992 p8]

These desires and wishes produced upheaval, not just in the child, as the work of such clinicians as Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, Donald Winnicott,

Margaret Mahler, John Bowlby and many others testify. These earlier conflicts if not resolved, Freud believed, then appear in adult life as affects which often incapacitate the person's working, relational or emotional internal life.

Clergy are caught in the dilemma of trying to live a life obedient to the divine will within a national culture influenced by humanistic values. This will be at the heart of the research, because of such statements as Freud's - that 'religious doctrines... all of them are illusions and insusceptible of proof'. [Freud. 1961 p40] How often is that an experience of the clergy? Is religion the 'universal obsessional neurosis of humanity and like the obsessional neurosis of children it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father?' [Freud. 1961 p55] If so, how does that impact on Anglican clergy?

What is interesting is that all his life Freud's ideas were evolving and changing and he, of all people, was aware how limited his understanding was. Even so, he believed that all knowledge and understanding of how the world is governed came from man and his scientific achievement.

Freud believed that 'science is no illusion. But an illusion it would be to suppose that what science cannot give us we can get elsewhere'. [Freud. 1961 p71]

Up until the time of Freud, the Church had dominated the realm of emotional and spiritual need. There had been little to challenge the Church's right to arbitrate on the ills of humans and to offer a way of living. Such concepts as the Protestant work ethic¹ had a considerable impact on Victorian Britain. It provided a way of life governed by an acknowledgement in an all-powerful God who ruled the world. Freud's ideas challenged theologians and the impact was felt within the congregations. Thinking people now had to ask serious questions about the nature of humanness, human growth and development and the nature of God. People began to realise that maybe the Church did not have all the answers. Freud's work, combined with the effects of Darwin's earlier writing, ('The Origin of Species', 1859), began to undermine the foundations of the Church, from which it has barely recovered.

¹ An active outworking of Christian commitment as espoused by Count Zinzendorf in the late 17th Century

(1859)

Darwin's work became a particular problem to the creationists who believed that God literally created the earth and human life in six days.

[The Holy Bible - New International Version. 1992 p.42]

It will be within the nature of these concepts that the spiritual doubts of the Anglican clergy will be explored.

In many ways Freud's ideas alarmed theologians, moving away as they did from a theocratic worldview. Carl Jung, his contemporary, though seen to be the Christians' analytic psychologist, also produced conflict within the Christian Church. For Carl Jung, in his espousal of archetypal figures populating the collective unconscious, it was essential to have a spiritual dimension to his work. Jung was aware of 'the tremendous powers that lie hidden in the mythological and religious sphere in man', [Campbell. 1971 p65], and that 'purely personalistic psychology, by reducing everything to personal causes, tries its level best to deny the existence of archetypal motifs and even seeks to destroy them by personal analysis'. [Cambell. 1971 p65].

Though Jung was fascinated by the spiritual element, especially within the client's unconscious, he was, even during his own lifetime, treated with great suspicion by the established Church. This is because in his writings entitled, '*The Answer to Job*', Jesus Christ is seen as just one of the archetypal figures, with no special place other than that accorded to any heroic figure. Jung states that 'some people believe it to be physically true that Christ was born as the son of a virgin, while others deny this as a physical impossibility... Both are right and both are wrong'. [Campbell. 1971 p52]

Since Freud and Jung, others have attempted to add a spiritual dimension within the psychoanalytic work. Whilst such an emphasis will enable a person to have a sense of the divine within, the psychoanalyst appears to bypass the realm of spirituality altogether. The psychoanalyst will focus on the original environment, coupled with an exploration of the desires and fantasies hidden in the unconscious. The Christian, though benefiting from an understanding of early trauma through maternal deprivation, may well feel their faith undermined if the analyst ignores what to them are the realities of their spiritual experience.

Abraham H. Maslow, a foremost humanistic spokesman, sought to bring into his work a spiritual element. This again is seen to have nothing to say to the orthodox Christian, as it is not Christo-centred and therefore to the Christian, invalid. Maslow's concern was with transcendence, which 'refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general, to other species, to nature, and to the cosmos.' [Maslow. 1971 p269] This would be too vague and lacking in a monotheistic drive crucial to the orthodox Christian.

These varying belief systems had the effect of alienating large sections of the Church's priests and laity from any psychological insights. It was not until the 1960's that there began to be a significant paradigm shift.

Several Christian writers saw the necessity for pastoral care and counselling and were willing to combine a biblical exegesis with a sound psychological theoretical underpinning. Foremost amongst these exponents was Frank Lake, (1962) a medical missionary who later espoused Otto Rank's theories

on the primacy of the birth trauma during his treatment of neuroses and personality disorders with the drug LSD. Lake, a medical practitioner, was given credence throughout the Anglican Church.

It was in the 1960's that many Christians realised that Christians suffered from depression, neurotic fears and psychological disorders as much as any other human being. From this came a tentative recognition that the insights of psychoanalysis might have something to offer. So when in 1962 Frank Lake formed the Clinical Theology Association, the Church was happy to be participants in the training and teaching seminars that Lake started. However, at this present time, some Christians have abandoned their adherence to clinical theology; seeing it as too liberal in its thinking.

Another respected clinician is Roger F. Hurding. Hurding is a medical practitioner who lectures in Pastoral Counselling at Trinity College, Bristol. In his book, *'Roots and Shoots'*, [Hurding. 1985], Hurding traces the rise of secular psychologies and examines the Christian response to them. He studies a wide range of methods of counselling and psychotherapy, looking at assumptions, aims and techniques. He offers a

framework for evaluating different styles and systems from a Christian perspective.

Hurding analyses Freudian theory in the light of Christian theology, suggesting that, 'Freud's theory of personality has also come under crossfire with respect to both the emergence of the ego and the growth of the superego. Whether the ego, with its perceptions of the inner and outer worlds, is already present at birth is one of the imponderables of life, although the methodology, which includes the reliving of foetal and neonatal experiences, suggests that it might be. But where many will part company with Freud is with regard to his belief that the conscience is primarily a harsh parental voice that is instilled into the psyche during childhood'. [Hurding. 1985. P71]

Hurding goes on to say that while parental admonitions are internalised in this way and that a moral stance develops in the context of society while a person matures, the Christian would want to add that God is at work too, seeking to challenge and educate conscience through his Spirit and according to His word.

It is, in Hurding's view, Freud's theories on the nature of guilt that are a cause for continuing dispute, for Freud believed that within the psychological state there were mental conflicts whose source is hidden in the unconscious. He believed that it is these neurotic elements which disrupt a person's life, rather than the Christian view of guilt being as a result of original sin.

Freud believed the main symptom of neuroses is anxiety, in which the sufferer may be continually preoccupied by fearful and apprehensive feelings. Often these fears relate to specific life situations, or there may be an experience of general unease or free-floating anxiety.

Hurding argues that Freud saw anxiety as comprising: 'moral anxiety, which arises from dilemmas posed by the superego; reality anxiety, which preoccupies the ego and is engendered by objective danger and difficulty; and neurotic anxiety, which is the result of submerged conflicts within the id.' [Hurding. 1985 p71]

It was in '*Totem and Taboo*' [1912-13] that Freud related mankind's awareness of guilt to the twin taboos of incest and patricide. In turn, these forbidden activities of sexual intercourse with a mother and the murdering of a father were linked by Freud to the Oedipus complex.

Hurding states that the Christian will find much to disagree with. Allowing for the concept that a great deal of guilty feeling is neurotic in that the sense of conviction bears little or no relation to reality, (and even this concession is disputed in some Christian circles), Hurding suggests we cannot permit such a view on humankind's guilt to go unchallenged, for as he writes, 'because Freud reasons from naturalistic presuppositions, he does not accept the roles of freedom, autonomy and responsibility in personality. Nor does he postulate a sense of sin that can be remedied by repentance. The Bible, of course, is crystal-clear about the universality of man's sin and his objective guilt before a holy and righteous God. We see this declared uncompromisingly in, for example, Psalm 14: 3:' [Hurding. 1985 p72] 'all have turned aside, they have together become corrupt.' [Holy Bible 1992 p631]

Writers such as Lake and Hurding have enabled the Church to move from a defensive position in its regard to psychoanalytic insights. Books on a wide spectrum of pastoral care have helped the clergy in their parochial work. The Westminster Pastoral Foundation has spawned many pastoral writers. The emphasis of such writing has been largely to enable the carers to care more effectively. There have been, however, during the last two decades of the 20th Century, a number of writers who have sought to bring a rapprochement between psychoanalysis and religion – especially Christianity.

Meissner (1984) was concerned that much psychoanalytic thinking saw religious experience in essentially a 'reductive, or even more prejudicially, psychopathological terms.' [Meissner. 1984 p.vii] He believes that theological thinkers ignore the fact of human needs and drives, focussing solely on the life of man's spirit, and that a Freudian approach ignores the spiritual and supernatural aspects of human life. He is at pains to bring the two disciplines closer together by applying psychoanalytical concepts to the understanding of religious experience.

Lovinger (1984) and Benner (1988) are concerned more overtly with the relationship between Christianity and psychotherapy. Both authors see the psychotherapist occupying the role that was historically assigned to the priest. Lovinger looks at the role of the clergy in the whole psychotherapeutic treatment process. Benner, on the other hand, is interested in a variety of different Christian spiritualities. He then presents a model of personality as a psychospiritual unity.

Watts and Williams (1988) investigate religion from a psychological perspective. Quoting Macquarrie, they explore how prayer is infected with 'magical ideas and egotistical notions'. [Watts and Williams. 1988 p.112] They are at pains also to examine religious experience under the microscope of psychoanalytic insight.

Symington (1998) is less interested in interpreting religion psychoanalytically than in exploring where the two belief-systems meet. He believes both religion and psychoanalysis are failing because they exist apart and so do not respect, or incorporate into their own thinking, each other's values.

This chapter has seen that from the time of Freud religion, and especially Christianity, has appeared to be undermined by psychoanalysis and the subsequent therapies that have been spawned. This has had a great effect on the Christian Church. Gradually, through Christian theologians and Christian psychotherapists, the language and practise of psychotherapy has become acceptable to the Church. It has, however, not been seen as a replacement for religion as Freud hoped it would. Rather, it is viewed as an adjunct to spiritual and emotional care by the clergy. Alongside this, psychotherapists and analysts, aware that 'God is not dead' for many, are exploring the psychological significance of religion. Others are looking at where these two apparently different belief-systems meet and experience shared values.

Though the language of theology and psychoanalysis often appear at variance with each other, there are many meeting places - as will be seen within the research. Because of this, it is possible to research into the psychotherapeutic needs of a group of people whose needs at first appear to exist within the spiritual realm rather than that of the emotions.

The next chapter will explore in greater depth the literature that is particularly relevant to this research.

Chapter III

Background Literature to the Research

What a curious institution [the Church] is! It's so open to abuse, of twisting theology to add to one's own sense of inadequacy and guilt and so rarely affirming; extraordinarily pastorally insensitive sometimes... the Church has struck me [often] as being an uncaring, disinterested institution... [but there are also] the great joys of the Church; I don't want to lose sight of that. I love the Church with a passion... which surprises me. I've nowhere else to go; the Church of England's my home and I love it, but it drives me wild! [Burgess, N., 1998 p.9]

The many different influences on the Anglican Church and on the parochial clergy in particular have made those who work for the establishment seem very insecure. The changing status of the parochial parson in the community has often left the priests unsure of their identity and with a feeling that the base they stand on is far from firm. The research looks at the carers and who cares for them when life becomes unmanageable.

In order to evaluate the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy, six areas will be explored - why people are ordained, their view of authority, the meaning and value of their role as priest, their relationships with family and friends, their work in the parish and their emotional and spiritual strength. Within these main sections the themes of sin, guilt, betrayal,

doubt and wholeness will be explored. But what academic work has already been done in this field?

It has already been highlighted that there is concern amongst the hierarchy of the Anglican Church at the number of clergy marriages that are breaking down. What is being done about it?

A large amount of research has been carried out in American churches exploring the emotional needs of their clergy. Their culture is different from the English one. Though much can be learned from their writing, it is important to examine those whose research has engaged with samples from the Church of England clergy. Such research has been spawned as a direct consequence of the perceived difficulties amongst the Anglican clergy.

General Stress:

Mary Anne Coates explores 'Clergy Stress', (1989) 'which may show itself in physiological, emotional or even action (behavioural) ways'. (Coates. 1989 p3) She aims to reflect on the ministry from inside the feelings and fantasies of the clergy. She looks at the effects of stress and ways to alleviate it but within this framework she is 'committed to the belief that the experiences and desires that have had to be... kept out of consciousness are most likely to belong to our earlier... childhood', (Coates. 1989 p53) and have particular relevance to the work of the priest and how he/she deals with stress in the present day.

She looks at the material that is repressed in the subconscious and how it eventually may be forced out through conflict situations in the parish. It is often at this point that a priest can feel utterly alone and isolated and experience the 'uncertainty as to whether God, (or mother), will utterly forsake us if we let rip our hate'. (Coates. 1989 p119)

Anglican clergy often find it stressful that they are far from being the only educated adults in their communities. Frequently in their congregations their laity will have degrees and expertise in a wide range of subjects, both from science and arts. It is not an uncommon occurrence for there to be a theology graduate in the congregation with more biblical expertise than the vicar. It causes stress for many to stand up in public and deliver a speech on their own subject. For the clergyperson who is required to stand up at least once on a Sunday and proclaim a biblical message to those with knowledge of the classics, plus an informed doctrinal base, this can be daunting indeed. Stress is a major problem for the clergyperson. However, it is in marital relationships that the results of stress are often seen.

Marital Stress:

In 1994 Mary Kirk and Tom Leary, both trained marital psychotherapists, collaborated on a book exploring marriage and ministry, '*Holy Matrimony?*' (1994). This book looks specifically at the influence of selection and training and seeks to inform clergy couples and the hierarchy of the

problems peculiar to those in ministry. They quote Mary London who, when interviewed about her book, *'Revelations: the Clergy Questioned'* (1994) said, 'Clergy are actually very resistant to self-exploration at... depth.' [Kirk, Leary. 1994 p12] Both Kirk and Leary feel that for there to be a successful ministry in terms of satisfaction and sense of identity, there needs to be preparedness for clergy to explore not only their internal worlds, but their relationships as well.

In their study they concentrate on the traditional clergy couple. That is, where the man is ordained, as the ordination of women to the priesthood took place in the year of the publication of their book. There had, therefore, been no time in which to collect any relevant data on the less-traditional couple. They discuss issues of sex and gender and the different perspective of the role of ministry the clergyman has from his wife. They look at the burden of expectation put on the wife to fulfil 'the clergy wife role' and the pressure from living in a goldfish bowl, where the parish seem to know all that the family are doing.

They pose the question of where God is in it all. 'Some clergy couples find it as hard to address or contemplate God in a personal and meaningful way together as they do their differences and difficulties.' [Kirk, Leary. 1994 p141)

In their research it is interesting to note that out of a sample of thirty-seven wives, thirteen of them – that is, one third – suffered from depression, and those are only the ones who admitted to it.

The impact of this on the marriage, family life and the parish is far reaching. The wife feels exposed and vulnerable, the clergy husband finds it difficult to acknowledge a perceived weakness in the family when preaching a gospel that leads to wholeness.

Kirk and Leary reflect that the wife often becomes depressed 'where the wife had not had an outside interest, professional or not, and was closely bound up with her husband's pastorate.' (Kirk, Leary. 1994 p130) They also examine financial constraints on the couple, social isolation leading to a sense of alienation and the role of the parish priest.

They are concerned that the clergy should be able to maintain boundaries between their public and private life. They look at the need for support systems to be in place. Most pertinently, they have recommendations for the congregations and for the hierarchy of Bishops and Archdeacons in the care for their workforce. Their qualitative research is a very pragmatic study of clergy marriage.

Much has also been written about stress and burnout of clergy and the effect this has on the clergy family. This extract, which expands on this theme, comes from an article written by Wanda Nash, [1990] a clergy wife, called

'LIVING WITH GOD AT THE VICARAGE':-

'Some people feel that Christians should not complain - certainly not in public. But at workshops and seminars all over Britain parish clergy and their wives were actively encouraged to let out some of the things which caused them significant stress. They were asked to focus on those that were specific to the business of living in a clergy household. The following are a sample of the experiences they described; in no way could they be called 'complaints'.

The Women's Experience

- We are just about the only people left who are on 24-hour call to the public. The call may be trivial but it may be important. How can one tell? We can *never* not answer the phone or the door.
- Having spent all his energies caring for other people, on doing 'God's work', there is none left for me. Aren't I a part of 'God's work'? How do I persuade my husband I need him too, without becoming just another load? Do I HAVE to become a nagger?
- Our 'public' life gets mixed up with our 'private' life. Because the office is in the house, other people's worries invade the kitchen, the sitting-room, they even come upstairs into the bedroom. I can't have a home of my own.
- I don't have a Vicar to turn to.
- My husband is so engrossed in other people's troubles, he has no time left for the troubles of his children or his wife.
- My home is a fish-bowl. We are so exposed.
- Somehow there is an emotional intensity at our house that seems over the top. I think it's got something to do with it only being 'safe' for my husband to be angry *inside* the Vicarage, with me in particular, whatever it is that is actually making him angry.

The Ordained Men's Experience

- (A) The job and its in-built hazards for instance:

- Potentially the work is *never-ending*. I have no job description: there are no boundaries which let me feel 'I've done it!'
- There's no way of measuring what I do; the work seldom seems to progress it just goes on and on and on, just repeating itself.
- Not enough time, not enough time, not enough time.
- The feeling that there's no-one around who really shares the same values as me.

(B) Other people's expectations, as perceived by the clergyman.

- I'm meant to be a man of peace; I have to confront the P.C.C., the verger, the organist, the diocesan official, where's the peace?
- Highly skilled people in 'the world' see you as a wally - what an unrealistic and ridiculous goal, trying to be all things to all men all of the time!!
- You feel very separated from your friends - their leisure time is different, they all have more money, we can't keep up the same interests in common any more.

(C) Home life and self-perception.

- How can I convince my wife I love her?
- Being unable to fulfil my own demands. Fear of being found out. Fear of failure.
- Am I really what other men tell of? Or am I what I know of myself? A ragbag of bits that can't be neatly docketed.
- The Vicarage, my work-place, my family base, is a goldfish bowl.

- My free time seldom overlaps my children's free time. They are growing older and I don't know them.

Any of these statements, whether they have been made by a wife or an ordained husband, can be seen as a metaphor to contain a deeper, more significant package of feelings and findings. 'Since they each represent something that is over and above the 'ordinary' hazards of lay Christians and secular marriages, it seems right to look into the roots of these differences' [Nash. 1990 p8-11]

Other clergy wives have written about their marriage break-ups, suffering depression and how to cope as a Bishop's wife. It is often the wife who dares to articulate what the male clergyperson cannot say. Many dioceses run 'retreats' for clergy wives but there are few opportunities for the male clergy to explore their inner souls as their spouses do. Now that women are being ordained, maybe that will change and they will encourage their male colleagues to dare to expose the inner depths.

Results of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood:

In 1998 Walrond-Skinner published the first research to be carried out on clergy marriages since the ordination of women to the priesthood in 1994. In *'Double Blessing'* (1998) she looks at three different types of clergy marriages – the traditional marriage where the man is ordained, where the woman only is ordained and where both partners are ordained. She is particularly interested to see what impact the ordination of the women to the priesthood has had on all three categories of marriage.

Walrond-Skinner writes as a feminist, an ordained priest married to a clergyman and as a professional family therapist, so she comes to this research as an insider at every level. She has also used a qualitative research approach informed by her psychotherapeutic understanding. The roots of the research were in her clinical work, working with clergy couples and working within groups of women, both before and after they were ordained. She looks at how 'when the wife is ordained and the husband is not, he may be cast into the role of some kind of consort'. [Walrond-

Skinner 1994 p21] The problems are for the husband to find where he fits in and his own level.

She looks at the pain felt by couples where the husband is unable to be at his wife's ordination because of his strongly held beliefs. 'The repudiation of their priesthood by their marriage partners was experienced by these women as a profound assault on their own sense of identity'. [Walrond-Skinner 1994 p33]

Though much exploration of the traditional clergy marriage has been done, (Rogers, 1991; Mickey *et al.*, 1991; Lee, 1988, Horsman, 1989; Frame and Shehan, 1994; Morris and Blanton, 1994; Winchester, 1997), Walrond-Skinner's work is unique at the moment as it looks at the effect the ordination of women to the priesthood has on the marriage relationship.

Within the groups of women preparing for their ordination, themes of how female priesthood would differ from the male role and how to cope with 'intruding' into what had always been a male preserve were explored.

The women were conscious that they would receive very mixed messages from fellow clergy and laity. On the one hand there would be an excitement at this historic step, but also open hostility from opponents to women's ordination, as well as a veiled fear from most of the clergy. One male clergyman stated on the television at the time, 'I have always supported women's ordination but I feel a sense of fear, for this will impact in many ways.' He was describing the anxiety felt that now women were eligible, they would be applying for, and achieving positions in the hierarchy of the Church and the unconscious ethos of male domination would be threatened.

However, for many of the women, 'to be made to feel "responsible" for the major splits... within the Church was a heavy burden. The paradox of causing pain when one is there to relieve pain was keenly felt..' [Walrond-Skinner 1998 p.30] These women found that they were exploring their whole identity which, inevitably, meant that many unresolved issues from early childhood provoked extreme emotional trauma. 'The offer of priesthood threw many back onto... early experiences... of uncertainty, unworthiness and a deep sense of personal rejection.' [Walrond-Skinner

1998 p.32] Painful memories of rejection, or even of abuse and deprivation, had to be worked through by those who were in therapy.

Now that women are ordained, other issues need to be confronted. Dioceses struggle with how to deploy clergy couples. In some dioceses they will pay one salary, often the male clergyperson, leaving the female clergyperson feeling undervalued. Clergy couples are seldom allowed to work in the same parish.

When a clergy couple's marriage breaks down, 'the Church witnesses the distress of two people for whom it held a very direct and immediate responsibility as an employer.' [Walrond-Skinner 1998 p.217] There is a double disruption, as two posts are lost instead of one.

Some years need to pass before the full effect of the ordination of women to the priesthood on the Church of England, clergy and laity, can be fully evaluated. Stress, clergy marriage, the ordination of women, are all areas that have been, and are, in continual need of research. This research, however, aims to have a broader canvas, so that the marriage and family

relationship will be explored, as will emotional stress and the ordination of women. This will be done in the context of the clergyperson's own perception of their life, why they were ordained, what being a priest means to them, their view of authority and their relationships within the parochial community.

General Expectations of Clergy:

In the research carried out 'on the examination' of the role of the Episcopalian priest in the pastoral ministry, Burdsal, *et al* (1996) found that the laity had eight categories of expectations for their priests - pastoral sensitivity; administrative skills; scholarship; personal integrity; innovation; personal spirituality; meaningfulness of services and lay involvement. Within the American Church there is great emphasis on numerical and financial success. Now within the Anglican Church there is stress on the parish church being financially viable. These high expectations may undermine the confidence of the clergy. This, in turn, may well reactivate childhood feelings of not being good enough or acceptable to the carers. If God appears distant as well, not only does the clergyperson experience

psychological distress, they may also plunge into a chasm where God appears to be nowhere. The dark night of the soul may lead eventually to a much closer encounter with God. However, for the clergyperson experiencing emotional and spiritual trauma, the outlook may feel very bleak indeed.

The last two chapters have looked at the reluctance of the Church to tackle clergy problems from a psychological perspective until comparatively recently. Literature has shown the fear the Church has had of Freudian influence. Now the Church has to look carefully at its workforce. This is especially so in the light of much negative media interest and the increase in marital breakdown.

It has been seen that many are researching into such areas as clergy stress and marital breakdown. Sue Walrond-Skinner has been the first to explore the effect of the ordination of women on clerical marriages.

Though much has already been done, there is more to do. This research aims to look at a broad canvas, focussing primarily not on statistical data

but on using a qualitative approach toward understanding the psychotherapeutic needs of Anglican parochial clergy.

Chapter IV

Methodology

Pure logical thinking cannot yield us any knowledge of the empirical world; all knowledge of reality starts from experience and ends in it.

A. Einstein, P. Podolsky, N. Rosen

[Spinelli. 1989 p.1]

Though there are 10,004 full-time ordained clergy ministering in the Church of England, the focus of the research will concentrate on the incumbents. It has been seen in Chapter I that there are particular pressures on them.

The incumbents are answerable to the Bishop and the parish as to how they fulfil their role. The Bishop says to them at their Institution, '*Instituto ad tale beneficium, habere curam animarum, et accipe curam tuam et meam*', [Phillimore 1895 p354] (I institute you to the benefice, and to the living, and receive the cure¹ of souls which is both yours and mine.) The cure of souls is passed from the Bishop to the incumbent for the duration of

¹ The care of those within the parish

his/her incumbency. This ancient exhortation lays upon the incumbent the charge of the spiritual and moral welfare of *all* within the parish.

Since 1994 women also have been ordained to the priesthood. Though many of them have exercised a leadership ministry within the Church prior to their ordination, it is only gradually that women are being instituted to their own parishes. 340 women are incumbents at the time of writing. Overall the percentage of all female clergy to all male clergy in 1996 is ten percent. That is set to increase as more women come forward to the selection conferences.

The Aim of this Research:

The aim of this research is to analyse the clergy's view of the problems and conflicts they confront in their lives. This will be explored under six headings:-

- Why Ordained: Impoverished Narcissism
- View of Authority: Super ego
- What it Means to be a Priest: Self image
- Personal Relationships: Attachment

- Working within the Parish: Defense and denial
- Emotional and Spiritual Health: Dark night of the Soul

This broad approach, by investigating such concepts, (which are explained in greater detail in the empirical chapters), from the data produced may be seen to aim to validate the hypotheses arrived at. It is by investigating the clergy's perception of their life and work that an answer may be found as to whether the clergy perceive themselves to be 'successful' or 'failures'. This will depend more on their own internal integration than on the lack of credibility of the Christian faith to the surrounding community.

It has already been shown that the clergy live and work within a culture and community that has changed dramatically over the last 50 years. Added to that there has been a seemingly visible increase in clergy distress. This has resulted in clergy marriage breakdown, clergy leaving their parishes and seeking secular work, loss of faith and psychosomatic illness. The symptoms of depression, alcoholism and sometimes violence may sound a clarion call that the conditions of service for clergy in the new millennium need a radical overhaul.

Though it is apparent that there are 'successful' clergy who feel fulfilled and satisfied in their jobs, the literature review has revealed that there are seemingly few in this category. The purpose of this review is to establish why this may be. Many clergy, as they progress in ministry, express various dissatisfactions with the work. They feel unsupported by the hierarchy, undervalued by the laity and underpaid by the establishment. In comparison to many in the congregations, they feel their work has very little value in the world outside the Church.

Loss of confidence in the Church to make any impact on a largely materialistic society, plus little faith in Bishops to speak clearly on doctrinal and moral issues in the country, produce feelings of despair. It is hard, grinding work to motivate a congregation - to 'go and make disciples of all nations', [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.1155], even just within the parochial boundary.

Many of the laity are unprepared to reach out to those in the community for fear that if they enter the church then things may change. This creates a group of people who are an army in retreat, 'returning to the trenches', rather than one that is visionary and marching ahead. Clergy are left isolated as they battle to keep alive the flame of faith within them.

The aim of this research is to look at the broad canvas of the life of the clergy and to establish their psychotherapeutic needs. Why have they risked all to be ordained into what appears to many to be little more than another club? Having begun to understand why people are ordained, it seemed important to explore how the clergy view the authority structures over them. In trying to understand their view of that, as well as what it means to be a priest, it may be possible to begin to understand how secure or insecure they feel in the structures of the Church and within themselves.

Relationships within the family and in the working environment are explored and the state of their spiritual and emotional health. The data extracted from the interviews may highlight whether the changing culture does affect the psychological health of the clergy and in what ways. Variables to do with ministering in a northern or southern parish, in a rural or town parish, a working class or middle class parish, may correlate directly with the clergy who are able to cope and those who are not.

What is it that makes a successful, confident clergyperson who believes in the gospel preached and has no fear of reaching out to a disinterested

community? What is it that produces a depressed clergyperson who has lost faith in the Christian message and feels he/she is irrelevant in the community they serve and that the gospel is irrelevant as well? This research aims to address these questions.

My Psychotherapeutic Stance:

My personal philosophy as a therapist has largely been shaped by my background, my Christian faith and my journey as a client. I express this in my work in my view of the client, the therapist, the therapeutic relationship and the outcome of therapy within the framework of my own theoretical stance, which is as a psychodynamic psychotherapist.

As a Christian I see every individual as of infinite worth and importance. Alongside this is the observable fact, which Michael Balint describes in his book, *'The Basic Fault'*, [1968] 'that all of us have certain character traits... or compulsive patterns of object relationships, some of these are the outcome of a conflict or a complex in us.' [Balint. 1968 p.165]

With my clients I share this common humanity and therefore this common human condition. This means that I sit, as it were, where the

client sits. Because I have been a client myself, I will continue to have the client within me, the vulnerable needy child that reminds me of my shadow side. For this reason the client deserves my respect, my interest, my awareness of their worth and dignity.

However, I aim to be as aware as possible of my own prejudices and biases, so that I can attend only to the client, who and what they are and how they see themselves. For me, as a practising therapist, not only do I need a non-judgmental view of the client and an awareness of their intrinsic value and potential, I need to provide a safe enough forum for the therapeutic alliance to develop.

Over the years of working as an accredited BAC Private Counsellor, my theoretical preference has moved towards a Kleinian object relation model incorporating Freudian concepts of transference, counter-transference with especial reference to enabling clients to bring unconscious fears, wishes and desires to the conscious. This theoretical approach has been enhanced through personal, as well as group supervision, with Freudian analytic practitioners. My present way of working is as a psychodynamic psychotherapist using attachment theory and object relations theory to enable clients to make sense of their present-day problems in the light of

awakening understanding of their backgrounds and any repressed material coming into conscious awareness.

This is facilitated by interpretation of the positive and negative transference and my alertness to using my own counter-transference response to the clients' material. This interactive relationship enables the client to explore their life and inner world, to own responsibility for the choices they make, and have made, and to enable them to make decisions about what they want out of life and how they can accomplish that realistically.

Throughout this research project, my psychotherapeutic stance has informed the questions I have posed, my interview technique and the analyses of the data.

Methodology:

The methodological approach of this research is phenomenological and a description of this and the reasons for its choice are first discussed. This is followed by a consideration of the 'grounded theory' mode of analysis, which is used in this study.

At the outset it seemed clear that there would need to be some statistical analyses which would be used to evaluate the data collected from a pilot study questionnaire. But in order to understand the psychotherapeutic needs of Anglican parochial clergy, a qualitative research approach seemed preferable. The alternative quantitative method, whereby a hypothesis is expressed in operational terms, in order to test a relationship between the two variables, was felt to limit the possibility of deducing nuances from qualitative data. The orderliness and separation into clear linear sequence does not allow for the 'messiness of other aspects of real life', [Robson. 1993 p.19] whereas using a qualitative approach to research allows the theories and concepts to arise out of the enquiry. 'They come after data collection rather than before it... it is often referred to as "hypothesis generating", (as against "hypothesis testing") research.' [Robson. 1993 p.19]

Because of this a phenomenological approach is used, drawing on grounded theory, such as described by Glaser and Strauss in their book *'The Discovery of Grounded Theory'* [1967] This interpretative research method relies on listening to what people say and then analysing the transcript. For instance, the 'acknowledged emphasis placed upon the

exploration of clients' consciousness and experience of being-in-the-world... is the central effort on the part of the therapist to enter into the client's inner world in order best to clarify and expose the client's world-views and reflectively mirror them back for consideration.' [Spinelli. 1989 p.128] So this enquiry is concerned with a person's perception of reality, not with reality itself.

a) Phenomenological Approach:

'As human beings, we attempt to make sense of all our experiences.' [Spinelli. 1989 p1] Behaviour, the identity someone acquires and how they feel about themselves, is influenced by past and present experiences but also through the personal understanding each person attributes to those experiences. The aim in using a phenomenological approach to the research is to look at the situations the clergy experience through their own eyes and through the sense they have made of their interaction in the world.

'Phenomenologists deny the possibility of "correct" interpretations.' [Spinelli. 1989 p5] Though as the researcher I aimed to put myself into the other person's position, as interviewer I have my own world view and

consequently the analyses may be biased. However, the aim of this research has been to give a voice to the clergy in order for them to feel the Church hears what they are saying.

The research aims to understand the personal meanings in the lives of Anglican parochial clergy. The incumbents themselves are the experts. They live at the coalface of parish life and are the face of the Church of England. In order to capture the uniqueness of their own experience within a semi-structured interview, enough flexibility was allowed for 'the descriptive language and personal viewpoint of the subject to be of prime importance.' [Baker 1990 p105]

This study allows the clergy to 'reveal... the way in which they perceive their roles, and the way in which they relate themselves, both to their own family and to society in general', [Oakley. 1983 p] *society* being specific to the community they live in.

A phenomenological approach requires a different type of interviewing from a more traditional research method. There the interview is structured around particular questions. Response codes and different responses are usually circled directly. The semi-structured interview,

however, relies on 'a dimension of greater or less structure... Interviewers have their shopping list of topics and want to get responses to them, but... they have greater freedom... in their exact wording.' [Robson. 1993 p237]

The content, therefore, is less pre-determined and the methods less controlled.

In order to understand the respondent, phenomenological research demands active listening in order to make sense and understand the language of the interviewee. Though the researcher will have the initial category to explore and particular questions to address, nevertheless the interviewer 'will then be to some extent guided by the interviewee's responses to the succeeding sequence of topics.' [Robson. 1993 p238]

This allows for some freedom of discourse within the interview.

Subjective interpretations suggest that it is important to understand the nature of the perceptions as well as the events described. The researcher has to contend with issues of authenticity and truth and have an awareness of omissions by those being interviewed. It is, however, the subject's personal experience of reality that is being explored.

The idea of researching the individual's 'perceptual world' is much discussed in the literature. [Ardener, 1975; Spender, 1985; Rossiter, 1985; Hollway, 1989] Basic to it is that the research becomes an interactive process between interviewer and interviewee but with the concomitant risks of transference and counter-transference.

Grounded Theory:

Research, which seeks to understand its subjects' perceptual worlds, relies primarily on a qualitative approach. It is essentially inductive analysis, in which theory is developed from listening to what people say, establishing patterns, integrating information and 'allowing substantive concepts and hypotheses to emerge.' [Glaser and Strauss. 1967]

Glaser and Strauss advocate grounding theory in the research itself. They see theory emerging as a process and contrast this method with the logico-deductive method, which, they claim can stifle emerging theory. They suggest a twofold approach to the analysis of qualitative data:-

- (a) Converting qualitative data into crudely quantifiable form by coding and analysing it.

(b) From this one can generate categories and their properties and consider the relations between them.

'The theory that emerges from the researcher's collection and analysis of qualitative data is in one sense equivalent to what he knows systematically about what he has studied and lived through.' [Glaser and Strauss. 1967 p.224] It was because I had experience of the world of the clergyperson's life that grounded theory related in developing the hypotheses. The statements within the hypotheses echoed what I had seen from first hand, as well as having observed in others. The lack of respect by the wider community appeared to have a devastating effect on clergy confidence and only those who seemed to be more integrated were able to survive.

Criticisms of Grounded Theory Approach:

Glaser and Strauss acknowledge that there are possible criticisms of this approach.

Sociologists emphasise the need for verification of theory through rigorous quantitative research. That imperative could be seen to discredit any theory that appears to rely on 'impressionistic' data. Such data would then

be labelled as unreliable and unsophisticated. They therefore urge the need for constant comparative methods. Because of this I therefore used a codified procedure for analysing the data which allowed for the emergence of negative conclusions to those which I proposed. The theory emerging appears at first tentative and needs revision and replacement as other hypotheses are tested. Constant checking ensures credibility for the emerging substantive theory.

The Scientific Method:

Grounded theory is seen to be an inductive method of research by Glaser and Strauss. They believe it has scientific validity. Miles and Huberman [1994] however believe that it is data reduction that 'is part of analysis... (as it) is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organises data in such a way that "final" conclusions can be drawn and verified.' [Miles and Huberman. 1994 p11] From this mode of research, hypotheses may be deduced and then tested against variables. It is a logical and rigorous method that appears to allow little room for manoeuvre and for the respondents' own view of their world. Because of this it is unable to bring out their psychological behaviour in a way that qualitative research allows. Qualitative research tends to use small samples of people whilst

large, context-stripped cases are sought by the quantitative researcher. 'Qualitative sampling is often driven by the emerging hypotheses generated by the data. However, it is its emphasis on coding and the rigour with which contrasting and comparing occurs, and the different categories, that provide its validity.

Research Design:

1. Sample

It would have been possible, though very costly and time consuming, to have targeted all the incumbent clergy. 'There are some circumstances where it is feasible to survey the whole of...' [Robson. 1993 p136] a particular population. That, for one person, would have been difficult to cope with in terms of the volume of replies and the possibility of a large percentage wishing to continue with the research.

Another possibility was to target just one diocese and mail all the incumbents there. The problem posed was which diocese, from which province? The dioceses are so varied, depending on whether they are rural, urban or suburban. Other differences depend on environmental size,

population, the immigrant and ethnic groups within the culture and, most importantly, the area the diocese is in. Northern and Southern dioceses exhibit many idiosyncrasies that are applicable only to them.

Eventually it was decided that within the constraints of the time available and mobility, to target just two dioceses – one northern and one southern. Both can be seen from a different perspective because they are within either the province of York or of Canterbury.²

For obvious ethical reasons I did not include any clergy for the study from my own diocese and none with whom a therapeutic relationship had been developed.

I had informed the Archbishop of Canterbury of my research to alert him, as Head of the Anglican Church, to my enterprise. Unfortunately, grants for such research are available only for those who are ordained, [Appendix I] which may indicate an understandable wariness.

² The Church of England is divided into only two provinces

Letters were written initially to Bishops who knew me personally and had used me in their dioceses as a counsellor, Bishop's Selector³ or Bishop's Visitor.⁴ (Appendix II) The Bishop from the northern province knew me well from the southern diocese in which he had worked and agreed almost immediately to allow me access to his incumbent clergy. It was more difficult in the southern province. This was because three of the dioceses were already embarking on research projects and the Bishops were, therefore, unwilling to burden their clergy with even more questionnaires. Eventually, however, a diocese was found where the Bishop was prepared for his clergy to be interviewed.

2. Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be explored are:-

1. 'The lack of respect for the Christian gospel and the more constraining conditions of service within the modern culture, as well as the fact that the media and the greater freedom of the wider society often seek to denigrate traditional values, may be seen to cause the Anglican

³ Each Bishop chooses some clergy and lay people to become national selectors for Selection Conferences

⁴ The Bishop's Representative, who cares for the deserted clergy spouse

parochial clergy a loss of confidence and may have an adverse effect on their psychological health.'

2. 'the dis-ease within affects not just the clergyperson's work and his/her own spiritual journey, but also has an effect on every aspect of his/her life' and
3. 'The reaction of a clergyperson to the modern-day culture depends more on their own internal emotional strength, or ego identity, than on the changing cultural values.'

3. Procedure

Initial Questionnaire

These hypotheses were initially tested by sending out a letter [Appendix III] and a pilot study questionnaire to each of the 346 incumbent clergy, [Appendix IV] 199 in the northern diocese and 147 in the southern diocese. The initial reason for the pilot study was to test whether such a project would receive the interest of the clergy.

This questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first looked at personal details; the second explored the feelings of the clergy about where they lived; the third looked at emotional support and feelings; and the last section explored the clergy's spiritual confidence.

Both Bishops had been quite sceptical about the likelihood of much response as they felt clergy were too busy to be expected to return the questionnaire. Within two weeks about 180 clergy had replied, saying they were willing to proceed further with helping with the research. Sixty others had returned the completed questionnaire but said that for various reasons they were unable to help further.

In all, 264 clergy had returned their pilot study questionnaires, out of a possible three hundred and forty-six. Having expected a much smaller response, the 76% affirmed the need for such research.

73% of clergy responded from each diocese. In the southern diocese 74%, and in the northern diocese 75%, of clergy were willing to continue with the research.

There were fewer obstacles put in the way from those in the north when arranging the dates for the interviews than from those in the south. Fig. 1 shows a pie chart with the proportions of replies from each area of the total sample.

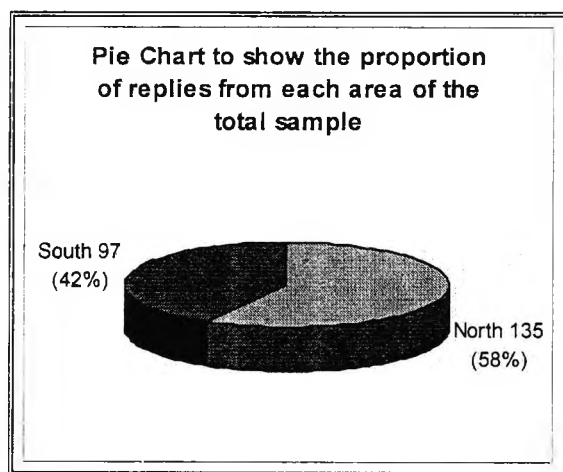


Fig 1

4 Results

Descriptive Data:

‘Often a research project... tells you that you were asking the wrong question in the first place.’ [Barker, Pistang and Elliott. 1994 p.1] From the pilot study questionnaires it soon became apparent that for the female priest the wrong questions had been asked. Most of them had been in the Anglican ministry for a very long time. The question, ‘year of ordination’ was therefore a difficult one to answer adequately. As one woman wrote, ‘commissioned 1972, priested 1994’. For her the important time had been

her recommendation to train and the culmination of that training through her commissioning in 1972. Since that time she would have become a deaconess, 1979, then ordained deacon in 1983 and eventually ordained priest in 1994. Consequently, she had been 'examined' at each new opportunity for leadership in ministry and becoming a priest had an inevitability about it. She did not feel she was doing something new but that her ministry was being ratified - given the Church's final approval through the laying on of hands in the ordination to the priesthood.

Now, she just wanted to get on with what she had been doing for years but now with the full seal of ecclesiastical and episcopal approval.

Because the pilot study had been a tentative testing out of clergy interest, it was in many ways inadequate as a means of gaining much valid data. However, the data that were collected have been placed in Appendix VIII.

The data collected highlight the variables about clergy in the north and south - the different age and gender groups, churchmanship differences and their status as to whether they are married, divorced, remarried or single. Homosexual relationships, when relevant, also were spoken about in the interviews. Interesting data on their ministry also emerged.

The size of the church congregation seems to have a bearing on how the clergy view their ministry. Fig. 2 shows that over sixty churches had congregations of between one and fifty people and nearly one hundred and fifty clergy who responded led congregations of less than one hundred people.

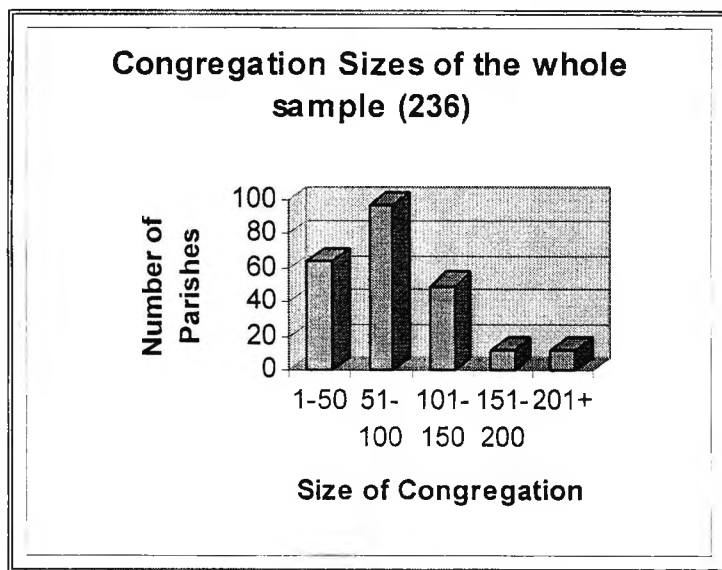


Fig. 2

Fig. 3 seems to suggest that the percentage of smaller congregations is greater in the north than in the south and that a higher percentage in the south than the north has larger congregations, though there is little real difference. How much is that to do with a seemingly more affluent lifestyle in the south? From immediate observation, many of the parishes visited in

the north seemed run down and deprived since the closure of the pits. In the north the Church is seen to be part of the community but the poverty of joblessness does not appear to increase the size of the congregation. A general air of deprivation was noticeable.

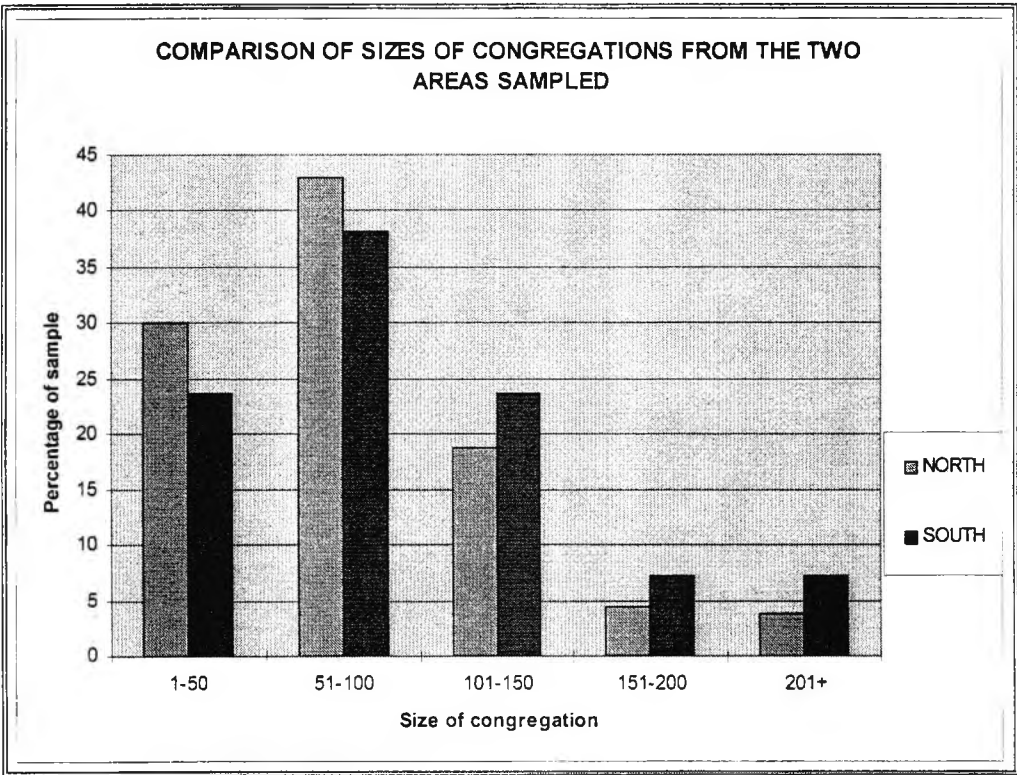


Fig 3

The data from sections two, three and four were based on a Likert ratio scale of one to five. The areas covered looked at where they lived, support relationships, emotional stability and spiritual alertness. Figs. 4 and 5 show an interesting phenomenon. Though the clergy saw the Vicarage as home, it was seldom a place of retreat or relaxation for them. (App. 8 p.xxvii and xxviii) The congregations seemed to have a proprietorial view of it and the children of the Vicarage were more prepared to see it as their

home than was the clergy spouse. Something has already been said about the Vicarage seeming to be like a goldfish bowl. This view was also expressed by those within the sample who were interviewed.

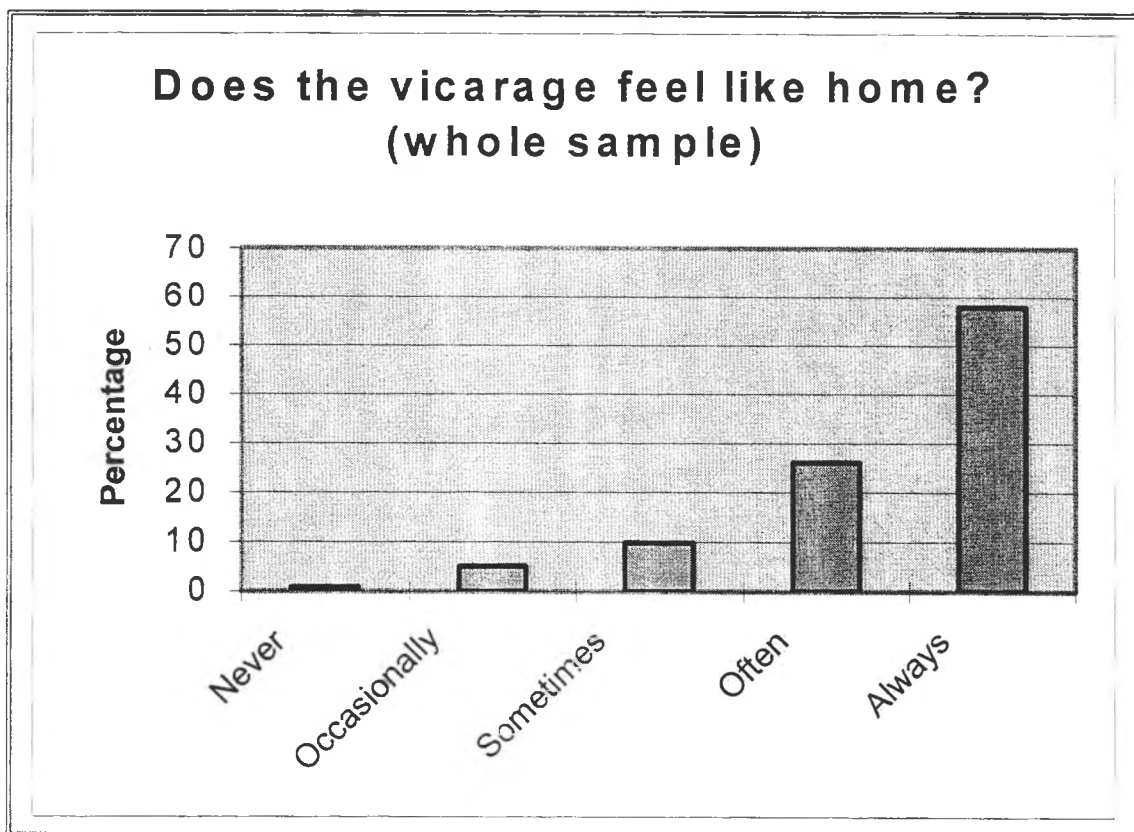


Fig 4

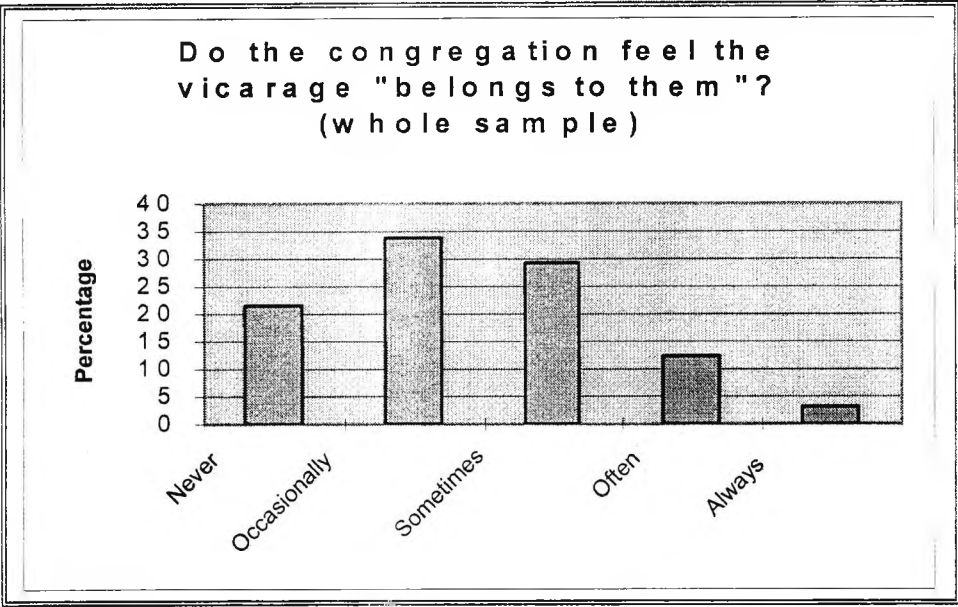


Fig. 5

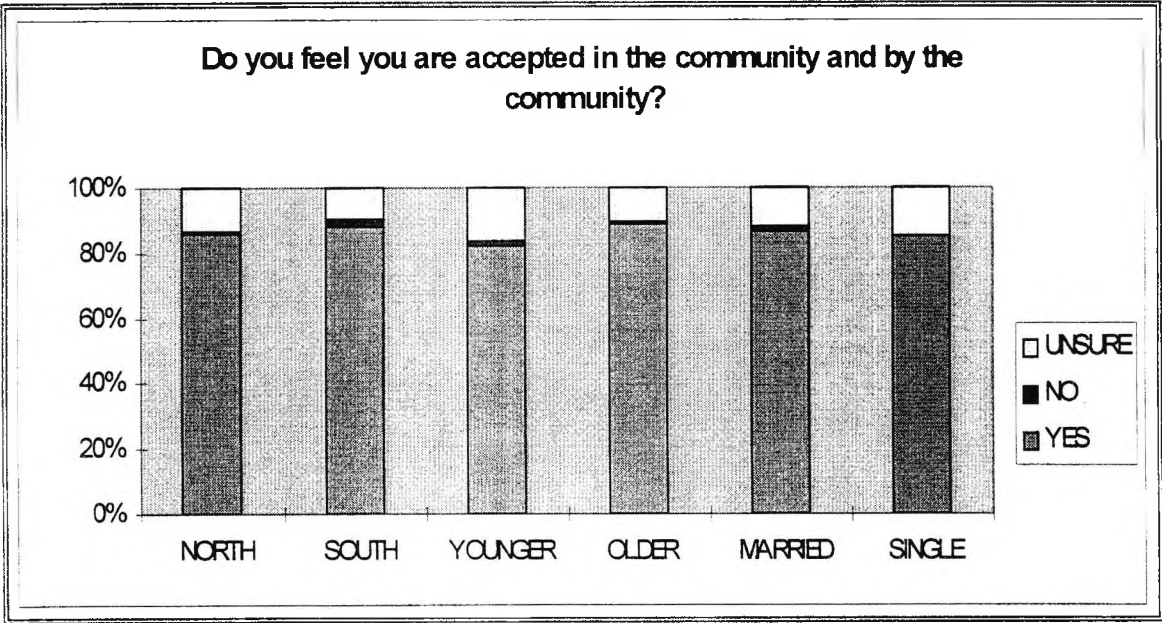


Fig. 6

Fig. 6 shows a surprisingly high percentage, 80% and over felt accepted within the community. This is of particular interest in the light of the fewer numbers who attend church or have any seeming interest in it. How much is this feeling of acceptance because the clergy themselves work hard to be accepted or because the institution of the Church is still tolerated as an icon within the community is open to debate.

The questions related to feelings of sadness, depression or joy and hope became a link for the main body of the research. All categories confirmed often to feeling a sense of hope. Female clergy were about 5-10% more full of hope than the other categories. A very small percentage of northern clergy, those married and the older clergy admitted always to feeling extreme sadness and depression. None of the categories said that they never felt times of hopelessness, depression or sadness - though, again, a very small percentage of married clergy said they never experienced feelings of joy, a sense of hope and renewal and elation. A small percentage of female clergy and the married clergy admitted to never feeling a sense of elation. The percentage was higher amongst the female clergy.

The last section of the pilot study questionnaire aimed to explore the spiritual life of the clergy. These questions looked at preaching the gospel within a multifaith environment and the clergyperson's confidence in doing this. They also examined the clergy's perception of support for them from the hierarchy. The last question sought to gauge the spiritual health of the clergy and their own awareness of times of spiritual aridity within their ministry. This will be explored more fully in the qualitative research. The female clergy scored less than 40% in their confidence to preach the gospel. This may highlight the fact that they have only had such a consistently public ministry since their ordination to the priesthood in 1994.

Female clergy were seen to be less confident than their male counterparts discussing spiritual issues with those of other faiths. They were, however, more able to respect those who had no faith at all. Female clergy turned to Christian leaders more often than did the male clergy and were more prepared to admit occasional periods of spiritual aridity in their lives than were the male clergy.

In the category under 'seeking spiritual support from church leaders', it is interesting to note that about 15% of unmarried clergy will never seek help

in contrast to about 7% of married clergy who will never seek help. 38% of unmarried clergy occasionally have times of spiritual aridity in their lives whilst over 40% of married clergy experience spiritual aridity. The fact that married clergy have a spouse to share things with does not, from this statistic, seem to suggest that they will have fewer spiritual difficulties. In fact, being married may provide greater stress due to the need for the clergy to show care for their spouse and children.

It is interesting to note, however, that the same percentage of younger and older clergy 'always' turn to their leaders for support, though 12% of older clergy never do compared to only 2% of younger clergy never seeking help from the hierarchy. About 40% of older clergy and younger clergy 'occasionally' experience times of spiritual aridity.

It will be seen in the later research that many of the northern younger clergy meet regularly in a support group. It is about 4% of the younger group who admit to 'always' having times of spiritual aridity in their lives. That may well be because being younger they are able to be more open and honest about their spiritual experience than the older clergy and feel less threatened doing so.

The pilot study questionnaire provided rich data for the rest of the research project. Also of interest was the fact that several of the respondents who said they were unable to go on with the research sent letters of encouragement. Many of them sent their parish magazines so they could more fully explain their work.

The Sample Studied:

The pilot study had initially been designed to test whether there was a need for this research. The overwhelming response took me by surprise. It was now important to provide a random sample. The sample could never be totally random because the sample chosen was not from the whole population of the clergy. Neither was either diocese a random choice, depending as they did on the willingness of the Bishops to allow their clergy to be interviewed for a research project. However, as each incumbent in the two dioceses was given the opportunity to continue with the research, any sample taken had the possibility of the element of being random.

180 clergy were prepared to move to the next stage of the research. Such a number was unmanageable for one researcher to tackle, therefore I decided

to take a stratified random sample - thereby reducing the eventual number to about one third. 'This (involved) dividing the population into a number of groups or strata where members of a group share a particular characteristic or characteristics, (e.g. Stratum A may be females; Stratum B males).' [Robson. 1993 p138]

There was a perceived need to include a group for those who had identified themselves as gay and I was particularly concerned that I had a proportion of women in my eventual sample.

Out of the 180 I had already eliminated eight clergy. They had either retired, were not full-time, were prison chaplains, were not of incumbent status or, as in one case, an engineer who was a non-stipendiary priest. This eliminated eight from the sample. I then divided them into different categories, as Fig. 7 shows. I took the first from each category and then every third one. The result was 64 clergy to be given in-depth interviews.

Total Sample of Those Wishing to Continue with the Research Project

		Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Remarried	Gay
NORTH	Male = 91	16	73	1	0	0	1
	Female = 9	2	5	2	0	0	0
	Total 100						
SOUTH	Male = 65	3	55	1	0	1	0
	Female = 5	1	3	0	1	0	0
	Total 70						

Fig 7

Random Sample = 64

		Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Remarried	Gay
	Male = 33	6	25	1	0	0	1
	Female = 4	1	2	1	0	0	0
	Total 37						
SOUTH	Male = 24	3	19	1	0	1	0
	Female = 3	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Total 27						

Fig 8

It was interesting to observe that the total number of female clergy, seven, was above the national 9% percentage of women priests in the Church of England at that time. Because, in the Pilot Study, I had not included under the section 'married' the words 'divorced' or 'widowed', only those who had offered that information were included in their appropriate categories.

Only one male clergyman included on his pilot study questionnaire that he was gay, though through the in-depth interviewing others were prepared to declare their homosexuality. It could be said that this sample is not truly random and therefore lacks validity because the Pilot Study did not highlight the various categories clearly enough.

The lack of clarity in the original questionnaire provided very large groups of married clergy in both the north and south diocese. However, this did allow for 'disproportionate sampling where there is an unequal weighting...' (and so) 'ensure(d) that there is at least some representation of certain "rare species".' [Robson. 1993 p138] It certainly seemed important to include as many different categories from the sample as possible.

Having obtained the random sample, each one from the whole sample was written to and thanked for their co-operation. Those who had been willing to participate further and were not part of the random sample were informed of this. Those who were part of the random sample were also informed that interviews were set up. [Appendix V]

In-depth, semi-structured interviews provided a flexible way of observing the clergies' reactions to the questions. It also allowed the respondent to pursue themes of particular interest whilst putting the responsibility on the interviewer to make sure the material given will be relevant to the theory questions. 'Face to face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry... and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self-administered questionnaires cannot.' [Robson. 1993 p229]

Some Methodological Problems:

However, because interviewing requires a considerable degree of skill by the interviewer, 'the lack of standardisation that it implies inevitably raises concerns about reliability. Biases are difficult to rule out.' [Robson. 1993 p229] Not only was the methodology itself open to question, but the fact that as the interviewer I am married to one of the members of the Church

hierarchy posed problems also. Would I be able to approach my task objectively enough, or would I be tempted to put my own interpretations on some of the disclosures, as I was a participant observer? Equally valid was the possibility that the clergy themselves would feel threatened by being interviewed by an Archdeacon's wife. They may find it hard to believe that all they said would be treated confidentially. On the other hand, others may feel that by sharing their experiences with me they would have the Bishop's ear. It was particularly important that the parameters of the research and the confidential nature of the exercise were explained fully to each participant.

The Rapoports (1976) believe the interview allows the researcher to study the phenomenological world through the perceptions of those interviewed. In this research, the clergy are given a voice. However, 'as Swirsky [1989] cautions "the interview process is not a simple channel through which the subject's experience flows".' [Baker 1990 p.119] There is a reaction between researcher and the subject. This will inevitably influence what the participant says.

Factors of Influence:-

- i. The researcher (i.e. respondents might have interacted differently with a different researcher).
- ii. The relationship between participant and researcher as perceived by the participant (i.e. unbeknown to me, I had attended the same Selection Conference as one of the respondents).
- iii. The questions asked, however 'neutral' the researcher tries to make them.
- iv. The possibility that the 'probing' are based on the researcher's perceptions of what was being revealed. My inside knowledge as a clergy wife would have biased my questions.
- v. The impression which the subject hopes to convey.
- vi. The possibility of transference and counter-transference.
- vii. The constraints of time.
- viii. The possibility that, at a different time, different thoughts or feelings may have been expressed.

The Process of Qualitative Research in the Main Study:

The research is about the clergy's psychotherapeutic needs. As such, the qualitative approach will be cognisant of unconscious processes at work. The clergy may consciously withhold information for a variety of reasons but he/she may unconsciously 'put up resistances... (repeating) attitudes and emotional impulses from his early life'. [Freud. 1973 p333] The fantasies which produce the transferential phenomena may produce a bias to the answers in what Lacan calls 'the triumph of miscommunication'. For such reasons it is impossible to adhere slavishly to methodological rules. For 'no study conforms exactly to a standard methodology; each one calls for the researcher to bend the methodology to the peculiarities of the setting'. [Miles and Huberman, 1994 p5]

There were two other concerns. First, as a psychotherapist by training I was aware that my role must be of a researcher and not a rescuer. It was far easier to remain in role as a researcher than had been anticipated. What was problematic was that the earlier interviews suffered by virtue of my lack of experience. As I became more relaxed less was missed out.

It was decided that each interview would last in total for one hour and a half. That included arriving, setting up the recording equipment, having the interview and then leaving, as 'anything going much over an hour may be making unreasonable demands on busy interviewees.' [Robson. 1993 p229] It was also important to arrange the visits carefully; fully cognisant of the busy lives the clergy live.

Most of the clergy were extremely accommodating, though I did arrive at two clergy houses, both in the Southern diocese, to find they had forgotten the appointment and had gone out without letting me know. One of the clergy was extremely apologetic, whilst the other said it was only to be expected from such a busy person. However, the clergy appreciated the professional and careful preparation that had gone into setting up the interview.

In order to explore a psychodynamic analysis of problems confronting Anglican parochial clergy, the main areas of a clergyperson's life required exploration. This broad spectrum of enquiry provided an objective, if somewhat superficial view, encompassing their *modus operandi* from the time of hearing 'a call' to serve God to the end of their career.

In-depth interviewing required theory questions that would allow the interviewees to speak freely and openly. The central research question, '*what are the psychotherapeutic needs of Anglican parochial clergy today?*' then provided the possibility for six categories to be looked at:-

1. The reasons for being ordained.
2. Who was the focus of authority?
3. The respondent's understanding of priesthood.
4. Personal relationships.
5. Relationships in the parish.
6. The priest's emotional and spiritual health.

Within these categories questions invited the respondent to explore their feelings of each of these areas in their life. [Appendix VI]

Once all the interviews had been recorded and then transcribed, a code was needed to break up the data material into relevant categories. A code for each theory question will provide a method of constant comparison. Glaser and Strauss, discussing grounded theory, postulate that if data is compared and interpreted with other data then a negative case will falsify the current theory. In proposing three hypotheses, the research would explore their validity in the light of the data collected.

Because of the unreliability of using a qualitative research method only, some statistical data is produced from the in-depth interviewing. This, with the data already produced from the pilot study questionnaire, should provide a more accurate picture of the psychotherapeutic needs of Anglican parochial clergy.

Lessons Learned:

There had been an initial disbelief that many clergy would be prepared to take part in this research. Consequently the pilot study questionnaire had been seen as a necessary tool in order to test the possibility of embarking on this research rather than as a serious piece of quantitative research in its own right. Because of this, not enough care had been applied to such categories as 'married', 'single', 'divorced', 'widowed', 'remarried' or to the vexed question of the year of ordination.

It was the 76% of response, allied to the swiftness of the returned questionnaires, which highlighted the clergy's need to be heard. During the interviews, the respondents wished not only for the hierarchy to hear, but the whole Church. They wished to tell of their sense of isolation, of

having been trained to communicate their faith to a seemingly disinterested community. They wished to be heard as they struggled financially to bring up their children and to cope with the resultant pressures on their spouses and themselves. Matters of faith, how they impart it, but also how they keep alive their own faith, became a major preoccupation for many.

It was, in many ways, a 'shocking' experience to enter homes where wives had left their husbands recently, or where the clergy themselves were experiencing deep depression. A sense of desperation pervaded these houses and there was an almost audible cry for help. The fact that their job depended on their faith and the healthiness of their spiritual and mental lives was an obvious reason for stress. The experience of entering a home where the Incumbent felt at peace with God provided a welcome relief after the heaviness of the pain and distress experienced in the former homes.

Main Study:

The intention of this research is to study the psychotherapeutic needs of Anglican parochial clergy. This is a broad canvas, looking at the six main

categories already mentioned. The broadness of this research will prevent in-depth study on any one category but will hopefully provide an overview of the priest's vocational life.

Variables to be Considered:

1. *Situation of the Diocese:*

A diocese from the north and one from the south were deliberately chosen in order to test out the hypotheses. Is there a greater respect for the gospel in a northern community than in a southern one, where the assumption is that the more sophisticated a society the less religiously aware they are? Because of the deprivation suffered within many a northern town, does that correlate directly with the clergyperson's own sense of value within his/her role?

2. *Churchmanship:*

Clergy representing the three main sections of the Anglican Church - Modern Catholics, Liberals and Open Evangelicals - were interviewed from both dioceses. There were some clergy representing 'Forward in Faith', Anglo-Catholics who oppose the ordination of women to the

priesthood for traditional reasons. However, there were no clergy interviewed from the Reform Evangelical group, whose opposition to the ordination of women rests on their understanding of male headship from a Biblical exegesis.

Looking at these differences in churchmanship, and whether one group or another had larger congregations, was important. It was also crucial to observe whether clergy feel more confident and appear psychologically more integrated from one group than another.

How much influence does a person's background have on whether they become a protestant or a sacramentalist in the expression of their faith? Important correlations will appear regarding these variables.

3. *Age:*

The older clergy will have experienced a very different church when they were first ordained. People still respected clergy and saw the Church and the Vicar as part of the community just as much as the pub or school. There were comparatively small ethnic groups in different parts of the country and they seemed to have little effect on the Church of England.

The training for clergy was about being the 'shepherd', or pastor of the flock, and the expectation was that the Vicar could do it all. Now younger clergy are encouraged to work collaboratively with an increasingly vocal and skilled laity. They are taught management skills and most dioceses provide annual assessments - unheard of in the 1960's - 1980's.

These variables will highlight the older clergy's view of the Bishops and their need to have a 'father' in God over them. The younger clergy expect more collaborative working with their Bishops, even if they still are seen to carry the weight and authority of the Church.

4. *Marital Status:*

Since 1994 clergy have been allowed to be ordained even if they have been divorced and remarried. This is only after lengthy investigation by the Bishop's Representative so that 'the impediment to ordination' can be removed. There are now a good number of clergy who have been married before and now remarried.

Looking at the category of relationships highlights whether clergy who are married, single or living within a homosexual relationship, experience more support for their work or find having a partner increases the stress.

5. *Male/Female:*

Unexpectedly, the research does not highlight a militancy amongst the female priests. It is the male clergy who admit to feeling threatened by the ordination of women priests. In fact, the men were, as a whole, more open - even more aware of their needs than the women. It may be that the women have no need to be aggressive since they now have what they have spent so long fighting for.

6. *Parish:*

The last variable is to do with the type of parish the Incumbent works within. An urban priority area may appear, on paper, as more stressful than a rural parish. A Vicar who is in charge of eight village churches, on his own, will disagree as he frenetically moves between each community - each one of which demands his undivided attention.

The Interview:

Each lasted one and a half hours. Because five interviews took place in one day, there was no room for manoeuvre. Each interview was taped and then later transcribed. The respondents were aware of the researcher's shared understanding, since I am a clergy wife. There were, as has already been stated, advantages and disadvantages to this.

Rubin [1979] lists the advantages of the interviewer having had clinical training which is relevant here, too, with the present researcher being trained as a psychotherapist. Rubin suggests she should be able to:-

- Create a facilitative, neutral, non-threatening atmosphere
- Understand the dynamics underlying the response
- Recognise resistance and denial

- Minimize the countertransference effect - i.e., in being able to see her own tendency to projection she should be more able to 'hear' what the subject is really saying, even with emotionally-laden material.

Disadvantages:

1. It was, as a woman, particularly difficult to listen for one and a half hours to male clergy castigating the Church for ordaining women to the priesthood.
2. As a Selector whose job is to investigate the validity of the 'call' to ordination, I was dismayed to hear one female priest say she was a priest because she did not know what else to do.
3. It was not easy to hear the pain of so many clergy and walk away.

For their part, there was a danger the clergy may have found me too professional and clinical. The clergy who felt they had been 'passed over' may well have envied the seeming success with which they endowed my husband.

Analysis of Results:

After the transcribing of each interview, themes were taken and grouped under topics. Quantitative analysis was done where appropriate, using a coding system, which will be included in the following chapters.

It was of interest to note that rereading the transcriptions, and listening again to the tapes of the respondents, brought a different response than that elicited at the interview itself. It was as if the nuances had been missed in the interview. Listening to the respondent who seemed over-garrulous in person, the pain and hurt of years gone by became very evident on the tape recording.

Leaving some homes feeling irritated by the interview, when listening to it all again I was often struck by how much I had missed. Rossiter [1988] aptly describes it. 'It forced me to acknowledge what each subject had said, line by line, and prevented me from focussing on only those parts of what (he/she) had said that I already had meanings for.' [Rossiter. 1988 p.]

As the analysis progressed it became increasingly clear that the hypotheses were tenable.

Clergy Response to the Interviews:

Having heard some anecdotal evidence of how reticent clergy can be when confronted with personal questions, I had wondered if respondents might be defensive but, in fact, this was not so. One male clergyman began answering the questions flippantly and even he was quickly prepared to let down his guard. Several clergy from the south said that the whole exercise had been therapeutic for them.

The fact that I had been open about my husband being a member of the Church's hierarchy and that I knew their Bishop personally appeared to give them confidence that they could trust me with their real feelings. Their trust may be explained by the fact that as an Archdeacon's wife I may be listened to by the hierarchy. There appeared no doubt that the clergy wanted the Church to hear what they had to say. The total number of clergy interviewed was 60. Four of the random sample were unable to be interviewed. One had moved to another diocese, two had retired and one of the northern clergy was in hospital at the time of his interview.

The openness of some of the clergy was quite startling. In two of the homes I walked into a situation where the clergy wife had only recently left her husband. In one of these the clergyman smoked incessantly, was still wearing slippers, and the vicarage had an air of neglect and depression that was palpable. It was only during questions about his wife and family that he shared what had happened two months previously. He then went on to describe his complete mental breakdown and that he was only just beginning to return to work. This man had a greater need to have his voice heard by an unknown researcher than he had to hide away behind closed doors.

For another clergyman, the distress was not a broken relationship but the situation he found himself in. He had been moved from a parish he enjoyed because he was unable to work with a female priest due to his doctrinal beliefs and, instead, located in a very deprived parish of the diocese, with about 80% unemployed. A sensitive, creative man who, with his wife, had made many friends, he had suffered from depression for four months and been off work. He and his wife found it hard to cope with the constant confrontation from the young people on the estate and the vandalism. His feelings of being in the wrong place, not valued or

understood in the parish, were evident after only a few minutes of questioning. He was an intelligent man and yet out of his depth and having no mechanism to know how to cope.

As I reflect on my visits to the two dioceses, it is the male clergy I remember most vividly. This is not because only 9% of the random sample was female. I believe it was more to do with the fact that vulnerability seemed more obvious within the male clergy than the female. That is not to say that the female clergy did not have pressures and therefore experienced stress and psychological disturbance.

Women have for long been battling to find a place, an identity, in the male-dominated structures of the Church. Now they had secured their desire. The women whom I interviewed had been in ministry within the Anglican Church for many years, though in a subservient role. Now they were learning to be leaders within this organisation. They did not come into the Church as trained leaders, as did their male counterparts. Therefore, for them the pressures were about finding their place, seeing what they had to offer, what they could bring into the ordained ministry that might be uniquely different from the offerings of their male colleagues. They were facing more gain than loss.

However, the male clergy had exercised their prerogative of leadership for hundreds of years. I have already written about the reasons for the far-reaching changes within the Anglican Church in the introduction to this research. The women are part of that change but the men are the ones who appear to be most adversely affected by it. This is because their once secure position is threatened on all sides. All the women, bar one, appeared comfortable and confident in their new roles and were excited at the opportunities ahead. The only one who appeared anxious, and rather obsessively tidy, had been hurt by people's attitudes to her because she was a woman. She was, however, mainly preoccupied by a very demanding dependant, who lived 200 miles away, and by her own health needs.

As yet, there are not enough female incumbents, and none who came straight into ordained ministry, to get a sense of what effect being ordained has on their psychological health. The effect on them of being ordained, however, will be explored and their psychotherapeutic needs discussed along with those of the male clergy.

Using the above-mentioned research methodology, it has been necessary to balance two needs in the research. The first is the need for consistency and internal validity. The second is to hear the voices of the clergy as they struggle with their role in an ever-changing society, which appears to be anti-establishment and to denigrate traditional values.

It should be mentioned that the possibility of making comparisons between the various categories generated by the data was considered. However, this was not pursued because of concern about over-interpretation of the data. Therefore, no attempt at inter-rater reliability was made.

Though there can be no claim to true scientific objectivity, yet the remaining chapters will explore the clergy's worldview of their situation. The data engendered will highlight their psychotherapeutic needs.

Chapter V

Why the Ordained Ministry?

Song - I, the Lord of sea and sky

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry,
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord,
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night,
I will go, Lord,
If you lead me,
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain,
I have wept for love of them,
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone,
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them,
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
Till their hearts be satisfied,
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

[Dan Schutte - © 1981 D. L. Schutte/New Dawn Music]

Why Ordained: Impoverished Narcissism:

Freud first used the word 'narcissism' in 1910 'to account for object-choice in homosexuals, who "take themselves as their sexual object"'. [Laplanche and Pontalis. 1973 p.255] Freud at first saw narcissism as a stage in sexual

development whereby the subject sees his own body as his love object. Freud and others then developed a belief that the ego's formation depended to a large degree on the external environment, that is 'the mother's ego supportive function being taken for granted.' [Winnicott. 1984 p.61] Where, however, the infant is deprived of a maternal preoccupation and without what Winnicott would term 'a good enough holding', [1984], the development of the infant's ego is not firmly established. The narcissistic needs of the infant are therefore not realised and there is a sense of impoverishment within.

Narcissism is 'any form of self love'. [Rycroft. 1968 p.94] In looking at why men and women seek ordination, the research will explore whether the clergyperson has moved from an impoverished narcissism to a more integrated sense of self. For 'even when they do achieve, they cannot feel supported by their accomplishments.' [Cooper and Maxwell. 1995 p18] Not only do they have feelings of low self-esteem but also they cannot 'incorporate anything good', feel fragmented and experience identity confusion. In spite of this the 'grandiose sense of self-importance or uniqueness', [Cooper and Maxwell. 1995 p18] is often patently obvious.

However, it is inconceivable that all who seek ordination have done so 'from the narcissistic injury of loss.... Religion need not be regarded as a psychologically defensive posture.' [Meissner. 1984 p 71] Yet Burton [1977] states, 'clergy consistently reported unempathic responses from their parents... (and were) likely... to have felt unwanted,... been sexually abused and assaulted, and... had an absent father or traumatic house moves.' [Burton. 1997 p.17]

Burton's was a comparative research project, comparing Anglican clergy with scientists, engineers, psychotherapists and patients assessed for psychotherapy. Her findings show that a larger percentage of clergy suffered early loss and deprivation than the scientists or engineers. The ordained ministry represents life and death issues to do with absolution and restoration and 'religion answers the basic needs of man, so that psychologically at least, it is correct to say that its origins are intimately associated with those needs.' [Meissner. 1984 p.60]

The clergy status encompasses a variety of roles from pastoral, teacher and administrator. Nevertheless, the sacramental and proclaiming role necessitate the clergy to be in the centre stage for a large part of their ministry. How

much is the clergyperson drawn to seek such employment in order to satisfy his ego, which is 'behaving as though it were in love with itself.'? [Freud 1973 p.135] and yet can never have enough recognition. How does the call of God come? Is that through the influence of family, religious leaders, or mentors discerning a spiritual yearning within the applicant, or is there a need for those wishing to be ordained to find the long-lost father so that the 'call' is no more than reparation for the impoverishment within?

One of the most prolific modern-day researchers into Christian ministry and Christian clergy in particular, is Professor Leslie J. Frances. In his research with Raymond Rodger into the influence of personality on Anglican clergy role prioritisation, it was found that 'characteristically male clergy are introverts. They are shy in company, uneasy in taking social initiatives... They are not people... to stand on the soapbox.' [Francis and Jones 1996 p.66] Given the very public nature of ministry, it is a strange phenomenon that so many introverts seek ordination.

However, the seemingly safe haven of the institutional Church, with its clear structures, may be felt by many as a return to the womb. For those who have experienced childhood deprivation and abuse, the all-embracing warmth of

'mother' church may become - or be perceived as - the salve needed for the narcissistic wound. The wound which has been caused by not acquiring a 'sufficiently strong sense of self love in order to be able to express that love outwardly in concern for others.' [Jacobs 1986 p.39] However, it is that very need of inner reparation which causes stress and, as Francis and Rodger say, 'clergy who score high on the neuroticism scale and clergy who score high on the psychoticism scale are significantly more likely to have... thoughts of leaving the ministry.' [Francis and Jones, 1996 p.76] For it is those clergy with greater ego strength and a high sense of self-esteem who circumnavigate the paradoxes of clerical ministry. For the clergy is seen both as the representative of Christ to be respected, but also as the 'Aunt Sally', to be pilloried when God or the world do not meet the needs of His creatures.

There is a final problem about vocation, however careful the selection process. 'When someone believes that he has discerned his vocation, can we speak at all of the insight being "correct" or "incorrect"?' [Watts and Williams 1988 p101] Though there are criteria for the selection process, it can never really be discerned whether the candidate has a psychological need to be ordained or not.

The Road to Ordination:

Given the changes in the culture and within the institutional Church itself, why are men and women seeking ordination and, especially, why did the respondents get ordained? It is no easy matter even to reach a Church Selection Conference. The candidate must first secure the approval of their Incumbent and the Parochial Church Council¹ before they go forward to a Conference.

The Director of Ordinands,² (DDO), may then take a year or more to explore with them their vocation. The DDO may send the candidate to be questioned by diocesan examining chaplains or pastoral counsellors to see if they are both spiritually and emotionally able to go to a Selection Conference. The DDO will also meet the candidate's spouse several times and ensure that they are supportive of what is being planned. On average, it will take two years before a candidate reaches a Conference to test his/her vocation. The Conference lasts for 48 hours and is a very rigorous examination of the candidate under eight criteria. [Appendix VII]

¹ The church governing body within each parish

² Every diocese has at least one DDO, whose role is to explore with a Candidate their vocation

As one of the National Bishop's Selectors, I am constantly aware of the seemingly 'good and lucrative' positions people are prepared to sacrifice and their willingness to embrace the change, financially and in their living arrangements for spouse and children, in order to do what they believe 'God is calling them to'. For many it is a complete change of direction - from a business, commercial, educational, scientific and, essentially, a secular environment to a religious *modus operandi*.

Pursuing a similar enquiry, Sussman, (1992) looks at the reasons individuals choose to become psychotherapists. He discusses the metaphor of the *wounded healer*. Just as 'many therapists have gone through periods of psychological disorganisation and that this may contribute not only to the desire, but also to the *ability*, to cure others.' [Sussman. 1992 p30] so clergy may have experienced a profound psychological disturbance, changing their direction in life. Jesus Christ is seen by the Christian as being the supreme wounded healer. Like Christ, the potential clergy 'before becoming a healer, or shaman... must undergo a period of intense distress and illness'. [Sussman. 1992 p30] The research will highlight the relevance of such experiences.

The Desire to become Ordained:

What emotional gap does ordination fill? What does it provide? Can a psychopathological need be inherent in those wishing to be clergy? Is there within an impoverished narcissism? In looking at the main influence on why the respondent was ordained, I explored whether or not they came from a Church background. [Fig 9.]

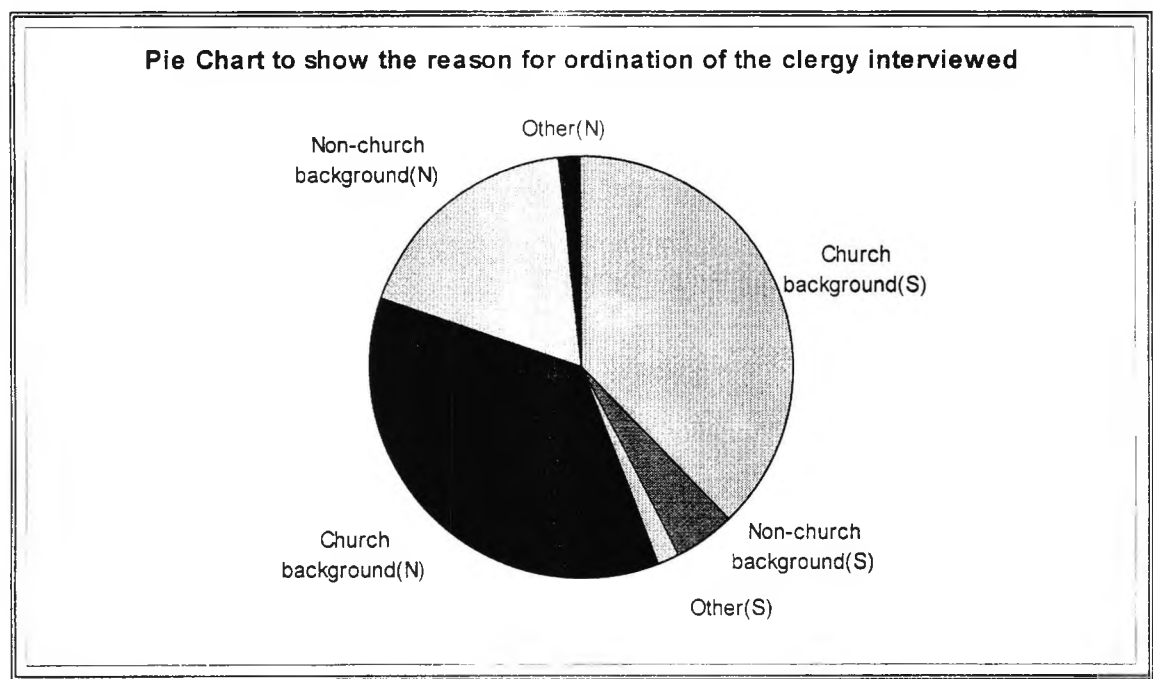


Fig. 9

It will be noticed that out of all the respondents from both the northern and southern dioceses, the largest percentage by far came from a Church

background. For many that meant they were 'born into a Church environment' because their parents went to church, their father was a minister, or even if their parents were not churchgoers themselves, they sent their children to Sunday School. This meant that, in one way or another, these children experienced in some depth a religious environment. This was extremely influential in their adult formulation and, especially, their religious espousal. It was the importance of the influence of coming from a church background, or not, that dictated the main categories to be explored under the heading of Why the Ordained Ministry.

Analysis of the Data:

1. Church Background: *Reasons given for being ordained:*

The subsequent categories all appeared within the data collected and, as such, came from the voice of the respondents interviewed. This was their own view of why they sought ordination.

(a) A Safe Option

One participant, Int.³ 106, a woman in her late forties, married with no children, explained that she had gone into the Church as she did not want to 'enter the world of work, didn't want a career'. This clergywoman had grown up in a vicarage so had known no other life than that dominated by the Church. She said, 'I was happy to do nothing'. She felt it was 'a way of avoiding real life'. The world seemed strange and alien and she had had little real contact with the world outside home.

She needed to feel 'safe', and entering the Church work structure, first as a lady worker⁴, provided a haven. Lady worker, or accredited lay worker, was the only authorised option for women at that time. Though her experience of home life had not been easy because of her mother's volatile temperament, where she got things 'out of all proportion', yet the known still appeared more manageable than the world outside.

³ Int. equates to interviewee

⁴ Authorised to work pastorally within the parish, usually amongst the children, the bereaved and the women

(b) A Familiar Environment

Many of the respondents coming from a Church background described themselves as 'having grown up in it'. Attending church regularly was part of the rhythm of their life. For many it was embedded in their whole family life. For others at boarding school, daily chapel and chapel on Sundays was part of the culture of their educational environment. Often the family was also involved in community public service. Int. 48 said his 'parents were local councillors and mother was chairperson of the Rural District Council'. For those who were either sent to Sunday School, or went because friends went, without any encouragement by their parents, it became an integral part of their lives.

(c) A Refuge

There were, however, others for whom going to church became seeking a refuge, an identity, a place to belong. Int. 116 described himself as a lonely boy whose parents had split up when he was a child and he was sent to boarding school. Becoming ordained, he described as 'God setting the solitary in families'. Throughout his interview he mentioned influential men

whom he had met and talked with. He talked about a need for 'my scars to be healed' and about the importance of such people as Archbishop Ramsey, whose books he had read. Freud's assertion is relevant, that for such a person 'religion is nothing more than a dependence on the sovereign father.' [Meissner. 1948 p.58] It is this deep sense of loss, from which powerful emotions are released, that is rooted in narcissism. This is not to suggest that all the respondents coming from a Church background were ordained in order to heal their narcissistic wound within.

Winnicott [1984] speaks of the integration of the ego being related to the 'holding function' the infant has received in their early environment. I met clergy who had the appearance of integration. They seemed to feel at home with themselves and experienced a sense of 'I am, I exist, I gather experiences and enrich myself.' [Winnicott. 1984 p.61]

(d) A Transitional Object

Int. 142 grew up in a 'strong Christian home... a stable childhood and very happy.' He was an only child of a working class, loving family, within a strong extended family community. He described himself as a hard worker though I

had no sense of his being driven, either by a need to find a safe haven or by a need to find an identity. For Int. 142, being ordained 'arose from a sense of self and a valuing of those things related to the self that became objectified as outside the self... this parallels Winnicott's [1951] concept of transitional objects'. [Lovinger. 1984 p.112]

(e) A New Family

It is interesting to note that for several respondents who did not grow up in church-going families and yet were sent to Sunday School, it was the 'family atmosphere' of the Church that attracted them.

Int. 4 went as a young boy to a very 'lively church' and as a man he tried to 'get away from the call and become a jet pilot'. He said that he came from a background where those who wanted to be ordained were 'one step away from being mentally certified', according to his parents. His parents 'thought I was barmy', as they wanted him to do something 'nice and respectable'. In order to please them he went and worked in a bank for a year but could not get away from the 'inner conviction' that God wanted him to be ordained. For

this man, his basic needs were not met through the ethos of his family. Educationally he surpassed his father by going to university.

(f) Upward Class Mobility

Thirty years ago, when he was ordained, the Church was still a respectable profession. No longer is that the case. How much was being ordained equated with being 'upwardly mobile' in a class classification? Clergy live in much larger houses than the majority of people. They did then and still do, in some places, enjoy the respect of the local community. Added to this they have an obvious public role. That may not seem to answer this man's psychological need to be ordained. 'Freud attributed the "compulsive conviction" attaching to religious beliefs to the return of the repressed.' [Meissner. 1984 p.110] Within the constraints and limitations of the data available, it is impossible to make a valid judgement.

(g) Separation and Individuation

For Int. 142, there was a sense of individuation. That is he appeared to 'detach consciousness from the object so that the individual no longer places

the guarantee of his happiness, or of his life even, in factors outside himself.' [Jung, C. G. 1968 p.186] In spite of his parental dismay, Int. 4 had to answer the 'inner call' that he experienced. As he said, 'I tried to get away from it, and I couldn't.'

Int. 77 was brought up in a Christian home and though he felt 'called' to be ordained, he had a strong desire to engage with his faith on his own. This was especially true as his father was ordained and an evangelical clergyman. He moved from a fundamentalist faith to a sacramental expression of Christianity, where being a priest has a greater sense of being set apart by God for holy things than does the pastor or the minister. He felt he sought ordination because of his need 'for affirmation. I was an unhappy child, always competing with my siblings for my parents' affection and time.' His father was a busy hospital chaplain and his mother worked full time.

(h) Maternal Deprivation

It could be argued that Int. 77 experienced limited 'holding' from a mother busy with the demands of his other siblings and work outside the home. Certainly, during interview, he appeared nervous and very fidgety. It was

during this interview, in the hall, that someone outside threw an egg against the window and smashed the glass.

He was young and vulnerable and, after my interview, I wrote down that I felt 'the Church was the loving, accepting family and father' that he had not experienced as a child. His maternal deprivation was being addressed in an institution that is often described as 'Mother Church'. That particular expression is used by Anglo-Catholic clergy who see the calling to ordination as to an ontological state that sets them apart from others. From this, not only is the sense of inadequacy treated but there is a patriarchal structure in which to begin to develop the 'I am'.

Thirty-year old Int. 77 had the insight to realise that in part his calling to the ordained priesthood was to address these issues. Like many other respondents he admitted that it is impossible to have one's desires fulfilled.

(i) Like Father, Like Son

Int. 194 grew up in a clergy family and felt he had wanted to be a Vicar like his father, 'ever since I could remember.' During university he became

disenchanted with the Church and religion, though still feeling he wanted to be ordained. After university, he went to a Selection Conference and was not recommended for training. He said he was 'devastated and very cross', especially as he was told not to return until he could 'show industry and achievement.' His Director of Ordinands said he would not be able to be 'captain of football' without playing the game.

It is interesting to note that this interviewee had what he described as an 'idyllic childhood until 13 years.' He had good communication with his father. They then moved and his father had a breakdown and was no longer emotionally available to him. How much was his need for reparation part of his desire to be ordained, though he neither went to church nor was interested in Christianity? When he went to boarding school he said, 'it was the first time I'd been to church without Dad being there.'

Emerging Themes:

In listening to the stories of the journey taken to ordination, certain similar themes echo in the silence again and again - the need to belong, a desire for safe enough holding, for affirmation, acceptance and a wish to be the 'first-

born', eldest child. By that I mean that, until comparatively recently, an incumbent was the king in his particular kingdom or parish. With the exception of 6 and 7 all reasons for being ordained come within the framework of needing to feel held, to be valued and to be accepted.

Even though there is much emphasis on collaborative ministry and men and women are selected for their ability to work alongside colleagues, there is still the view that the Vicar or Rector is the one in charge in a church. Congregations promote this idea and certainly the older clergy come from a culture where the clergyman was firmly on his pedestal. This seemingly inviolate position is strengthened by the uniform that is worn, (or mask that is adopted), and by working for God. Because of this the clergyperson is afforded a special place within the Christian community, right at the heart of the 'family' of God.

Discussion:

There is no denying that the majority of those interviewed for this research had an experience of 'God' 'calling' them to this work. The lack of respect for the Christian Gospel, as highlighted in the first hypothesis, was not a seeming

deterrent to their desire for ordination. Many felt they would be able to make a substantial difference to society's view of Christianity. In exploring further, deeper psychological reasons for wishing to be ordained emerged.

Int. 190 said 'the call began when I was a child. I knew I had to work for God.' She does not come from a Church family, though she was sent from an early age to Sunday School and so had a background rooted in the Church. Was this to do with looking for a lost, idealised father figure? She said that she was always 'cushioned by love of family and friends.' She describes how things changed for her at puberty, when sexuality 'hit' her. So though, in the past especially, religion has ignored the innate human drives and needs, was her call to ministry to do with fulfilling her need to belong? She feels affirmed by the Church as a person. In talking to her she said her sexual identity has found expression in her marriage.

Freud has enabled the Church, or rather forced the Church, to be cognisant of human drives and desires. The women now ordained priest will need space and time to explore being a sexual female in what was once a society led solely by men. However, their need to feel accepted and affirmed sexually will require them first to own their femininity and not to displace it all on Mother

Church, as has been done in the past. The issues of gender within the Church has been a hidden subject since the time of Augustine of Hippo in the 4th Century, though it has been worked out in terms of power and hierarchy.

I was surprised by the lack of a feminist theological forcefulness within the female clergy I encountered. Either it had never been there or the battles they had been engaged in had been so 'bloody' that they had no 'fight' left in them for that particular battle.

Int. 220 said that she had 'wanted to be a medical doctor and had set my heart on that.' She did not pass an exam and so was unable to continue with her studies. It was by default that she became a lady worker. A lady worker's role was seen solely as ministering to the women and children in the parish. Accredited lay workers usually had no liturgical or preaching role in the church. Such a job not only received very poor remuneration but had little or no social kudos and certainly not the status of a doctor. It seemed that she became a lady worker as it provided a safe holding after the disappointments of not achieving what she had desired. She had grown up in a Christian home and 'always believed in God and I made a commitment when I was 13

years old.' Similarly to Int. 4 who had wanted to be a jet pilot, Int. 200 appeared to gravitate to a position of safety for, as she said, 'I just felt I must let go and let God take over.'

For those who have grown up within a Christian family, or been familiar with life within the Church, ordination provides, initially, a return to the matrix. It is, in Winnicottian terms, a transitional object. It accepts the person as they are, provides affirmation of who they are and because of its institutional and hierarchical structures, provides a 'good enough' parental intervention. 'It was Freud who originally pointed out that the believers' attitude toward God may contain resonances and residues of earlier attitudes toward parental figures.' [Meissner. 1984 p.11]

It is no longer seen to be true, as Freud originally postulated, that all religion expresses a pathological need. However, neither can such a need be dismissed. The women in the sample portrayed a seeming lack of aggression and yet they had been the ones who had stayed within the Church while acrimonious debates occurred as to whether they should be allowed to be ordained priest. They had also experienced, since their ordination, clergy

from the traditional Anglo-Catholic wing and the Reformed Evangelical wing leaving the Church of England because of them.

During the 1-1/2 hour interviews this was barely mentioned by the women, though the men against the ordination of women were very vociferous concerning their own feelings. It appeared that what was most important for the women was that now they were ordained priests. They belonged in the family, they had what many of them felt to be their rightful place and they were accepted and affirmed. Now all their energies were consumed with getting on with the job rather than analysing their feelings about their new roles.

In the in-depth interviews with the women clergy, seemingly less complex psychological reasons for ordination were expressed. Maybe it was because I did not ask the right questions. I feel that it had more to do with the women now resting where they are and not wanting to explore too deeply what it meant to them. It is not, I believe, because these questions are not being raised but that there needs to be time and space before they can really be acknowledged and analysed.

The male clergy were more prepared to make sense of who they are and what they are about.

Int. 224 described his own father as self-centred. Though he was close to him, his father was undemonstrative. His parents were non-churchgoers but sent him to Sunday School. It was there that he found 'a priest who cared for me.'

Many of the male clergy stated that it was a priest - a chaplain at home or school - who showed a special interest in them who had a profound influence on their future direction. This contrasts sharply with the female clergy, who did not mention any one person as a particular influence on them as a child.

Int. 256, a female priest, experienced a great deal of loss as a child. Her father died of cancer when she was 11 years old and her grandmother when she was six. However, she only specifically mentions individual clergy who cared for her after her husband died. As a child it was the fact of belonging to the family of the Church that related most powerfully to her.

There is little evidence to support the fact that those who have grown up in Christian families or gone to church from a young age are more secure within.

For many the desire to be ordained has an element of returning to the womb; that is, re-appropriating something that is familiar and known. For those whose fathers were clergy, there is a desire to please and seek approval from a father imago. Int. 236 said that his 'parents were thrilled I was going to be ordained, for the Church was seen to be professional, respectable and decent.'. He described the Church as a 'benign family'; again, one of acceptance, where he felt affirmed and that he belonged.

Are the needs the same for those in the sample who were not from Christian backgrounds of any sort and who came into the Church in different ways? How much easier is it for them to join the Church from totally non-religious backgrounds or is it more about rebelling against authority figures?

Analysis of Data:

2. Non-church Backgrounds and Other:

Many of the clergy came from a background where there had been no church influence. Their families were uninterested in Christianity. The category 'other' denotes those clergy who, 'out of the blue', experienced God's call to

ordination from a seemingly non-religiously fertile environment, though they may well have experienced the Christian religion at school. These two categories have been included together because very little separates the view of the families of origin to religion.

Reasons given for being Ordained:

The categories mentioned below emerged from the interviews with the clergy. These words were used by them as they struggled to share what being ordained meant to them.

(a) *To Serve*

Int. 122 came from a non-Christian background, though he had attended a Cathedral school. He described himself as a 'non-Cathedral person' and that the religion of the school had seemingly no impact on him. However, he spent three years in the Army in the Libyan Desert. He described it as 'an evocative, spiritual place.' He came from a very affluent background. It was in the desert, surrounded by poverty, that he 'felt one day oppressed at heart'. He took a long walk in the evening and 'suddenly the Lord made this move.'

After this he said he 'felt quite different', that he had been given a commission to 'serve humanity'. He said that he did not hear a loud voice but that 'it was an imperative voice that came from without.' As a result of this experience he spoke to the Regimental Chaplain, who advised him to 'be glad; to say "yes"; realise it will work out and go to church more often.' Once in England he engaged in voluntary work and eventually decided he should go to a Selection Conference to test out his vocation.

Whereas those from a churchgoing background were often looking for holding, Int. 122 appeared to show all the signs of guilt that one coming from an affluent lifestyle experiences when faced with extreme forms of poverty and deprivation. Winnicott linked 'a sense of guilt... to destructiveness and on the other hand to constructive activity.' [Winnicott. 1986 p.81] What he seems to be saying is that guilt is a necessary part of human growth and development. Klein (1942) believed this required a movement from what she described as the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position. In the former, Klein emphasises 'the co-existence of splitting and persecuting anxiety'. [Segal, 1991 p.114] This developmental stage is then superseded in healthy development by 'the depressive position where love and hatred come into acute conflict'. [Segal. 1991. P.112] If the

human infant is able to move from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position, hold on to conflicting feelings and experience a sense of guilt, that augurs well for the psychological birth of the human infant.

Int. 122 was not describing a feeling of guilt associated with puberty and the emergence of his sexual identity. It was as though who he was, where he came from, the ground of his being, was suspect, so that for the very first time he questioned his own identity and found it wanting.

(b) To Find a Meaning to Life

For Int. 144 it was not guilt so much as an answer to the existential meaninglessness of his mother's death when he was a young man. He began to ask questions about the meaning of life and began to find himself 'drawn intellectually to the Christian faith'. He said that the 'idea of ordination insinuated itself' into his mind and just 'wouldn't go away'. To him it seemed a strange and alien idea to be part of the Church of England but because these thoughts would not go away and entered his everyday life, he went forward to a Selection Conference and was recommended for training.

The sense of nothingness pushed him to find an answer which had not been there before. For this man, the trigger calling him to God was his experience of being wrenched away through death from the maternal object. It is in the 'experiences of the mother as a loving and caring presence... the child finds himself narcissistically embraced... and he finds a symbiotic union... that can serve as the basis for... trust, acceptance and security'. [Meisnner. 984 p.138] His mother's death robbed him of security, acceptance and trust. Turning to 'Mother Church' may have provided maternal and paternal 'arms' for him to feel held by.

(c) *Faced with Mortality*

The variation in conscious motive for ordination was impressive. Int. 93, a single woman, started to go to church when she was training as a nurse because, for the first time, she was faced with suffering and death and could not answer her patients' questions. The metaphor of God the Rescuer, the Saviour, was enacted in her life when she found herself 'stuck on rocks in the sea and had to be air-rescued'. Not only was she nursing those who were facing death but, in this dramatic event, she had to face the possibility of her own death and the existential terror that that produced. It was whilst she was

waiting to be rescued that she 'made a pact with God, that if I came off the rocks alive and no-one was injured, then I would explore the possibility of full-time ministry.' She kept her bargain with God, even though this stirred up the wrath of her parents, who would not speak to her for six months. Her relationship with her mother, which had never been good, never recovered.

'The thesis that religion and the impulse to belief are born out of the fear of death', [Meissner. 1984 p.70], would appear to gain credence from her experience. Certainly there is a deep human need for restitution and salvation as a compensation for the ultimate loss in death. That this woman was faced with it, not just at work but in a particularly personal way, caused her to examine the meaning of life.

Death, however, has a deeper meaning than that, which is the ultimate end of every human being. Death, therefore, denotes all the fear of loss throughout life. The fear of rejection and all the daily experiences of disillusionment, disappointment, deprivation, which is part of the experience of human failure.

(d) *Experiences of Loss*

Int. 161 also echoed themes of death and restitution. Not only had his father died when he was two years old but, as a result of his mother's remarriage, he was sent away to boarding school and did not see his mother for two years.

He was educated at seven schools and described himself at that time 'as living life at one stage removed.' He did not engage with anyone at any depth. He describes how, at the age of 18 years whilst in hospital with a suspected melanoma, he began to experience life in a real way. He encountered a young man who had had both legs amputated, having fallen off a pylon.

Like Int. 93, he was confronted with the possible death of another, as well as his own mortality and the possibility of dying. He said, 'in the midst of all this I saw, unbidden at the end of the bed, the presence of Jesus Christ.' As he lay in bed he had been thinking that either 'God was the most important thing in life or it was a total con.' From what he described as a 'vision', he knew 'the rest of my life would be dedicated to His service and that I would be travelling and involved with missionary work.'

Out of all the men and women I met, Int. 161 was exceptionally gifted and had served abroad and in England. Though still a comparatively young man, he had contracted multiple sclerosis. When I met him he had just been retired from full-time ordained ministry and was again experiencing, in full measure, the paradox of serving a God who saves within a visibly dying body.

(e) *A New Way of Life*

All the respondents in this category experienced conflict with their families of origin, they were seen to have rebelled against the family culture. All described their parents as atheists, non-churchgoers, non-Christians, very anti-church, embarrassed by church involvement, having nothing to do with church. It is interesting to note that none of these men and women had the experience of finding a family, a safe place to go to from the conflicts of home as children, for none of them had contact with church life whilst still at home. Some experienced Christianity through school, whether at boarding or day school, but they were not involved in formal Christianity, as were those from a Christian background.

What drew them out of the safety of the known into the mystical unknowingness? It seems to have less to do with a sense of emotional impoverishment that those from a Church background seem to exhibit. Even though those from Christian backgrounds speak of a shared faith, it seems that only by staying within the safety of the known can they experience integration. Yet for those from a non-church background, they are leaving all that is familiar without any guarantees that the new world will not prove just as false as the old one.

Speaking theologically, all expressed a sense that God had called them to know Him and to share what they know. When expressed in psychotherapeutic terms, it may appear to diminish the sense of wonder and awe that these respondents experienced in their 'various encounters with God'. However, it can be seen that whether they are expressing their experience in spiritual language, there is 'no need... to insist that man's instincts are completely derived from the narcissistic injury of loss,... religious belief... can represent a constructive aspect of ego functioning'. [Meissner. 1984 p.71]

For some the reason behind their entering into the ordained ministry may be because of guilt, meaninglessness or death, but for others it is more to do with their experiences of existential isolation. Int. 293 was such a man.

(f) *In Order to Find a sense of Connectedness*

This man was the only person to whom I arrived late. He said he admired the Greek Orthodox and enjoyed, when visiting Greece, having his hand kissed by those who supposed he was, in fact, an Orthodox priest. This clergyman was vicar of a small northern artisan parish. He spoke of books he had read and was reading. It was quite difficult to enable him to speak of his childhood. He was an only child. He described himself as a lonely child.

My earlier parapraxis was understandable the more that Int. 293 spoke. He found it hard to articulate the feelings that mattered. He had been hurt by the Church of England in the past. Now it appeared I was also bent on 'hurting' him by being late. It was, for me, a sign 'of an interplay of forces in the mind as a manifestation of purposeful intentions working concurrently or in mutual opposition.' [Freud. 1976 p.94]

During the interview I became aware of how difficult it must be for him to minister in such an artisan parish. It seemed, at times, difficult for him to engage on an emotional level. He prefaced most answers with a quotation. So why had he wished to be interviewed?

Thinking about it now, it seems that all his life he has experienced a profound sense of isolation. As a child he won a place to the Grammar School, where he was ridiculed for speaking in a different way. Not only did his parents' job mean they were constantly on the move, but also his pronunciation and intellectual ability were foreign to all those amongst whom he lived. I believe that one of his desires to take part in this research was a wish to communicate his feelings of hurt to the Church. At the end of his contract in his last post, his job was immediately filled. He applied for many jobs before eventually finding a living. In spite of this I had a sense that in some unconscious way, by being ordained, he was trying to find a 'major buttress against the terror of existential isolation.' [Yalom 1980 p.363]

For Int. 293, ordination provided a buffer against isolation. With its clear structures of hierarchy, its theological intellectualism and the seemingly transcendent expression through word, sacrament and music of its belief

system, he could feel 'held' in what he described as an 'aesthetic emotional feelings for Christian worship'. When it 'clicked intellectually' for him, he found the 'Christian view of the world very attractive and it aroused a faith response.' Here was a man exhibiting a real sense of impoverishment and an emotional need to experience connectedness with other human beings.

Several of the clergy who only started attending church at university, or as adolescents at school, did so for relational reasons - though not with such obvious desperation as Int. 293.

(g) *The Call of God*

Int. 300 came from a loving and very supportive family. He appeared a secure, intelligent man who was openhearted and wanted 'to share God's love with everyone.' Thinking of recent research carried out by Mary Burton, [1997] where she argues that clergy enter a caring profession because of early experiences of loss and deprivation, it is always a shock to meet someone who appears fully integrated.

He started going to church at the age of 18 years because his friends invited him. Then he fell in love with a Christian girl. There seemed to be no awareness of inner need or emptiness. There was certainly no background of Christianity and when he first felt the call to ordination, he told God to 'get on yer bike!' He said, 'I felt I was going mad' and it was the last thing he wanted to do. He 'hadn't a clue what it was all about.' However, the call was insistent over a six-month period and eventually he went to a monastery to work at 'A' Levels, but ended up staying for ten years.

Emerging Themes:

The themes that emerged from those seeking ordination from non-church backgrounds are about profound existential issues: life and death; meaninglessness; isolation; loss. Unlike those from a church background who needed to stay within the safety of the known; those from non-church backgrounds were looking outside the familiar for meaning. They appeared to need something that would provide answers to life. This was exemplified in the interview with Int. 293. However hurt by the Church he had been, it had still provided him with a meaning to life, a place of attachment. He

seemed to have totally divorced himself from the life of his childhood and espoused the Church as his 'family' and 'home'.

Discussion:

The pie chart, (Fig. 9), at the beginning of the chapter highlighted the small percentage of clergy from the south coming from non-church backgrounds. The percentage in the north was proportionally larger. Even so, the majority of clergy sought ordination from a life experience embedded within the Christian Church. Those from non-church backgrounds often experienced parental opposition as they made cultural paradigm shifts. In spite of that, many of the clergy shared that their parents and siblings now attended church. All the clergy spoken to from this category expressed feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment at the direction their lives had taken. Within the church family they had found a reason for being. The deep existential questions that had accosted several of them were answered within a framework that believes God has a purpose and plan for everyone's life. The fears of isolation and alienation evaporated within a familial structure that at least outwardly provides interaction with other human beings. At a deeper

level the mystery of the Godhead and the 'Christian world view' for Int. 293 gave him a deep sense of attachment.

All the clergy in this category had moved from the familiar to the unfamiliar. They had, however, found deep psychological meaning to their lives. It can be postulated that being ordained, in itself, answered their psychotherapeutic needs to feel safe and secure.

Conclusion:

Reviewing the different stories told and the themes emerging, there are, in many instances, obvious deep psychological needs that are met by being ordained priest, such as the very fact of belonging to a tangible 'family' for those who have been sent away to a boarding school or who have experienced the loss of a parent in early life. Within the Church the ordination itself, and the 'uniform', give each clergyperson an immediate sense of identity and acceptance. Because they still work so much in situations where they are the only priests, then the affirmation by the congregation of their importance is offered swiftly. It is the clergy whom the sick want to visit them, the clergy only who can really offer words of consolation to the bereaved.

These psychotherapeutic needs were highlighted in themes coming from those who both did not have, and had, a background in Church life. There were also a few clergy who appeared to have no 'need' to belong, to be ordained, but were somehow 'accosted' and invited to think, maybe for the first time, transcendently.

It will be interesting to explore, as the other categories are analysed, whether the clergy with recognisable psychological needs are able to cope with the vicissitudes of ordained ministry more competently than those who entered the ministry from a seemingly stable background. What will be their psychotherapeutic needs? Will those from a position of existential isolation, meaninglessness and death find all their fears answered in their religion? May they, in fact, be able to minister more effectively because of where they have come from?

All of this begs the question, what is success? How can that be quantified? This is, in fact, a qualitative research project. The limitations of that is that the thesis can only research the clergy's own perception of their inner and outer worlds.

At this stage in the research it was impossible to validate any of the hypotheses. This was because the effect of the surrounding culture, and even the emotional integration of the respondents to it, only became a dynamic force in their lives once they were ordained.

This chapter, looking at why people are ordained, is the stepping stone for an exploration of their psychotherapeutic needs in the life they now live.

Chapter VI

View of Authority

'I've lived a life that's full.
I've travelled each and ev'ry highway;
But more, much more than this,
I did it my way.

Regrets, I've had a few;
But then again, too few to mention.
I did what I had to do
And saw it through without exemption.

I planned each charted course;
Each careful step along the byway,
But more, much more than this,
I did it my way.

[Revaux/Francois/Anka - 1968]

Every institution has its lines of authority. Accountability and managerial structures have found their way into the Anglican Church, though there is still a perceived culture that the Anglican priest is in charge in his own parish. Some clergy, like the singer Frank Sinatra, would prefer to 'do it my way'. Clergy who are instituted into the freehold of the benefice swear canonical obedience to the diocesan Bishop. 'They can only be removed from their living through immorality, heresy or pastoral breakdown.' [Leeder. 1997] There is, however, a long procedure for the latter to be put into operation.

Over the last ten years, the laity have found a voice and are now more prepared to challenge their incumbents. However, there are still many

parishes where that will not occur. Who, then, do the clergy see as having authority over them? Several clergy, when asked that question, said they felt they were accountable to themselves.

A more important question is whether the clergyperson's understanding of to whom they are accountable has anything to say about their psychological health. Diocesan Bishops have oversight over their clergy and are seen as the chief pastor, or father in God in the diocese. Because of the far more national and, (for some), international role many Bishops assume, they are less available than in the past to the clergy. Do the clergy, then, see their Bishops as the authority figures and, if so, what type of authority figure do the clergy want?

For some clergy the Bishops are like absent fathers - never accessible when needed. For others 'it is nice to know they are there but I'm glad they don't bother me, as I like to get on with things without someone breathing down my neck.'

View of Authority: Super-ego

Super-Ego:

Though the super-ego has been described as an heir to the Oedipus complex, psychoanalysts like Melanie Klein believed the super-ego was formed at an earlier stage.

Freud noted that 'the sufferer from compulsions and prohibitions behaves as if he were dominated by a sense of guilt.' [Laplanche and Pontalis. 1973 p.436] Many adults appear to act as though parental figures still dominate their lives. It is as though they have acquired an internalised harsh, judgmental parent so that they constantly seem to question their own decisions and ideas, 'for the part which is later taken on by the super-ego is played to begin with by an external power, by parental authority.' [Freud. 1973 p.93] Parents who offer only conditional love and threaten punishments, which the child experiences as love withdrawn, then become introjected. This often prevents the adult acquiring an inner sense of autonomy and so seemingly preventing them from reaching a degree of

responsibility. So it is that the 'super-ego derived values serve as a system of internal regulation.' [Meissner. 1984 p.238.]

'That part of the ego in which parental introjects are located.' [Rycroft. 1968 p160] will define how the ordained minister responds. Every institution has its lines of authority and accountability. The Church of England, with its structures of Bishops, priests and deacons is seen by many to exemplify a hierarchical structure. The fact that it consisted until 1994 solely of male hierarchical figures had made it seem even more archaic. It is in early childhood that the parental introjects are internalised, which then allows 'the super-ego to take the place of the parental agency and observes, directs and threatens the ego in exactly the same way as earlier the parents did with the child.' [Freud. 1973 p930-94]

In researching the clergyperson's understanding of authority, the data examines whether the hierarchy is seen as primitive and judgmental, or benign and supportive. It explores whether the clergy seem to have a dependent need for strong authority figures to take away the fear of individual responsibility. Those with a stronger ego and more integrated sense of self

may desire greater distance from their Bishops and Archdeacons and have a maverick reaction to canonical¹ obedience.

Weiser, (1985), who carried out research on sixty-three ministers in a Protestant mainline denomination in America, found 'more successful clergy to have greater ego strength, impulse control and object relations. He also noted that more successful ministers had a strong supportive father during their formative years.' [Frances and Jones. 1996. P110] This suggests that those from backgrounds with caring but non-judgmental parental figures have enough ego strength to withstand over-interventionist hierarchical religious leaders.

The clergy who are aware that they owe canonical obedience to their Lord spiritual, (i.e., their Bishop), and yet see no need to seek constant reassurance and approval would seem to have had a good enough integration of parental introjects but, for some, stress 'is self-imparted through a desire to prove or live up to expectations.' [Marc Europe p.7]

¹ The Canons. or laws that regulate Church practise.

Because clergy jobs often rely on the Bishop's recommendation, and many come within the episcopal patronage,² there is pressure on the clergyperson to be seen in a favourable light by the hierarchy. Hence by the time anyone hears of a clergy marriage breakdown or clergy stress, there is often no way back. Clergy have an almost pathological fear of any negative messages reaching the Bishop's staff lest it has an adverse effect on any preferment. In one of the dioceses used in the research, there was much cynicism expressed about confidentiality among the hierarchy and a verbalised fear of 'anything getting out', which might prevent them from having the chance to move from one parish to another.

So whom do the clergy see as their final authority? The Bishop? God? The congregation? Or are they the masters of their own destiny? Do those with a fragile internal structure need a stronger and more overt and visible authority to give them much needed security?

² The Bishop to appoint clergy to the benefices in his patronage.

Fig. 10 Clergy Perception of the Source of Authority

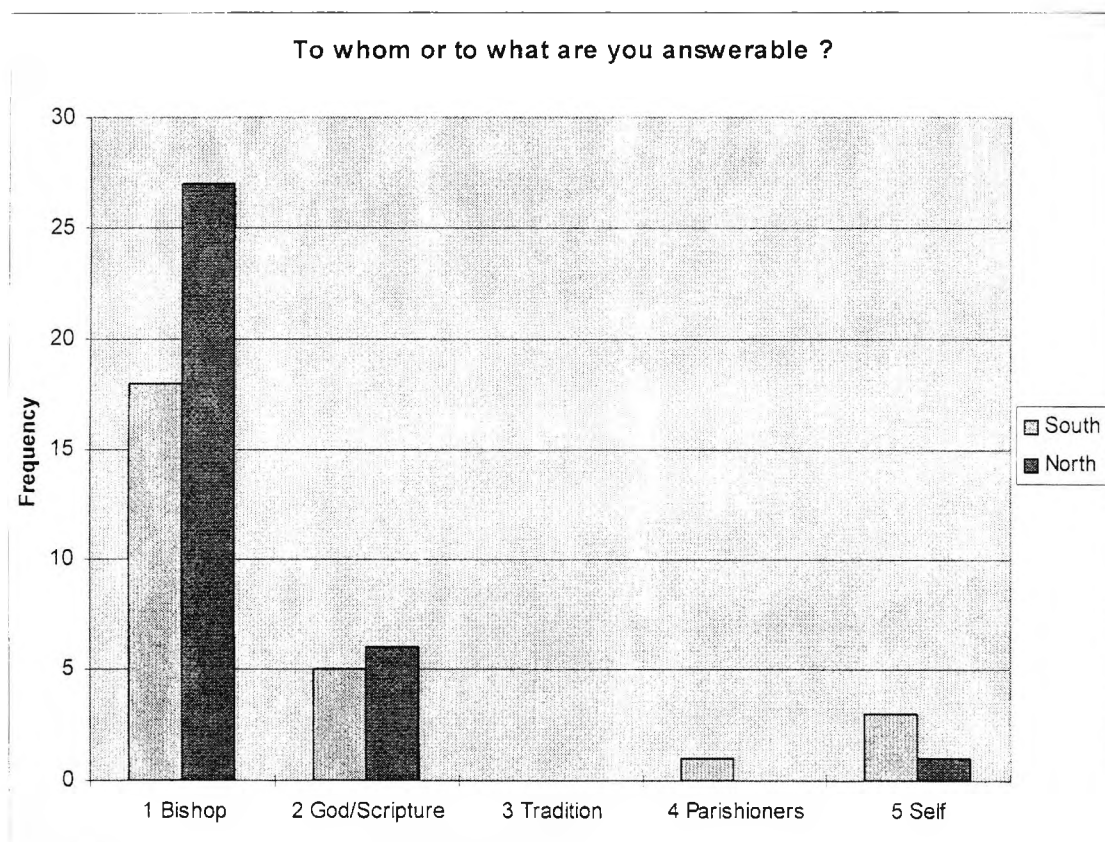


Fig 10

These categories arose out of the data collected. No one appeared constrained only by tradition. That may well be because the authority of the Bishop, who is seen as embodying the Apostolic succession, is part of tradition. The Reformation did not break that particular episcopal link with the early Church. Looking at the different categories, it could be assumed that the way the clergy view the lines of authority denote their churchmanship. The clergy from the more Catholic wing would have an

exalted understanding of the Bishop's power over them under God, whereas the Evangelical or Charismatic clergy would see the authority lying with God's word in Scripture.

From the above chart it will be seen, therefore, that it appeared many more clergy from the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church were interviewed than from the Evangelical party. That may be explained in part by the fact that this particular northern diocese has more Anglo-Catholic clergy within its boundary than clergy from the other wings of the Church of England. Whereas the southern diocese used tends to attract those from the Central churchmanship to its parishes. Churchmanship was not categorised when taking a random sample from the whole.

It is, however, not who the clergy see as having the authority over them that is important for this study but rather the psychological significance that authority exercises in the lives of the clergy. In the analysis of the data, I will be looking to see if the authority adhered to is, in fact, an internalised parental introject from the clergy's super-ego and, if so, why and what effect that has on their daily lives.

THE SUPER-EGO:

The Bishop:

The majority of clergy said they were answerable to the Bishop. When ordained priest, the Bishop exhorts the clergy to work with him as 'fellow-priests, as servants and shepherd among the people to whom he/she is sent.' [ASB 1980 p.356] Several of the clergy interviewed felt they were left on their own and would have preferred the Bishop to be more visible. Each of the subsequent categories were taken from the ideas the clergy expressed about the perceptions they had of the Bishop, their authority figure.

1. *Absent Father*

Int. 262 felt he had 'no one to answer to on a daily basis' and he found that hard. This correlates directly with the fact that his parents divorced when he was seven years old and the Church became another family grouping for him which was safe and secure. During his boyhood a curate took a lot of interest in him. The curate, in many ways, became a replacement father. Now, as an

incumbent, Int. 262 still needs to feel there is someone there for him. He said that he had a major internal crisis when he felt he had 'mis-read the parish situation and there was no one to talk to.' He spoke a lot of needing someone to tell him if he was 'doing it right, or wrong'.

This particular incumbent was young and in his first incumbency. He said there was a 'great gulf between being a curate and being a vicar.' For him as a curate, he still had a parental figure to fill the gap left by his absent father. He described his feelings as being 'a blind person walking along without a stick'. For Int. 262, the Bishop represented his father in God and was far more tangible an icon than the image of God. It was difficult that for him the 'Bishop's authority was distant and he only told you when to move parishes'.

2. Introjected Father Figure

The image of father in God, or pastor to the clergy, describes graphically the psychological expectations the clergy have of their diocesan Bishops. However, the authoritarian prerogative is derived from the fact that the Bishop, in instituting someone to a benefice, entrusts 'to a minister... the care of the souls within it.' [Leeder. 1997 p.73] The incumbent then has a

delegated responsibility. The Bishop has 'the general supervision of the clergy in his diocese and no one can perform clerical functions within the diocese without his permission.' [Leeder. 1997 p.49]

Int. 241 felt he is 'answerable to the Bishop as well as being servant of the people.' Int. 4 said that though the Bishop is the authority, he is 'given a lot of freedom'. He would do something the Bishop told him to do if he felt it was legitimate. It is, however, to the parishioners that he feels answerable on a day to day basis. The needs of the congregation and others imposes a 'heavy burden', as he is often torn between 'the demands of the parish and the demands of the family'. The sense of guilt experienced by this clergyman and others was powerful.

Guilt is often a major preoccupation for clergy. They feel they have 'let God down', and others also, and that they can never get it right or do enough. This profound sense of guilt is seen to be 'the state of one who has committed a sin or a crime.' [Ferguson and Wright., 1988 p.285] It is in this dilemma that a clergyperson like Int. 194 'needs the reassurance' that 'talking things over' with a member of the hierarchy can give.

Int. 194's father was a vicar. The pressure not to let him down, as well as God, the parish and the Bishop, appeared to be heavy.

3. *Rebelling Against 'Father'*

Int. 19 said that he has 'problems with authority, though I recognise that of the Bishop.' He spoke of himself as being a 'guilty, rebellious person' who has difficulty with diocesan figures. His father was a distant father. The Church, and especially the clergy, became father figures for him in his youth. Now in his fifties, he said, 'I don't need father figures any more.' He believes he has grown to maturity and 'he' is the father figure. He was rebellious as a teenager and feels that he is that again. He shared an incident when he had 'exploded' at a diocesan meeting.

The greatest problem for Int. 19 is that not only do the authority figures not have any meaning for him, but he is unsure he still 'ought to be in the Church of England', as he has lost his faith and 'lost touch with God.' He said, 'the traditional ways of talking about God don't mean anything to me anymore.' It is as though the internalised super-ego has been expelled and there is now an emptiness, a void. He said, 'I sometimes find it hard to get

motivated to work at all.' It is as though Int. 19 wishes 'to push away from parents both as love objects and as authority figures.' [Jacobs 1986 p,141]

Winnicott [1974] says that a child becomes an adult often over the dead body of the parent. If the adolescent survives then there is a sense of the resurrection of the adult coming into being. However, as far as Int. 19 goes, it appears that he has not gained any more than a superficial sense of freedom. His eruption at the meeting made him aware that he was 'going through a mid-life crisis.' He said 'my greatest fear is that I will end up like my father and be a depressive all my life.' It felt as though there was still a strong internalised super-ego preventing the emergence of an integrated ego.

The Bishop is a figure to be rebelled against, to provoke guilt within the clergy, but he is also the father who is seen never to be good enough.

4. *Inadequate 'Father'*

Int. 172 blamed the Bishops for not having a common mind on such things as baptism policy and homosexuality. He feels frustrated 'with the National Church, as I bang my head against a brick wall.' To him the Bishops are not

fulfilling what he sees as their authority role. He believes 'Bishops should be more hands on.' He believes they just want it 'like a sausage factory', where things are just churned out.

For Int. 236, his diocesan Bishop is extremely problematic. Because his Bishop has ordained women to the priesthood, he has to find other episcopal oversight as he is of a 'different integrity'. He feels his 'Bishop let me down', first because of the ordination of women but even more so when his first marriage broke down. Int. 236 said there was a complete lack of compassion and warmth and that this heightened 'my sense of failure'. He feels he now has a 'black mark against' his name, as he is divorced and remarried. 'Now I try to keep my nose clean and get on with the job.'

Int. 236 had had to leave his previous job due to some misdemeanour. After the interview with him I wrote down, 'this man is an angry and hurting man.' At every question he needed to talk about how wrong the Church of England was for ordaining women as priests and how much that had hurt him and others. He is also a man who needs a lot of affirmation and came into the Church looking for love and security. He has felt let down by those in authority for their lack of care and by the Church as a whole. At the end of

the session he said he was exhausted but that it had 'been like a therapy session and done me good.' This sad, hurting man has looked for, and is still looking for, parental love and attention.

For those who feel so abused by the ordination of women to the priesthood, it is as though a hated sibling, and a female, has come and taken the parent away from them. One clergyman said 'I could foam at the mouth' because of the ordination of women, as it 'is a subversion of episcopal authority'.

5. *Judgmental Father*

Another clergyman, Int. 195, divorced twice, has a very great 'disillusionment with the hierarchy.' He said that 'either you become the blue-eyed boy or you are left on the fringe.' He has felt that the Church has 'labelled me' so that it is now very hard for him. He felt that he only 'got told off, but never told if I had done well.' In a very difficult situation he felt he was 'not allowed to argue my case.'

His father was a 'strict authoritarian' and he is totally unable to shake off the effects of a judgmental internal super-ego. As a boy he 'challenged' the views

of his parents, now he is challenging the Church hierarchy. For him, as for others, the Bishop is not the loving father they crave for.

6. *Unacknowledged Father*

The respondents who have been mentioned have all been male. Int. 256, a female clergywoman, said that she does not 'think about the question of authority'. 'Women ordained had spent years as assistants... had discussed the value of collaborative ministry'. [Dyer. 1999 bp.90] Now they are in leadership it is more how she exercises that than who is over her that is important.

Another clergywoman, Int. 271, said 'they don't affect my day'. She gets on with her work knowing that the 'Archdeacon is there' for her if she needs him.

Int. 190 described her position as 'being given responsibility by the Bishop and by the people to do a job'. The whole area of authority did not appear to be of primary interest to the female clergy. Though Int. 93 recognised the

Bishops' authority, she said, 'I don't take orders from them, I'm answerable to the people in the parish'. She sees the Bishop as her line manager.

The idea of hierarchy, and who has authority over whom, though seen as important, appears to have less impact on the female clergy than on the male clergy.

Discussion:

The Church of England has yet to look in depth at the psychological difference that ordaining female priests will make to the whole Church. 'Chodorow [1978] wrote, "the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world, the basic masculine self is separate"' [Jacobs. 1986 p.87] That may account for the lack of anger and aggressiveness which was encountered during the interviews of female clergy. The women interviewed had grown up within a male dominated environment. Now they are part of that establishment they appeared less willing to challenge that. Maybe those women who are now entering the profession of the ordained clergy will be able to do that. It may not feel safe for the women now to 'accept what we might call the bisexuality of personal qualities: that is, men and women have

the capacity to be both active and passive, scientific and poetic, assertive and sensitive.’ [Jacobs. 1986 p.88]

Though some of the clergy described themselves as rebels, none of those interviewed appeared to react adversely against the authority of their Bishops or the Church. Some were quite vocal in voicing their dissent to their Bishops’ pronouncements but without taking any active part in anarchy. All appeared to value and need the parameters the Church sets and also to advocate such a stance within their own parishes.

Other clergy respected the Bishop’s authority without question. ‘The Bishop should be father in God and not a line manager.’ There does appear to be a direct correlation with the clergy’s background and how they view the hierarchy in the present.

Int. 142 comes from a ‘stable happy childhood’ and said that he does see the Bishop as the authority figure. However, he talked more about the respect he has for those who ably and appropriately fulfil their roles. There was no sense of his feeling not cared for or neglected. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Int. 142 appeared as a man with a strong sense of self.

Int. 43 said that though the Bishop has authority, clergy are given a lot of freedom and that he has never felt 'authority has been inflicted' on him. He feels the Bishop has 'to watch the sort of authority he exercises.'

Int. 47 said his relationship with the Bishop 'was very tenuous as the Bishop is so busy.' For many of the clergy it was hard that their Bishops were so involved in national affairs when they felt they should be fulfilling a pastoral role in the diocese. With the 'weakening of the self confidence of the clergy (resulting) from the declining public understanding and appreciation of (their) role and no expectation of what the clergyman has to offer', [Russell,

1993 p.10] affirmation from the Bishop seems even more necessary. It is not surprising that the male clergy look to their Bishops for support and pastoral care as well as acknowledging them as having the Church authority over them.

God/Scripture:

For about 20% of the clergy interviewed, authority rested not so much in the person of the diocesan Bishop but in Holy Scripture. The voice of God, they

felt, could more easily be heard through the pages of the Bible. The evangelical clergyperson, especially, believes God has spoken to the world through the prophets of the Old Testament and then especially through the person and work of Jesus Christ. For them, God/Scripture is their final authority.

A Freudian Perspective:

It is interesting to note that Freud 'had been deeply engrossed in the Bible almost as soon as he was able to read anything, and that this had an enduring effect on him.' [Meissner. 1984 p.25] Though Freud moved to an agnostic, scientific world view, the metaphors he saw within the Biblical text still affected him.

Not surprisingly, this book speaks equally as powerfully to so many today. Freud identified with Moses. He saw himself as a leader, founding a new nation and propagating a new religion in psychoanalysis. For Freud, the metaphor of Moses was about the ambivalence of the relationship between father and son. He could see himself as 'a saviour – a Messiah, another Moses – who would lead his people out of psychological bondage to the freedom of a

new religion that provided a new understanding of life and a capacity to deal with its hidden and unconscious forces.’ [Meissner. 1984 p.53]

The clergy who see Scripture as the authority they relate to do so because, in there, they find, as Int. 14 said, ‘the authority of Christ.’ For Int. 24 it is about ‘God being in charge and wanting to do what God wants.’

Freud may say that this God is a projected father figure and that it can be argued that ‘the Heavenly Father is strongly influenced by the attitudes and behaviour of his/her parents’. [Meissner. 1984 p.141] For some people the internalised God image may be punitive and a father to be placated, for others God may be good and all protecting.

Facing the Dilemma:

A question that arose frequently in the context of this research was: *is God just a projection or is He, as many believe, outside, beyond? The creator God and sustainer of life?* If He is the former, then doing an analysis of the clergy’s view of God is not a problem. If, however, He is the Saviour, the Father, then how can that be analysed, or is it about analysing the clergy’s perception of the God

they worship? God, whoever He is, is central to each person interviewed. Because of this it is impossible to capture something that is at the core of the self and explain it, or reduce it to scientific measurement. 'God is to be found, not wholly in the world of inner fantasy, nor wholly in the world of external reality, but in the transitional world, that is, in Winnicott's terms "outside, inside, at the border".' [Watts and Williams. 1988 p.35] Watts goes on to argue that a Winnicottian view of God as an adult's transitional object is not wholly satisfactory. He believes much more empirical investigation needs to take place.

The question is, is it possible to investigate the transcendental? Certainly for the purpose of this thesis, if God is diminished in any way, or written out of the picture, then the heart will be taken out of what is essential to all the participants of this research. Symmington's '*life-giver* - that which has not been chosen', [Symmington. 1993 p.96] approximates to the Christian view of the One outside the human person.

Christian Perspectives:

Christian literature starts with the premise that there is one triune God. This is expounded in the sacred writing of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. For the evangelical Christian especially, the Bible is understood to be the revealed Word of God to His people down the ages. 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation'. [Douglas, Hillyer, Bruce, and Guthrie. 1982. P137].

This is a blueprint for Christian living. Though clergy who view the Bible as their final authority on all matters of doctrine and daily living will respect their Bishops, yet they will only adhere to what they say if it is in agreement with Holy writ.

The categories arose from the interview material collected.

1. *God as Supreme Authority*

Int. 161 stated adamantly, 'God is the authority. I serve the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact I am an Anglican is part history and part coincidence.' He also

said, 'the Bishop hasn't got a clue what I do.' This clergyman appeared at first to be self-opinionated and full of his own sense of self. At first it appeared 'he believed he had everything, but... did not have the capacity to give out of his own self.' [Symmington. 1993 p.46] However, as he talked of his incurable illness he said, 'when following Christ we are not asked to live happily ever after.'

Through his early boarding school experience he had learned to be independent. Though appearing narcissistic, Int. 161 had given his whole life to God and, whatever was required of him, he saw it as a part of his 'pilgrim journey'. The strength of his attachment to God the Father directly correlates with the fact that his own father died when he was two years old. His allegiance was to the transcendental rather than a human masculine Church hierarchy that fails or lets him down.

2. A Trustworthy God

Int. 251, who described himself as a 'wheeler-dealer', said he 'finds it hard to be answerable to Archdeacons and Bishops', as he 'doesn't trust them and they are never there for support.' He is answerable to God and finds 'the

worship of God the ultimate joy.’ He describes his childhood as happy, coming as he did from a working class background. He was the eldest of three children. His father was a lorry driver and he said he was the ‘black sheep of the family’ and he ‘didn’t match up to what my parents imagined their ideal priest should be.’ His lack of trust had arisen from the time of the ordination of women to the priesthood. He is ‘not against women priests, but what I am against is the liberalism within the Church of England.’

Int. 251 is a traditional Catholic whose spirituality centres around the Eucharist, where he experiences God. For him, it is the God of the Eucharist, rather than the God of Scriptures that he obeys.

Six male clergy from the southern diocese said that God was their authority. Three were modern, or central Catholics, and three were from the evangelical wing of the Church.

3. The Incarnational God

Int. 24 described himself as a ‘rebel’, saying ‘lots of things happen in the parish that don’t accord with the Church of England’s ruling on worship.’

For this clergyman God is present, that is incarnational, in every aspect of his life. Though he respects the Bishops, he believes 'God is in charge' and that he is solely answerable to Him.

For all these clergy, trying 'to demonstrate the existence of God intellectually was to misunderstand the nature of God. God's way is to reveal himself.' [Watts and Williams. 1988 p.43] Each of these clergy talked of personal encounters with God.

Interestingly, in the southern diocese only male clergy saw God as the authority they looked to. In the north, Int. 220, a female priest, talked of 'standing in front of the King of Kings' and asking 'what have I forgotten?' She did not want her congregation to see her in the place of God. She said, 'the Lord is the one to ask. (She felt she) 'needed to be with God, entering into the heart of God and struggling with the pain' of ministry. She said she wished 'God would leave a note on my pillow' to tell her what to do.

'Matters of belief or valuative judgement are determined primarily by an appeal to trusted authority.' [Meissner. 1984 p.155] Whether God is a

projected father figure or is seen as 'other', the representation of God as authority will have been affected by the clergy's early development.

Discussion:

The Anglican Church, like any institution, has its laws, embodied in Canon Law. The Christians' code of practice is enshrined in the Ten Commandments.

The whole area of authority and the emphasis on law and order and the ongoing tension between autonomy and dependence in this phase reflect Freudian developmental issues. Jacobs likens this to the anal stage. 'Being independent is at the heart of (the anal stage)', [Jacobs. 1986 p.61] with the 'attendant struggles over autonomy... ambivalence and of separation and individuation.' [Meissner. 1984 p.155] All the clergy needed to have a 'figure' to relate to as their authority icon, in order to rebel against and then 'separate out' from.

Int. 306 said 'I sit lightly to the Church institution', as he feels it is 'broad and open', but he was adamant that God was the authority figure in his life and that he wanted to give everything to God.

This developmental stage was more easily detected in Int. 48, who described himself as a conservative evangelical. His background was surrounded by church and local government. Both parents were local councillors and he described himself as 'being a good Anglican all my life.' His father was a Churchwarden. He said he came from a 'hierarchical' system. In talking about Church structures, the regularity of his prayer life in the saying of the daily offices, he came over as someone who needed to be in control. The association or link 'between my need for clear lines of authority and how I cope with what felt a painful rejection' will be noted when looking at the data denoting his spiritual and mental health. The fact that he said 'I can get very wrapped up with the minutiae of the systems and structures' describes graphically this clergyman's need for a sense of control.

Int. 58, also an evangelical, but an open one, looked to the Bishop for authority, though he said that 'in the end I am answerable to God.' Coming

from a non-Christian background, he seemed to have less need of control than did Int. 48.

Int. 144, however, said that for him 'authority, the bottom line is the interpretation of Scripture.' He puts that before the tradition of the Church. He was drawn to the Christian faith through an intellectual understanding. This clergyman said he was thinking about becoming a Franciscan. This was in order to have a support structure, as he felt he wanted 'to live a pattern of life that was consistent with Christian faith and belief.' Again, he talked about structures.

It has already been seen that the *world* in which the clergy operate is seen to be out of sympathy with the ethos of the Anglican Church. This provides an imperative that the clergy has security in the authority of their faith system or the institution that they are part of. This is not easy. For instance, those who derive authority from scripture have found that hermeneutical studies have given a greater interpretive understanding of the text from a cultural and language perspective. It has also provided academic ammunition for opposing theological debate, which often leads to acute disagreement amongst clergy and their Bishops.

Each 'individual strives toward consistency within himself'. [Festinger. 1959 p.1] When a person is confronted with inconsistencies there is psychological discomfort. Festinger describes this as a cognitive dissonance. This is a state of frustration or disequilibrium which occurs when two differing ideologies or reference groups meet within one individual. Attitudes and opinions which are easily accommodated separately by the same person, cause internal disharmony joined together. Festinger suggests people are disinclined to accept new cognitive elements which violate a belief system they already hold. They resort either to avoidance of the situation or to trying to resolve the dissonance. This is achieved by either:-

1. Reducing it and declaring the dissonance unimportant.
2. Adding new cognitive elements which enable them to find a consonance.

When a new reference group is espoused, a new language and differing values are provided because 'people's attitudes, aspirations and grievances largely depend on the forms of reference within which they are conceived'. [Runciman. 1966 p.9] Being prepared to integrate such differences produces a conflictual situation that is not easily tolerated.

This integration is enabled by feeling accountable to God, the Bishop, or the Church. The clergyman who was wanting his Bishop 'to be more hands on' was alluding to the need for the cognitive dissonance to be solved through the loving care of the *father in God*. Int. 33 talked about being accountable to God.

Several of the younger clergy from the north, during their interviews, said they wanted clearer managerial structures within the Church. One young clergyman said he would have valued his church having written a job description before he came. He felt that if he knew what was expected of him he had more chance then of being able to perform adequately.

Int. 66 said he found the Church 'lines of authority under which I work very confusing.' So it is easier for him that 'God is *the* authority.'

Clergy who look either to their Bishop or to God as the authority figure have less chance of confusion. The Bishop or God represents one view of law and order and the clergy have a sense of where the arbitration is coming from. It may be that these figures 'will be heard as critical and punitive even when they

are not, and even when the person has done nothing to warrant such a feeling.' [Jacobs. 1986 p.67] When Bishops visit their clergy in their churches, the incumbents are anxious that everything should be in order. Authority figures can become the strong super-ego that causes a constant sense of guilt within.

There were some clergy who also experienced feelings of shame and suffered from 'the inability to do things, feelings of incompetence, a self-image of being immature, a failure to reach the aspirations set either by oneself or by others.' [Jacobs. 1986 p.68] This shows itself in feelings of not 'being good enough', 'letting people down' or failing to 'achieve control'. Many clergy have a sense of letting God down. They are called to preach, baptise and bring people into the Kingdom of God. When their churches are half empty and they feel they and the Church is 'an irrelevance' within the community they live in, they feel shamed and impotent as to knowing what to do.

However, as well as all the negative feelings toward strong authority figures, the internalised parental figure may provide a positive holding. It is within the matrix of the 'family' with a strong paternal influence, whether God or the Bishop, that the clergyperson feels secure. Here the clergy can live 'at

others' commands; pleasing others is high on the agenda; and seeking advice and approval is a constant factor.' [Jacobs. 1986 p.75] The dependent clergy can run 'back to daddy' when life feels intolerable. For those who vest the authority in themselves or their parishioners, there is no such safety net.

Parishioners:

When clergy speak of parishioners, they are speaking about all the people within 'a geographical area entrusted by the Bishop to the minister who has the cure or care of the souls within it.' [Leeder. 1997 p.73] The priest is responsible before God for his/her work amongst all parishioners, whether they are Christians, of other faiths or hold no allegiance to any group. The 'authority' of the parishioners is powerful. They will show their approval or disapproval by attending or declining to attend church. A clergyman who does not listen to the people in his/her parish does so at their own peril.

Some incumbents are in charge of parishes with 40,000 people, others have small country parishes with but a few thousand living there. If they have several churches to work in, the pressure for them is coping with different

congregations who often have no desire to work with other churches in the area.

Expectations on the Clergy:

Parishioners are not necessarily members of the congregation. They can, (and do), demand visits by the priests and that the priest will officiate at the 'occasional offices' when required. That is to say weddings, funerals and baptisms. Though many of them have little or no time for the church and its vicar, they are usually the ones who make vociferous protests if the church congregation wishes to make any alterations to the church, within or without. They may never go to church yet they will have an opinion, which they share, about the vicar; about whether he/she is caring and pastoral. In close-knit communities the parishioners will be as aware of the vicar's lifestyle, and that of his spouse and family, as are the members of the congregation. The parishioners themselves exert an inordinate amount of influence on the life of the clergy and the corresponding stresses from the pressures they exert are evident in this research.

This amorphous group, consequently, is observed to hold a lot of power. The clergy are expected to be on call at all times.

In a study by Schaller, Strommen and Brekke [1980] there were found to be several 'general areas of ministry contributing to ministerial effectiveness. These areas included: having an open, affirming style; caring for persons under stress; evidencing congregational leadership; being a theologian in life and thought; undertaking ministry from a personal commitment of faith; developing fellowship and worship; having denominational awareness; evidencing ministry to community and world; being priestly-sacramental in ministry; manifesting a lack of privatistic, legalistic style; and not having disqualifying personal and behavioural characteristics.' [Francis and Jones. 1996 p.99] They continued by saying the clergy needed to exhibit a priestly and sacramental style of life.

Though this research was carried out in America, these expectations of ministerial effectiveness are looked for by parishioners in England. It is not surprising, therefore, that few of the clergy interviewed were prepared for the parishioners to hold the authority.

These categories were highlighted in the data as the clergy explored their own perceptions of the power the parishioners had over them.

1. *Collaborative Authority*

In re-reading the transcript, Int. 147 found the whole question of authority very difficult. He was brought up in a Christian home so had always been used to going to church. He said he had been 'trained to authority at school and in the Army', though for him 'unless you are unfortunate, authority is not much to the fore.'

Int. 147 was used to authority but did not seem to know where it was located. For him, it was in the 'Churchwardens, who represent the congregation and are like colleagues.' He also saw it in the parishioners in the community and within the hierarchy of Bishop and Archdeacon. Commenting on the interview afterwards, I noted that he looked and sounded depressed and talked incessantly. This clergyman has suffered from depression and has, and is having, counselling. For him, the interview appeared to be a chance to offload all his fears and inadequacies.

This clergyman had three churches to care for, with a total population of 5,500 people in the communities. Int. 147 said 'I am very much on my own.' He also said that 'the time you spend with an authority figure is small because everyone is so busy, unless you have committed a terrible crime.'

2. Accountability

Int. 106, a southern clergywoman, had a very pragmatic view of authority. 'The parishioners have authority over me', she said, 'because they pay me.' She is therefore answerable to them. It was this clergywoman who had said she came into the ministry as she 'didn't want to enter the world of work.' She has a small parish of 1,500 adults and one church, in a rural area. Initially, this priest appeared cold and hard. She said, 'I will not let myself go.' As a child she had experienced a lot of verbal violence from her mother so that now, in every situation, she applies logic and reason. She said, 'I have a strong sense of responsibility to people.' Though she obeys canon law 'because it is the only way I can have the life I want', she feels strongly that 'I must be true to myself.'

There appeared a very firm wall of defense around this respondent. Maybe that is why she sees authority vested in the parishioners. Though on the one hand they are making constant demands, on the other hand she has learned how to keep them at what feels a manageable distance for herself. Authority figures, like parental figures, are harsh and judgmental in her experience. Now she can, quite literally, shut her front door if she does not wish to engage with someone. As she explained later in the interview, 'I will not allow myself to be bullied.'

Interestingly, Int. 106 is chaplain to the local police force. With their uniform and very clear boundaries of law enforcement, she is surrounded by all the icons of authority, even if it appears not to be vested in one person. About the Bishop she said, 'I would do what he said because I have promised to obey. I would let him know I did not agree with it but I would do it. But, I do have to be true to myself.'

Int. 340 described authority as being vested in 'the people on a day to day basis.' Though the Bishop is over him, nevertheless he feels 'a duty towards the community.' He does 'what is right, bearing in mind the needs of the people.' He said that he is seen as the authority figure and that 'I didn't want

to be like my predecessor, who told people what to do.' He would rather stand back but finds it 'very hard to motivate people to take leadership roles.' In this former industrial coal mining parish of about 3,000 people, he said that the people in this mainly artisan area 'were reluctant to offer their gifts.'

There was a sense of hopelessness as this man spoke, especially when he said, 'I hope God is in it all.' He feels that he is 'more concerned about things than God is', and 'I get very fed up that others don't share my vision.'

Discussion

Looking over the data from these priests who see the authority lying within the community, there is a sense of helplessness. Only Int. 106 appears to have a clear sense of direction. Her fear of violence has caused her to keep a tight hold on control, even though she would affirm that the parishioners exercise the power, yet she has erected firm boundaries beyond which she will not allow others to trespass. Certainly for Int. 106, she has 'inhibitions about being spontaneous... and feared what would come out if, as (she) saw it, (she) lost control.' [Jacobs. 1986 p.64]

This interview was difficult because of the heavy defenses erected and the fear of sharing any vulnerability. She appeared 'very precise and exact... planning out all that (was) said, perhaps afraid of letting something slip.' [Jacobs. 1986 p.65] It was as though she had tried to banish the internal parental introjects but had not succeeded, though she had no awareness of that. Int. 106 had embarked on a basic counselling course but was now involved in research for a M.Sc. That, it seemed, felt more manageable than the messiness of the counselling world.

Int. 147, when talking about his Churchwardens, said, 'they can always say they don't like this or that.' The themes in the data generated from his interview were about his not being 'good enough', or coming up to expectation. Both of these clergy, in different ways, exhibited a sense of failure. Of his childhood Int. 147 said, 'I was not a useful member of the school but met people who were intellectually superior to me.' Of his home he said it wasn't a 'frightfully leadership-type home... my father did have certain offices (in church)... not hugely important ones.' How much his early life had been a battleground for control was not discussed. This man is still waiting to feel affirmed and approved of.

Int. 340 feels answerable to the community on a day to day basis but also feels 'the Bishop has authority' over him. He is over 60, so due for retirement soon. He has served in the RAF during National Service and then taught. Through the interview it became clear that he feels he has not got the satisfaction out of being ordained that he had hoped for. His father was not very supportive of his being ordained as he 'felt I could serve people better as a teacher.'

For this man, the looking back to what his father had said, his feelings of regret that life had not brought the satisfaction he had expected, pointed to a lack of individuation. However, because he found the meaning of his faith within the sacramental community, this 'provided a powerful motivation for institutional adherence.' [Meissner. 1984 p,156]

Tracing through the previous data and analysing the clergy perception of authority where the Bishop, God and Scripture and parishioners have occupied that role, it has highlighted the internalised parental introjects which will have been laid down during an early stage of development.. For those clergy who acknowledge that the authority lies within themselves, is that

because they have reached a stage of integration not acquired by the others?

Only through a detailed examination of the data will that become clear.

Self:

Winnicott [1965] talks of emotional development in the child/adult as a maturational process. He says this 'refers to the evolution of the ego of the self and includes the whole story of the id, of instincts and their vicissitudes, and of defences in the ego relative to instinct.' [Winnicott. 1984 p,85] If, during early development the child is deprived of 'maternal pre-occupation', or experiences loss; then rather than the human infant maturing and integrating the life stages, they will become fixated at the point of deprivation. Their sense of self will then be what Winnicott [1965] describes as a false self. 'When a False Self becomes organised in an individual who has a high intellectual potential there is a strong tendency for the mind to become the location of the False Self,... there (then) develops a dissociation between intellectual activity and psychosomatic existence.' [Winnicott. 1984 p.144]

A Fragmented 'Self'

This was the only category that appeared in the data under the heading of 'self' as the authority. It was a statement of this clergyperson's feelings at the time of the interview.

This appeared true for Int. 116. His parents' marriage broke up when he was a teenager. As an adjunct to the dis-integration at home, he found solace as a young boy in the local church choir. He was a communicant member from the age of 11 years. He had read philosophy, politics and economics at Oxford. Describing his call to ordination, he said, 'my ideals at that time were to build peace.' It was through the intellectual stimulus of reading theology books and conversing with friends that he was drawn to the priesthood. This clergyman could not talk of God calling him, nor was he able to verbalise any understanding of an emotional relationship with God.

He worked in a small rural area with five churches. Int. 116 said 'I'm not answerable to anyone.' He felt he was 'a one-man band... and I wonder how much longer I can go on.' He described the job as a 'heavy load.' Though he

wishes to build up a band of lay people to work with, 'there is no real sharing of the faith.'

He had been ill for some while and at the interview he said how 'very disillusioned' he is. He feels 'the Church of England had lots of stunts to stem the tide and build bridges with people and to renew life of the parishes, but I hear the tide is still going out.' He said, 'I don't discern God's will and I've no idea who Jesus is.' He finds the New Testament 'irrelevant' and everything, the Church and his role as vicar, he felt was an irrelevancy to those around. This very depressed and sick man said he 'felt very unsupported and that I must get on on my own.' He feels he is going through a crisis about God and about the Church of England.

It seemed in talking to Int. 116 that though he had recognised 'a need for healing within' and had, in fact, studied Jung avidly, certainly as far as his faith was concerned it had remained an intellectual exercise. His emotions had not been engaged. Interestingly, he was unconsciously trying to rectify this split. He said that he was conducting a day in the villages called, 'Individuation and Jung'. There appeared a real dissociation between his intellectual activity and his emotional existence.

There was a strong sense that Int. 116 had no experience of belonging. He had been divorced and then remarried. There was a deep inner exhaustion that emanated from this priest.

There was an equal sense of dislocation when interviewing Int. 123. His wife had very recently left him so that he felt 'the only authority I'm answerable to is what I impose on myself. I'm answerable to myself first and then to God.' He felt that the authority figures - Archdeacons and Bishop - 'made no impact on what I do and show no interest in it either. Where are they?' He has little time for Bishops and wants 'to see them as far away as possible.' He said that 'since my wife has left I have not heard from a Bishop.' When he first arrived at his parish four years previously, there were some very difficult issues that needed resolving. The Bishops were not supportive so 'I don't look for help from Bishops now, as it won't come.'

Because of all that has happened to him he says his 'faith has been rocked. I stood up in church and said, "if God is sitting there, would you mind standing up and waving so I can see who you are, because I'm not quite sure where you are."' He has lost confidence in what he is doing and feels 'I have

lost my way with God.’ He was very shocked by his wife leaving as he felt he had been trying for twelve months to make the marriage work.

Though he said God is distant and he can’t find Him at the moment, he believes his faith will come back. He said that the good thing that has happened is that he has ‘learned to depend on other people.’ Before this he was closed to others. He was the carer and the giver. Now he is learning to receive.

It is important to note that all three respondents who said the authority was within themselves are males whose first marriages have broken apart. All three experienced major trauma as a child.

Int. 284’s father died when he was a baby and his mother did not marry again. When a teenager, Int. 123’s father became disabled and, as has already been stated, Int. 116’s parents divorced when he was an adolescent. All three found the boundaries of their lives first during the years of growing up and then, as adults, disintegrating. It was as though the super-ego introjects, whether punitive or benign, had fragmented within. No longer were there any safe structures to hold on to. All three were well over the age of 50 years,

so that the sense of a life that has not fulfilled expectations has added to the burden of distress.

Discussion:

The mid-fifties is a difficult age for incumbents. If they have been in their parish for some years then they need to move before they are 55 years old, because no other parish will want them as their incumbent. Also, many at this age feel passed over by the hierarchy. As one priest said, 'I don't feel my gifts have been properly appreciated in the wider Church.' He was voicing an oft-expressed view of disaffection; that he had not been considered for preferment. Because of this, many older clergy experience weariness within the job they have been doing for many years.

"There are unique dimensions of existence in which each person exists alone, not only influenced by his unconscious processes but committed to responsible activity and able to exercise a measure of control". [Weismann 1865 p.175.] [Meissner. 1984. P.238] It is not aloneness that is a problem but where the ego has neither become autonomous nor adapted enough for there to be a True Self established. In this situation, aloneness becomes

isolation with a lack of an integrated control core. These three respondents, in different ways, expressed this, though Int. 284 and Int. 123 appeared to be working through the traumas of alienation.

Conclusion:

None of the women priests came under this category. '(Their) new ministry was marked by liberation after years of waiting, a release of energy which had been suppressed... Many spoke of a sense of change in their inner being - of becoming who they were meant to be through ordination.' [Dyer. 1990a p.86] Their preoccupation now is with the work they are doing and not with who they are. Certainly for the women interviewed, they were not anxious about who had authority over them. Neither were they preoccupied by a sense of guilt that they were not coming up to the 'Bishops' expectations'. It was as though they still lived within the afterglow of their ordination to priesthood.

The one female priest who was anxious was unconcerned about authority figures. For her it was more to do with how she could cope with all the work and care for an elderly relative many miles away.

Dyer, [1999] in her paper on '*Reviewing the Reception – Five Years of Women Priests*', has found women now ordained reluctant to resurrect old wounds. Dyer is involved in work amongst women who have been harassed and abused by male colleagues. She has faced frustration that so few women are prepared to reveal 'situations where they have felt themselves to have been bullied or sexually harassed.' [Dyer., 1990a p.3] She believes they are 'reluctant to speak... because of their fear that they will not be believed and that the institution will protect the men concerned.' [Dyer., 1990a p.3] This is certainly true. However, there is another reason why they do not come forward.

These women have 'fought' for many years for the right to stand alongside male clergy and to preside as equals at the Eucharist. This has involved them in innumerable confrontations with authority figures within the Church. Though many Bishops openly supported their petitions, yet many did not. Even now, in at least three dioceses, women are not ordained priest by their diocesan Bishops. For those who have been ordained and are now incumbents, the battle has been won. There may still be barricades to storm but the main one has fallen. During the interviews, there was a sense of 'arms

laid down'. Unlike their male colleagues, they do not have such a need for a dependent relationship on their Bishops. They have now come of age, are no longer tied as 'children' to an underling's role within the Church. They can exercise authority too. Though none are yet ordained Bishops, there is every expectation that this will happen. For now, the women are enjoying the freedom and autonomy that being ordained priest gives.

That may link directly, though often unconsciously, to the sense of threat the male clergy feel, and their need to feel accepted and affirmed. During the interviews it was very apparent that the whole notion of authority was important to them - not only their own exercising of leadership within their parishes, but also to whom they were accountable. Few relished the idea of just getting on with the job. The majority of the male priests wanted to know that their Bishops knew what they were doing and were interested.

Many bemoaned the now largely national role Bishops play, which prevents them from exercising a more pastoral role within their diocese. Clergy expressed dismay when yet more academics, or managers, were appointed to the House of Bishops because they felt their diocese would miss out on pastoral care.

Many of the clergy in this study appear to be fixated on a need for strong authority figures. As has been seen, if this is not forthcoming, then a sense of fragmentation will result with the possibility of a loss of faith in God as well. This has been seen graphically in Int. 116.

In theoretical terms, the relationship to authority figures is linked to the anal stage. (A concept introduced by Freud in 1908.) Gomez (1997) writes, 'power is the issue of the anal stage... power over others or other's power over you. The burning question is who is in control of whom.' [Gomez. 1997 p.183] The congregation accede authority to the incumbent who, usually, willingly embraces it. This, however, may leave the priest feeling very vulnerable at the heavy responsibility he has to bear. such clergy 'may only feel safe if he is under the control of an other... Projecting his own anger and wish for power into the other allows him to safely inhabit the submissive counterpart.' [Gomez. 1997. P.184] These clergy have no desire to 'do it my way'.

The area of authority has much to say about the clergyperson's inner emotional needs. It is here that all three hypotheses can be tested for their

validity. Not only has it been seen that external conditions may cause a sense of disequilibrium, but if there is no emotional integration then the life, work and spiritual journey of the clergyperson will be seen to be affected.

In what ways does a clergyperson's view of authority affect their understanding of what it means to be a priest? Are the two inextricably tied up together? This will be looked at in the next chapter.

Chapter VII

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PRIEST?

The Priest:

A prayer on Sunday night

People ask a great deal of their priest, and they are right. But they should understand that it is not easy to be a priest. He has given himself in all the ardour of youth, yet he still remains a man, and every day the man in him tries to take back what he has surrendered. It's a continual struggle to remain completely at the service of Christ and of others.

A priest needs no praise or embarrassing gifts; what he needs is that those committed to his charge should, by loving their fellows more and more, prove to him that he has not given his life in vain. And as he remains a man, he may need once in a while a delicate gesture of disinterested friendship... some Sunday night when he is alone. [Quoist, M., 1961 p.49]

The theory question discussion on how the clergy saw the role of the priest and what meaning it has for them was the hardest section for them to address.

This is not surprising. 'The Church of England is a notoriously enigmatic institution. "Clergyman", "Minister", "Parson", "Clerk in Holy Orders", "Priest" and "Vicar": this range of designations indicates the variety of ways in which the religious functionary of the Church of England may be regarded.'

[Russell. 1980 p.3] Add to this Rector, Priest in Charge, Curate, Non-Stipendiary, Worker Priest, Ordained Local Minister and Minister in Secular Employment and it is not surprising, therefore, that there is such confusion.

However, the above titles given to the clergy have a historical derivation. It is not the purpose of the research to pursue a historical *modus operandi*, nor

will it further the pursuit of the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy to investigate a wholly theological exegesis of priesthood.

Theological Understanding of Priesthood:

In order, however, to understand the clergy's view of their role and status as priest and how that informs the whole of their life, it is important to set the research in context. Russell [1980] remarks that the word 'priest', as a religious functionary, is to use a theological definition. This understanding is grounded in the New Testament writings and the subsequent development over the centuries of the doctrine of ministry and priesthood in particular.

The term 'clergyman', and the other terms mentioned apart from that of priest, denotes an occupational role. It is the word 'priest' that highlights the ministry as vocational and theocratic.

How marginalised many clergy feel by society has already been discussed. Because of the implications for the clergy of the irrelevance of the Church in many people's lives, it is evermore crucial that their view of what and who they are produces confidence rather than undermines their own self-image.

Understanding the meaning of the word 'priest' will also allow exploration of the clergy's psychotherapeutic needs within this category.

There are other complications. The idea of priests comes initially from the Old Testament [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.121] where Moses anointed Aaron and his sons. Aaron was the first Levite to be ordained priest. In the New Testament Jesus Christ is seen to be 'the high priest who is able to sympathise with our weaknesses', [Holy Bible, NIV 1992 p.1389] through his death on the cross and resurrection. Also, all Christians, Jew and Gentile, are described as 'a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ'. [Holy Bible, NIV 1992 p.1406] 'There is (then) no New Testament warrant for ascribing any special qualification of priesthood to ordained persons within the common priesthood of the church.' [Sinclair, Ferguson and Wright. 1988 p.531]

It was in the mid 3rd Century Bishops and Presbyters, (Elders), influenced by Cyprian, were designated as sacrificial mediatorial priests. Then, through the Reformation and the influence of such men as Martin Luther in the 15th Century, the Church was called back to the New Testament understanding of priesthood. However, the controversy continued.

The conflict centres round the enactment of the Eucharist. This thanksgiving service represents the Last Supper of Jesus Christ, where he broke bread and poured out the wine as a visual aid to the crucifixion.

In the Church of England there are those who take a Roman Catholic position and would therefore venerate the 'Blessed Sacrament'. There are also those who view the Holy Communion as a service of remembrance, reminding them of all that Christ has done, and within these extremes there are many variations. Consequently, the issue for this research is how do the clergy view their priesthood? Is it the sacrificial priesthood of the Old Testament, which denotes an ontological position - that is, 'once a priest, always a priest?' The laying on of hands by the Bishop changes that person in some mystical way so that at the altar they are 'Jesus' for people, as the Rev'd. Lucy Winkett said [BBC 2, 27th June, 1999] in the programme on St. Paul's Cathedral. Or does ordination confer eldership on the clergy? For, as the Bishop says at their ordination:-

'A priest is called by God to work with the bishop and with his fellow-priests, as servant and shepherd among the people to whom he is sent. He is to proclaim the word of the Lord, to call his hearers to repentance, and in Christ's name to absolve, and to declare the

forgiveness of sins. He is to baptize, and prepare the baptized for Confirmation. He is to preside at the celebration of the Holy Communion. He is to lead his people in prayer and worship, to intercede for them, to bless them in the name of the Lord, and to teach and encourage by word and example. He is to minister to the sick, and prepare the dying for their death. He must set the Good Shepherd always before him as the pattern of his calling, caring for the people committed to his charge, and joining with them in a common witness to the world.' [Alternative Service Book, 1980 p.356]

This debate continues and it is interesting to note which of the extremes prevails at any time in Church history. That will denote the strength or otherwise of the Anglo-Catholic, Liberal or Evangelical constituencies within the institution at that time.

In order to understand the clergy view the data was divided into five groups denoting their view of their own priesthood - Representative, Pastor, Servant, Shepherd, Teacher. Fig. 11 shows the result. These categories were derived from the data collected. They were symbols used by the clergy to denote their own view of the role they fulfilled.

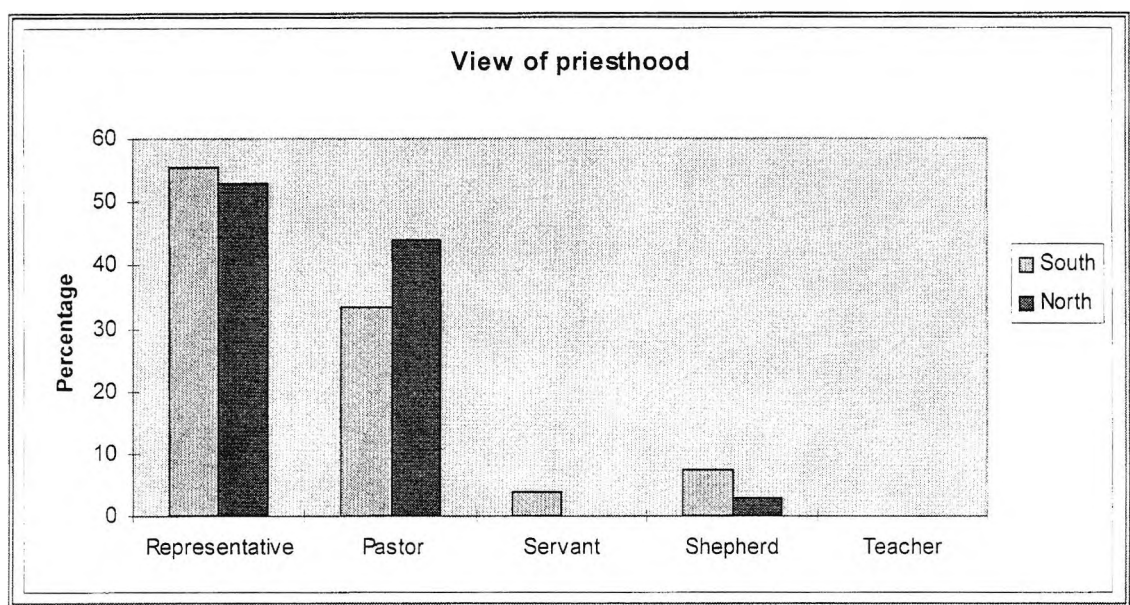


Fig. 11

Producing a chart proved difficult. In re-reading the transcripts, many of the clergy answers were confused. I made the assumption that the Anglo-Catholics would see themselves as having a representative ministry¹ whilst the Evangelicals would place themselves within the pastor, teacher columns. That assumption was not wholly accurate. Most priests, in fact, saw themselves in more than one category. The problem was resolved by studying the individual interviews and placing the clergyperson within the category that appeared most faithfully to represent his/her own view of priesthood. Though this system has obvious weaknesses, the frequency with which the clergy spoke of

¹ Representing Christ to the people and the people to Christ

themselves according to one model of priesthood gave the exercise enough validity to assure its credibility.

Michael Ramsey's [1985] book, 'The Christian Priest Today' is top of the reading list for any aspiring ordinands. He gives four reasons to the question 'why the priest?' He says the priest is 'a man of theology, man of reconciliation, man of prayer and a man of the Eucharist. [Ramsey. 1985 p.10] Though he sees the priest in a representative role, he/she does not become Christ. Nowhere does Ramsey say that the priest is Jesus for the people.

Self Image:

Before looking at the various categories in detail, it is important to understand what self-image is and how that affects the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy.

'Fairbairn used the term schizoid-position, derived from Klein's paranoid-schizoid position, to describe a situation occurring in early infancy in which the infant interprets rejection... as evidence that his love is destructive'.

[Rycroft. 1968. P145] As a result the ego splits and the child then grows up with a very confused sense of self. This often results in the adult needing to be seen as all good or all bad.

Using the work of Klein, Winnicott [1963] continued to look at how a sense of self is developed. Klein had been concerned with the emotional development from dependence to independence. Winnicott saw the maturation process occurring within the instinctual life of the human and came to believe that socialisation was a prime factor in healthy emotional growth. 'The adult is able to identify with society without too great a sacrifice of personal spontaneity.' [Winnicott. 1984 p.83] Though independence can never be absolute, at least 'the healthy individual does not become isolated, but becomes related to the environment in such a way that the individual and the environment can be said to be interdependent.' [Winnicott. 1984 p.84]

Within the infant the ego needs have been met in what Winnicott calls 'good enough' maternal preoccupation. The infant has also been gradually, during the toddler stage, allowed to explore and move increasingly away from the one who has been his/her whole world. In this exploration of the world around, inhabited by people, the growing child begins to learn to tolerate aloneness.

The adult's 'inner world takes shape through the child's evolving developmental experience... shaped by the internalization of... relationships to specific objects. [Meissner. 1984 p18] It is these relationships that help form the boundary between 'what is me and not me, between self and not self.' [Jacobs 1986 p31] Mahler *et al* [1975] discuss the need for the infant to be psychologically born in order to develop an adult view of self. It is when, for whatever reason, the infant child is unable to separate from its mother, or mother figure, that the adult grows up with a false sense of their own self image.

The work of the priest is a lonely occupation, so that 'the consequences of defective ego support by the mother can be very severely crippling' [Winnicott. 1984 p.58] and produce severe trauma in adult life. Several of the clergy were exhibiting signs of clinical depression. During the interviews it appeared that with the breakdown of their defense system, the apparent 'true self' was absent, leaving them exposed and vulnerable and inadequate to cope with their false self.

Ordination into the priesthood provides not just a role but a mask to hide behind. The man/woman of God can feel set apart through the Episcopal

laying on of hands at their ordination and can hide their inner feelings of low self-esteem behind a 'godly' exterior. Such adults often seek leadership roles in order to attempt to restore their own self-image.

Why men and women are ordained and how they see the authority structures in their lives delineates the view they have of themselves. This is most clearly seen when looking at what the role of the priest means to them. The Anglo-Catholic view of the priest is as Christ's representative to the people and the people's representative to Christ, whereas the Evangelical view is that the priest is part of the priesthood of all believers.

The Evangelical priest sees his roles in terms of a pastoral and didactic function, whereas the Anglo-Catholic priest has a pre-eminently sacramental² role. The Evangelical is a leader from within, in the sense that he is not 'above' or 'beyond' any within his/her congregation. The Anglo-Catholic, with an ontological view of priesthood, sees himself/herself as separate from the laity through the laying on of the Bishop's hands. He is, in an incarnational³ way, being Christ for, and to, the people. Though there are

² The priestly function at the Eucharist is at the heart of Anglo-Catholic spirituality.

³ God taking on human form in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

variations among the different church expressions of faith, yet this is broadly how it is seen.

How much, then, does the clergyperson's self-image determine their view and understanding of priesthood? A respondent to the research said, 'I sometimes wonder what I am doing when I am holding up my hands at the Eucharist.'⁴ He felt at times that his enactment of the Eucharist felt flat and empty. Was that due to the fact that he came from an Evangelical background with a notion of the priest as leader and pastor? He had no sense of his role being part of the 'otherness' of God, though he had moved towards a more sacramental ministry.

The Anglo-Catholic, because he represents Christ, is seen to be apart from the world. The distance and the fact that he/she is empowered to anoint the sick and absolve the sinner may enhance self-image and this may remain so even amidst criticism and conflict about his/her ministry because of its sacramental nature.

⁴ The Church service that commemorates the death and passion of Jesus.

A study conducted in America by Dudley and Cummings found that if clergy had 'not found the success needed to fulfil their own expectations... they feel a sense of failure and guilt.' [Francis and Jones 1996 p156] The low morale amongst these clergy was seen to be caused by the pressures experienced by the families. How much of that was also to do with an emphasis on pastoral leadership as opposed to sacerdotal leadership was not addressed. However, it is interesting to note the finding of Joseph H. Fichter. He researched a group of American Roman Catholic clergy to prove what he called 'the myth of clergy burnout.' In fact, he found only 6.2% of his sample could be counted as candidates for burnout and those were 'parish priests in their mid-forties who had more psychological problems than physical ills.' [Francis and Jones 1996 p154] What does this prove? How much is the self-image enhanced by the notion of the priest as a sacerdotal image and how much is it diminished by the notion of his/her being a pastor to unwilling sheep?

However a priest sees the role, their understanding of their self-image will have been laid down in childhood long before they heard the call to represent the Wounded Healer ⁵ and Suffering Servant. ⁶ Many clergy will have

⁵ Description of Jesus Christ.

⁶ As 6

experienced their faith as bringing a sense of groundedness in what may have been a difficult background. However, Henri Nouwen, [1972], a Dutch Roman Catholic theologian living in America, felt clergy experience alienation 'because "he feels an added loneliness from the changing meaning of the ministerial profession itself."' [Francis and Jones, 1996 p147]

Few people are immune to the desire for a good self-image. Though ordained ministry is about forsaking all for Christ's sake, concerns about the image they project are also important to the clergyperson. Robes still worn from the 16th Century have no 'particular doctrinal significance (and)... are not to be understood as implying any doctrines other than those contained in the formularies of the Church.' [Leeder. 1997 p.297] In spite of that edict, the clothes - that is, a black, grey or other coloured clergy shirt and the robes or vestments⁷ worn - denote the churchmanship of the priests. Anglo-Catholic priests, (usually from the more traditional wing), wear vestments during the Eucharist and black shirts with dog-collars. The uniform speaks of the importance of their priestly office as God's representative. That is, they represent God to the people and the people to God as they enact the Eucharistic ritual. The conservative Evangelical clergy wear no vestments and

⁷ Official sacramental robes worn by priests during the Eucharist

may not even wear robes at the Holy Communion service. The rest will wear a mixture. Though this is a generalisation, yet again it imbues the particular clergyperson with a particular view of their priesthood. That may have much to say about their own self-image.

It is interesting to note that a Modern Catholic priest and an Open Evangelical priest have much in common. Both would hold to the centrality of a liturgy founded equally on Word and Sacrament. Both are more prepared to adopt the style of dress most in keeping with the church within which they serve.

Several of the clergy said that being a priest was tied up with celebrating the Eucharistic. They viewed themselves as iconic. The Bishop laying hands on them had, through the Holy Spirit, imbued them with the sacred and the holy. In many churches congregations venerate their clergy, calling their male clergy 'Father'. How much is this to do with the edicts of the Christian faith, or is it more to do with the need of the clergy to hide behind a mask which hides their fragility?

Meissner [1969] is aware that the development of faith viewed in psychoanalytic terms, is difficult to analyse. The complexity of the task is obvious. Certain elements can be identified 'that relate to parameters of trust and fidelity, but these parameters suggest that the experience involves complex integration of instinctual (libidinal) and ego functions... faith involves to a significant degree a cognitive aspect that plays itself out in various forms and levels of symbolic activity and conceptualisation.' [Meissner. 1984 p.149] It is within the symbolic activity that the clergy find a role, a status and an identity. Many clergy who have, for whatever reason, left the ordained ministry, feel naked without the protective covering their office had once supplied.

Analysing the data from the clergy as they discussed what being a priest meant to them may help to understand whether they come from a true or false sense of self. This will help towards understanding whether the uniform of the priest can be a defense against a split or damaged ego.

Representative:

'A person authorised to act or speak for others.' [The Collins Pocket Dictionary 1981 p.710] As can be seen from Fig. 1, the largest number of clergy saw their ministry in representative idiom. Even amongst that group, however, there was confusion as to the definition of representative. It hovered between a Catholic view of representing God to the people and the people to God, to the more liberal view of the one who visibly represents the priesthood of all believers. What psychotherapeutic significance lies behind the meaning for the clergy? The categories emerged by inference from the data collected.

1. *The Dissatisfied Leader*

Int. 19 said that a priest is 'an altar person... leadership is very important.' He sees himself as a leader/pastor. His father was a distant, absent father. He described himself as having problems with authority. His 'whole life had been a battle to learn how to be a father', which he feels is more important than his job. However, what was extremely significant was that he felt 'the Church had not used my gifts.' He would like to be 'a mover and shaker'. He finds

himself in a job that is boring and wants to break out. During the interview he said, 'I would like to be a Bishop or Archdeacon. How do you do that? I can't apply for such jobs. Some people in the hierarchy are not my equal.'

In discussing his rebellious feelings and lack of faith in God, it seemed as though the only tangible thing still left was presiding at the Eucharist. There he could wear his uniform and gain a sense of authenticity.

Int. 19 expressed not just a sense of failure but also of envy. Klein, (1957) in her discussion of the concept of envy, believed its roots were in deep primitive feelings of frustration and desire. Int. 19's desire to be a Bishop or archdeacon could, in Kleinian theory, be linked with early infantile experiences.

Klein [1957] explored the notion 'that some of the earliest aggression, starting from the separation of the infant from his mother at birth, is experienced as envy.' [Spillius. 1988 p.38] Though these findings were in relation to those suffering from schizophrenia, it is nevertheless observable that such early trauma affects the adult in their relationships.

Int. 19 used projective identification to deal with his own envy. Whilst 'God' or Bishops provided a 'parent' for him to relate to, he felt safe. When he experienced a separating out and became father to his own inner child, then 'violent destructive impulses (made) their appearance'. [Spillius. 1988 p.123]

Thus was engendered his eruption at a large meeting. He said, 'either I get a job like that or move out to some other job.' His representative role was not secure enough to prevent him from leaving.

2. The Intruders

It has already been remarked upon that the ordination of women to the priesthood has had a profound effect on the male clergy. The women having achieved what they have so long desired, appear more integrated in their view of themselves and their understanding of their role as priest. The men, however, for the first time, have become aware that gender is an issue that the Church must grapple with. Before 1994 it seemed possible to ban such discussion from the Church's agenda, as it was not visibly on view. Now, with female priests with a high profile performing what has until now been a male prerogative, this issue can no longer be ignored.

'Sexuality is as basic for the survival of our species as food is for our individual survival.' [Jacobs. 1986 p.86] Gender issues produce envy and rivalry, whether amongst siblings or within peer groups. The ordination of women to the priesthood has done just that. The male clergy have served 'Mother Church' as representatives of all that is potent and virile. Now that women have 'intruded', there is much uncertainty as to how to include them into the male world. There is a real fear of losing their power and authority.

Chapter⁸ meetings have, historically, been notorious for the lack of caring fellowship and for the insidious competitiveness that is generated. These meetings are for the clergy to meet and support each other and discuss matters of mutual concern. In many deaneries clergy will avoid going because they come away feeling undermined. Female clergy often do not feel accepted in such gatherings. They find such meetings particularly difficult in the light of the veiled suspicion they receive, accompanied by the fear male clergy have of their usurping jobs they feel they may be in line for.

⁸ A group of clergy meeting within a specified deanery area

3. *The Uniform*

The parents of Int. 153 did not go to church but he described his childhood 'as very happy'. He said that 'being a priest is representing the people. Wearing a uniform is a sign that God is here.' He was very conscious of his weaknesses and vulnerability and said, 'I would like people to like me and to think I am friendly.' He believes that what he does at the Eucharist defines him and that his 'role helps me to relate to God.' He is 30 years old and single and the description written about him immediately after the interview was: *he is a young, anxious man, who recognised his need to please and his fear of confrontation.* It was also noted that he appeared to have a history of mood swings and does become depressed. Such a man would need his 'uniform' to act as a defense against a seemingly hostile world outside.

Though his childhood seemed happy, he remembers his parents arguing and 'hating' his sisters for long periods and fighting with them physically. He began to show an interest in going to church at the start of adolescence. He was confirmed at the age of 17 years. The Church and its uniform has

provided him with a sense of identity. Being a priest, for him, has made him feel he belongs.

4. *A Sacrificial Role*

Int. 43 is an intermediary, bringing people to God and God to the people. He said, 'I have a love relationship to God which is basic to my priesthood.' 'Self-offering is key to priesthood. You have to give yourself away time and time again.' He believes pastoral ministry is about 'self-giving and associating oneself with the cross.'

This priest was very aware of his failures and that he could not live up to people's expectations of him being a 'holy man'. He had broken his leg some months before the interview. During his stay in hospital he realised he wasn't 'in control'. He has had to learn to be dependent on others and has found that has been very therapeutic. He has celebrated the Eucharist in a wheelchair and had people wheeling him around. It felt that any defense systems he had built up had come down and that he was now ministering as he is.

During the interview with Int. 77, a young, single male priest, an egg was thrown at the window, which broke the glass. He is ministering in an urban priority area. He was a nervous young man who kept getting up during the interview to tidy things up. He said he did not come from a happy childhood as he had several siblings and there was a lot of competition for their parents' attention. He said, 'it is hard for me to look at my role as a priest.' He had come from an Evangelical background and now had moved to a Catholic expression of faith. He believes priesthood is 'about sacrifice' and, though he found it hard to articulate it, 'is being available, loving, accepting, kind, strong, prayerful and committed.' Several times he said, 'I still have the "L" plates on.'

He is on a learning curve in every area of his life, friendships, preaching, meetings and parishioners. However, he does not feel he is one of the people as 'I am different and have a very high profile.'

5. A Holy Work

Int. 47 and Int. 66 believe that the 'priesthood is a particular office and calling within the Church that has to be safeguarded as it is under threat.'

Int. 66 believes the priesthood is 'holy, sacred and God-given and can't be chucked around like confetti.' People see him as God's representative though he sees his ministry is about affirming 'everyone's ministry.' He believes that people are being ordained too easily in the Church. By this he meant many are being ordained as non-stipendiary clergy. For him that is not being a 'real' priest.

Int. 79 said he was a priest 'in the order of Melchizedek⁹. A priest forever. I can't step in and out of the role as it affects every part of my life. Wherever I am, God is there as well.'

Discussion:

1. *The Women*

If the male clergy find it hard to define priesthood, though it has been a male preserve for 2,000 years, how would the female clergy cope? For them, the ordination to the priesthood did not seem to be the defining moment in their ministerial lives. As Int. 190 said, 'I've been ordained three times - as a deaconess, a deacon and now as a priest.' She had 'felt a priest of God all my

⁹ An Old Testament priestly figure

life, as I had a platform from which to share my understanding of God.’ She does feel less frustrated now she is a priest. She is a sacramental person, ‘handling the holy in people’s lives, in the world God created and in sacramental mysteries.’

Int. 119 said the sacrament was very important to her. She said that ‘the marks have been rubbed out that were there before ordination.’ She had felt she was short-changing people but now she can do what people expect of her like any ‘normal’ minister. For her, it is a fulfilment of all she has wanted over the years, along with the other female clergy.

Int. 256 described herself as ‘Christ’s representative’ but went on to say that she is ‘a point of contact between God and people, a facilitator.’ For her the important thing is that she now has the authority to offer a sacramental ministry.

Many of the women seem more concerned at what they can now do for the people than the image they may reflect. They have had more basic struggles with their self-image. It has felt that it is *not good enough* to be a woman, for you can only be a second class citizen amongst the church full-time workers if

you are. Being priested has therefore confirmed that God had created women in His image as well as men. [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.2] For men it seems that being a priest is about adding another dimension to who they are.

The Eucharist represents brokenness as well as wholeness. In sharing in the brokenness of Christ and of his world, so the priest partakes in Christ's resurrection life. 'It is about transformation and transcendence.' For those who see priesthood as representative, the Eucharist is central to their lives. As Int. 201 said, 'it takes a large amount of time in my life.'

2. *The Men*

In an interesting research project, Francis and Rodger [1996] studied the influence of personality on clergy role prioritisation, role influences, conflict and dissatisfaction in ministry. They found that the main body of Anglican male clergy was introvert. Such people find social gatherings difficult, public occasions embarrassing and would prefer to hide away. They did not evaluate whether there are more introverts among the Modern Catholics than amongst the open Evangelicals. No doubt the Catholic view of priesthood would provide a defense behind which the introverts can hide, whereas 'the clergy

who score high on extroversion are more likely to engage with the wider community... and more likely to feel the need to appear responsive to the wider community.' [Francis and Jones. 1996 p.74] Though for many of these clergy pastoral work is important, the emphasis on a salvic Eucharistic ministry, which is seen as distinctive and apart from lay ministry, provides them with a safe distance from others. When feeling dissatisfied with the job, as Int. 19 shared, the representative role provided a sense of authenticity.

Each of these clergy in the column marked 'Representative', said the fact of being an ordained priest was the most important thing to them in their lives. All of them saw who they are in terms of a sacramental ministry, which was rooted in worship and in the Eucharist. Though many seemed confused about what the term 'representative' meant to them, it was about having a unique, sacrificial, holy role.

As Watts and Williams [1988] say, 'the notion of discovering one's true self in conformity to an ideal pattern has found expression in the concept of vocation.' [Watts and Williams. 1988 p.100] Many of these clergy, male and female, have found profound fulfilment in their calling. They, and maybe the women especially, have found something important about who they are. They

have a real 'raison d'être'. However, it is also apparent that even the clergy, with such a high view of their calling, find that the priestly accoutrements are not themselves proof against the disappointments inherent in the job.

What about those who see their role mainly in pastoral terms? Are they less likely to experience disappointment because their self-image is less ontologically rooted?

Pastor:

'When all is said and done the increase of... love of God and neighbour remains the purpose and the hope of our preaching of the gospel, of all our church organisation and activity, of all our ministry.' N. R. Niebuhr'.
[Campbell. 1985 p.1] 'Pastoral care is the practical outworking of the Church's concern for the everyday and ultimate needs of its members and the wider community.' [Atkinson and Field. 1955 p.78]

Nowhere in either of these definitions has a sacramental ministry been mentioned yet all those who saw their priestly role in pastoral terms are engaged in a sacramental ministry. All are called to bring people to

repentance and in Christ's name to absolve, baptise and prepare for confirmation. They are also exalted to lead people in prayer and worship and to preside at the celebration of Holy Communion.

Pastoral care has the notion of being alongside the vulnerable and weak. It is a 'hands on' outworking of a priestly function. As such, it is also about being prepared to be vulnerable and open to others.

Many of the clergy who see themselves primarily as pastors, would use the word 'minister' rather than priest to denote their calling. This distinction, though theological, 'has, nonetheless, important practical implications for the way that the role is carried out.' [Davie. 1994 p.174]

Many of these pragmatic roles that pastor clergy have through the centuries been involved in have, however, been usurped. Once the clergy were instrumental in education, medical care, welfare work and, especially, ministering to people's emotional needs. Now such works have been taken over by professionals, whether within the state or in the private sector. What has been especially hard for the clergy is that it is now psychotherapists or

counsellors who have taken over 'ministering to', or working with the emotionally deprived or traumatised.

Nevertheless, if clergy make themselves available to their community they often find, especially in this market economy, that the clergy are 'the only available person to whom the most vulnerable turn when there is no apparent alternative.' [Davie. 1994 p.176] Therefore the clergy became generalists but still functioning on the priestly level as well. How does this all affect the self-image of the pastor clergy and, therefore, what psychotherapeutic needs does it produce?

The categories highlighted were implicit in the data gathered and are descriptive of the work they do.

1. *Showing God in All They Do*

Int. 131 believes clergy are there to act 'as a focus of prayer and study, to show God through service to the community.' He hopes that 'people will see me as approachable and open with them and that they can discuss anything with me.' He kept reiterating how human he is and that it is very important to

know himself. He is prepared to baptise anyone's child and marry divorced people, as he believes 'everyone is entitled to God's grace.' He admitted that sometimes the dog collar can be a barrier and because of that he is happy not always to wear it.

Int. 122 described himself as an 'Anglo-Catholic Charismatic'. He is a man of 61 years of age who saw his role in practical pastoral terms rather than in ritualistic ones. He said 'a priest is a link between God and the world. It is not a representative but a conduit - that is, an element of communication.' He described his role as 'standing in the front of the crucifixion and seeking the sorrow of God and His brokenheartedness and His rejection by people.'

He has been 20 or more years in his parish and he believes that is important. People know and trust him and he sees second and third generations as well. He describes his ministry as a 'glorious and wonderful vocation and I feel a sense of fulfilment that I am doing something exceedingly worthwhile.' The fact that he meets people right where they are, he says, 'satisfies my need for self-esteem.'

This clergyman was brought up in an affluent lifestyle amidst great poverty. The guilt experienced and the feelings of low self-worth because of this appeared to have found solace through ministering and caring for others. Does this type of caring show 'a stage of ego integrity that generates... a caring attitude', [Jacobs. 1986 p.122] or a rather desperate need to mother the unloved child within? For 'the self needs affirmation, or else it withers, withdraws, becomes less and less self.' [Meissner. 1984 p.223]

2. Proclaiming God's Word

Int. 332 said, 'being a priest is nothing to do with presiding at the Eucharist.' He preferred the word presbyter, or elder. 'Someone recognised and reasonably experienced in things of God and pastoral work.' For him the whole emphasis of his ministry was on 'proclaiming the word of God.' Though he called himself a pastor, he found, as a single man, that it was difficult to do much pastoring. Unlike the previous clergyman, he felt he needed to share difficult situations with others so that he did not become embroiled.

He described his home life as a very happy and very loving Christian home. His father was a London City Missioner, so that he was used to the ministry of care. This clergyman seemed a quietly content man, not a recluse, but certainly with a strong integrated ego. He enjoyed his own company. When he was interviewed, he had in fact retired the week before and was moving into a flat on his own far away from the parish he had left.

Unlike those who saw themselves as having a representative role, these clergy spoke little about the Eucharist. Their emphasis was on people and on their needs, rather than on a mystical experience.

3. *The Suffering Servant*

Int. 331 said that he 'identified strongly with the wounded healer.' He wishes people to see him as 'the servant' serving God who is 'the servant of the world.'

Int. 171 believes he 'is wrestling with others to allow God to be real.' He sees himself as 'just part of the whole congregation, trying to let God work in us.'

This clergyman came from an Anglo-Catholic background but says he has now come 'to have a very low view of the ordained priesthood.' He described himself as not naturally a leader, though he knows that is part of his role. He owes a lot to the charismatic¹⁰ movement and all that it has enabled him to understand in terms of healing and God in power at work. Even so, he gets frustrated because he finds 'in reality that the vision is hard to realise, as it never quite works. I wrestle with the people and with God and say, "why the hell are you not doing here what you say you will".' He said he often feels like a small boy having tantrums.

This emotional man had experienced tragedy at first hand when his son died in an accident. For him, wrestling in prayer with God was his ministry. 'When narcissism is opted for, it is to protect the individual against appalling pain.' [Symington. 1993 p.80] Int. 117 did not appear to fall into a narcissistic state after his son died. Rather he held on to the *lifegiver*. For him, the lifegiver is God.

Both of the female clergy in this category saw themselves not as sacramental priests but as Int. 220 stated, 'the wounded healer or suffering servant'.

¹⁰ A movement from the 1960's which emphasised the work of the Holy Spirit

Again, for them it is about coming alongside the weak and vulnerable and ministering God's love.

All these clergy are prepared to move out to others without hiding behind a mask. They seem aware of their own inner hurts and longings and talked openly about them. Several of them said they had been 'touched by the Holy Spirit and had found a deep fulfilment of joy and power in the Holy Spirit.' Their longing to share that, as well as become partakers with others in their lives, provided a very different flavour to their ministry than to those whose root was centred in sacramentalism.

Int. 204, a Modern Catholic Charismatic who was struggling through depression within an economically deprived parish, could still say 'I must identify with others' sufferings, cry with them, laugh with them.' He felt if he could do that 'then I will have achieved something.'

4. *The Caregiver*

Int. 194, whose father was an Anglo-Catholic Vicar, said 'I become less and less sure what this thing "priesthood" is, and also less clear about what the

work is.’ Having discarded any idea of a sacramental priest, he seems to have little to put in its place though he says the ‘job is to recognise the worth of other people.’ Now ‘I prefer to work with non-church people, especially those I encounter in funerals. I used to think the Eucharist was everything. Now I’m more drawn to what the Bible is all about.’ He described his family, and parents in particular, as ‘undemonstrative, with no real touching.’ It appears that now, in tentative ways in order to find a real sense of self, he is reaching out ‘to touch others’.

Int. 151 describes himself as ‘a guide and fellow traveller’. The emphasis again, as with Int. 325, is on ‘being with’ rather than ‘apart from’. It is also ‘about being me’ and finding their own identity in the role they assume.

Int. 321, an acknowledged homosexual, said that ‘I lost friends when women were ordained priest’. He found he was not invited to dinner or sent Christmas cards by those in Forward in Faith. He believes that there is not one model of priesthood and that he did a U-turn when women were ordained priest. He found it ‘a great shock to realise I had been wrong about female priests and that when they were ordained the roof would not fall in.’

He has enjoyed working with women clergy and it has helped him to reflect on the nature of priesthood in a different way. Now he sees the priest 'as playing ball amongst the people, as a pilgrim leader, leading them on, snapping at their heels like a shepherd dog.' He stands with people and travels with them. He said he had a happy childhood, though it was a solitary one. He was an only child and his father was ill with tuberculosis. Again, there is a sense in which this man is seeking to be 'in touch'.

Discussion:

Several of the pastor clergy shared pains they had been through. It seemed that often these experiences had been defining moments in their lives and brought them face to face with themselves.

Mahler et al [1975] talks about psychological birth. She describes moving from the symbiotic stage of fusion with the mother through to the gradual separation to the individuation stage. She recognised that 'it seems to be inherent in the human condition that not even the most normally endowed child, with the most optimally available mother, is able to weather the separation-individuation process without crises, come out unscathed by the

rapprochement struggle, and enter the oedipal phase without developmental difficulty. [Mahler, 1971]' [Mahler, Pine and Bergman. 1975 p.227]

Many of the clergy in this category had indeed faced major crises, whether through divorce, depression or a son being killed. They have had to face existential isolation and meaninglessness expressed by Int. 117 when he said, 'why the hell, God, ain't you doing what you said you'd do?' It is at such a stage that God becomes for them a *lifegiver* or they lose faith in Him, as Int. 19 did. Such crises are defining moments in their lives. They are either instrumental in a meaningful continuation with the struggle of a pastoral ministry, or produce a cynical reaction with nowhere for the clergy to go.

Servant:

'I am among you as one who serves'. [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.1221] Jesus constantly emphasised His servanthood. He was on earth to do the will of His Father in heaven in all things. He exhorted His disciples not to be concerned about 'which of them would be the greatest'. [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.1201] but to be prepared to wash each other's feet. It is not surprising that 2000 years later those with a vocation to follow Christ into full-time

ministry are 'called by God to work with the bishop and his/her fellow priests, as servant and shepherd among the people to whom (they) are sent.'

[Alternative Service Book. 1980 p.356]

Two clergy only, one from the north and one from the south, saw their role of priest as that of a servant. Many of the other clergy included servant as part of the role of priest, though these two had a greater sense that priesthood is synonymous with servanthood.

The categories denoted highlight the clergyperson's view of their role as a servant.

1. *The Human Servant*

Int. 161 would describe himself as a Protestant in doctrine but a Catholic in worship. However, being a priest for him is about 'suffering'. He is suffering from a progressive illness but feels called 'to teach people how to die'. He said that 'it sticks in my gullet when I hear priestly ministry described as gaining a superior avenue to God, or that priests are superior beings.' For him, priests

are like anyone else – human, and therefore ‘in the same boat as everyone else.’

It is interesting to note that if the index in a book on psychology or psychotherapy is explored, words like ‘suffering’ or ‘servant’ seem to have no place. Why is that? The emphasis on Freudian, Jungian and other psychologies, whether analytic, cognitive or behavioural, appears to be on ‘wholeness’, ‘maturation’, ‘individuation’. For the Christian, the theological centrepiece is the cross - the salvic work of redemption. When exploring the psychotherapeutic needs of Anglican clergy, it is almost impossible to do that without using theological language. Meissner, [1984] however, exploring the developmental aspects of religious experience, manages to achieve that;

‘The developmental spectrum is defined in terms of the metamorphoses of infantile narcissism, the changing quality and integration of object relations, the progression and modification of instinctual derivatives, the transition from absolute dependence toward increasing autonomy in function and structure, the progressive internal organization that provides stability and coherence to the psyche, and the gradual emergence, definition, and stabilization of the self as a coherent and integral part of the subjective world.’ [Meissner, N. W., 1984 p.158]

However much that can be attested to, it still says little or nothing about the priests' 'call' to servanthood. 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p1135] For many Christians, that is a clarion call which can neither be dismissed nor laid aside from the whole message of the Gospel. How is it possible then to speak psychotherapeutically and theologically when the aims of one seem diametrically opposed to those of the other?

There is a general feeling that the western world has become both individualistic and self-centred. This has been laid at the feet, by some, of psychoanalysis. Freud was, however, a realist. Just as the Bible and Christians emphasise the fallen nature of humankind, so Freud believed that 'what history tells us and what we ourselves have experienced does not speak in this sense but rather justifies a judgement that belief in the "goodness" of human nature is one of those evil illusions by which mankind expect their lives to be beautified and made easier while in reality they only cause damage. [p.104]' [Meissner. 1984. P.161]

Nino, discussing Augustine of Hippo's search for the restoration of the self in his Confessions, [Chadwick. 1991] says that the quest for truth is at the heart

of both genuine religious experiences and the therapeutic method and that it comes from the willingness to "recognise oneself for what one is." [p.12]

In this search for religious experience, there are certain themes, which arise especially from the idea of a servant priest. They are sin, guilt, betrayal, doubt and wholeness. The themes are at the heart of the priest's search for a meaning to life and an awakening understanding for a restoration of self. These five themes are seen to be woven into both the religious and psychodynamic realms, and it is in their exploration that a person is enabled to recognise himself/herself for who they are.

Sin:

From childhood, Christians receive instruction in the main doctrinal beliefs of the Church. These centre around who God is and the human condition. They are taught that God is Creator, Saviour and Judge. Humankind, the highest form of all God's creation, is seen to be flawed. Evangelicals believe that from the time of Adam, the human race has been affected by original sin. This sin 'introduces into the heart of human nature a limitation, a defect, that cannot be overcome by natural means'. [Meissner, 1984 p.221] All orthodox

Christians will be aware of their inherent sinfulness 'since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. [Holy Bible 1952 p.1185] Therefore 'all are born corrupt because they are representatively incorporate in the sin and guilt of Adam. ...this is the root of each person's inherent disposition to sin... a person is not a sinner because he sins, he sins because he is a sinner'. [Ferguson and Wright. 1988 p.642]

Guilt:

Each Christian will express in a variety of ways the feeling of letting God down. From this will come a profound sense of guilt because of feeling in 'the state of one who has committed a sin or a crime'. [Ferguson and Wright 1988 p.285]

Guilt is 'a feeling of self-reproach resulting from a belief that one has done something wrong'. [The Collins Pocket Dictionary 1987 p.377] Meissner states that 'the phenomenon of guilt may reflect not only superego accusations but also a realistic appraisal of moral failure by the ego, acting primarily in terms of its intrinsic reality function'. [Meissner. 1984 p.131] The Christian

may feel an ego failure because as a Christian they may feel they have, in some way, fallen short of what an Omnipotent God requires.

Betrayal:

Betrayal is defined as the failure 'to uphold... to desert' [Collins Pocket Dictionary 1987 p.78] the primary love object. As the perceived misdemeanour is explored, opened up and talked about with reference to the background and life in the family of origin, a sense of having betrayed God and parents will often be experienced. The fifth commandment, 'honour your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you', [Holy Bible 1952 p.78] is an exhortation to all Christians. Daring to investigate the inadequacy of parental nurturing during childhood causes many metaphorically to look over their shoulder to see if God can see and hear.

The Christian priest moves from an awareness of what they have done wrong to a feeling of guilt for the offence, followed by a sense of betrayal as they suggest that childhood deprivation by the care-givers may be one of the causes for their subsequent distress. Working through these feelings gradually

enables the person to have a different perspective on past relationships, the traumas they have experienced and the culpability of significant others in his life.

Doubt:

Doubt is defined as 'to be uncertain or undecided... to be inclined to disbelieve'. [Collins Pocket Dictionary, 1987 p.258]

For Evangelical Christians 'it is a popular misconception that doubt is tantamount to unbelief. In fact, although doubt may lead to unbelief it may equally produce a firmer faith'. [Ferguson and Wright 1988 p.208]

Thomas, in the New Testament, is the archetypal doubter for Christians. He would not believe in the risen Jesus unless he saw him for himself and put his hand into the nail prints of Jesus' hands and feet.

For the Christian, doubt takes many forms. As a result of experiencing painful suffering and loss, they may doubt the existence of a God who cares. It may be that they feel the only God who is there is a punitive and sadistic

one, with little interest in the inhabitants of His world - for what they read in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, bears little resemblance to their daily experience.

But doubt may also be about a desire to know more. 'Learning through radical questioning has been an important and accepted method of making progress in understanding'. [Ferguson and Wright 1988 p.209] Thirdly, doubt may be experienced as losing faith held on to until now. This can feel both frightening and liberating, as people struggle to make sense of their earlier concepts of God in the light of their greater internal awareness.

Often through questioning, doubts are expressed about their view of God. If the image of God starts to change, a person may well begin to doubt the very existence of God. It may be that their experience of God has born a striking resemblance to a punitive parent. If so, who and what is God, and is the faith they have been taught reliable or is it all a sham? The Christian will need to make sense of the 'psychic process of creating and finding God - that is the personal representation - which continues through the course of the human life-cycle'. [Meissner. 1984 p.180]

Wholeness:

Wholeness represents a seeking after completeness, health, being 'not broken, damaged, defective, etc.' [Collins Pocket Dictionary 1987 p.971]

'The word health comes from the Old English root hal, which means whole, and from which the words wholeness and holiness are also derived'. [Ferguson and Wright. 1988 p.287] It can be seen that health and wholeness are almost synonymous. Jung stated that 'it is highly improbable that there could ever be a therapy that got rid of all difficulties. Man needs difficulties; they are necessary for health'. [Campbell. 1971 p.278] However, his aim in treatment was to enable his patients to go through a healing process to what he called the individuation process, which he believed is 'an identification with the totality of the personality, with the self.' [Jung. 1968 p.138] This is the ability to integrate the unacceptable aspects of the self.

From the time of Freud, the aim of therapy has been to relieve neurotic suffering through creating 'a private space... where hitherto unmentionable and unacknowledged aspects of man's inner world could be faced'. [Brown and Peddar. 1992 p.11] This bringing to consciousness of repressed material

enables a person to work through the positive and negative parts of themselves to a more realistic awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Margaret Mahler states that 'the psychological birth of the individual... is a slowly unfolding intrapsychic process'. [Mahler et al 1975 p.3] It is something that never stops. For Mahler it is 'the separation individuation process, the establishment of a sense of separateness from, and relation to, a world of reality, particularly with regard to the experiences of one's own body and to the principle representative of the world... the primary love object'. [Mahler et al. 1975 p.3]

Many clergy struggle with their doubts about God, about him/herself and the perception of the world around, then gradually a working through to the realisation 'that it is possible to make sense of life' and that 'can be seen as a process of exploration of what can make life meaningful'. [Deurzen-Smith van 1988 p.3] The possibility of greater wholeness, both emotionally and spiritually then seems within reach. This wholeness represents a striving towards psychological health, emotional freedom to be and spiritual life,

where God is no longer a projection of a punitive parent but a 'loving God that enables Man to achieve His salvic purpose'. [Meissner. 1984 p.244]

Writing in such a way about these themes it seems as though there is a logical progression from the theme of sin to that of wholeness. However, that is too simplistic. There is no prescribed path.

Discussion:

The themes of sin, guilt, betrayal, doubt and wholeness concern the clergy not just on a religious level but also at a psychodynamic one as well. Though the word 'sin' is not part of the therapist's vocabulary, there is a prevailing view that there are 'human limits of a duality of human character (good and evil). [Lovinger. 1984 p.54] The 'implicit all-goodness of people of Rogers, Fromm, Maslow and May, with its corollary of unlimited growth and free choice' [Lovinger. 1984 p.54] is not echoed in the literature of Freud, Klein, Balint and others. These authors see the seeds of discontent sown in the soil of early neo-natal development. The baby who experiences the breast as sometimes a good and sometimes a bad object, because it is not always available when required, is embroiled in trying to resolve his inner turmoil.

Melanie Klein delineates two main early stages of development which the baby has to negotiate. The paranoid-schizoid position is where the breast, as part object, is split between seeming all good or all bad. Then the depressive position is where the growing infant begins the process of integration of the good and bad object and experiences the pain that involves. It is certainly early environmental trauma, which is seen by psychotherapists to produce the feelings of not being good enough, and a sense of shame and worthlessness in adults. Freud saw this conflict as originating in the position between the unconscious and the pre-conscious system. Gradually he saw this struggle as consisting of a conflict between instincts. However it is defined psychotherapeutically, what is experienced is an internal conflict of interests. This may have a moral or religious dimension but because this inner conflict affects the clergy relating in their world, it is of profound significance.

Within the Christian faith there is a striving after wholeness, a searching for growth and maturity. Carl Jung describes this as the 'individuation process' and Margaret Mahler as 'the psychological birth of a person'.

It is these very themes which highlight for the pastor servant the heart of his/her work. As Int. 48 said, 'being a priest is dangerous to health and feelings of comfort. You cannot expect to be fulfilled. The work is mostly enormously frustrating.' He went on to say that if he engages with the community then 'I have to give myself and it is an ongoing sacrifice in time, well-being, material things and in effort.' It is for him about having to 'join with Christ on the cross', where themes of sin, guilt, betrayal, doubt and wholeness meet.

Maybe one of the reasons that only two of the clergy saw themselves primarily in the servant role is that it is such a costly role in spiritual, physical, emotional and mental terms. It is about identification on a psychological and spiritual level. Rather than hiding behind a mask, it is as though all the inner and outer defenses are down.

Shepherd:

Three of the clergy transcripts saw their priesthood in terms of being a shepherd. Again, this is a direct reference to Jesus, who said, 'I am the good shepherd'. [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.1243] The shepherd of Old and New

Testament times, and still in Israel today, went in front and led the sheep.

Though many Christians have an antipathy to being called 'sheep', the idea of the shepherd priest is one of symbolism for many clergy.

The categories came directly out of the data collected.

1. *The Leader*

The priest as a representative has a mystical quality; the pastor is the priest who goes and paddles in the mud with the parishioners; the servant priest is open to his/her own woundedness, as well as to the wounds of others; whereas the shepherd priest is the leader from the front. Though Int. 58 is 'not in favour of a paternalistic ministry', yet he sees his function in terms of 'leading the sheep to pasture, feeding the sheep through preaching and pastoral care.' He is 'the conductor of the orchestra trying to get each member to play to the best of their ability, and to play in tune.' He said that a lot depends on him as leader and on 'my personality'. Because of this, he tries to do too much himself and forgets to delegate responsibility.

Int. 4 also talked about the importance of leading from the front, though he sees the 'negative side of the priesthood is having to be a one-man-band.' This clergyman talks about using lay leadership, though he said, 'shepherds lead from the front, so there is a strong element of leadership.'

2. Model of Christ the Good Shepherd¹¹

Int. 284 ministers in a small rural parish. He finds the smallness very pressurising as he feels that if he is needed 'I must make an immediate response, as I have no excuses.' For him, the model of ministry that means most to him is Christ the Good Shepherd. Though he would see 'presiding at the Eucharist is top of my agenda', he nevertheless sees his priesthood as being worked out 'in the context of the community of people.'

Discussion:

Within all models of priesthood there is the strong notion of leadership. In research carried out in America into leadership styles and effective ministry, Allen Nauss [1996] included seven factors – preacher-priest, administrator,

¹¹ As seen in the Gospel of John. Ch. 10

community and social involvement, personal and spiritual model, visitor-counsellor, teacher and evangelist. This research explored the ministry of Lutheran priests.

In this research, Anglican clergy certainly relate to five of the functions. It is only the younger clergy who felt that they needed more help as administrators, though none of them saw that as part of the priest's role. Though some saw their work in terms of evangelism, it was not mentioned under this category as an essential part of their work. The Evangelical clergy, however, have a burden for evangelism, which they articulated. Leading public worship, preaching and pastoral care appeared to be their main preoccupations.

It has been noted how the representative priest has a mystical leadership, the pastoral clergy a coming alongside leadership and the servant priest an identification with the cross - a leadership which equates with the themes of sin, guilt, doubt, betrayal and wholeness.

The shepherd leader appears to form the end of the continuum. It is almost as though the salvic priest starts with a transcendental ministry which is earthed by the pastor and servant priest. The shepherd priest then leads

his/her people out to the 'Promised Land'. It has a heroic feel to it – almost like a Pied Piper or Peter Pan figure, dancing ahead to the Promised Land. Both of the former figures have an untouched, unearthly quality about them. They are ageless, and both provide the possibility of escape from intolerable, unwanted situations.

The prototype of a 'shepherd' is not based on an abstraction of the characteristics that actual shepherds have in common, but on a more intuitive concept of the paradigmatic shepherd.' [Watts and Williams. 1988 p.135] Though there is much that is similar to the prototypical shepherd, nevertheless the 'Good Shepherd', Jesus, was seen as the 'ideal shepherd'. The clergy who use the 'good' shepherd as a model for ministry are then aiming to emulate the 'ideal' shepherd.

This leading to a Promised Land, 'a new heaven and a new earth', [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.1440] Freud saw as an illusion. He felt that they, like dreams, stood in the way of reality and he felt that one of his roles in life was to destroy illusion, for "to tolerate life remains, after all, the first duty of all living beings. Illusion becomes valueless if it makes this harder for us". [p.299] [Meissner. 1984 p.162] He believed religion, Christianity especially,

was the equivalent of psychosis. For Freud, this illusion was in fact a delusion.

However, over the years, Freud's antipathy has been refocused so that 'the current perspective not only has found a place for illusion but has defined it as a powerful and necessary force in human psychic development and in the continuing nourishment and health of the human spirit as well.' [Meissner. 1984 p. 164]

Winnicott [1971] developed the understanding of illusion through his work on the transitional object. Here the infant, as it develops, moves from the mother's breast to a thumb or finger and then, eventually, passes on to a special object belonging to the mother, or a teddy, as the object of comfort and security. It is this transitional object which allows the gradual separation of mother-child and is very obvious within the genital phase of life. The transitional object allows for the inner and outer realities to separate and yet to remain interrelated. Because of this illusion is a necessary part of human psychological development and functioning.

Religion 'shares this participation in the illusory with other aspects of human culture, but is unique among them because of the extent to which it impinges on what is most immediate and personal in man's psychic life, namely, man's sense of himself - his meaning, purpose and destiny.' [Meissner. 1984 p.178]

All the categories of priestly role so far studied relate directly to the clergy's sense of meaning, purpose and their destiny. The Christian faith appears to speak to the deep needs of the adherents. The shepherd priest with the 'ideal' shepherd always set before him/her, embodies all three aspects of life. Their role is one of symbolic meaning, leading their 'flock' out to new pastures, caring for the sheep and rescuing those that are lost.

What then are the transitional objects for the clergy? It may be that the very elements of the Eucharistic feast provide the primary 'teddy bear' for the priests. For, as Rizzuto [1979] says, 'God is a special kind of object representation that the child creates in the intermediate psychic space where transitional objects achieve their powerful and illusory existence'. [Meissner. 1984 p.179]

For the adults, the elements of bread and wine are powerful symbols of God's presence with His people. God is not decathected and relegated to psychic limbo, as teddy bears are. He is, instead, cathected with increasing intensity and especially during the oedipal experience. Throughout life and the many crises, God remains available. 'Often, when human objects of real life acquire profound psychic meaning, God, like a forlorn teddy bear, is left in a corner of the attic, to all appearances forgotten. A death, a great pain or intense joy may bring him back for an occasional hug or for further mistreatment and rejection, and then he is forgotten again.' [Rizzuto. 1979 p.179]

There are many symbols of faith which become the transitional object throughout life. As well as the bread and wine, the crucifix, the cross and the liturgy, the ordained clergy themselves are used by Anglicans in this way, for they are visual representations that provide a psychological mechanism for an adherence to an absent deity. These symbols engage people on a sensory, visual and auditory level so that 'the individual believer prays to a God who is represented by the highly personalised transitional object representation in his inner, private, personally idiosyncratic belief system.' [Meissner. 1984 p.182]

The shepherd priest becomes not only the transitional object but leads people to the 'ideal' object, with all the promise of psychic wholeness offered in such an encounter. The strain of such expectations was apparent when Int. 58 said, 'a lot depends on me and on my personality; I find I try to do too much and so need to withdraw into the desert at times.' Int. 4 said that 'I make too many burdens for myself and bite off more than I can chew.' The clergy were aware of the pressure of such a role but seemed unable to surmount it.

Conclusion:

Looking at the research as a whole, it seems that the question of what it means to be a priest is pivotal. It is the clergy's understanding of their own priesthood which defines their role, gives them their identity and affects their relationships within the home, congregation and wider community. Their view of who they are in God's eyes and in the eyes of their people will influence profoundly their spiritual and mental health. This is in line with the hypotheses. Depending on how the clergy are perceived and their own internal emotional strength/weakness will depend on the effect their role has on every aspect of their lives.

Where clergy from one churchmanship struggle in a church with a very different churchmanship, they often feel unaffirmed and rejected. If they see themselves as representatives of God in a congregation that has little liturgical appreciation and wants rather a preaching Vicar, the internal struggle will affect them at a psychic level.

Because of the influx of Evangelical clergy over the years, many of them struggle in churches that are Anglo-Catholic or Central. Congregations and priest finds themselves at variance and both feel confused by this cognitive dissonance. This does not sit easily, because clergy and people belong to the same Church of England and yet speak a different language.

The Church of England seems not to have addressed the diversity of theological opinion. It has gloried in its broad church, and rightly so. However, this may have been largely at the expense of a baffled laity and an already struggling clergy - for, as has already been noted, self-image is crucial to a sense of wellbeing.

A PSYCHODYNAMIC ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS CONFRONTING

ANGLICAN PAROCHIAL CLERGY

[Vol. Two]

BY

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Chapter VIII

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

'The value of marriage is not that adults produce children
but that children produce adults.
[Peter de Vries, "Tunnel of Love"]

'There isn't any formula or method. You learn to love by loving -
by paying attention and doing what one
thereby discovers has to be done.

[Aldous Huxley, "Time Must have a Stop"]
[Skynner, A. C. R., 1976 p.100]

'Research concerned with the psychology of Christian ministry would be incomplete without taking into account the home and family life of the minister.' [Francis and Jones 1996 p.321] It is also true that exploring the psychotherapeutic needs of clergy needs to include their families and other intimate relationships. Many clergy spouses describe living in a parsonage house as being in a goldfish bowl. If the house is near to the church they feel especially exposed and vulnerable.

Married Clergy:

Before discussing single clergy, this chapter will look at what makes clergy marriages different. This long quotation is taken from Kirk and Leary's [1994] book, '*Holy Matrimony*'.

'A clergy marriage is necessarily a public one, but then so are many others - royalty, politicians, housemasters in independent schools, senior officers in the armed forces, media "personalities". Nor are clergy alone in having domestic life and the job, for the most part, based in the same place. So also do farmers and most self-employed workers, and an increasing number of people whose jobs can be done from home with the aid of modern technology.

So what makes clergy marriages distinct from all these other domestic set-ups? One bishop, when asked that question, replied: "There are differences with other marriages and also similarities. It is the total package that makes clergy marriage a special case." He went on to list the factors which, operating synergistically, he considered distinguish clergy marriage from others:

- ☐ Tied housing and often fixed-term appointments;
- ☐ Few resources;
- ☐ Moral standards;
- ☐ Public image to keep up;
- ☐ Expectations of ideal family;
- ☐ Ill-defined boundaries between work and home life;
- ☐ Doing the Lord's work - spouses compete with God;
- ☐ Coyness about using counselling agencies when difficulties occur.

To these should be added other significant distinguishing features; being obliged to consult, and seek the approval of, their superiors when they wish to take a wife; the method of selecting a spouse; high incidence of problems relating to sex and gender; high incidence of illness and depression, especially among spouses; a divorce rate which lags behind the national average; the perception of work, necessarily done in other people's leisure time, as 'not a proper job', and social marginalization and isolation.

Several books have been written by clergy wives, (Meyrich 1988, Nash 1990 and others), exploring the particular dimension of being 'married to the ministry'. Each of them describes how it feels to live in such an exposed situation - the intrusiveness of being so open to people's gaze and comments on how they live as a family and the constant encroachments into family life of their spouse's work due to the ringing of the telephone or the door bell. Living in a house that is not their own produces the stress of others' interest in how the garden and house is looked after. Though there are benefits in not being responsible for the structural upkeep of the tithed house, the friction and stress involved when the house needs repair often outweighs anything that is positive. Added to this, working for an employer, 'God', whose demands appear to work to the disadvantage of the family; it may not be a surprise that many clergy spouses are discontented.

Ashdown (1998) writes of her experience of living through a clergy marriage breakdown and surviving the divorce. Though not up to the national average, the number of marriage breakdowns amongst the clergy in each diocese per annum has raised anxiety within the House of Bishops.

For over ten years Broken Rites, an organisation campaigning for the rights of clergy wives who have been abandoned, have seen Bishops take very seriously the plight of deserted wives. As a result of the concern expressed, an informal working party was set up in 1994-1996. The then Bishop of Winchester chaired the committee. In their summary of suggestions they looked at the stress within clergy marriages; the need to prepare couples for when the spouse is ordained; to offer support and to have in place a code of practise in the management of the breakdown of a marriage. However, it is still experienced by many that Bishops are more concerned with keeping scandal out of the press than addressing the increasing pressures amongst clergy couples that eventually lead to the breakdown of relationships.

There is another dimension to the above. Increasingly, clergy wives espouse a career. They are consequently unprepared or willing to forfeit promotion or a discontinuation of the work they are doing in order to

leave the area and move to another parish. Many clergy wives are themselves ordained priests. It is becoming an increasingly common occurrence that the male priest will give up his parish and follow his wife, whether it is in secular employment or to work within the Church. The increasing affirmation by male clergy of their wives' gifts and expertise is welcomed by many but it does also mean that for some of those husbands it is very difficult to find employment, especially within the Church. Consequently, the male priests are experiencing the dislocation inherent in following their partners.

Fig. 12 shows the distribution of married and unmarried clergy amongst the original research sample.

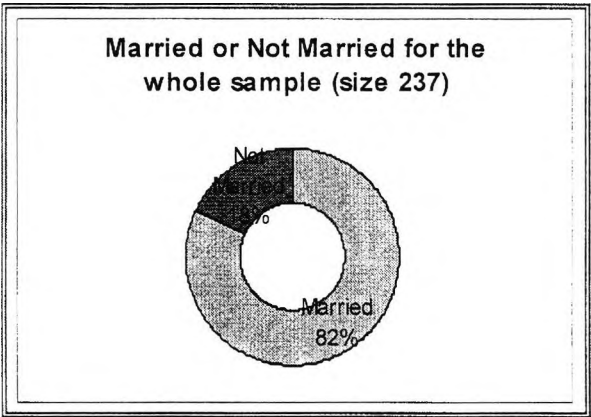


Fig. 12

Initially, it was not known who had been divorced, remarried or who was gay. As the research project progressed this became clearer, though even in

the eventual random sample it was unclear how many of the clergy had remarried. One clergyman had declared himself gay. It was, however, not until the semi-structured interviews that it became clearer who described themselves as homosexuals and were in a gay relationship.

Fig. 13 gives a breakdown of the various relationships before the interviews.

		Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Remarried	Gay
NORTH	Male = 33	6	25	1	0	0	1
	Female = 4	1	2	1	0	0	0
	Total 37						
SOUTH	Male = 24	3	19	1	0	1	0
	Female = 3	1	1	0	1	0	0
	Total 27						

Fig. 13

The eventual total number of clergy interviewed was 60. This was because one clergyman from the north was admitted to hospital the week he was

due to be interviewed. Two clergyman had retired and one clergyman had moved without communicating this information.

Fig. 14 highlights the breakdown of numbers interviewed into married/single, etc.

		Married	Divorced	Separated	Remarried	Widowed	Single	Gay
NORTH	Male =31	16	1	1	5	0	4	4
	Female =4	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Total 35							
SOUTH	Male =24	18	1	1	2	0	1	1
	Female =4	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
	Total 28							

Fig. 14

Single Clergy:

As will be seen, several male priests were prepared to admit they were homosexual and in a sexual relationship in the interview. 9% of all male clergy interviewed were gay. This included clergy who said their sexuality was a grey area. This was a similar percentage to those priests who were

single but heterosexual. None of the female clergy admitted to being lesbian.

The gay clergy in relationships, though living on their own, had the constant companionship and support of their partners. They did not experience the loneliness and isolation of the heterosexual single clergy. 16% of the sample were single and some of those priests were young clergy who were living on their own for the first time.

Of the two male clergy whose wives had very recently left them, one was on his own though he saw his children frequently. The other priest looked after his children. They had frequent contact with their mother. One widowed clergywoman had children to look after, the other had no offspring but had a very close friend across the road. The divorced clergy also had access to their children. 10% of the sample had experienced separation, divorce or remarriage.

What effect do these relationships have on the clergy? What effect does it have on their psychotherapeutic needs and how much is determined by their early experiences? In what ways does their view of their priesthood affect their intimate relationships?

Personal Relationships:

Bowlby (1946-1972) worked as a full-time consultant psychiatrist at the Tavistock Clinic. It was here that he began to explore the result on a young child of being separated from its mother. Through his research he propounded his theory of attachment.

Attachment:

Bowlby described an 'attachment figure' as 'the mother figure... to whom a child directs his attachment behaviour by preference.' [Bowlby 1973 p42] He found that children who had been parted from their attachment figures to be hospitalised, suffered traumatic dislocation. The resulting body of knowledge strongly suggests that children deprived of their attachment figures would, as adults, show signs of dysfunction. They would be seeking to repair the primary damage by locating an attachment figure to provide reparation. This unconscious longing may be directed to any person or institution, such as the Church, who seems to offer emotional nourishment. The concept of transference was first used by Freud, who

noticed that his patients would bring up material that related to the thoughts and feelings they had about the analyst. Freud felt that what was said had little or no bearing on the actual personality of the analyst but was, instead, thoughts and feelings and wishes transferred from the past about significant others in the past, onto the persona of the analyst. In a similar way the Church becomes a transference mother/father figure who 'will', 'must', provide all that is needed.

Unlike a Freudian emphasis, which said that 'attachment bonds between individuals develop only in order to have certain biological drives met...Bowlby's thesis is that these attachments come from a need for *security and safety*.' [Worden. 1982 p.7] Bowlby experimented with monkeys and found that emotional bonding was more necessary for survival even than food. When that bonding is halted, or is not successfully managed, the young child will experience grief reactions. Some of these include profound sadness, searching, anger, guilt, anxiety, shock and withdrawal.

Bowlby also postulated that if a person has experienced separation and loss as a child then they will have greater difficulty in forming lasting intimate

relationships as an adult. This is especially noticed if the person has been unable to work through the early trauma and negotiate it sufficiently.

It has already been noted that many of the clergy from the sample were sent to boarding school from a young age, or had little contact with one or both parents as a child.

The concern of Bishops and researchers about the breakdown of clergy marriage has already been noted. This research looks at the clergy person's perception of their own marriages and support systems amongst family and friends. Some of the data relates to clergy with a homosexual partnership but all the research explores the nature of the relationship and the role it fulfils in the life of the clergyperson.

How does the clergyperson view the role of their spouse? How important are they to the feelings of wellbeing? Even more important, what role does the spouse or the partner have in the perceived success of the clergy in ministry?

'It was evident from the research sample that many of the clergy had had difficult families of origin.' [Kirk and Leary 1994 p94] Not only would

such clergy look to the Church as a new family and a safe environment in which to work, they would also look towards their spouse to provide that needed figure on which to attach all their longings for acceptance and affirmation.

This research also explores and compares the sense of security within those clergy who feel supported and affirmed by their spouse and the sense of dislocation and alienation of those clergy whose marriages have broken down or whose spouse is disinterested in their work. Interestingly, Kirk and Leary, in their research amongst Anglican clergy and wives, found that many of the clergy had 'dominant, controlling mothers and/or distant, cold and absentee fathers', [Kirk and Leary, 1994 p94] so that the Church becomes the benign attachment figure that will value her 'sons/daughters' offering. Often what is being sought from the Church is the same as that which is being looked for in a spouse. Both marriage and the Church offer stability and a sense of belonging. Here sexual anxieties may be denied because the Church is seen as 'a place to control any strong emotions by external sanctions, a place of safety... because the world of the sexual market place is on the outside.' [Kirk and Leary, 1994 p96]

For the single clergyperson, the need and availability of close friendships is examined. For many, the loneliness of living alone in a community where so many expectations are laid upon them means that often the clergy's emotional, sexual and intellectual needs are sublimated in the work.

Because the research enquiry has been so wide ranging, it was only possible to investigate superficially into their backgrounds. In fact, the aim of the first theory question was to explore why the clergy sought to be ordained, rather than an in-depth study of their childhood. Even so, patterns of early emotional deprivation have been noted.

In order to gain some understanding of how the clergy view their own relationships and what impact those relationships have on them, the following categories in Fig. 15 have been highlighted. These categories to be explored were highlighted within the data. Many of the clergy described their partners as supportive. The other categories were implicit in all the clergy shared about their relationships with those close to them.

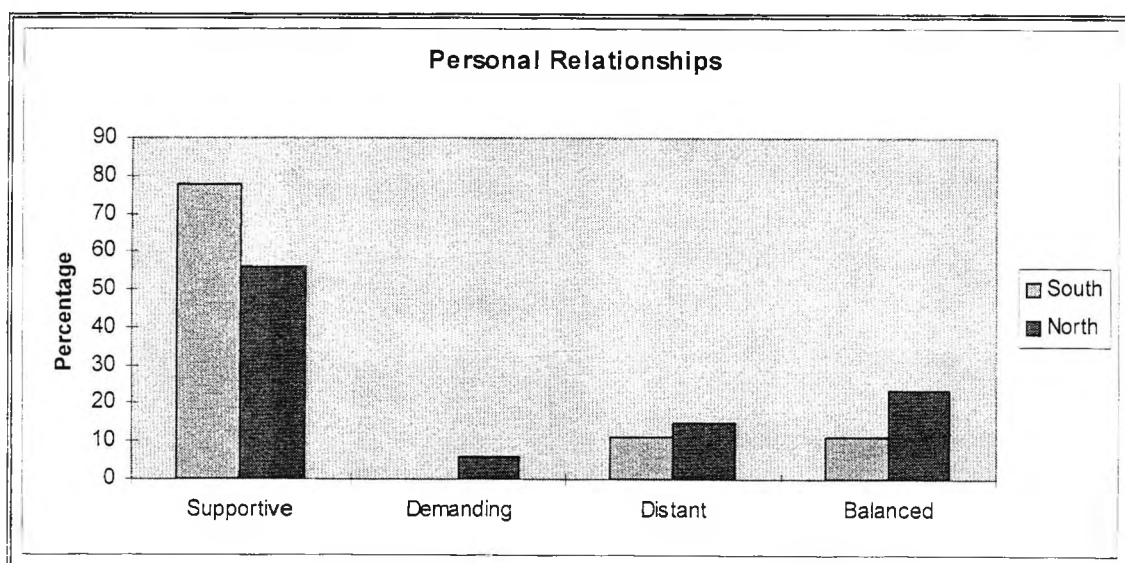


Fig. 15

Supportive:

Male Clergy Marriages:

Kirk and Leary (1944) maintain that Anglican clergy marriages are based on companionship rather than sexual attraction. In their research they found that 'shared values and belief, similarity of background, personality, niceness, decency and stability', [Kirk and Leary. 1994 p.55] were of greater importance. Throughout this research it is the clergy's need to feel supported that has been highlighted, whether by parish or the hierarchy.

Interviewing the clergy about their marital relationships, the emphasis they focussed on has been how supportive or not their spouse has been. Such

phrases as 'she is better than a curate', 'she is always there for me', and 'I don't know how I'd manage without her' show the depth of dependency the male clergy, in particular, have on their spouses. It is as though their wives make up for any of the deficiencies that they feel they have.

The importance of this report is seen in Fig. 4, where nearly 80% of the clergy in the south and 55% in the north reported that their spouses were very supportive.

1. *The Stable Marriage*

Int. 4 said he had 'a very happy stable marriage.' He describes his wife as a 'committed Christian' who shares in his sense of vocation. His wife knew him after he had already felt called to the ordained ministry, so that it was always part of the marriage scenario. She had her own career as a Special Needs teacher. Her career is seen as 'every bit as important as mine.' It helps financially that his wife earns more than he ever will as a parish priest. He said, 'I don't know how other clergy survive on just the stipend.' Though he is sometimes torn between the 'demands of the parish and the demands of the family', he feels his 'wife is there to support and encourage

me.' Interestingly, this priest came from a non-church background where his parents had no understanding of his desire to be ordained.

Int. 151 said also that his wife 'has always been very supportive and is a partner in ministry.' He said his wife teaches part-time so, again, there are no financial problems. Because he grew up poor, he said he had a very low expectation of any financial remuneration. It was difficult for them to manage before his wife returned to work. They try and have days off together but if something 'important comes up in the parish' he will deal with it.

He said that 'the children learned Sundays weren't good days because I was often tired and irritable.' He concluded by saying, 'without my wife's support the edifice would crumble.' Their last parish was a very tough one and they felt they 'lived in a goldfish bowl.' His wife has become 'angry at the effect the ministry has had on me at times. That has increased over the years.'

Int. 14 described his wife as a 'deeply Christian woman. We have a close relationship to each other and are deeply committed to each other.' His wife's father was a clergyman and she had vowed she 'would never marry a

priest.' In fact she didn't - for Int. 14 was a scientist before he was ordained.

They are both Australians and the husband said, 'our biggest rebellion was leaving Australia.' He had been brought up in a church environment and had been 'a model lad.' Though his wife 'maintains a radical independence from me and my ministry she is, nevertheless, wonderfully generous and supportive. She is committed to my sacrificial ministry.'

Money presents no problems for them as his wife has a well-paid secular job. He described her as 'highly qualified and very professional.' She has been the main breadwinner and is sought after by many people to share her expertise. However, he resents the fact that he is unable to be more financially supportive of the family. They have a disabled child. He says that 'the children have been deeply affected by my life and ministry in their attitudes and lives. They all suffer from self-esteem problems.' This has been due to anti-church feelings in their schools and because their father is the Vicar.

This priest said it is also difficult to maintain friendships as he has moved parishes several times. He said, 'who wants to know you if you're a priest?'

I am set apart by my lifestyle and the pressures. I feel like a person with two heads.'

2. Second Marriage

Int. 172 had been divorced and is now remarried. Though his wife has children from her previous marriage, he has none. He described his first marriage as a mistake from the start. Because his wife had had problems as a child, she wouldn't have children. He said, 'there is a great stigma attached to divorce. I stuck the marriage for seven years because I was a priest. It then all became impossible and I couldn't carry on even if I lost my job.' He did not, in fact, lose his job.

He said, 'it's quite difficult for my second wife being married to a priest, as she can no longer be an ordinary person in the congregation. Though there are no expectations on her, it is what she can't do that is difficult.' Sometimes, he said, 'she feels she'd like to go to another church.'

He felt aggrieved that the hierarchy had not appeared to be sympathetic or understand the financial problems he had assumed because he had had to help his first wife financially. He resents the fact he has to pay for his own

uniform. Now life is easier financially and his second marriage is 'a very different experience.'

This priest was sent away to boarding school from the age of seven years. Feeling a sense of attachment appeared vitally important to him.

Int. 24 had been married before. He said, 'we just grew out of love. I had to battle with my principles. I've always been close friends with my present wife and her children. We are both deeply in love but I still wonder if I got it wrong. I will have to stand before God one day about it.'

His wife works full-time in order to pay for their house for when they retire. This means they have little time together and it is hard for his wife 'who longs to be more involved.' He believes that being a priest has been hard for his children. 'They have had remarks at school.' He also said it is hard to have close friendships in the parish because it can cause jealousy.

Int. 236 said his 'second marriage has been great.' His wife has stood by him through a very difficult time when he 'fell in love' a few years earlier. Though that hurt his wife 'deeply' and he had to move jobs, they 'are

working things out together and amidst all the “grot” good has come out of it.’

The wife of Int. 284 left him five years previously. It was a total surprise. She was having an affair with someone in the church. Now he has remarried.

3. *The Family within the Marriage*

Int. 19, who has described himself earlier as a ‘rebellious person’, said, ‘my family are very proud of me being a priest and value it greatly.’ This clergyman, who said he had lost his faith and wasn’t sure he should still be in the Church of England, said, ‘fifteen years ago, I made my family my priority.’ He felt his children had been affected when young because they hadn’t had his attention. Four years earlier, his wife had been gravely ill. This major crisis has made him think through many things.

His wife has worked most of their marriage, which has helped financially. He is cross, however, with the Church because ‘I have no time for hobbies and it is very difficult to have personal friends because of the hours I work and how all-consuming the job is.’ He said that he is an ‘introverted

person trying to be an extrovert.' Church has dominated his life, though 'I have a good marriage and my wife supports me.' We talk endlessly.'

Int. 187 described how it was 'a slow bereavement not being able to have children.' This clergyman seemed a sociable man who enjoyed friendships and many hobbies. His wife works full-time and he said, 'she copes magnificently with parochial life.' For him, friendships and hobbies 'feed my spirituality.'

4. *The Working Wife*

The themes of wives working in order to help the family financially, the priest feeling he is not contributing enough economically and the children being affected by their jobs, is echoed many times throughout this category in the research. Working wives who wish to develop their careers and how that impinges on the general running of the household is woven in throughout the reports - all of this encapsulated within the framework of the demands and expectations of parish life and coping with being at the centre of many people's vision.

Some wives will say, 'I don't like being called the Rector/Vicar's wife' and will kick against being seen as 'belonging to someone' rather than being their own person. Others, like Int. 43, 'love the hurly-burly of it all and is very involved'. All of them would see being married to a priest as involving some sacrifice. As Int. 47 said, 'the work of a priest has denied the sharing of a great deal of quality time with my wife. The job is totally unmanageable, except by devoting an immense amount of time which is at the expense of my relationship to my wife.'

Many wives find their husbands forget to tell them where they are at any given time. 'The parish encroaches all the time and on that part of me which also belongs to my wife.' Int. 58 said, 'it is important to get the balance right between family life and parish ministry.' Many clergy had regrets that they had not been more involved at home when the children were younger.

The wife of Int. 66 is a non-stipendiary minister and helps out in her husband's church. He said, 'I share virtually everything with her. She has many roles and also has to cope with me. I can't imagine how it would be to be married to someone who was not committed to the parish.'

Those wives who married someone in a job outside the Church have particular adjustments to make. Not only do they cease to live in the house of their own choosing but often they are disadvantaged financially because their husband's salary drops appreciatively. These wives go out to work often from necessity.

The wife of Int. 340 earned money so that her husband could train for the ministry. Their children were then 13 and 10 years old and 'found it very hard me changing jobs and training to be ordained. My son detested living in the Vicarage and so went away to boarding school.' Though his wife has been very supportive she has felt 'let down by the Church and the hierarchy and after much agonising has left the Church and gone to the Roman Catholic Church.'

5. The Problems of Moving

Int. 293 has found it hard to find a job in the Church of England. It has been even more difficult for his wife, who still has no job after five years in the parish. They were married later in life and so have no children. He said, 'it is my job that is important, though I have been prepared to go where she is working.' He said he seldom takes holidays.

He has moved a long way from his working-class background and his parents see him as 'even more strange now I'm ordained.' He has no hobbies as 'I like to do nothing much, though I like history and aesthetics and going abroad and shopping.'

6. *The Protective Wife*

Int. 251 and Int. 246 described their wives as 'more than a curate would ever be' and 'a more convinced Christian than I am.'

Int. 142 and Int. 131 have wives who are 'very supportive and protective' and 'see it as their role to keep me on the rails'. Some of the wives guard their husbands against 'the things that get me down or get on top of me'.

The one single male heterosexual clergyman in this group has a very close female friend with whom he spends all his spare time.

Female Clergy Marriages:

1. *The Shared Family Pain for the Female Priest*

Within the sample there were three female clergy, each married. Two had children and one did not. Int. 190 said that marriage had been very important for her as it 'held my radiant sexuality.' Her husband has been 'very supportive from the beginning of my training, even though he wasn't then a Christian.' He has, however, 'been frustrated at times as the Church has infiltrated everything in our lives.' He and the children get angry with what the Church has done to Int. 190 and to them. They are particularly hurt when people refuse to receive the sacraments from her hands because she is a woman. This priest said that her husband 'still has to be the financial provider.'

2. *The Supportive Husband*

Int. 271 declared herself 'stressed out by everything.' As she talked more about it, she described her husband as 'a rock, always there for me.' It is

her elderly mother who causes her the most stress because she lives over 200 miles away and she has to visit her very regularly.

The house of this clergywoman was immaculate, with nothing out of place. She also looked very neat and well-groomed. She was, however, very stressed and talked about the pressure of life constantly.

Int. 106, who had said her husband was delighted 'not to have to pay a mortgage', said he had given up a job he had disliked. She said that being a priest 'hasn't affected my marriage at all but I couldn't cope without being married as it has been a great support.'

Homosexual Relationships:

Int. 175 described himself as gay. He is in a stable relationship though his partner does not live with him. He sees him once or twice a week and has been with his partner for ten years. The clergy team knows about his partner, though he doesn't feel the hierarchy do. He has not been asked about it. He said, 'I don't talk about it in the parish. I don't feel any need to talk about it. My sexuality is part of me. I believe my personality,

sexuality and spirituality are all bound up together. I believe it would cause a problem in the parish among some people so I don't mention it.'

He went on to describe that he is wary of getting too close to people in the parish because 'people are very needy and they don't understand that friendship is limited by time and so they get hurt when clergy leave.'

This priest did not easily admit he was in a gay relationship. However, as he talked of his partner it appeared to be a stable and very supportive relationship.

Int. 321, another single priest, talked about the importance of his homosexual relationship. He does not live with his partner of 14 years, though they are in and out of each other's homes. He describes the relationship as 'a deep and loving one which has never weighed me down with guilt.' He said he had never hidden the fact he is gay and in a permanent relationship. He was very 'up-front' about it at his Selection Conference and he does not know 'what the problem is all about.' He says his relationship 'is deeply supportive and we help and respect each other and are not threatened by each other.' He said, 'the Church has not collapsed and they have been ordaining gays for years. If the Church

decides not to ordain gay clergy in a relationship I do wonder if my orders will suddenly be rendered of no value.'

Discussion:

All these respondents have recognised the importance of close intimate and supportive relationships. Several have said they could not manage without the backing of their partners. In spite of the cost to the partner's work, home and way of life, all have paid tribute to what has been given up for them. What does this tell us about the psychotherapeutic needs of these clergy?

'Normal healthy development is characterised... by a progressive capacity to relinquish the original relationship of egocentricity, total dependency... in favour of a more equal, mutual relationship.' [Skynner. 1976 p.110] No longer is a symbiotic 'good enough' infantile relationship with the maternal object required but an equal, adult partnership, where both can take responsibility for their own actions. Problems arise, however, when the adults have not mastered successfully a particular developmental stage. They may have become fixated in the paranoid/schizoid position, where

unacceptable aspects of the self are projected into the partner. The partner may then find that they 'carry' the clergyperson's inadequacies.

Dicks (1967) described three reasons why people marry:-

1. Physical attraction
2. Shared cultural background
3. Unconscious forces

'it is this last named aspect which... constitutes the personal psychological core of marital life, not only in the disorders of marriage but also as the healthy, normally functioning element which bind two people in a dyad.'

[Dicks., 1967 p.8]

The clergy who have been described above all expressed the importance of their partners' support - some even going so far as to state, 'I don't know what I would do without it.' The fact that some wives 'guard and protect' their husbands and 'keep them on the rails' suggests quite a degree of dependency. Though 'love requires a partial giving up of personal, selfish demands in order to be able to consider... the needs of the loved one... it is nevertheless a real loss of... freedom.' [Skynner. 1976 p.113]

Whose freedom is lost? In all the cases examined it is the clergy who have been enabled to pursue the path they feel is God's will for them because of the self-sacrifice their partners have seemingly willingly undertaken. They have gained the freedom to follow a particular pathway whilst their spouses have forfeited their own freedom. Often the children have made sacrifices as well.

Several of the clergy had been divorced and remarried. Though many reasons were given for the marriage break-up, the inability to cope with the requirements of the ordained ministry certainly appeared to be one of them. Maybe the partners' own dependency needs prevented them from allowing their clergy partners to make all the demands.

When candidates come forward to start the process leading up to a Selection Conference, the Diocesan Director of Ordinands, (DDO), interviews the candidates and their partners in their own homes several times. There is no requirement that a spouse shares their partner's spiritual beliefs or that they have any desire to see their partner ordained. The interviews are more concerned with the stability of the relationship and the effect the training and subsequent ordination will have on their family life. If there are concerns, then the DDO may well ask the

candidate to be interviewed by someone with the ability to discern their psychological integration. However, it is not an easy task to surmise how the relationship itself will cope in the ordained ministry, nor whether the dependency needs of the clergyperson will produce an intolerable burden on the clergy spouse leading to the break-up of the marriage.

In discovering the cracks in the clergy these may be discerned in exploring their intimate relationships. Some of those interviewed who had experienced early boarding school and maternal loss and deprivation, found a partner who provided a "good enough" attachment figure for them to rework the developmental stage they had not negotiated. Those whose first marriages had ended described partners whose needs were greater than their own. Such dependency needs could not be accommodated within the 'goldfish bowl' of parish life.

Kirk and Leary (1994) may be right in asserting that clergy marriages are usually not founded on grand sexual passion. From this research it appears that the bedrock for a permanent relationship is where the clergyperson can depend on their partner's caring support. It is surely this that enables the clergy to cope with the vagaries of the modern-day culture more than just depending on their own internal emotional strength and ego identity.

Demanding:

There are spouses who seem unable to cope with life as they have to live it. 'The dyad itself has the task of integrating the personal need systems of two (people)... These object-relations themselves are, for each partner, a system, an inner world, or society of loved and hated figures.' [Dicks. 1967 p.314]

Only two of the clergy were located within the category marked 'demanding'. The following two categories from the data were descriptive of how the clergy presented themselves at interview.

1. *The Depressed Couple*

Int. 204 said he was off work and had been for four months because of depression. His wife, 'has found parish life very difficult because of the isolation and I feel physically isolated because of the constant vandalism to the Vicarage. We don't feel we belong and we feel like fish out of water.'

Though this priest said his wife is 'supportive and helpful', it appeared that her need was just as great as his. They lived in a very deprived parish with high unemployment. They dare not leave the house for holidays or days

out because as soon as they do, windows are broken. Several times tyres have been stolen off their car and there have been attempts to steal the car itself.

There was a sense of deep hurt invading the whole house. His wife appeared to have an eating disorder and seemed even more depressed than her husband. This relationship had the appearance of the 'babes in the wood' which Dicks (1967) describes. All the bad and wicked is located outside and the couple are left huddled together in fear and deep despondency.

Int. 204 described his early life as a lonely one. His parents' marriage was not good and he was an only child. He did not get married until his late 30's, though they knew each other for nine years before. They have no children.

There appeared deep cracks of fragmentation within this couple's life. Their main interest was connected with textile design. Through this interest they have made friends around the world on the Internet. The desire to design, to create, appeared a very concrete attempt to be involved in their own inner healing. The experience of such dis-integration had the

possibility to be interwoven into a rich tapestry. It may not, however, be possible for this couple to operate in such a demanding environment when their own needs are so obvious.

This priest had already had a period of time outside the ministry as an artist. It was then hard for him to find a suitable parish to work in. They had had to leave their last parish because a clergywoman had been appointed to work there and Int. 204 was unable to accept women priests. Unable to care for her husband, it appeared that the problems his wife experienced only added to Int. 204's feelings of stress and pressure, thus making more demands on her husband.

2. *Shattered Ideals*

Int. 38 and his wife went to college with high hopes of being the 'model Vicar and Vicar's wife'. They found that they 'didn't fit into college and were not encouraged to work together there. College was not easy for us and our first curacy was very difficult as well.' When they arrived in the parish the house had been flooded. The carpets were soaking and there was mildew on the walls. Their son was born two weeks after Int. 38 was ordained. He said that his wife 'would push the pram round the park

crying all the time.’ He was unaware of this. At his second curacy his wife was counselled by the Vicar’s wife, which helped a lot.

This couple started out with great expectations of working together for the Lord’s sake. Nothing seemed to go right for them. Far from being able to support her husband through training and the first curacy, this wife found it all intolerable. Thus the pressures and demands of study and then the work, plus his wife’s needs, crushed all his earlier enthusiasm.

This couple needed the supportive care of an incumbent and his wife in their second parish to nurture them through their pain. Now things are easier. His wife ‘feels she doesn’t have to be a Vicar’s wife as she can now be herself. She is now doing things for herself and so is much happier and feels more at home. What she needs most of all is a close friend, which isn’t easy in a parish setting.’

Discussion:

Though both these couples were from northern parishes, with their attendant greater poverty and unemployment, there is no certainty that they would have fared better in a southern parish. In both situations there

seemed to be mitigating circumstances. In one, a lot of violence directed against the church and the Vicarage and in the other an unsatisfactory housing situation. Added to this a sense of disappointment that ministry was not quite what had been envisaged and the husband's deep depression; it is easy to understand why these two couples appeared not to be coping.

Kirk and Leary (1994) have postulated that it is not grand passion that draws a clergy couple together but rather shared beliefs and values. For couple Int. 38 their shared vision ended in disaster. 'In these days of drastic change it's difficult for young people to know what to expect from marriage. In the traditional marriage the man was the leader and the woman the follower.' [Freeman. 1990 p.21]

For Int. 38 and many of the clergy couples, especially from the older age group, they follow a more traditional marriage relationship. Many wives are content to pursue that whilst the children are young. However, as they begin to develop their own self-image through embarking on a career, the couple may find themselves drifting apart and leading separate lives. It appeared that couple Int. 38 were in danger of that occurring in their relationship.

Other wives may find their marriage enhanced as they seek extra parochial employment because of all they are now bringing in concrete terms to the marriage. The clergy husband may then feel he is not contributing enough to the marriage. If the couple are able to tolerate that the marriage will be enriched.

Some clergy wives, who have faithfully over many years been the traditional wife, may feel when their husbands have retired that they have given up everything for him and yet have nothing to show for it now. Exploring human growth and development and how each stage is reached and negotiated, as Jacobs (1996) and others do, it is possible to parallel this to different stages in marriages. Whether of short or long duration some marriages will have the appearance of being in the early stages of dependency. 'The distinguishing characteristics of the more developed marriage are the ability to communicate effectively over a wide range of subjects... where the boundaries between the different worlds inhabited by the couple are maintained so as to enhance the well-being of both the marriage and the ministry. [Kirk and Leary. 1994 p.85]

The initially symbiotic relationship will find it hard to survive if either of the couple begins to develop as individuals. Certainly these couples within

this category have the appearance of being within the earlier developmental stage. Though couple Int. 38 are beginning to separate out, there may need to be quite a bit of adjusting in order for the relationship to remain intact.

Thinking of the psychotherapeutic needs of Anglican parochial clergy may well need to take into account the needs of the spouse as well. The crack may open up if the spouse is unable to tolerate all that is part of the clergy's work package.

Distant:

The last category examined the relationship which appeared demanding. The demanding marriage or partnership can soon become distant if the demands cannot be met. Then one partner will look for someone else, or something else, to fill what may feel a gap. Ashdown (1998) describes the breakdown of her marriage in graphic detail and the pain and sense of betrayal she suffered. 'If I were to say how it felt, it would be: "I'm breaking up inside. I hurt so badly, I want to run away – so please just leave me alone".' [Ashdown. 1998 p.31]

The Break-up of the Male Clergy Marriage:

The break-up of a marriage for the parochial clergy is a very public affair. There is no way of hiding from the church congregation when the spouse leaves the Vicarage/Rectory. Neither is there any possibility of the parishioners not eventually finding out if the marriage has broken up because of an affair.

One of the seeming main concerns of the hierarchy is that the newspapers do not get a chance of reporting yet more salacious scandal. Because of this, Bishops will issue through their communications officer a statement as to why the clergy or spouse is leaving the marital home which will bear little resemblance to the trauma and anguish of the past months.

Whilst the Bishop aims to pastor and/or discipline what may be a recalcitrant priest, he also appoints his representative, whose role it is to provide pastoral and practical help to the deserted spouse. If the clergyperson has left the parsonage house then the spouse has about three months in which to find alternative accommodation for themselves and children, plus a job. They also have the task of trying to get their life back

together again. All of this is acted out in public. It is almost impossible to keep the grief and pain within the privacy of their home.

There were two clergymen whose wives had left them a few months previously to the semi-structured interviews. In both cases, when the pilot study questionnaire was sent out, the wives had been living with their husbands. One of the clergy was from the north and the other from the south. One priest had telephoned to explain what had happened, wondering if he was still eligible for the research. It was only when questioning the other clergyman about his wife and family that it became clear why the house seemed so neglected and the priest was chain-smoking.

The other clergy in this category were single, widowed or divorced, though there were two clergy who were married. All these clergy, however, appeared 'distant' from relationships - whether it was friendships or the spouse they lived with.

Bowlby (1973) looks at the problem of aloneness. He traces the need for humans from the beginning of time to be in groups or to have a companion for the sake of physical safety. He believes that that is still a necessity for today. He states that we are 'so constructed that we find

comfort in companionship and seek it', [Bowlby. 1973 p.172] that when alone anxiety and despair is often experienced.

Both of the clergy whose wives had left them exhibited extreme anxiety and depression. One of the clergy had said from the pulpit in his sermon, 'God, if you are out there, show yourself.' The other priest had been off work with depression for four months. He said he had been unable to function at all.

This 'interpersonal isolation, generally experienced as loneliness, refers to isolation from other individuals.' [Yalom. 1980 p.353] Though this isolation is about a loss of intimacy, it often becomes an experience of existential isolation, which is 'an unbridgeable gulf between oneself and any other being.' [Yalom. 1980 p.355] The person becomes split off from the rest of the world. A sense of dislocation is then experienced and the loneliness of being totally responsible for one's life. Though this isolation is an experience of everyone, either fleetingly or when people allow space in a noisy world to think and reflect, it is nevertheless exaggerated and intensified when some disaster strikes, for people are then aware of the fragility of life.

‘Thomas Wolfe was forever haunted by his unusually acute awareness of existential isolation. In the autobiographical *Look Homeward, Angel* the protagonist muses on isolation even while an infant in the crib:

unfathomable loneliness and sadness crept through him: he saw his life down the solemn vista of a forest aisle, and he knew he would always be the sad one: caged in that little round of skull, imprisoned in that beating and most secret heart, his life must always walk down lonely passages. Lost.. He understood that men were forever strangers to one another, that no one ever comes really to know anyone, that imprisoned in the dark womb of our mother, we come to life without having seen her face, that we are given to her arms a stranger, and that, caught in that insoluble prison of being, we escape it never, no matter what arms may clasp us, what mouth may kiss us, what heart may warm us. Never, never, never, never, never.

Existential isolation is a vale of loneliness which has many approaches. A confrontation with death and with freedom will inevitably lead the individual into that vale.’ [Yalom. 1980 p.356]

Reasons for the Break-up

Int. 317 had no warning that his wife was leaving. She went off with a church member whom they knew socially. He said, ‘it has been dreadful and I am having ongoing counselling. I feel it will take at least a year to

put myself back together again.’ He believes his wife will not come back to him and says, ‘she has changed beyond all recognition.’

(a) *Lack of Privacy*

As he thought about what caused it to happen he said, ‘we lived an open-door policy for two years. My wife was a traditional Vicar’s wife and I felt she and I were very happy but I’ve inherited the worst job in the diocese. I knew it when I came.’ He then went on to describe how the parish is in terminal decline and that it is bankrupt. Buildings are dilapidated and the team is not functioning. The clergyman said, ‘I went off to Evensong and when I came back she had gone and the house looked as though it had been burgled.’ This very hurting man felt he was just crawling back from the brink.

(b) *Lack of Time with the Family*

Int. 123 had realised for much longer that his wife was finding being married to him difficult. He had spent very little time with the family when the children were little. Now his wife had a high-powered job and was commuting round the country a lot so that ‘we hardly saw each other.’

He also came into a very difficult parish situation where there had been five members of staff. One of the non-stipendiary clergy moved, one had a 'breakdown' and the other, a woman, 'caused all the problems of horribleness and had to be asked to leave.' He felt very unsupported by the hierarchy and feels that it was 'all these pressures that have a lot to do with my wife leaving. She just felt she could no longer carry my burdens as well as her own. My going into the ministry put a lot of strain on my wife and she feels that she and I lost the ability to be friends.'

(c) *Competing with God*

Int. 122 was divorced a few years ago though his wife left several years before. His wife 'felt she was married to a bigamist. My mistress was the Lord. She could never come to terms with God being in my life and could not feel comfortable with my sense of vocation.' He described himself as a workaholic and that 'my wife got more and more resentful. Then there was someone else and she left.' He has never wanted to marry again or have a relationship. He goes on holidays on his own and doesn't have many friends as 'I live for the job and the job lives for me.'

The Supremacy of the Role

Int. 195 was married and divorced twice. He said he felt in his first marriage 'that I had married someone who carried my intelligence. My wife was bitterly opposed to my doing a degree. I had romantic ideas of priesthood and spent hours and hours working though I did help in the house, but my priesthood came first.' His wife became a counsellor and met someone else. His second marriage lasted five years and he wonders why it began, as she had a drink problem and a personality problem. He has no desire to be in a relationship again.

(d) Aloneness

Both of the married clergy, Int. 194 and Int. 147, said their wives found being clergy wives difficult. Int. 194 found the parish 'alien and lonely' as she came from a different part of the country. She felt 'the church culture was bizarre.' Again, his wife was 'unhappy that I wasn't around more for the children.' He said, 'she will not be a Vicar's wife. She is her own person and does her own things.' Both wives work and that has made life more tolerable for them, especially financially.

Female Clergy:

There were two female clergy in this category. Int. 220, a single clergy priest said, 'I've never felt the desire to be married or have children. I love being alone and go on holiday on my own as I use it as a retreat. I do not feel I need taking care of.

Int. 256's husband died before she started to go to church. It was as a result of his death that she turned to religion. She had started drinking and the curate, who also had a drink problem, came and visited her. As a consequence, she began to find God and eventually went forward to train for the ordained ministry. She said, 'I have very little time for leisure and my children resent the church, as they feel it has taken me away from them. I'm not good at taking holidays and find it hard to keep up friendships.'

Discussion:

All these clergy, for different reasons, had struggled with intimate relationships. Part of the answer for them was to work harder so that they did not have to be vulnerable and fear more rejection in close friendships.

Whatever unconscious forces brought the married couples together, it has been seen that the demands of the job, and the needs of each other, have caused almost intolerable stress. Though 'marriage is always an attempt at growth, at healing oneself and finding oneself again, however disastrously any particular attempt may fail for lack of sufficient understanding or external help', [Skynner. 1976 p.127] there comes a time for many when it is too painful to look for healing within a relationship.

Balanced:

Mutual Support

Ten of the clergy interviewed who were in the above category were single. Six of these were from the northern diocese. During interviews it became clear that the younger clergy from the north who were modern Catholic by tradition, met regularly. They had become a very supportive group for each other. Partly this was prompted by the ordination of women to the priesthood.

The male clergy who had supported women priests had been ostracised by their former friends who remained firmly opposed to it. Consequently, this group met frequently and provided a lot of affirmation for each other. It was particularly striking in the light of the fact that the rest of those interviewed appeared to have few, if any, clergy friends and certainly did not meet regularly in groups. As has been stated earlier, the Chapter meetings, (regular deanery clergy meetings), are often far from supportive.

‘There is a strong causal relationship between an individual’s experiences with his parents and his later capacity to make affectional bonds.’ [Bowlby. 1997 p.136] Bowlby believes that marital problems, neurotic symptoms and personality disorders can be attributed to the early years of childhood and how the parents perform their roles. Where parents are unresponsive, absent or threatening, such experiences can lead the adult to live in constant anxiety, or what Bowlby describes as anxious attachment.

Those young clergy, some of whom come from deprived backgrounds, have needed to feel ‘attached’. As Int. 296 said, ‘my childhood was very lonely, as my parents were out at work all day, so I spent a lot of time on my own.’ Now he is on his own ‘it has never bothered me that I am on my own. I like my own company and have always had close friends in the parish.’ He

went on to say that he has ‘ a strong sense of the life of the world to come and that partings are not permanent.’

Holding such views provides a defense against deep existential isolation. This priest appears to have some understanding of his own psychology and so has provided ways of coping with the fear of rejection. It is this homeostasis which provides a sense of balance. His home was warm and decorated in bright colours. He had a housekeeper who looked after all his needs and there was a sense of his being at peace with where he is. He had experienced a mental breakdown, which will be looked at later. He was aware of his own needs.

Int. 331 had wished to marry but it had not happened. He described himself as a celibate for whom friendships are very important. He has friends within the congregation and those outside. This intelligent man who looked after himself, appeared to live in a state of chaos and semi-squalor. Though he had felt badly let down by a Bishop some years previously, he appeared content in where he is now.

Int. 332 said, ‘it has never bothered me that I haven’t married. I would have liked to but I like my own company.’ He came, he said, from a very

happy and stable Christian background. As a conservative Evangelical, he has a very definite view of faith and how to live out the Christian life. His family is very supportive and he has a lot of close friends.

Female Clergy:

The two female clergy in the category came from the southern diocese. Int. 93 is single but says, 'I'm not lonely as I have cats and geese.' She believes that her gift is to be single. She has many good friends who are mainly outside the church. Though she would like to be able to stay at home for the holidays she cannot do that, 'as people phone me up wanting something.'

Int. 119's husband died many years ago. She has no children. Even though she had only been in the parish for two years, she had a very close friend who lived opposite her. She said, 'I find someone to be close friends with in every parish. Here I take holidays with my friend.' Int. 93 found balance and a sense of meaning in her animals, whilst Int. 119 found it in a friend.

Single Clergy:

Two of the clergy, Int. 201 and Int. 224, admitted to their sexuality being a grey area. Again, for these clergy, belonging to a supportive group of clergy and having friends they can spend holidays with is very important. Int. 201 said, 'I belong to a companion of Mission Priests where we make a vow not to marry as a yearly promise. This leads to a celibate lifestyle, though I wouldn't see having a strict celibate life for the rest of my life. I have had times of confusion in the past and I don't like living on my own as I miss having someone to talk to.' He does find it difficult if he is friends with a member of the congregation and they don't come to church. He feels 'that they trespass on our friendship by feeling I won't mind. Though they are letting God down rather than me, I take it very personally.' He had described himself as 'a bit of a loner.' In spite of that, he needed attachment figures to anchor him.

Int. 77 and Int. 153 stated they would like to marry but that it would encroach on their freedom and it would be 'a real shock to pick children up from school.' Int. 153 said, 'I enjoy living on my own. If I got married I would have to sacrifice my space. I'm used to being my own master and

making my own decisions on my own.' He has not told any of his close friends about his girlfriend of four years. He believes he is 'a selfish person'. Both he and Int. 77 are young clergy at the start of their ministry. They both appeared anxious and nervous at the interview and wanting to impress.

Preparing for Death:

The last person in the category was Int. 161, who had to retire in 1997 because of an incurable disease. He is badly disabled and his wife works. He said, 'we have been planning for my death and how my wife can live her own life in her own way.' She had seen 'priesthood as a large lion leaping through a flaming hoop.' He had found it hard to distinguish between what is work and what is play. He said, 'I have now fewer close friends because of my journey of suffering. When one takes up the cross you do it on your own. People can watch and go a certain part of the journey with me, the rest I have to carry on my own.' He has found that this year he has been on his own. Some of his friends had been prepared to stand and watch while others have drifted away and stayed in the background.

Discussion:

The difference between this category and the 'demanding and distant' categories are small. In all the categories the clergy come from mixed backgrounds of 'good enough' parenting. It is how they have integrated the pain of the past that appears to make the difference.

The clergy in this last group were aware of their internal needs and vulnerability. They appeared more cognisant of the cracks in their psychic development and therefore in their adult lives than the other categories. Those who needed a supportive spouse seemed to defend against an existential fear of fragmentation. The spouse provided all the 'good enough' mothering that enabled the clergy person to function as an adult in the world.

Within the 'distant and demanding' categories the needs of the spouse were as noticeable as that of the priests. The added pressure of these demands, combined with the strain of the job, often caused a breakdown in their relationships. For some this meant a break up of the marriage, whilst for others they managed to hold the relationship together whilst living more separate lives.

Conclusion: *Reasons for Stress*

1. Many clergy highlighted lack of money as a major cause of stress. It was financial stress that prompted the spouse to work outside the home. The clergy felt inadequate not being able to provide adequately for their families.
2. Being different and set apart made it difficult to find and keep up friendships.
3. Lack of time often meant little chance of sharing themselves with their families.
4. Needs of family, especially when they have young children.
5. Expectations of the parishioners.

Bowlby, like Freud and others before him, has rightly shown the importance of these early attachment figures on adult lives. It is Bowlby, however, who highlights the importance of the emotional attachment in

order for the human being to develop mutually conducive adult relationships. Whatever idea the clergy may have of their own priesthood, whether representative, pastor, servant or shepherd, it is in the home that their psychological make up is seen at close quarters and worked out.

The spouse or the priest who feels unheard and unaffirmed, may experience a sense of betrayal. It is when these feelings are unacknowledged that the crack within the relationship becomes so big that it is past repair. Several of the clergy in the sample had experienced broken marriages and had been divorced. Two clergy were experiencing the immediacy of that pain.

Betrayal

Pushed aside
Like a used rag or
A dirty shirt.
No longer wanted
Thought of or Loved.

Feelings not considered
Not important
Any more.
I don't matter now.
Treated, dealt with
Anyhow.

Like a spider
Squashed and trodden underfoot
No consideration given
To the pain -
Because from now on he doesn't
Care.

Selfishness means
He closes his eyes to
My feelings.
Where once I was important
Now I cease to
Exist.

Feel like nothing
Don't want to live
I must be worthless
He's walking away.
Do I exist - I don't think so.
Rejection.

Left for dead.
Might as well be.
Where once I was loved
Now I clutter his life.
No pain worse than
Betrayal.

Numbness.
Emptiness.
Just nothing.
Nothing
Nothing
Betrayal
And death.

I wait for resurrection.

[Ashdown, S. 1998 p.43 and 44]

The cracked pot is a reminder that there is the possibility of light shining through the crack, or the crack itself providing beauty to the whole object. How tolerable are these cracks and how to live with them is the question that the clergy have to wrestle with before any possibility of resurrection.

The first hypothesis highlights the pressures from without. This chapter has examined whether, given the stress from living in a climate that is alien to what the clergy stand for, the support they receive from those closest to

them provides them with the necessary emotional strength to adequately maintain their ministries.

This chapter highlights the importance of the role of the partner. Where the clergy feel 'attached' to someone who is there for them, they appear to have a greater degree of internal emotional strength. The research did not explore whether that was solely due to their own internal integration or rather also as a result of the relationships they had.

From this chapter it can be seen that 'the dis-ease within' does affect the whole of their lives, as well as that of their partners.

Chapter IX

WORK IN THE PARISH

Frances R. Havergal, 1836-79

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always only for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from thee.
Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it thine:
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart; it is thine own:
It shall be thy royal throne.
Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At thy feet its treasure-store
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee.

[Songs of Praise – 1956 p.311]

Starting work in a new parish produces feelings of excitement, nervousness and apprehension. Usually, the clergy express a feeling that God has called them to this particular work. Havergal's hymn may well express the desires of the clergy as they start this new work at their institution service.

The Call:

How they manage the job will depend on several factors. First, there seems to be little doubt that their initial calling will have a vital role to play in their subsequent parochial life. Depending on how deep and 'real' this call has been experienced, the 'safeness' of the ground beneath their faith will thus be determined. If, as with one of the clergy, the call came through his admiration for certain ecclesiastical gentlemen, then there is little to base a life-long belief system upon. Those who believed God 'spoke' to them in some definable way then have that to fall back on when the parish work itself appears impossibly difficult and God does 'not seem to answer their prayers.'

Clergy Background:

Secondly, it has already been noted that the clergy's backgrounds will affect their human growth and development. The early experiences of loss and deprivation will colour their adult relationships and the view they have of themselves. Their parenting will determine how they relate in adult life and how they manage not only intimate relationships, but parochial ones as well.

Authority Figures:

Thirdly, this in turn will affect how they experience authority figures within the Church. It has already been observed that several of the clergy were looking for a father figure - someone they could turn to when there were problems - and, more importantly, someone who was interested in them, what they were doing and would show that interest in affirmation and support. Several clergy bemoaned the fact that their Bishops were often national figures as well as diocesan Bishops, so had little time for pastoring their own clergy.

View of Priesthood:

Fourthly, the crucial question was their understanding of what it meant to them to be a priest. This appeared to be affected not simply by theological dogma but by their own emotional makeup. The sort of priestly role they inhabited often appeared to indicate how integrated or not their egos were. It was noted that some models of priesthood seemed more accessible to relating comfortably to parishioners than others did. The representative and shepherding roles appeared to allow for a distance between them and others.

Personal Relationships:

Fifth is the fact that backgrounds, calling, view of authority and of being a priest inevitably have their effect on close relationships. Several of the clergy admitted to not being 'there' enough for their spouse and children in the early days. It was not, however, only their own emotional resources which determined their intimate relationships but also the stability, (or sense of self), of their spouse. It was noted that several clergy had been divorced and remarried and two others at the time of the interviews were experiencing the break-up of their relationships. Others were managing the circumstances of being single or gay in a very public environment. All of these factors will impinge on the clergy's life as a parish priest.

Working within the Parish:

This particular theory question has aimed to explore their leadership style within the parish, as well as how they relate to the parishioners. In order to do that the research investigated how their training prepared them for ministry; how they handled different people; how they see their role; how the clergy coped with sexual advances to them, or where they felt sexually drawn to someone other than their spouse; how aware they were of

dependancy needs, both their own and those of others in parochial situations; boundary issues and awareness of their own denial and defense systems at work. The aim of this section was to highlight the clergy's awareness, or not, of their own vulnerability and how they managed that. Their feelings about the future of the Church of England were also explored.

Ego Identity:

Human beings usually have their own concept of how they wish to be. That is their ego ideal, or the idealised notion of how they want to be. Certainly clergy seem to have a desire to be a particular type of priest with a particular ministry in the parish. Their psychotherapeutic needs will be affected by whether they feel they match up to their own ego ideal. However, their ideal may become a mask as they aim to be what they feel they cannot attain. As they experience the harshness of parochial ministry, their inner vulnerability may not be sufficiently inviolable to defend them from feelings of dis-integration.

It has already been noted that the largest percentage of clergy is introvert. They find it extremely difficult to share their feelings and expose their

vulnerability. The idea of being weak is abhorrent to them. Sunday by Sunday they are in the front leading services, hearing the confessions of the congregations and absolving them and preaching about a way of life and faith that they feel they must be seen to uphold. It is not surprising if they find it hard to admit to thoughts and feelings they may describe as sin in others. They would then appear to lose any respect or credibility.

Wives who have been deserted by clergy husbands will say how hard they had found it to listen to their husbands preaching what they had not been practising at home. Being deserted by them felt like an enormous betrayal - especially so as the husband often managed to delude their congregations by the Christian authenticity of their preaching. Not surprisingly these wives are left full of bitterness.

Splitting:

This study, however, is about the clergy and how they manage to live with the internal splits, or feelings of fragmentation. 'Splitting' is a term used especially by Klein [1950's] to denote the way the ego is split off from its self. This defense mechanism ensures that the good object is split off from the bad. 'Splitting of both ego and object tends to be linked with denial

and projection.’ [Rycroft. 1968 p.156] Parishioners, and clergy themselves, have a need to perceive the priest as all good. It is therefore easier for a clergyperson to split off the bad within themselves and project it out onto an external object. Many clergy find chairing the Parochial Church Council¹ very difficult. It is not surprising that this body of people often becomes the enemy.

In the research it is, for some clergy, the institution of the Church itself which is the bad object. Having allowed women to be ordained priest, many of the clergy are unable to face their fear of losing dominance and control and so the women became the split off part of themselves. It is as though the male clergy have allowed the women to ‘carry’ their feminine or unacceptable side of themselves and it is hard to take back these projections. Other clergy see their Bishops, who become inadequate father figures for them, as the bad object.

¹ The legal body that governs the local parish church

Defense and Denial:

Defence mechanisms include 'all techniques used by the ego to master, control, canalise and use forces which may lead to a neurosis.' [Rycroft. 1968 p28]

Melanie Klein's [1935, 1940 and 1946] work on the paranoid-schizoid position and the depressive position in early infancy delineated 'the defenses of splitting, projective identification, fragmentation, introjection and idealization.' [Spillius. 1988 p.5] The defensive organisation occurs in order to allow an individual 'to maintain a balance, precarious but strongly defended, in which he is protected from the chaos of the paranoid-schizoid position... yet... does not progress to a point where he can confront and try to work through the problems of the depressive position.' [Spillius. 1988 p.195] The rigidity needed to hold the defenses in place produce a profound resistance to change and appear in the clergyperson as an aloofness and unwillingness to engage with people at any depth.

Though the defence system is used to protect the ego from neurosis and is used to play a part in normal development, it may nevertheless receive a

severe battering from external and internal forces. The clergy who have suffered deprivation in their families of origin, causing them to have an immature ego, will need a strong defence system. It is in the work in the parish with the congregation and in interaction with the community at large that the priest will feel most vulnerable.

‘Many writers have emphasised the lack of self-concern that characterises a religious approach to self-knowledge.’ [Watts and Williams 1988 p97]

Clergy are extremely reticent at looking at themselves. Dioceses that plan therapeutic support groups, or the chance to look at clergy marriage, find little support and interest. For the clergy who often minister on their own in the parish, there is a perception that they provide answers. It is extremely embarrassing for many clergy to admit to vulnerability. As one clergyman said, ‘I cannot cope with the verse that says, “when I am weak then I am strong”’. [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.1346] He felt he had to wear a continuous mask of confidence and strength. Meeting conflict situations in the parish became a nightmare from which he felt he would never wake up.

Often it is the clergyperson’s fear that produces such strong defences. It is these defences that prevent clergy from being aware of the inherent risks

within their profession. The clergyperson who shows warmth and compassion on a funeral visit is seldom aware of the dangers they may run. Often they are ignorant that too much intimacy to a bereaved person may send signals of love rather than just pastoral care. Because of their lack of self-understanding, the clergy can often find themselves compromised in a situation from which they are completely unable to extricate themselves. Many clergy marriages have broken down because of the clergy's lack of insight and naïveté in the face of such need.

'Career counsellors have been saying for years that many of the major difficulties which pastors experience in their work stem from interpersonal problems.' [Francis and Jones. 1996 p.117] Now Bishops are showing concern at the risks their clergy run. In many dioceses codes of conduct have been devised to ensure the safety of the clergy. All clergy and all laity involved in any way with children must abide by the strict guidelines to prevent any child abuse or any risk of litigation.

How much are clergy aware of the effect they have on others? They may be seen as parental figures who will provide all the emotional needs of the congregation. Clergy are often seen by the needy as a former object from their childhood. They speak with the authority of God the 'Father' of all,

so it is not surprising the clergy then becomes an icon to be worshipped and adored. Because of the clergyperson's seemingly impenetrable defence system, they are often unaware of all the projections that are put into them, let alone the emotional desires. These may be experienced by the clergy as people becoming over-dependant on them and seeking more of their time for themselves. Yet often the clergy feel that they cannot be harmed because they are doing God's will. It is all the more tragic when the clergy spouse is made aware that what the priest is preaching bears little resemblance to how they are living. The catalogue of disasters within the personal lives of the clergy regaled in the press illustrates this point.

It is this defense and denial which places the clergy in a very vulnerable position. Because so often they lack self-awareness, they are unaware of the emotional needs of their parishioners. Many more clergy now have been through counselling courses or been in therapy themselves. There remain, however, many who have little or no understanding of human psychology. They are therefore unaware of the danger of transference and counter-transference situations into which they place both themselves and those they are ministering to.

Transference:

Joseph Breuer, in conjunction with Freud, discovered the phenomenon of transference (1895). They found that material came up in the therapy that had little or no bearing on the actual personality of the analyst. Instead, it was about the patient's thoughts, feelings and desires transferred from significant others from the past. This produced both positive and negative transference, so that the analyst became both loved and hated. The more he understood this phenomenon, Freud and others were able to use this to help their patients bring to consciousness deep conflicts buried in the past. (1895) It became, and is, a valuable tool in the whole process of psychotherapy.

It can, however, be experienced as a very dangerous phenomenon when not understood by the unwary. Clergy are particularly vulnerable to this - especially so since the advent of the charismatic renewal movement.

In the early 1960's there was a renewed interest in the work of the Holy Spirit. Over the next 30 years this affected the different churchmanship within the Anglican Church, Non-Conformist Churches and the Roman

Catholic Church. One of the results of this new expression of faith was a greater openness to each other and a much greater physical contact. Before this Anglicans had sat in their pews, eyes in front and arms and hands held firmly by their sides. Now they were prepared to look at each other, touch each other and, in the peace during the Eucharist service, even hug each other. This brought a greater joy and relaxation and freedom to many congregations which is still experienced today.

The shadow side of this experience was the ignorance of many church leaders. They had little awareness that touching and hugging emotionally deprived or abused adults may cause extreme transference situations to develop. They were also ignorant of what counter-transferential effects they themselves may experience. It does not seem mere accident that the incidence of clergy marriage breakdown has appeared to increase within the last 30 years, though there is no statistical evidence to support that claim or to link it to the effects of the charismatic movement. Marriage breakdown has now risen to 1 in 3 in the general population. However, because of the Christian view of the sanctity of marriage, the clergy are expected to be 'above' such national trends.

Work in the Parish:

The theory question exploring the work of the clergy in their parishes will aim to address all these issues. In order to do this, the clergy have been grouped under different styles of leadership, as seen in Fig. 16. As with the previous question, it has not been easy. The clergy see themselves as operating different styles of leadership at different times, depending on the circumstances. It is also their perception of their leadership style, rather than that of their spouse or congregation, that they have declared. It is difficult to explore how much that is a projection of their ideal self. It is interesting to note that none of the clergy saw themselves as being confrontational. This will be explored later.

The question of what categories to use was resolved by using the descriptions of their leadership style that the clergy used themselves. Though there were weaknesses in this approach, it did however follow the grounded theory model whereby the data itself produces the categorisations.

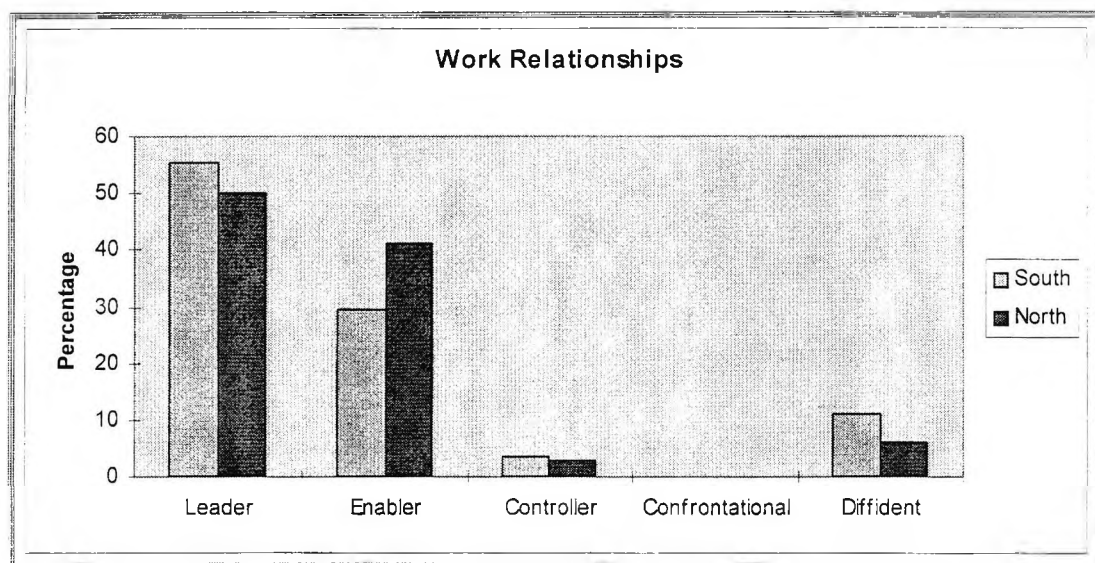


Fig. 16

The adjectives used to describe leadership styles came out of the research material gathered during the interviews. These various categories denote what the clergy ‘do’. This is about the role of the Vicar or Rector, whereas the question which related to their priesthood was about who they ‘are’ – about their very ‘being’. It could be said that whilst on one level the priesthood is about an internal, almost private role, the work in the parish is the public, external enactment of the former persona. Some of the clergy bemoaned the fact that people just saw them as the Vicar/Rector whilst having no idea what being a priest meant.

When a priest arrives at a parish to be the incumbent, all that the parishioners, and certainly the Churchwardens, are concerned about is what that person will ‘do’. Will they help the church to move forward,

change things too much, increase the giving and bring more people in? in other words, their desire is that the incumbent will put the church 'on the map'.

Leadership:

'Testing ourselves in the adult world takes place largely through the *effective contributions* we make to others.' [Rayner. 1986 p.163] Rayner discusses how this occurs through love, friendship and leisure activities and also in work that earns money. Though incumbents will have been through a rigorous selection process and training procedure; will then have served an apprenticeship curacy and now are solely in charge, under the Bishop, of a parish, the remuneration is small. Living in a consumerist society, the clergy lead a congregation largely influenced by materialism. The clergy often live in much larger houses than their parishioners so they have the appearance of wealth, without the finance to sustain it. The diversity of parishes - country, urban or holiday resort - also causes confusion. It may be that the clergy are leading a congregation of largely professional, affluent people whilst he/she has grown up in a working-class environment, or it may be the other way round. It has already been shown that clergy from

one churchmanship operating within a church of another find themselves, as well as the congregation, in conflict.

1. *Authority:*

‘Leadership gives vision and direction to a group and enables its members to work together to fulfil its aims.’ [Atkinson and Field. 1995 p.544] The clergy who were interviewed expressed these desires. It is, however, difficult to share a vision with a group who are pulling in different directions from the leadership. It is as equally difficult to work for those whose intelligence is superior to that of the leader. Intelligent congregations may find it hard to respect a leader who lacks erudition. How then does it feel to those who are leading from the front? It could be argued that the clergy who have a sense of leading their parishes have a clear ego identity. Rather than splitting off the bad, these clergy have been able to integrate the positive and negative parts of themselves. It could equally be argued that as leaders in a community they defend themselves against intolerable distress by splitting off the bad and so are in denial. However, it is:- ‘Leadership implies power. This power may be based on:’

- The ability to reward;
- Having the power to punish;
- Possessing expertise;
- Holding a position of recognised authority; and
- Attracting and inspiring others, where any of these may be desired or feared by the person on whom the power is exerted.

French and Raven, in Cartwright, ed., *Studies in Social Power*, Ann Arbor, MI, 1959. [Atkinson and Field. 1995 p.545.]

2. *Power:*

The clergy do exert a powerful image. Not only are they dispensers of God's means of grace – that is the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine - they also hold a recognised authority imparted to them by the Bishop. Through enabling others to exercise their gifts, they *reward* their seeming spirituality. The punishment they have power to enact is to refuse Holy Communion to those who are heretics or are leading immoral lives. The expectation is certainly that they possess expertise in the things of God. It is hoped that they will be men and women of prayer and study the

scriptures, so that they may attract and inspire others to live a godly life. How do the clergy feel they measure up to these criteria and what effect does it have on their psychotherapeutic needs?

Theological Training:

Many of the clergy said that the training they had at college did not prepare them for a parish life. Those who went to the more Catholic colleges said that they were well grounded in theology, 'had a good knowledge of the Bible, Church history and learned the discipline of a life of prayer.'

This was especially true for two of the clergy who spent time in a monastery. These Modern Catholic clergy were well served by their colleges in priestly formation. They felt, however, that they had not been prepared for the cut and thrust of parochial life. Int. 317 said, 'I came out of college with a very clear idea of what sort of sacrificial pastor/priest I would be. I said Mass beautifully. The college trained introverts to cope and have a sacred space but I have real problems with people who don't agree with me. A priest and a Vicar are different. I can't see why a lay person can't be a Vicar, as many tasks of the incumbent aren't strictly

priestly.' This clergyman was between the 36-45 age bracket and had been ordained for 17 years.

Even Int. 262, a 30-year old clergyman, said that 'the pastoral training was inadequate as it was crammed into three weeks of term and there was little time to reflect on it and apply it.'

Those from a central churchmanship felt they fared barely any better. Int. 19 said, 'college taught me how to drink sherry and play croquet.' Two of the clergy felt they were not given any management training. One young clergyman said he would have liked a job description from the parish, so that he could know if he was fulfilling the contract.

The clergy who had come into the ordained ministry later in life and following a career in the secular world, bring with them a diversity of experience. Int. 4 said, 'I got a real picture of how people live in National Service.' He found that at 'my very conservative, evangelical college I was not prepared for ministry as real life didn't enter in it, so I was very grateful I had been in National Service.'

Those who had attended one of the more evangelical colleges felt they had had very good training in pastoral care and counselling, though not so adequate in sustaining their own spirituality. No one felt they had been taught how to deal with diocesan committees.

Apart from the criticisms, most of the clergy greatly valued their time in college. Those who had had little previous education received invaluable theological training, whilst for many of them it was a time set aside to think about what God wanted them to become and to do. As Int. 14 said, 'theological college was excellent.' He trained in Australia. The training scheme was ecumenically based, so that he trained alongside Jesuit priests, Anglican priests and those from Non-Conformist Churches. He said, 'in terms of the practical work of a priest, it was superb. We had three years mandatory clinical pastoral education based on the American system. It gave me real competence.'

The training varied considerably with some colleges majoring in priestly formation whilst others concentrated on pastoral care and counselling. This often depended on the churchmanship of the college. In spite of the variations and the positive and negative feelings expressed about their training, all the clergy felt that was only part of the training for ordained

ministry. 'Most of the training occurs in the first parish where I trained as a curate.'

The Curacy:

Each of those interviewed expressed the importance of their first curacies.² It appeared to colour their whole view of later ministry. Int. 151 said, 'you need two curacies with good training incumbents to learn the job well.' He felt it was important to give people the right sort of background. 'At college I was not taught about mission theology or how to do baptisms and marriages. In my curacies I was given a lot of hands-on experience.' The importance of the training incumbent was expressed again and again. Several said, 'I owe so much to my first Vicar. I learned so much from him.'

In this category only one clergyman had anything negative to say about the curacy. Int. 172 said, 'I had a very good first curacy for nearly two years, when the Vicar left. I was on my own for four months and then had a difficult nine months with the new Vicar.' A senior cleric said that those clergy who have negative or abusive relationships with their training

² The first 3-4 years are served under a training incumbent as a curate

incumbents will repeat that pattern when they become training incumbents themselves. There appears a need for the Curate to relate to the incumbent as a good father/mother figure.

The Leader:

The subsequent categories were derived from the data material.

1. Being 'Myself'

Int. 4 believes that priests can be too holy and unworldly. He sees leadership as being 'about being myself. Most people see me as approachable and amiable. I like to be in the community with schools, pubs and shops. The Church is part of the whole package, even if people don't come to church, and see me as a total irrelevance. Most people have no idea what vicars do.'

2. The Organiser

Int. 14 said, 'I can say "no" to people. I am a highly organised priest and work to calendars and programmes. I have budgets and goals and I like to

plan long-term. I set boundaries and commitments.' If he sees people for counselling it is for one hour with his wife in the house. He finds it hardest to cope with people who have fundamentalist views about anything. This clergyman believes 'the moral ground has moved. I am a modern person and have kept up to date. I like to see the Church at the forefront of change and this parish is a liturgically experimenting parish.'

He has definite ideas and appears to find it hard to tolerate firm ideas that are opposed to his. He appears to need clear boundaries to provide a secure holding for himself. It is as though he leads from the front so that he will not be able to experience the fear of being out of control. This priest did a scientific degree where there appeared more chance of keeping everything in order. This priest's greatest anxiety is that he can never complete anything. 'I go to bed every night of the week with things left undone. I don't know what it's like to go to bed having completed a task.'

3. The Inflexible Theologian

Int. 151 said that as a leader 'I need a robust and sustainable spirituality. My relationship to God must be healthy. I need to think theologically so I can bring a theological perspective to bear on what we do in church.'

Again, this priest stated that 'I find it hard to cope with people whose views are diametrically opposed to mine. I find it hard to get on with those in Forward in Faith,³ as I don't believe they have any theological ground to stand on.' He then went on to say he finds people like himself difficult to cope with. 'I am often very quick to jump in on things and certain people drive me to a frazzle.'

This bright and rather tense man talked incessantly throughout the interview, with no space between to reflect on the questions. Being a training incumbent and a Rural Dean, he felt the only way to manage was to have a tight hold on everything. He appeared very restless and was not sure he wished to stay in parochial ministry.

He had a very clear sense of boundary management with people and children. He would take someone else with him to see a woman at night. If someone was sexually attracted to him, 'it happened once. I would now set my wife on them. If I was attracted to someone I would withdraw and would never be alone with them.' He sounded as though he would be unable to cope with an importunate female without the 'guard dog' qualities of his wife.

³ Anglo-Catholics who oppose the ordination of women to the priesthood

4. *The Visionary*

Int. 161 said, 'when I'm around things change. I have confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit to get things done. I have confidence we will build a new hospital in four years. I can hold goals for a very long time and I can hold a goal in mind for 17 to 18 years and get it done.' He continued to say that he could speak at 'the drop of a hat' and was able to listen to people. The people he finds it hard to cope with are 'the righteous people who won't listen through ignorance or prejudice.' He said he finds career clergy very difficult to cope with as 'they pose as holy men and very priestly, while committing adultery with their parishioners.'

He is very clear about managing boundaries. 'I will not transgress and go over boundaries in personal relationships.' He is very conscious, because of counselling training, about transference and 'especially if I'm dealing with marriage problems. I lay down the ground rules very clearly and make sure the person never gets between me and my family.' He acknowledges how flattering it is to receive people's confidence and love but keeps the relationship within the bounds of friendship only.

5. *The Diplomat*

Those clergy within the leading category appeared to have a clear sense of who they are and what they are aiming to achieve. Int. 172 said, 'priests need tact, diplomacy, flare for liturgy, administrative gifts, pastoral gifts and the ability to listen. I try not to reject people. It helps me that I have such a stable and happy marriage, as it prevents me from falling into temptation.' He finds, however, that boundary management is difficult as there are times when he needs to see people on their own because of confidentiality. He believes that he must not turn people away and 'I believe it is a real strength that people can come and talk without things being written down.' He finds thinking through moral issues very challenging, as he has to discover new insights. He said, 'I will back off if people get too dependent. I would not notice if someone was sexually attracted to me but I think my wife would notice, so I could discuss it with her.'

This clergyman's greatest sadness is that people won't talk to him about their faith. He doesn't really feel he has the luxury of time for small talk as he wants to get on with what he sees the work to be about.

6. A Manager of Conflict

One of the gay priests said, 'I need to be unafraid of conflict. I believe I have a secure sense of self and a growing spirituality. I do believe we are entering a new Dark Age in the Church of England, as many parishes will never have a priest again. I would like to see the large and small congregations as beacons of light. I do believe the homosexual issue could sink the Church.' This priest has learned to say 'no' and believes he has to have clear boundaries within relationships in the parish.

7. A Manager of Boundaries

Several of the clergy felt leading the parish involved loving people and accepting them as they are. They had clear ideas of boundary management. Whilst they admitted they may well, (and do), become sexually attracted to people they are ministering to, nevertheless the relationship must be kept within appropriate guidelines. Many of

them felt their spouse would provide the protection needed, either through being available in the house or, if at work, they felt that sharing the problem with their partners would prevent the situation escalating out of control.

Some of the clergy said they would share any unwarranted attention from others with their Churchwardens. If it was their problem then they would seek out a close friend to share it with. Even if they did not believe sexual attraction to others than their spouse was their problem, all the clergy were aware that it is a growing problem in the Church. They could speak of those, often within their own Deaneries or known to them, who had had affairs and had therefore had to leave their parishes.

Int. 201 said, 'people trust the priest and expect them to be part of their lives in a more personal way than other professionals. It is a privilege to go into people's homes and at times I do need to be alone with people, but we must be careful as there is great scope for abuse both ways.'

8. *Authoritarian*

Int. 19 has 'developed a pastoral ministry to some quite needy people.' He admits 'that some people find me bossy, rude, a controller and noisy and are frightened of me. I do find it hard to work with whinging people and those who try to tell me what I should be doing. I get angry if I feel I am being manipulated.' This priest wondered why he has not been given a senior position and appeared not to link that to his lack of tolerance for others. He believes he keeps in control of himself. He was once sexually attracted to someone and talked it out with them. After that it was no longer an issue.

This priest believes the Church of England has become increasingly marginalised, and the clergy also, so that the priest is no longer the person people turn to. He finds it depressing that 'clergy do less pastoral work and just keep the handles of the Church turning.'

9. *Others First*

Int. 43 has taken his model of leadership from the Army. 'I was trained to put the men first - see that they are fed first, then I could feed myself. If I am going to ask someone to do something I need to know I can do it as well.' He said that people 'see me as a leader, excitable, someone who puts my foot in it, who says sorry, is a pragmatist and who makes every event an occasion.'

He had taken part in a Myers Briggs personality type workshop based on Jung's personality types. Unusually for a clergyperson, he had come out as an extrovert. He said that in church 'I kiss a lot of women but I do it to everyone. I would be very surprised if anyone was sexually attracted to me, though I am often attracted to women. I find many of them very attractive.' He did say he would be very careful to avoid any compromising situations.

Discussion:

The clergy who were leaders within their parish often exhibited a firmness in thought and demeanour. They appeared to know what they wanted and where they were going. Nearly all of them were able to cope with the over-demanding by saying 'no', or saying that they were unable to meet everyone's needs. Self-knowledge appeared to be very important and also to know their own sexual limitations.

Because many dioceses have recently implemented codes of practise in working with children, the clergy were already alerted to the need for clear boundaries. Those who found such constraints difficult appeared very aware of the dangers inherent in not having a healthy wariness in relationships to others.

Listening and communicating were skills the clergy prized as the 'doing' skills needed to assist the 'being' skill of the priest. All of them echoed in different ways Int. 58, who said, 'I feel like a lump of butter spread too thinly over a fairly large slice of bread.' Even so, he added, 'Christ needs

leaders who expect God to do things.' Int. 66 said, 'people's appetite for my time is insatiable.'

Some clergy from this category saw the healing ministry as an important part of their leadership. Int. 246, who has been involved with the charismatic movement, feels 'the Church is getting too superficial. Training is inadequate and we are not critical enough of the world, which is getting too secular. I blame the hierarchy as they are the shop window of the Church and they have lost their cutting edge. Clergy are too thinly spread around and I want the Church to remain God's Church and not the people's Church.' This comes from an older clergyman who feels he has not been able to mould himself into modern ways.

Single clergy seem to have different problems from those in relationships. They become easy targets for lonely and single people in the congregations. Int. 262 said, 'I have to be careful as a widow woman keeps phoning me up. Often I have had to tell people to go and see someone else.' He has a housekeeper, which means he is never on his own in the Vicarage when he is seeing people.

The hardest thing for this young priest is that 'I feel very depressed about the split in the Church of England, and especially in the Catholic movement. I'm not sure where I am now with my friends in Forward in Faith. I don't feel they are asking the right questions.'

Int. 296 shared the previous priest's concerns but added, 'I'm worried more Evangelicals and Liberals are being ordained. I believe the balance in the Church has been lost because of Forward in Faith.'

Conclusions:

The clergy do not see themselves in isolation from the rest of the Church. It matters to them very much what is happening to the institution of the Church. They feel affected by motions passed at General Synod and pronouncements by the Bishops that appear to cause splits within the institution. It feels very unsafe.

About half of the clergy interviewed expressed concern about the Church and its long-term future. The rest felt it was exciting to be part of the Church with so much change taking place. Some said that 'it did not

matter if the Church of England died as God would raise something else up to take its place.'

Many of the older clergy found the changes difficult, especially those who had been ordained for a long time. Those approaching retirement spoke with seeming alacrity. Int. 39 said, 'I feel betrayed by the House of Bishops. I look to them to provide moral guidance and they don't. They're no help at all. They don't take a moral stand on abortion and homosexuality. People in the parish ask questions about why the Church does not give a clear lead.'

One of the questions looked at whether the clergy felt overwhelmed by people's needs. Those who had been in ministry for many years felt they did not, whilst those who were younger in age and in ordained years admitted to times when others' grief had overwhelmed them. Int. 77 said, 'I have a heroic view of being a priest. Two of my favourite saints were Jesuit missionaries who were very zealous - fasting, visiting, praying and winning souls - but I have been overwhelmed by people's needs when they've got attached to me and not to Christ.'

He is a young priest who finds situations in ministry 'quite scary'. Listening to him talking about his work in the parish it seems that though he offers a confident front he is, as he said, 'muddling through'.

There was only one woman priest in this category who appeared to see her role in the parish as leading. Int. 93 said, 'I am prepared to rebuke people and lead them out of the errors of their ways. As incumbent I have been given the cure of souls.' She believes, as a single woman, she is 'fair game' for people's misunderstanding. She said, 'I would be very upset if people said I was sleeping with a male or a female who happens to be staying in my house.' She is aware that she doesn't have a private life. 'I do not like aggressive males and the Church is full of them, and pompous people, and I can get tense and then I need to withdraw.' She said she is not a confrontational person, though has clear boundaries.

The clergy in this category appear to have fairly integrated ego identities. They have a clear sense of who they are, what they want out of life and what they believe God wants with them. They appear confident in their role as Vicar/Priest and are prepared to exercise that role, at times forcibly.

It might be expected that those who see their priestly role as a representative one may be those who see themselves as leading the congregation. However, that is not born out by the statistics. Many representative priests see themselves as enablers in their leadership style, whilst those who would call themselves pastors appear to give firm leadership to their congregations.

Enabler:

‘Enable... give (a person, etc.) the means or authority to do something.’
[The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1990 p.384] During the 20th Century there has been much written about empowering people. Beginning with the desire for women to be given the vote at the beginning of the 20th Century, the emphasis now, as the new century begins, is on equal opportunities for all. Whether it is about seeing women ordained to the priesthood alongside men, or gay rights, any minority group is banging the drum of empowerment. Certainly feminist writers seemed almost to hijack the word as they strove for equality for women in every area of life.

Whereas in the last category, ‘Leading’, the clergy appeared clear that theirs was the public guiding role, envisioning as well as teaching and preparing

others, this category is different. Here it seems the clergy strive to empower their own people to enable them to find out their gifts, take leadership roles within and outside the Church. They are concerned to promote lay leadership, seeing it as every bit as important as the ordained leadership.

Is it more stressful to hold all the leadership in one pair of hands or to delegate it? Those who do the former would have to defend against their own internal cracks. Several clergy said how difficult they found those people who had very different views from their own. Boundary management was important, not just out of propriety but in order to defend against their own vulnerability and to maintain a safe distance. Those who see their role as one of enabler will, by its very definition, be more intimately alongside people. That is a risky business.

These categories were implicit in the data gathered.

1. Ministry of Encouragement

Int. 187 said, 'I let things happen. I don't force anything. I have a modest degree of discernment.' Int. 33, who was trained in psychology and

human growth and development at college said, 'people see me as approachable. I am less judgmental than I used to be and I am seen to have a ministry of encouragement.' Even so, many of the clergy empower others from their own weakness.

2. *Facilitator*

Int. 190, a clergywoman, said, 'I get feedback from the Bishop and others that I am abrupt. I'm a "leaping-in" sort of person. Maybe I'm abrupt as a defense against any sort of attack. The Church hasn't really helped as I can feel sorry for myself if people expect too much of me.' She feels, however, that she has changed and is changing. 'I used to be very black and white and allowed my piety to box people up. I had to know I was in control. I had separated out my sexuality from my spirituality and I needed the structures of the Church to keep me safe.' Now she feels she is more mature and able to be kind and accepting. She sees her role as 'teaching and enabling people to take responsibility'.

Though she admitted she would enjoy someone being sexually attracted to her, she feels she knows how to maintain appropriate boundaries. The fact

that she has a good sexual relationship within her marriage has helped her to cope when she has felt attracted to others.

3. *Journeying Alongside Others*

Int. 194 rides a motorbike 'in order to switch off'. This priest describes himself 'as very vulnerable and exposed' and especially so when wearing a dog collar. 'I won't wear it outside the parish.' Enjoying such a pastime may act as a defense against the exposing role he offers as a priest.

He believes the priest needs 'gifts of openness, tenacity, vision and a Godlike sense of humour.' His ministry is about 'dealing face to face with people.' He will take other people along with him when visiting in order to train them. Sometimes he feels excited by the Church of England and feels energised at all the change going on. At other times he is depressed because he fears the Church won't change and will become irrelevant and an embarrassment. He believes the Church 'needs to stop being priest-focussed and centred on the priest. Instead, it needs to be people-focussed and to build up the people of God.' He is against building up the hierarchy.

Int. 194 said 'it is an awe-inspiring time being with someone when they've just learned they've got cancer and have said they want me there when they die. Also, the time when a baby was born with fatal problems.'

4. *Training Others for Ministry*

Several clergy saw their ministry as giving people space and encouragement to develop their gifts and so make the contributions that they can. Int. 33 said, 'it is a privilege to be a priest and a joy to be in a position to talk to people about spiritual things.' He said he is less judgmental than he used to be though 'I would want to take a biblical line on morality.' He believes in preparing people for leadership.

This priest had a very difficult curacy. His training incumbent was a very able man who 'thought if I couldn't do what he could do I wasn't up to the job. I felt very inadequate. It was a very unhappy time.' He described himself as a 'closed man' who doesn't easily open up - yet he did do so in the interview, openly admitting his failures. It is not surprising that he is now working in the Prison Service.

5. *Collaborative Ministry*

Several in this category stated that their theological training did not equip them for working in a parish. Int. 94 said, 'the pastoral side of ministry is very important. I believe in collaborative ministry. I have wonderful people in church who do pastoral visiting and administrative work on behalf of the church. I try and teach people that we are all involved in ministry. I am able to say to people "I can't do something".'

He describes himself as a very tactile person who will 'put my arm around everyone.' He does, however, maintain careful boundaries and at all times tries 'to maintain Christian values and standards.' He believes society is post-Christian.

Int. 99, a conservative Evangelical, wants the mystique of the priesthood to be taken away. 'I want to be seen as a straightforward person. I believe people have created too many barriers between me and them because I'm a priest, so I have been knocking them down.' He believes the traditional values of morality the Church has stood for in the past are more important than ever 'but I have to meet people where they are.'

This priest had a difficult curacy as the Vicar moved on only three weeks after he was ordained. He was left to 'run' the church for a whole year on his own. He said, 'I have never been overwhelmed by people emotionally.'

6. *The Carer*

Some of the clergy saw their ministry mainly within the whole parish so that Int. 122 said, 'I live a social gospel.' He is involved in many concerns of the community from Age Concern to the town council. He said, 'I get on with everyone and as I'm out and about I say "hello" to everyone.' He gets more passionate about social injustice than about people's changing moral attitudes.

Four female clergy were in the enabling category. Without gender stereotyping it is interesting to speculate whether female clergy are more used to enable others than male clergy. Int. 256 said, 'I have compassion and discernment. It has helped being a mum.' Int. 271 believes 'experience of life helps. I need to be kind, sympathetic and available. Though a leader, I need to enable others to take responsibility for themselves.' This female priest said, 'I have found that women don't really like another woman in leadership. I have three very strong and arrogant

women in one church and I don't handle stropky people well.' She feels very sad at the divisions in the Church over the ordination of women.

Int. 236 believes 'suffering is part of being a priest. I feel it is important to be empathic. The call to ministry is about taking up the cross.' This priest finds it very difficult when people don't like him. He avoids rows and confrontation. He felt his training did not prepare him for parish ministry. This priest appeared an angry hurting man. At every question he seemed to need to say how wrong the Church was for ordaining women. Having come into the Church looking for affirmation and security, this man felt let down by the Church. Though trying to enable others, he appeared 'disorientated and unsure where I am going because of the women's issue.'

Discussion:

Some of these clergy enable their parishioners to find their own gifts and use them. They do this from a strong internal ego where they appear able to meet people where they are. Having experienced pain in their own lives, and daring to face their own vulnerability, they have no need to hide behind a mask of leadership. However, other clergy minister from

weakness. It is not something they have worked through but were living through at the time of the interview. The priest whose wife had recently walked out was now enabling others to care for him. Whereas previously he had kept aloof from people and shared nothing of himself, out of necessity he was no longer able to hold up the mask in place. As a result he admitted that it was a 'healing process', allowing others to care for him. His very vulnerability he began to see as a tool for closer relationships.

These hurting clergy felt 'let down by the Church' and turned in their despair to their congregations for help. The parish church, as represented by the people, became the matrix cradling the wounded priests. The people of God become the much needed transitional object rather than the Church or the hierarchy.

Controlling:

It has already been noted that none of the clergy perceived themselves as exercising a confrontational style of leadership. In fact several of the clergy stated they did not enjoy confrontation and, in fact, 'ran away from it.' Yet such an public ministry inevitably will attract conflict. Parochial Church Council meetings are often arenas for the Church disaffected to state their

grievances loudly and clearly. Members, however committed as Christians, have little compunction in telling the incumbent clergy that their predecessors managed the parish far more successfully than they do. Many a meeting is prevented from forward planning by such statements as, 'oh, it was tried 30 years ago and it didn't work then', or, 'we've always done it that way and can't possibly change things now'. Eager clergy arriving with vision and enthusiasm have found themselves annihilated by such words.

Though none of the clergy admitted to using a confrontational style yet there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that there are clergy ministering in the parishes of England who are exceedingly confrontational. Those who have experienced an irate priest when asking for baptism, wedding or funeral services to be conducted in a particular way do not forget. Because clergy are like others in every area of life, there will be those who are gentle and those who are dominant. Why then did no-one in the sample admit to such strong feelings?

It may be that biblical injunction urges against a confrontational style. Many biblical figures are powerful people who thunder out their message. Paul is one of them. However, he urges upon his readers a gentle style. 'As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with

compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you have against one another.' [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.1366] This message of love is a powerful deterrent against conflict, coming as it does after Jesus' powerful message in the gospels 'to love one another'.

Some of those clergy may well be dominant clergy but unaware of their own confrontational style, though one did admit to being 'bossy and rude'. It would be hard for any of them to admit they are *always* confrontational and such a possibility may well not equate with their own image of themselves.

If not confrontational, are they controlling? This need to control is laid down during an early stage of development. It is difficult to admit to being controlling, as that can sound very manipulative. The clergy who lead their congregations often appeared controlling as they shared their vision and ideas with people. They did not, however, seem to take this control to extremes. Control is a defense which provides a false sense of security. Looking through the sample, only two of the clergy seemed to fit this category.

The following categories were implicit in the data collected.

1. Controls against Emotional Interaction

Int. 106 had said that coming into the ordained ministry was for her a way of 'avoiding real life. I felt I could create my own life as I was less likely to make mistakes.' This female priest had grown up in a Vicarage 'so knew the score. It felt safe.' For her the world had seemed strange and alien as she 'had never had any contact with anyone in the world.' Because of her mother's verbal violence to her as a child, it was not surprising that she now employs logic and reason in every situation. She said, 'I can't cope with feely, feely people. They find my logical mind difficult. I mustn't be emotionally tied up with people because I may need to rebuke them.' She felt no-one would be sexually attracted to her and if they were 'I would suggest they went to another church.' She said, 'if I was sexually attracted to someone I would move, as it would interfere with my work.' She described herself as very liberal in her thinking about morality, though she believes in commitment and responsibility. She said, 'I am able to step in and out of different thought worlds and work within their framework.' It is not surprising that this very controlling priest prepares services meticulously.

This interview was not easy as she gave nothing of herself. She appeared very happy in her work and self-sufficient. It was even difficult to get into the front of her Vicarage because of the closed five-barred gates. It was like a strong metaphor for her high defenses, which had been built up from an early age.

2. *Controlling in Order to Survive*

Int. 195 also came from a very difficult background. He described his father as 'a strict authoritarian' and that his parents 'were hooked on duty and I felt cheated out of any emotional input from them. They never took any interest in the school I went to and never came to anything.' Though he said his early childhood was happy, he described his mother as manipulative. His parents had opposed him being ordained and his mother said 'I was ruining my life.' Because she treated him like a five-year old he said he wouldn't speak to her again and he didn't. He did not go and see her when she died. Not only were his parental relationships very traumatic, but he had been married and divorced twice. He no longer sees his children.

At interview this priest appeared depressed. He was slow and ponderous in his speech. Even so, he seemed a rather ruthless man who, though talking about forgiveness, is unable to extend that to his parents and to his children. He said, 'I have strict rules about boundary management even though I come over as easygoing. I came from college thinking I was going to convert the world and everyone would tow the line but in the parish my beliefs went out of the window as I began to work with people who were struggling against the odds. I began to see how courageous people are and that often what I said was not helpful.' He went on to say that he finds people who lie very difficult and there are times when he takes control of situations and 'won't allow people to make too many demands on me.'

He was aware that if people were sexually attracted to him it was, in fact, 'to the dog-collar and their image of what it is.' He went on to say it was one of the contributing factors to the break-up of his first marriage. Someone was attracted to him and because he stopped going to her house 'she created havoc.' If he felt attracted to someone he would just acknowledge it and then do nothing about it.

This priest has worked in some very deprived areas of London. He knows what it is to be deprived himself and has experienced at first hand the need

to survive. Controlling the environment is about survival for this man. As he talked it felt he was describing a creative controlling, rather than a manipulative way of working. Having had some training in family therapy, it felt that not only was he prepared to address others' needs but at least to attempt to understand his own.

Discussion:

Int. 195 believes the Church of England 'is putting its house in order pastorally in its concern for clergy.' He believes the institution has the courage to tackle hard issues like gay priests and women's ordination and not to take 'a hard line'. Talking to this priest it felt like talking to a battle-weary veteran. Unlike the previous female priest, whose house seemed 'guarded' against intruders and was immaculate, his home was lived in. He had already been battered from within and without and appeared to be using his scars for others, whereas the female priest, having been 'battered' as a child, was determined that would never happen to her again if possible. Clergy who controlled their lives in order to survive seemed aware that this need began in a dysfunctional childhood.

Some clergy needed answers logically worked out in order to make everything safe. Control seemed a negative force for them whilst for others it appeared a creative way in which to cope with the demands of the work.

Diffident:

Several of the clergy expressed their fear of leading from the front, of making decisions and of facing conflict. They appeared anxious and distrustful in their handling of people and very unsure of themselves in their public role.

The problem of anxiety was studied in depth by Freud, first in a paper on anxiety neurosis (1895) and then in a major work, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926). He contrasted a realistic anxiety with a neurotic anxiety. The former is a natural anxiety which is precipitated by an external danger, such as nearly being run over by a car. The immediate reaction to such an occurrence is to take flight. If, however, the danger is perceived as threatening life, then the reaction would be either flight or fight.

Freud was particularly interested in the study of neurotic anxiety. There appears to be no obvious reason for alarm from the external world and yet

the person exhibits a profound state of anxiety. Freud believed that this state of anxiety had its genesis in the act of birth and the separation of the baby from its mother. In studying the clergy under this category, it was noted that their 'anxiety always foresees the most frightful of all possibilities, (they) interpret every chance event as a premonition of evil and exploit every uncertainty in a bad sense.' [Freud. 1976 p.446]

The following categories came from statements made by the clergy in the interviews.

1. Programmed to Please

Int. 153 said, 'I don't like confrontational people as I am programmed to please.' He said he hated rudeness and where people are two-faced and say things behind my back.' Throughout the interview he appeared anxious. At just over 30 years of age he seemed younger than his age. He openly shared his fear of becoming depressed. He described his childhood as happy, though 'I hated my sisters for long periods and fought with them and I can remember bad times at home.'

In re-reading the transcript it appears that he was very anxious to assure himself that he had a happy childhood, even though his 'parents argued at times.' There were some highly important parental figures in his life, such as his school chaplain and his grandmother.

In discussing his present work he said, 'the friendships I made at college are very important to me. They give me security.' He is in his first parish as an incumbent and feels he has been 'thrown in at the deep end.' He feels he 'cannot lay down the law to people who don't share my faith, so I am liberal in my preaching on moral issues. I don't give a lead on sexual morals as I don't believe the church is here primarily as a moral institution.' He believes his job is to talk about God's love. He is very worried about what is happening within the Church of England, though he is happy that women have been ordained. He is concerned about the Forward in Faith movement and the strength of Evangelicals. He believes the Church should be a balanced Church. He said, 'I could see myself leaving the Church to become a Roman Catholic.' The Roman Catholic Church provides even stronger boundaries than the Anglican Church.

The psychotherapeutic needs of this young priest seemed to be about safe and clear structures that are a defense against his anxiety.

2. *An Avoider*

Int. 164 said, 'I have a low opinion of myself and so would find it astonishing if anyone was sexually attracted to me. I avoid situations where people become dependant. I have never had an awkward encounter but I am very uneasy when I know members of the congregation are having an affair.'

This young priest appeared slow thinking and seemed to have difficulties in answering the questions. Before the interview he had had a very stressful week baptising a dead baby and then conducting the funeral. He described himself as overwhelmed by mental illness and 'I won't get involved and so I leave it to the professionals. I just do what I feel I can cope with.'

Int. 164 had struggled with verbal bullying at school. He did not tell his parents as they 'struggled with each other.' He has tried 'to do what is correct.' He and his wife struggled at college when they realised their rather idealised picture of ministry was not the reality. He has a fear of not getting things right and so is ruled by this deep existential anxiety. It does

not allow him to step out of line or to think creatively. It is almost as though his anxiety is like a straightjacket that prevents him flying free.

3. *Isolated*

Int. 116 was depressed and unwell when the interview took place. His early traumas, due to his parents' divorce when he was seven years old, have profoundly coloured his life. Coupled with his divorce from his first wife, both have produced what he described as 'an awful lot of darkness.'

He has found help through the Jungian training he has done. However, he appeared a very fragile, hurting man. 'I'm remote to people and I don't let people bond with me. People can get very dependent so I work like a therapist and keep to time with people.' He described how at college the talk was about 'the pain in the mind of the priest.' Because he cannot offer several sessions of counselling to people, pastoral care is trivialised so I don't do much of it. My wife doesn't like me being out morning, afternoon and evening, so I'm not. Why should anyone work morning, afternoon and evening?' He talked a lot about his shadow side and how he doesn't let other people's needs overwhelm him.

4. *Alienated*

Int. 117 said his mother thought that religion was a crutch. 'She was against me getting ordained.' He 'fought against the training as I didn't fit into the ethos of the college.' He went on to say 'that for 95% of the people, what I stand for is an irrelevance and that affects me. The values I stand for are ignored, but I try to build bridges, but I am very defensive about it. I do get depressed about it all.'

This man was anxious throughout the interview. He talked a great deal and it was hard to keep him to the questions. He appeared very real as he shared his struggles with God, 'as God is not doing what he promises to do.' He makes it clear 'to people who demand too much of me that I am extremely fallible and I can't meet their expectations.'

Int. 204 was against the ordination of women to the priesthood. Because of his depression he did not easily fit into any category. He was, at the time of the interview, unable to exercise a 'leading' role. He said, 'the college training didn't prepare me for ministry at all as it has changed drastically over the past 25 years. I believe one needs enormous resilience

and perception in order to bring a spiritual awareness into people's lives. I try to be tolerant with demanding people.'

This priest is very worried about the Church of England. 'the prime issue is the women's vote and the Church looking backwards. It is not cohesive. Clergy numbers are down and they are under increasing pressure.' This hurting man found it hard to even return to ministering. He was unable to enable anyone else to find a role as he appeared to feel he had lost his. There was a sense of ego disintegration.

There was one female priest in this category. She was a widow without children. Int. 119 said, 'people do not feel I am as accessible as I ought to be. As people don't like to upset me complaints go to the Churchwardens. Having three parishes to run I feel at times I am skating over the surface.' She finds young people difficult and does not pop into the various village groups. She finds socialising difficult and after Sunday services she just wants to collapse and be on her own. She said, 'the computer age is making me very alarmed. I feel I am being left behind.'

Discussion:

It was the clergy from the southern diocese who spoke of the Church and the clergy as being an irrelevance. Though people in the north did not appear to attend church any more regularly or in greater numbers than the south, the Church was seen to be part of the community and therefore important - especially for occasional offices. In the south, people are more likely to opt for civic wedding services and arrange the funerals of their relatives without benefit of clergy than is the case in the north.

Looking at the clergy within this category certain elements stand out. None of them appears confident of their own ability to lead their congregations forward. None expressed any vision they may have. All of them appeared fearful and hesitant about getting too involved with people. There appeared a clear connection between early childhood deprivation, later breakdown of adult intimate relationships and present-day difficulties with relating within the parish. It is not surprising that symptoms of neurotic anxiety are discernible.

Conclusion:

Being a priest is internal. It is how the clergy feel about themselves which is expressed in their priestly persona. However, being a Vicar/Rector is public. It is to do with how others see them. Not only that, but it affects others as well – the community, congregation and the wider Church. It is often not possible to hide feelings of fragility and incompetence. If the clergy find themselves near a parish that appears to be thriving, then their feelings of inadequacy are multiplied, as they are made more aware of their own failure. Few numbers at services, combined with people from their parish attending the more ‘successful’ churches, exacerbates the problem.

Out of the whole sample, the greatest percentage of priests seemed to cope with the public role they have to enact. The small percentage who struggle are like many in the wider Church. They express overtly what those others experience at different times in their ministry. The question to be addressed must be, how can the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy be met before they reach the degree of brokenness highlighted in the last category?

It is in their public role that the clergypersons' emotional strength/weakness is exposed, so that the validity of the second hypothesis is underlined. This, then, has a direct relationship to their reaction to the modern-day culture.

Chapter X

EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

'Under heaven all can see beauty as beauty only
because there is ugliness.
All can know good as good only because there is evil.
Therefore having and not having arise together.
Difficult and easy complement each other.
Long and short contrast each other;
High and low rest upon each other;
Front and back follow each other.

(Lao Tsu, Tao Te Ching. 1973)

[Rowe. 1983 p.101]

Life is about contrasts and opposites externally and internally. Externally, light and dark, good and bad and internally, health and disease. 'Without dark we would not know the light. Without death we would not know we were alive. Without imperfection we would not know perfection.' [Rowe. 1983 p.101]

The human race lives with the ambiguities of opposites whether they inhabit the two third world areas where the survival of war and poverty is top of the agenda, or the rich western third of the globe. Night and day, love and hate, anger and harmony, peace and war march side by side in every human being, in every community and every continent. A person's emotional and spiritual

strength will depend on such external contrasts and internal resources. This will determine how an individual lives their life.

The World and how it Affects the Clergy:

This is pertinent to this research. It has already been noted that the historical and sociological changes have had a profound effect on the Anglican Church. This, coupled with the ordination of women to the priesthood and the division that caused, plus the ongoing debate about gay clergy, has appeared to inflict a near fatal wound upon the institution. No longer is the Church of England seen in good standing in the country. No longer are the clergy respected for their erudition. No longer are the majority of people drawn to the dispensers of salvic mystery. As many of the clergy have stated, 'I am an irrelevance and so is the Church.'

Those who work for large business and commercial organisations experience stress and burnout. Many experience the trauma of redundancy. The feeling of being useless and of no importance operates at every level of society.

It may be thought that clergy are immune from all of this. They are seldom, if ever, made redundant and certainly not if they have the freehold of their parish. They are only removed from the office through 'conduct unbecoming the life and work of a clerk in holy orders and neglect of duty.' [Leeder. 1997 p.403] They have a lot of responsibility under the Bishop. In practice, the incumbent exercises his/her accountability without much reference to the hierarchy at all. They are, as it has already been stated, an iconic figure for their congregations. The uniform they wear adds cohesion to their role and status, providing them with a mask behind which to hide. So why is it that so many of the clergy admit to being stressed and finding it hard to cope?

Surely much of the answer to this has to do with the clergy's sense of irrelevance in the culture in which they live. It is as though on one hand the work they do proclaims a gospel message they profoundly believe in. However, on the other hand, no one else appears to. That, for many clergy, feels like crying in the wind - all the time swimming against the tide. Those who have a well-integrated ego are more able to find the opposing forces exciting and challenging. Those with a fragile sense of self appear unable to do that. They need the affirmation of the hierarchy, the congregation and those around to affirm their indistinct self-image. When that is not

forthcoming their belief system does not appear robust enough to defend against fragmentation.

The Paradox of the Christian Faith:

In many ways it is paradoxical. The clergy have learned that the Christian message is about the cross as well as the resurrection, about dying to self as well as receiving new life in Christ Jesus and about striving, as well as coming to Jesus for rest.

The gospel has never been seen as a soft option. The first disciples endured martyrdom in many gruesome forms. They were not promised a peaceful and easy existence in this life and neither are the present-day leaders promised that. There has been no physical persecution of Christians in this country for many centuries, (though there has been consistently in other countries throughout the world, both in the past and in the present.)

Clergy have little financial remuneration but they do have certain work advantages. By and large their job is secure and they usually live in a house larger than others in the parish and larger than they would be able to afford if

in secular employment. After serving their curacies they are put in charge of a parish and so are able to exercise total responsibility for the Church's work in that area.

Area of Research:

The last area that was explored in the research examined the emotional and spiritual life of the incumbents. Questions to do with what being a priest means to them, stress suffered, times of loss of faith or doubts, how they express anger - were all explored. The clergy shared the worst time and the best time they had experienced in their ministry, as well as their feelings about the amount of support they do or do not receive from the hierarchy. They were asked if they had ever felt like giving up. Using grounded theory, the questions asked enabled the clergy to explore their own perceptual world.

By the time this area of the interview was reached the clergy were sharing openly and honestly. Many of them feel this is the crux of ministry - whether they are able to cope with the daily demands of the work, the intrusiveness into their private lives and the effect it has on their close family and friends. The internal reaction to the external pressures has a direct effect on their

emotional and spiritual health. It is difficult to estimate whether, if they are spiritually strong, they are more emotionally stable or whether, if they are emotionally stable, their spiritual life remains intact.

This question will be divided into two parts - the emotional and the spiritual - though that is an artificial division, for one has a direct bearing on the other.

Emotional Strength:

Fig. 17 shows the different categories that have been delineated to express the clergy's emotional strength. The answers to these questions are their own perceptions of their emotional state.

The categories generated were derived from the implicit communications from the data collected and my own perception of the respondents' emotional health. The limitation of such categorisation was that it depended on how the clergy presented themselves on the day of the interview. This was largely determined by the events of the days before, their immediate relationships and their physical wellbeing. Grounded theory is an inductive analysis,

where theory is developed from listening to what people say. This allowed for categories and themes to emerge from the data and validated this exercise.

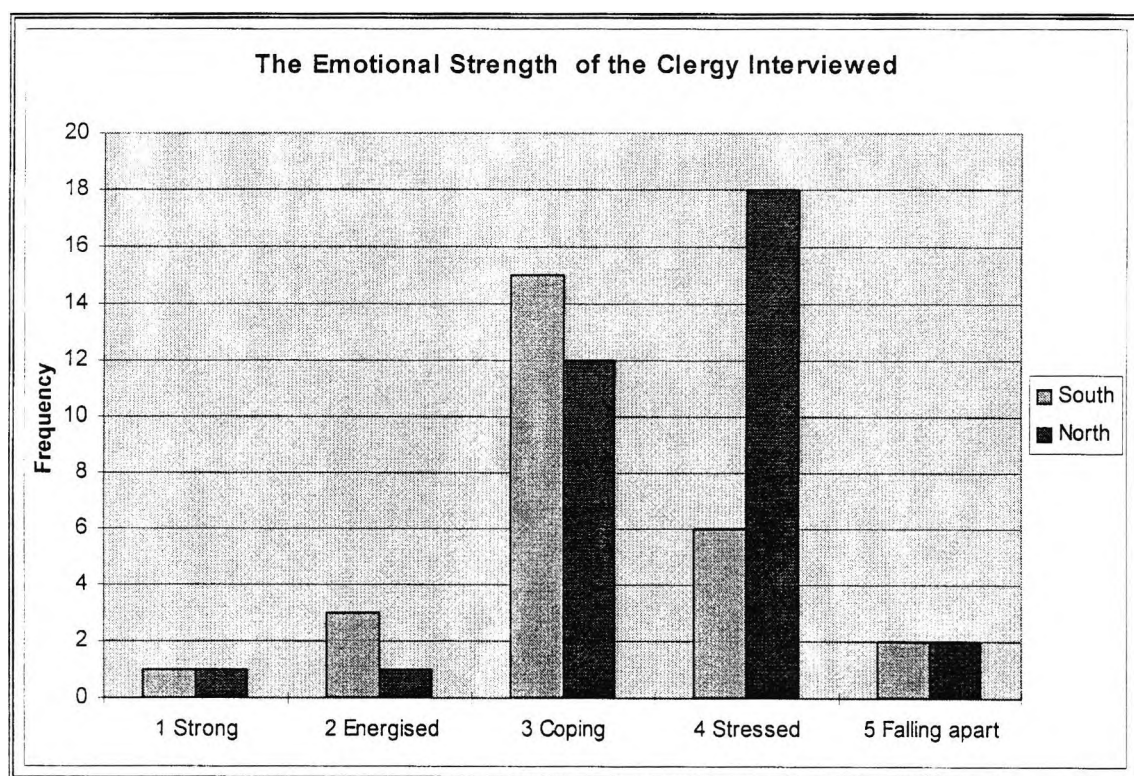


Fig. 17

Emotional Strength and the Ageing Process:

Fig. 18 looks at the breakdown of the different ages into each category. It is interesting to note that none of the younger clergy were experiencing a sense of fragmentation. Only within the middle age bracket did the clergy experience the full range of emotions. The middle age group would be dealing with adolescent children, ageing parents; disenchantment with their

job prospects; spouses (mainly wives) starting new careers as well as the inner emotional turmoil that these events raise.

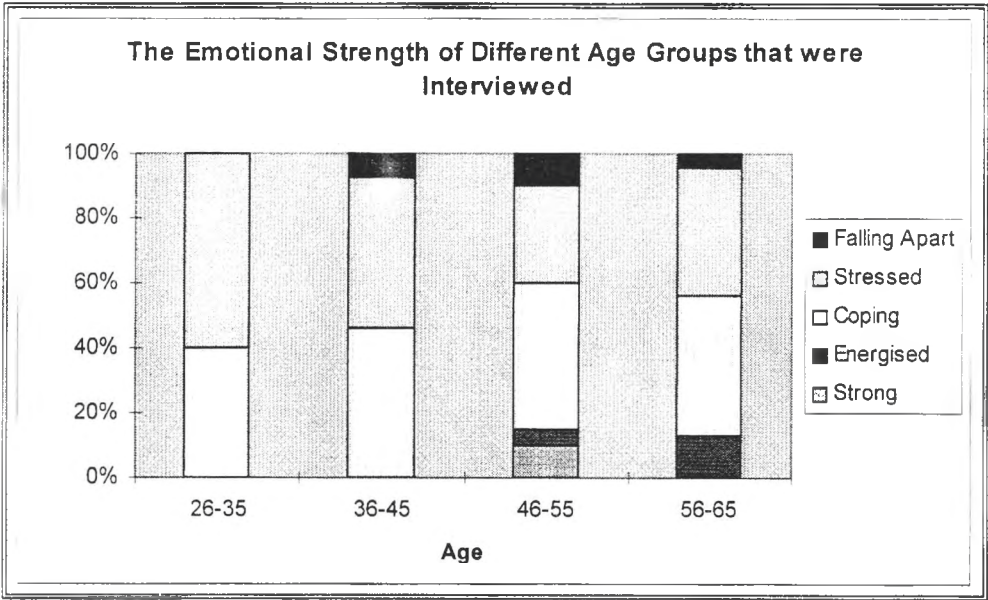


Fig. 18

The over 55s are beginning to think about the last job they will do. Several expressed anger that they had not been considered for preferment. They felt their gifts had not been recognised and that many clergy occupying hierarchical posts were less gifted than they felt they were. There is also the dilemma at this stage of life as to when to look for work in another parish. If they start a new work at 50, some feel they will then have too long a time in one place before they retire. If they leave looking for a parish until their late 50's they know that few parishes will be interested. Most parishes are looking for an incumbent in their early 40's, married with children. This is a very

stressful situation for the older clergy and they can easily reach retirement feeling disillusioned and passed over.

Integration and Individuation:

There are different words used to describe the person who appears to manage life and all its vicissitudes in a responsible way.

Integration - 'According to *Classical Theory* the human psyche starts as an unintegrated, unorganized id and becomes integrated as a result of *ego development*.' [Rycroft. 1968 p.75] From the infant's first breath, life is experienced as a paradox. The first feed and the sensation of being held are felt as positive, whereas the child who has inadequate nurture when the breast is unavailable experiences great fear, anxiety and rage. How can the much-needed object, 'breast/mother', be sometimes given and sometimes withheld? Klein (1946) suggests that the only way the infant can manage such terrifying opposing feelings towards mother is by splitting, (that is the paranoid-schizoid position), reforming what feels good and projecting the bad outward, at such an early stage. Reality, 'i.e. that the good and bad can reside in one person' is unbearable. Klein (1952) said, "if the split between the two aspects of the

object is too deep the all important processes of ego integration... are impaired... A very deep and sharp division between loved and hated objects indicates that destructive impulses, envy and persecutory anxiety are very strong and serve as a defense against these emotions.” [Mitchell, J. 1986 p.217] This lack of ego integration results in the adult looking for the idealised parent.

A hypothetical example of this process is that of a clergyperson who has exercised a ‘successful’ ministry, but for various reasons was then suspended from his job. His early childhood was experienced as lacking love, affirmation or any security. He has since then looked inappropriately to others to find the love he never experienced. Consequently, he has a sense of disintegration. However, ‘integration implies wholeness. A person becomes at one as he brings together and consolidates his previously divided parts. [Brown and Pedder. 1979 p.84]

Individuation:

It is this integration that Jung [1935] was describing when he used the term ‘individuation’. No longer does the individual place ‘the guarantee of his

happiness, or of his life even, in factors outside himself, whether they be persons, ideas or circumstances, but comes to realise that everything depends on whether he holds the treasure or not.' [Jung. 1968 p.186]

Many of the clergy appear to have placed enormous importance on the support they gain from their spouse, the hierarchy or the parish. The state of their emotional health seems to rest within 'objects' outside themselves. When the Church ordained women priests, that was experienced as an attack by the 'bad object'. Equally so, if the parish or hierarchy do not affirm and value them it can seem that the hierarchy is rejecting and abandoning them or the parish is turning its back on them. For those with an unclearly differentiated ego, these good/bad objects may have a direct result on the emotional integration or not of the clergy.

Research has been carried out studying stress amongst clergy over the past 30 years. Studies have explored whether a candidate's personality in theological training and their motivation will determine whether they will suffer stress and burnout in later years. This has been followed by looking at style and effectiveness in ministry. In America Weiser [1985] 'found more successful clergy to have greater ego strength, impulse control and object relations and

that more successful ministers had a strong supportive father during their formative years.' [Francis and Jones. 1996 p.110]

However, Rayburn, Richmond and Rogers, [1986] in their studies on stress amongst religious leaders, found that they experienced a lower overall occupational stress and personal strain than the rest of the population. Stress is a recognised problem amongst those within the caring professions. Clergy stress occurs because of 'work overload, (too many meetings to the detriment of pastoral work; time pressures); role conflicts (balancing family and work priorities; conflicts between planned and crises work; church conservation); role ambiguity....; dealing with grief and people in need...; relationships with parishioners and parish (unrealistic demands...); and self pressures (inability to say no; not appreciating one's own limitations; difficulties in delegating).'

[Francis and Jones. 1996 p.134]

In exploring the data of this research it appears that most of the clergy felt they suffer from emotional stress. How much does that deter them from functioning at an appropriate level? How much is it a sign that they have not yet reached a state of individuation? If the clergy appear to lack integration and individuation, are there then clear pointers to highlight an adequate

response by the Church to their psychotherapeutic needs? This will become clearer as each category is explored investigating their emotional strength.

Strong:

This category denotes a strong integrated ego with all the psychological signs that integration and individuation have occurred. Only two male priests come within this category. Both describe themselves as modern Catholics. The following categories were implicit in the data collected.

1. *Stable Family Life*

They come from Church backgrounds and attended day schools and describe their childhood as happy. One sees his priesthood as representative, whilst the other believes he is more of a pastor. Though he would, however, see himself as a representative priest, he would not want to 'get in the way of people seeing God.' He is not, therefore, representing God, but enabling others to find Him. Interestingly, both are only children, from working class families.

Int. 142 lived very near some cousins so was brought up in an extended family. Int. 321 said he was not academically gifted as 'it was not until Secondary School that they realised I was as blind as a bat.' Though he went to 'Grammar School, I faded without trace.' His father contracted tuberculosis and was very ill for several years. That was a difficult time, as 'father and I didn't speak for a long time. I'm sure it was just a male territorial thing. When I left home we became very good friends. We weren't a threat to each other any more.'

2. Supportive Partners

Int. 142 is married with children. Though his wife has her own profession, she still 'sees it as her role to support me and to keep me on the rails.'

Int. 321 is in a stable homosexual relationship of 14 years. His partner works apart from the Church and is not permanently resident in the parish. He describes the relationship as 'deeply supportive and helpful.' He described coming to his parish seven years before as a 'crucifixion. The last Vicar had left because of it. I decided the gay issue would have to come out. It was in the national papers. We have never kept it secret but it became a

resurrection. We were seen as a couple, there was no hiding, only freedom.'

He said that there was also a very good editorial in a local paper about his previous ministry. This priest said he has always been able to receive support from the hierarchy.

3. *The Joy of Priesthood*

Int. 321 said, 'I enjoy every minute of being a priest. When I wake up I want to get on with priesting. It invades every part of my life, whether I'm in the pub or not.' This priest appears to be saying that he is unable to withdraw from being a priest. It gives meaning to his life and a sense of identity. Though the 'invasion' implies intrusiveness, this priest welcomes rather than rejects such a plight. He said that he now gets less stressed 'as I can stand back from things and I am more laid back. Each Lent I have a sorting out time when I go on retreat.' The only stress he feels is because he is in his 50's and not his 30's and so has less adrenaline flowing. Though the parish can be stressful he said, 'I don't get deep stress. I never ask why am I here and what am I doing? I never want to give up and open up a teashop.' He said that he isn't an angry person but seems to 'explode every five years and that lasts ten seconds.' He explained that people know when he is annoyed.

Int. 142 said, 'I never thought of being anything else but a priest. I feel very fulfilled and happy.' At the time of interview, he was thinking about moving and had been shortlisted for a job but he was not over concerned if nothing turned up in the immediate future.

4. *Dealing with Conflict*

Int. 142 said, 'I've not suffered from stress, though I nearly did this year.' He was chairing a lay committee on which they spent two years planning for a large diocesan occasion. His colleagues in the parish released him from preaching for three months to allow it to be more manageable. He said that 'two thirds of the diocesan clergy did not support the event or encouraged their parishes to support it.' He believes clergy have developed a 'bunker mentality and do not want to know of anything going on outside their own churches and parishes.' He said, 'lay leaders are often hampered by less than supportive clergy. I believe so much of what happens depends on the clergy being on board. If they're not, the laity lose heart. I do believe the freehold should go and that clergy should have renewable contracts of five or seven years.'

He said he is a placid man who doesn't often show anger. 'If I get angry then I talk it out. I don't rant and rave. I bounce things off my wife. My worst time was six months before I was ordained. I had got through my finals and just felt totally dry. I did not know which way to go. I'd sailed through the course up to that time so it was very hard. Another difficult time was when I was in a very tough parish. The work took up a lot of my time when the children were small and my wife needed me and we didn't have much money.' When talking about support from the hierarchy, he said he did not know what the clergy were really looking for, 'as we can pick up the phone and ask to see someone at any time.'

Discussion:

Both these clergy have experienced pressurised times for different reasons. However, they have faced the challenge and have never doubted the rightness of their calling to ordained ministry. Not only that, but they have supportive partners who are equally fulfilled in their own chosen careers. There is no competition about whose job comes first, though when and if Int. 142 is offered a job some distance away, his wife will have to relocate her work. The

other interesting fact that came out of the data was that neither clergy talked of being 'passed over'. They were content with where they were. Int. 142, though he was looking for a job within the hierarchy, stated 'if that doesn't happen I am happy to remain a parish priest, for that was what I was ordained for.'

Energised:

A definition of energy; 'a capacity for action... effective power... the capacity for doing work and overcoming resistance.' [The Collins Pocket Dictionary. 1981 p.283] Five of the clergy from the sample came under this category. They exhibited many of the attributes of the two clergy in the previous category.

Backgrounds:

However, their backgrounds, life experiences and relationship status were very varied. One clergyman was divorced, one single, two married with children and the clergywoman was married without children. Three of the men were not brought up in Christian homes, whereas the female priest's father was a

Vicar and the other male priest's parents went to church. Two of the clergy were sent to boarding school and one male priest described his childhood 'as very lonely because my parents worked hard all the time.' This clergyman also experienced the loss of an elder brother who died of drowning when he was only three years old. A couple of them had what they described as 'breakdowns' in the early part of their ministry.

Useful Stress:

Despite this there was an energy and enthusiasm about these clergy. They enjoyed their work in spite of all the frustrations. Stress for them was part of the job and not a debilitating symptom that prevented them from functioning. There appeared to be ego integration in each of these clergy. Though the female priest controlled her life in every detail, she was aware of why she needed to do that. The counselling course she had attended had given her some insight into how she functioned. Her self-awareness made her avoid any situation that repeated her mother's verbal assaults.

The subsequent categories were derived from the data collected.

1. *Managing Stress*

Four of the priests described themselves as modern Catholics. Int. 58, an open Evangelical, said, 'I don't like the word "priest". I'm here to minister, lead and serve the people of God.' He went on to say that he had never suffered from stress. 'When I started in ministry I got very tired. I then used to have a half-hour sleep in the afternoon. Now I just go to bed very tired at night.'

He said that in the early years of ministry he got depressed because he was so tired. He finds playing clergy cricket helps him. He said he never shouts when he's angry but his feelings are heard in his voice. One of his worst experiences was when two of his leaders in his church had an affair. The other time was when they moved to their present parish. 'I had not been prepared for the sense of bereavement I felt. I had been at that parish for 15 years and had prayed with people and seen them grow up.' It was a real sense

of loss and I wasn't ready for it.' He has never found it difficult to phone up an Archdeacon or Bishop if he needs help.

2. *Confronting Conflict*

The female priest, Int. 106, said, 'I have very little tolerance of difficult feelings and I want to do something about it early on. I've never suffered from stress as I confront it straight away. I *never* get worn out. I'm not a weak person and I will not allow myself to be bullied.' The only time she admitted to feeling weak was when she gets ill. She feels she ought to accept it but doesn't. She said, 'I don't express anger, as I am too rational. As anger in my family was expressed violently, my mother shouted and screamed, I make sure I don't do that but I do answer back. I give as good as I get. People expect women to be gentle.' Her worst time had been in her curacy, when her Vicar asked her to leave. 'I told him I would take him to an Industrial Tribunal. Instead, I went to the Bishop. When I eventually moved, the Vicar was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.'

There was a quiet ruthlessness about this lady. In interview she appeared cold and withholding. To survive she employs logic and reason to everything. The

defenses she had built around her felt inviolate. However, if any of them crumbled there did not appear to be much to take its place. She has a very small parish, plus an extra parochial job. She is happy and self-sufficient with no visible crack to be seen. At the end of the interview the unspoken questions which hovered in the air were, 'what will happen if all of this crumbles? How will you cope?'

3. *Integration of Vulnerability*

Int. 241 seemed far more open to his own vulnerability. He said, 'I get self-regard from the audience who listens to me. Friendships feed me. Though I have a love/hate relationship with the parish, weddings, funerals and baptisms all feed me. I am a natural pessimist but I seem to have a buoyancy now. I find the hierarchy is more supportive and I have a "senior" friend to talk to and to confess to. Ministerial education is very helpful.' He said that he does get angry but he introverts it. 'I get my aggression out listening to aggressive symphonies. The hardest time has been when we moved to our last parish and seeing the bright ideas I had wouldn't work and they were rejected. I find the worst thing is being a new boy in the place.'

This priest had 'fallen in love' with a woman in the last parish. Though it was a very difficult time 'and I hurt a lot of people, I learned a lot about redemption. Also, I used to feel I couldn't complete the task as I hadn't any energy but not now. I do what I can.'

Again, this priest has travelled a long way. Unlike the female priest, he has used his times of brokenness for integration. 'As a consequence, narcissistic vulnerabilities are no longer cast in terms of danger to the integrity of the self; rather, they are more extrinsically focussed in terms of self esteem.' [Meissner. 1984 p.154] This man gains much self-esteem from others but he nevertheless has a much clearer self-image than he did previously.

4. *From Brokenness to Individuation*

Int. 296 is a single priest who lived in a warm, comfortable home. 'Being a priest is something which I have become and I can't see myself outside this role.' As a young man he had sustained a severe breakdown. 'I was the blue-eyed boy in the diocese. They got me to go on an exchange. I lasted six weeks there. It was horrendous. When I got home the diocese gave me six months to get myself back together. They then offered me a parish which would have

pushed me back into breakdown. My confidence had completely gone so, instead, I went and trained as a teacher and I stayed teaching for ten years. This rebuilt my confidence and I learned a lot. Before, I had lost all sense of colour. I found it was all to do with a dependency on my parents and my sexuality. I just had a great sense of loneliness. That was the worst time in ministry and when I came back I was treated like a pariah. I felt there were weak links in the hierarchy where things were not handled properly and so no support was given.'

Now he feels he copes better with stress. 'I have learned to say "no" if I am getting fraught. I can swear with, and at, friends and my housekeeper. I rarely retaliate in anger. I am pretty controlled.' He described the best time in his ministry as now. He enjoys all the extra parochial jobs he does and knows whom to go to in the diocese if he needs to. Unlike the female priest, whose home was guarded by double five-barred gates, this priest's home exuded warmth and comfort. He has learned how to nurture his inner being as well as being available to others.

5. *Serve to Lead*

The divorced clergyman, Int. 122, was an Army officer. He described priesthood as ‘ a job like any other but it works within the idea of servanthood. The motto at Sandhurst was “Serve to Lead”. I believe that sums up the Christian profession with the emphasis on prizing people, caring for them and working with and for them.’ He described how he had a breakdown ten years ago when his wife left. ‘Though others may describe it as a mental breakdown, it was a spiritual thing for me. It was a *reforming* moment in my life as it opened me up much more to God and off-loaded a lot of historic memory, pain and clobber and gave me a sharper focus on God.’

He had three months off work but it reformed him and it got ‘a lot of inner tension out of me. I went to Burrswood for three weeks and then to Hillfield Priory. I had some counselling and spiritual direction, which helped.’ At the time his wife thought he ‘was barmy’. It was frightening for her.

They had a very difficult experience during his curacy. 'I had a very bullish Vicar who said, "if you can't do the job then get out". My wife was on valium and we had young children. It broke my wife's expectations of a caring Church. I don't think she ever recovered.' He does feel the Church hierarchy is very bad at giving support.

This priest came over as a 'man with a mission'. He was a dedicated priest with one aim - God and the job. His broken marriage and the fact he has never wanted to marry again bore testimony to that. He has been through a lot and that comes across. He is a caring but insightful man. He has arrived at a place that feels manageable for him.

Discussion:

The clergy were open about the breakdowns they had suffered. These traumatic experiences had reshaped their lives. They had learned how to manage themselves and their workloads more effectively. Symptoms of stress acted like a barometer to enable them to take responsibility for themselves. They could now say 'no' to unreasonable demands.

Coping:

The largest numbers of clergy came within the coping and stressed categories. As Fig. 1 shows, more northern clergy admitted to being stressed than southern clergy. Those within this category admit to being stressed but appear to be able to manage it well enough so that their work does not deteriorate.

The following categories were either explicit or implicit in the data collected.

1. *Self-Induced Stress*

Int. 4 said, 'I suffer from stress but it is partly self-induced. It is the irrational guilt that I'm not doing enough. I don't always feel fresh and so give tired sermons and have to cut corners. I would feel stronger if I had more time.'

This priest has a small parish in population but ministers to three different congregations and three churches. He had never wanted to be a clergyman but couldn't get away from the call. He finds that stress affects his health. He has high blood pressure and is a diabetic. He gets angry at the whole Church

system and 'people's totally unrealistic and irrational expectations.' He feels let down, because 'if I had been teaching I would be fairly senior now. I feel I should have been a Bishop or Archdeacon by now.'

He feels that the negatives stem from the structure and mechanics of the Church. 'Sometimes I feel a terrible failure and the worst time is when no-one bothers with me and just lets me get on with it. It is bad feeling you don't matter or count for very much.' He said, 'I feel clergy are left to get on with it. I would like more encouragement. I would like the Bishop to say, "you're doing a good job". I would like appraisals that identify what's good and what is bad. I do have visits from the Bishop and Archdeacon but it's not enough. They need to face issues and bear souls and work things through with the parishioners and Bishop. I feel very lonely at times.'

He is near retirement and wonders if he has much more to give. At times he has felt as though he were drowning.

All of that sounded very negative. As he continued to talk, however, he said, 'the happiness far outweighs the unhappiness because I'm doing the job God wanted me to do so I do feel very fulfilled. I believe being a priest is about the

giving of the whole of the time. I try to minister the love and compassion of God and make people feel valued and that I'm there for them at any given moment.' He went on to say that he has got a good Bishop who does yearly visitations.

2. *Disabling Stress*

Int. 161 said, 'I used to enjoy stress until I became disabled. I used to be a character built for crises, challenges and difficulties but the illness has lessened my emotional control by 10/15%. I have to exercise discipline to keep calm and any emotional upheaval worsens my condition.' He then went on to describe his daily battle with coping with the very basic, everyday elements of living. Sometimes the pain is intense and then 'I rant at God and I say you only had it for three hours.' He said he had this year learned to accept the immense kindness, help and support from others. 'I have had to rebuild my theology of humanity. I used to be fairly Calvinistic, expecting to be let down by people, but the love and care has been salutary.'

He described his worst time in ministry was when working abroad amidst great poverty. It was very hard for his wife and children. He said, 'all the

ministry has been best, it's been wonderful. Now I have to learn that the Church can grow without me. Our Bishop is more concerned than any predecessor and has been there when needed.'

This priest sees his illness as a 'calling'. He is on a journey and everything is in terms of him being a follower of Christ and a servant of the living God. Though his pain and frustration was obvious, he is still a man full of ideas for living, though realistic about his approaching death. The whole interview was a very humbling experience.

3. *Guilty Stress*

A similar theme of guilt emerged with Int. 164, as with Int. 4. Int. 164 said, 'I spend my time feeling guilty as I always feel I should be doing something else. If I'm preparing I feel I should be visiting, if visiting, I should be preparing. I can never really relax. Things keep coming at me so I feel I'm either neglecting the parish or of educating the congregation. I do suffer from stress. I have haemorrhoids. I find it hard to sleep at times and will wake up and go downstairs and watch a video. When I get angry I swear, but not publicly. Sometimes I've felt like giving up, especially as people are not coming to

church and I feel I'm banging my head against a brick wall. I've felt I've had to prove I can do it in a new job.'

The worst time in ministry was when he was a Team Vicar. He had a very bad relationship with the Team Rector. 'I was scared of him. He once grabbed my arm and left bruises on it. I called in the Bishop and Archdeacon but we still had to stay there for eight months and we just did not dare go out of the house.' He did not feel supported by the hierarchy but was by the Rural Dean. He was eventually sent to work in a parish which was 'very restorative and healing, especially to be ministering again. My wife stayed in the house for four months and didn't go to church. It took her a long time to recover.'

He says that his wife helps him relax and that he has had lots of good times. He said, 'the priestly role is caring for people, weeping with those that weep, and rejoicing with those that rejoice. It is the cross and resurrection coming together and that I can't have one without the other.'

4. *The Unpredictability of the Job*

Int. 172 had been divorced and remarried. He said, 'it is a great privilege to celebrate the sacraments and to have access to people's homes. I come up against all sorts of emotions on a day to day basis. I could be doing a child's funeral and then have to go straight off and do a wedding. It does provide a balance, but I do wonder how long we will have access to people's homes before we have to provide identity cards. The unsociable hours and unpredictability of the job is very draining. I do suffer from emotional stress, especially when people are not responding.' He went on to say he gets irritable and withdrawn and blows up in a controlled way.

5. *Joyful Stress*

Several priests expressed the emotional joy and privilege of being a priest. Int. 201 said, 'I like being the centre of attention. I like to be needed, though some days I do wish not so many people needed me.'

This young, single priest appeared at interview to want to please. He talks of his sexuality as a 'grey area'. He was very young when put in charge of a parish of 9,000 people. He felt he would have liked a pat on the back from the hierarchy, 'someone to notice and care.' He finds when he is stressed he can't sleep.

6. *Bereavement*

A female, single priest, Int. 220 said, 'when I get stressed I get spots and I have stomach ache.' She said she goes silent when she gets angry. She found her worst time was leaving her last parish a few years earlier. 'The loss of friends and the sharp learning curve when I came here. It was also difficult to find people leaving this Church because I'm a woman. It is hard to be hated but it is everything to preach, celebrate the Eucharist and to visit. It is like breathing.' She said that when she was in training she could phone up the Bishop. Now she is managing, no one asks how it is all going.

Int. 43 said, 'being a priest for me is my secret love affair with my Creator.' He said it isn't any threat to his wife, as he could not love her any more. He said, 'I've suffered from stress. I had depression at college when the girl I

thought I was going to marry jilted me. Now if I'm tired I get irritable so I use escape valves - days off, family, going out for a drink and a meal, playing sport.' Fifteen years ago this priest had a blocked carotid artery. He was not off work but had scans. 'But I've never felt like giving up.'

7. *Burnout*

Int. 144 said, 'I got very, very burned out in a demanding parish. I got depressed and ran out of steam.' It was a very difficult parish where the previous Vicar had survived only six weeks and then had a heart attack. It had five worship centres and 21 Parochial Church Council meetings a year. He said, 'I was radically disjointed.'

8. *Intrusion from the Past*

Another priest, Int. 99, was told 'a few days before I was instituted here that the previous Vicar had been sacked. He only lives a couple of miles down the road. He kept coming into the parish every day, meeting with one of the Wardens and undermining all I was trying to do. When I went and visited a bereaved family, I found he'd been there before me and had arranged to do

the service. He still had the keys to the Rectory and he'd come and wait for the postman for his letters. I felt like giving up several times as the Church people gave me hell.' This priest felt unsupported by the hierarchy.

He still feels it is a privilege to be ordained, though he does not have a high view of the priesthood. He believes it is like any job. The stressful time he went through caused him loss of sleep.

9. *A Crucifixion*

Int. 66 said being a priest is about 'entering into my own pain and other people's and into the sacrifice of Christ. It is not an ego trip. I suffer from stress imposed by other people's expectations. I never can meet them but I have a sense of not being a private person. The office is an awesome one as it is a burden being the representative figure of the divine, of God.'

Int. 340 said, 'being a priest can be a crucifixion when rejected by the community. My children have been tormented because I am the Vicar. I have suffered from anger and frustration from the hierarchy because when I needed support it didn't happen. When I was off for five months with a bad

back, the Bishop came to see me once. He said he'd come back but he didn't. When I phoned about an incident my wife suffered no-one returned the call so I felt angry as I would care much more for my own people in the parish who are not churchgoers.'

He said that his ordination was the best time. 'I was naïve and full of hope and expectations beginning a new venture with God.'

Int. 256, a female priest, said, 'I've never suffered from stress, though I had an allergy after doing a funeral of a soldier who had been in Ireland. It got reported in the paper that I had condemned the IRA. I then got obscene letters. I went to the doctor who said I was depressed. I couldn't stop sleeping. But being a priest is my life. That's why it is hard to have days off.'

Discussion:

Most of the clergy in this category said they suffered from stress most of the time. Often it manifested itself physically. Int. 47, a 65 year old priest, said 'I am conscious of being tired all the time and I suffer from a sense of dis-ease

and unhappiness.' He has not felt supported by his Bishop and has, at times, felt misunderstood.

Several of these priests said they'd thought of giving up. One at least had embarked upon another career after being ordained because of a mental breakdown and not being able to cope with the stresses of parochial life. Stress appeared to be activated by poor relationships with colleagues; other people's expectations; physical illness; the close proximity of a previous Vicar; being young and at the beginning of ministry; being near retirement and feeling tired and that they have been passed over for preferment; too large a parish; too complex a parish and breakdown of marital relationships.

There was an enormous discrepancy in what Int. 4 said. Why did the Church become the bad object one moment and the good object the next? It has already been stated that the late 50's is a very difficult time for clergy. This priest had been in his parishes for over seven years. Now at 59 years old there is no prospect of another parish, let alone any chance of preferment. He had 'rejected' the lifestyle of his parents for what they felt 'was an alien profession'. At the end of his priestly ministry this priest was expressing a feeling of being rejected by his 'adoptive' parents - that is, the Church.

In spite of the above, the clergy have echoed each other in stating the importance of the job to them. They have used superlatives to describe what it means to them to be a priest. Because of this, the joy appears to have outweighed the stress. This has been what has enabled them to cope well enough in their situations - often feeling a sense of disintegration but with enough ego identity to continue.

Stressed:

The largest number of those in this category came from the northern diocese. In fact, there were twice as many as came from the south. More southern clergy admitted to being stressed but were feeling integrated enough to cope with their work. It is within this group of clergy that there are more obvious psychosomatic illnesses. The largest number of clergy feeling stressed and not coping very well come within the 36 to 45 age bracket. The 56 to 65 age group also experience a commensurate amount of stress. It has already been noted that the younger group are often in their first incumbencies whilst the older group are at the end of their working life.

The following categories were derived from implicit communication in the data collected.

1. *Physical Illness*

Int. 151 feels 'incredibly privileged to be a priest. Basically, congregations love their priests and will do anything for them. I do feel very supported and cared for.' In spite of this he continued by saying, 'I have suffered from irritable bowel syndrome for 10 to 15 years. My blood pressure is also being controlled. I do get depressed, though not clinically depressed, and it doesn't usually last long, but I have felt I could at times get in my car and just drive off. I do flare up when angry and I take it out on the children and I do react in a totally disproportionate manner.'

His worst time in ministry was his first incumbency. The previous priest had had an affair with a church member. At that time he 'found it very hard coming back from holiday and driving back into the parish.'

2. *Mental Illness*

Int. 153 said, 'I have had depression on and off for as long as I can remember. Being a priest is about guilt. My inadequacy is not getting things done. I see other priests doing things so much better than I can do them that I feel very ineffective. My father and gran had psychiatric help and my father suffers from panic attacks. If I feel depressed I tidy things up. I don't sleep. I used to wonder if I had the psychological stamina to be a priest.'

This very young single priest said, 'I have thought about running away but I have a ministerial consultant so have someone to talk to. At least as a priest I have a place in the community and I feel needed. I'm known and recognised in the market place.'

Int. 33 said, 'I feel I had a breakdown because my wife couldn't cope with me raising my voice or being angry. I had a Curate who had three brilliant ideas before breakfast every day and a mother in a local nursing home. At the same time, my wife suffered from repetitive strain injury so I had to do everything. I had to drive her to work and everything in the house. It was a nightmare. I

had ten weeks off work and went away and had a period of brokenness. I wept in church and prayed and things gradually came together. During that time I had felt suicidal and that people would be better off without me. I did not feel I could go to the Archdeacon or the Bishop, as I felt so ashamed. I felt like giving up.'

Int. 195 said, 'I was off sick for six months. Two church councils waged a hate campaign against me in my last parish and treated me as though I didn't exist. I kept wanting to burst into tears and could not put one foot in front of the other emotionally. But being a priest is something much bigger. As Julian of Norwich said, "all shall be well, all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well." I have come to terms with the isolation and loneliness. It is part of the human condition.' This priest has been married and divorced twice.

3. *Marriage Break-up*

A 63 year old priest, Int. 217, said, 'the worst time was when my first marriage broke up. I did not want it to, as I believed in my marriage vows. I felt I had let the ideals down and been betrayed as a priest. I would not want to be

ordained now. I get stressed because of what happens in our communities. I have a contempt for injustice.'

Int. 236 said he felt 'the hierarchy were useless. When my first wife left with the children I was in terrible darkness. I would cry every day for hours. I would come in from the parish and cook tea and just cry and cry.'

4. *Burnout*

Int. 19 said, 'I don't know what it means to be a priest. I don't really feel like a priest. In my last job I got completely exhausted and I left the job to escape. I was close to tears most of the time. Now I'm experiencing a loss of faith, so I'm coping by talking and exploring with friends and my wife. What is difficult is that I can't just go off and have a crisis of faith. Being a priest is my work, life, home and everything. If I lose faith and leave then it affects my wife and children and I can't do that to them.'

He went on to say that people find his anger difficult to handle, though it rarely comes out and he is pretty controlled. Because he is a large person his anger can be terrifying and would discredit the Church. He said, 'the worst

time has been the last ten years. I haven't enjoyed this job though I like the nice house and it has paid for the children's education, but I find the people's smugness and middle-classness irritating.' Because he has never been offered any preferment he feels angry and depressed.

5. *Family Pressures*

Int. 230, a young priest, said, 'the worst time was when my wife had a nervous breakdown two years ago. It was triggered by stress in work and concern for the children and me. She had never really recovered from postnatal depression. It had been hard for her to move from our previous parish, which was only eight miles away. Also, people were not very welcoming here. I just had to get her away. Her parents looked after the children.' This priest said he had had good written support from the Bishop, a visit from the Rural Dean, some money for a holiday but no visit from the Archdeacon or Bishop. He felt very hurt by that.

6. *Ordination of Women*

Two of the women in this category have experienced anger over the ordination of women. Int. 271 said, 'I did not get enough support. I asked God why He didn't like women.' Int. 119 found it very hard, in a cathedral service, to observe only male priests round the altar. She said, 'I've had a rocky year. I've had a lot of opposition and I've had shingles, which is a sign of stress. I have lost my faith in the Church but I can take my anger out on my piano, or by throwing books. I feel it is crazy being expected to run three parishes. I wonder if I'm in the right place. I felt very alone when my husband died, it was a real Gethsemane, but being a priest is what I'm best suited to do, so in spite of everything I do have a deep-down contentment.'

Int. 180 has experienced 'a lot of stress over the last two years because the Team Rector has a deteriorating illness. Also, I have problems working with one of the Team Vicars. There is a real clash of personality. I alerted the Bishop and the Rural Dean but nothing was done. I am now menopausal and have experienced acute stress. I don't believe the work patterns imposed are really helpful for women with children. They are all right for men. They

can attend early services but I can't as I have children to get off to school. I feel the hierarchy have been abysmal. My husband is a great support and does everything in the house.'

Int. 271 wonders 'why God has asked me to do so much that is demanding. When I am totally given to God I just get absolutely drained and exhausted.' For her, being a priest is 'saying "yes" to God.'

Discussion:

Several people in this category expressed their disappointment in their Bishops. They felt unsupported when they needed help. In some instances they experienced lack of support in looking for jobs when they had had to leave their present posts.

They feel that Bishops should spend more time going round parishes and less time on high-profile conferences. They believe the work of a Bishop is to be pastor to the priests in the parishes.

Those whose marriages had broken down were disappointed in what they experienced as lack of care from their Bishops. This was equally true for those clergy whose wives had been sick.

These clergy appeared, at times, very near the edge. However, at the time of the interview they were still managing their jobs and functioning at an appropriate level. It was clear, though, that their dis-ease was only just below the surface.

Falling Apart:

Four clergy admitted to feeling fragmented - two clergy from the north and two from the south. Two of the clergy, (one from each diocese), had recently experienced their wives having left them, whilst the other two - again, one from each diocese - were suffering depression, one because he had moved from his previous parish because a woman priest had arrived and he did not believe women should be ordained priest. This man had been placed in a very deprived area where there was a lot of violence. The other clergyman had been in hospital after falling over an animal and suffering a haematoma. All four clergy, for different reasons, were barely coping with life. They were off

work and had been for weeks, were suffering from depression and appeared anxious and desperate.

Listening to these clergy a sense of hopelessness and darkness was frequently expressed. At the time of the interview there appeared no escape from these intolerable feelings.

These categories were developed from my own observation of the respondents and from their verbal communication, which provided validity to the categories chosen.

1. *Hopelessness*

Int. 116 said, 'I feel I'm going back into a chrysalis. I'm not sure whether I'm going to die or emerge again as a butterfly. I feel I'm at the end of the cycle of renewal and death. Christ has taught me the patience of suffering, but I'm not looking for resurrection.' As he talked he expressed his deep concern for the Church of England. He feels his own church will close and that the Church is deeply exhausted. He has 'no more guts in me to cope with death and resurrection. I feel I am dying now.' He said he was suffering a lot of

stress and that's why he was on medication. He has been having panic attacks. 'I had a sabbatical planned but my wife did not want me to go. I thought the sabbatical would renew me in my job but it was all too difficult - lots of conflict about who would pay. I now just want time to read. I used to express my anger with a cricket bat, now I cut the grass.' When asked what had been the worst time in his ministry he said, 'NOW! There is no hope here. I want to give up. People don't want to hear my sermons.' He is a very deeply depressed man!

2. Dark Night of the Soul

Int. 204 disclosed how, leaving his last parish because of the advent of a female priest, he went through 'a dark night of the soul. The stress was real and palpable. It took a long time to move as I had many interviews and didn't get a job. My arm was twisted to accept this job. My father was a depressive. I have never had depression before so it's been very frightening. I have been off for four months with shingles, 'flu and depression. Our physical location on this housing estate is very bad. We suffer a lot of vandalism and sheer wanton hooliganism. I find the confrontation and violence very hard and demoralising. I haven't been trained to deal with

people who urinate against the back door!’ He feels the hierarchy has been very good during his illness.

3. *Breakdown*

The two remaining clergy were experiencing breakdown because their wives had left them some months prior to the interview. Int. 123 said, ‘it’s the function of the priesthood that gets in the way of family life. I spent very little time with the family when the children were small. With my wife working the last few years, and commuting to other parts of the country, we have spent very little time together. There used to be five members of staff here before I came. One clergyperson left, one had a breakdown. The Curate left and the other non-stipendiary woman priest caused all the problems and eventually had to be asked to leave.’

He feels that the irritation of the work is the reason why his wife has left. He believes that his family is very proud that he is a priest but he said, ‘my wife couldn’t cope with carrying my burdens as well as her own. I’ve decided I’m leaving the parochial ministry, as I can’t take it anymore. I want to do something totally different.’

Int. 317 said that 'the last two months since my wife left have been a blank. I've had a breakdown though I have not been hospitalised but I couldn't manage the business of living. I once went out and bought 20lbs of Cumberland sausages. I haven't smoked for 13 years but since my wife left I chain-smoke. This has been the worst time in my ministry. I felt as though I had died. I'm just beginning to come out of it and I'm just beginning to see what the future holds. The Church hierarchy have been very good.' He said that being a priest 'is very deep. It is about who and what I am. I both love and hate it but it is a passionate way of life.'

Discussion:

All four of these clergy were, at interview, experiencing a sense of deep fragmentation. They were not working and in different ways were trying to find a way back to life. Themes of death and the cross were expressed alongside feelings of desperation and loss of faith. Far from feeling integrated, these clergy were dis-integrated. They were, indeed, 'cracked pots' with a sense they may never get the pieces back together again.

It was very clear that the emotional strength/weakness and internal integration had a direct bearing on how the clergy cope with the pressures from the community and the rest of their lives. These findings provide validity for the hypotheses suggested.

This category was not just exploring the emotional strengths of these clergy but also their spiritual strengths. In looking at the totality of the results of the interviews of the sample clergy, those who were experiencing the greater sense of dis-ease also found their faith letting them down. For many, the cry was 'where is God in all of this?' Several expressed their disbelief that there was a God who cared at all. It was a sadness to witness those, who so much needed to feel the holding love of the God they had given up everything for, feel that He appeared to be non-existent.

Spiritual Health:

'Religion concerns itself with the meaning and value of life... with the yearning for home and peace, with the impulse toward nuptial union with the absolute,... with the thirst for freedom and grace, with the need for a love that is removed from the unbearable uncertainties of earthly life... through

religious harmony can lift the life of man,... can strengthen the heart, and... can elevate the value of existence.' [Meissner. 1984 p.99]

An Unproven Faith:

The Christian faith, a belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, renders the clerical profession distinct from any secular job. In business and commerce a product is produced and sold. The success or not of the company will depend on the product which is made. The Christian faith is about just that – *faith*. It cannot be tested and tried under laboratory conditions, or taken out of wrapping paper and passed around for expert verification. 'Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.' [Holy Bible NIV 1984 p.1395]

Though the clergy have the Holy Scriptures as a guide, and the life of Jesus as God revealed in human flesh, there is still nothing for them to grasp hold of. The testimonies of thousands down through the millennia – that there is a God and that He is alive and active in His world now, brings comfort and strengthens hope. Clergy, however, are right in the firing line. When pressures come from within and without, their faith in God may well be put

under severe strain. Because they constantly have to propound a faith in the unseeable, it is of vital importance to them that they believe what they say. If not, then they are living a lie and they are working at a job that has no heart to it. They may be emotionally worn out. If they are spiritually dead as well then their very existence as a priest is open to question. Even more poignantly, if there is no God then the Church has no viability either. The cracks in the pot would then, indeed, split it wide open.

Fig. 19 shows the breakdown into different categories of spiritual health.

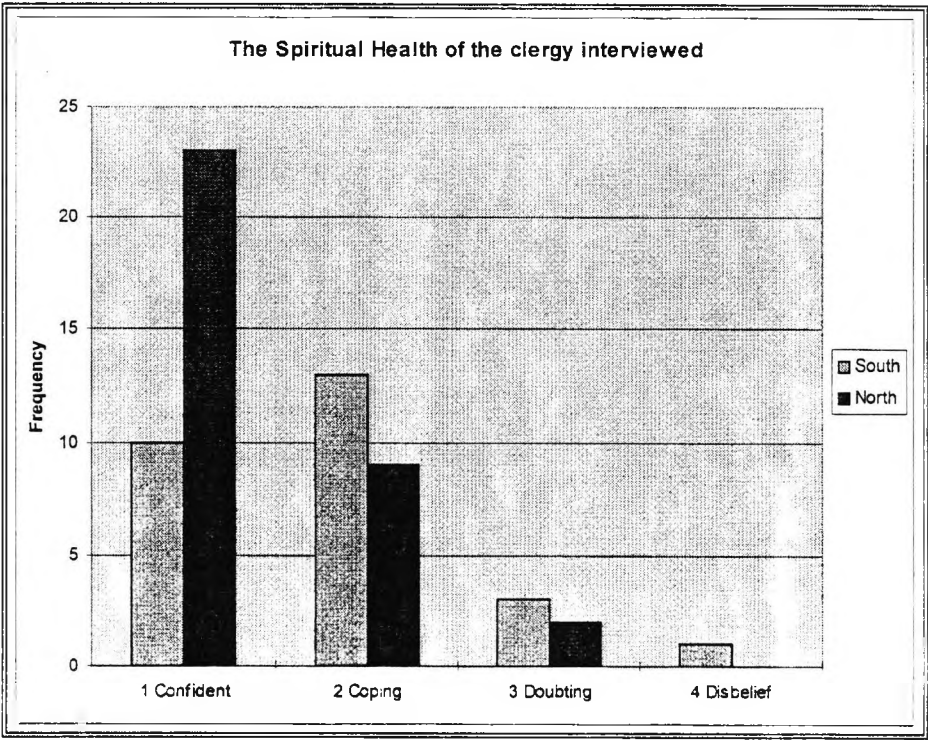


Fig. 19

These categories were all derived from the data collected and from my own observation and examining of the interviews recorded.

It is interesting to note that though more northern clergy are stressed, yet more northern clergy are confident about their faith. This correlates with the fact that in the north the Church and clergy are not seen as an irrelevance, as they are in the south. Though no more people go to church than in the rest of the country, the Church is still seen as part of the community along with the school and the pub.

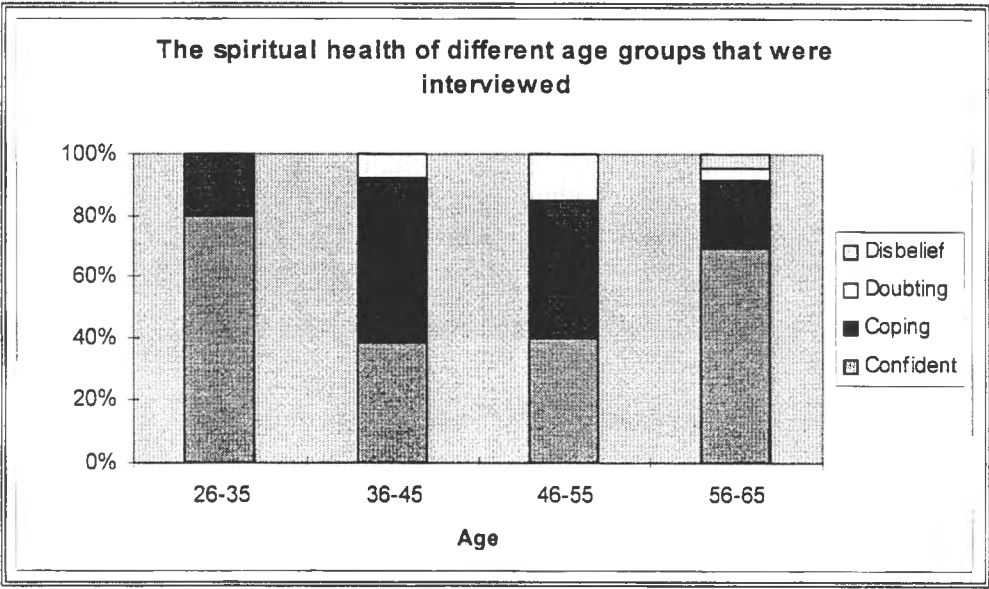


Fig. 20

It is noticeable that in the young clergy their faith remains strong. As the clergy become older, so doubts increase until, within the upper age group, there are a few who have lost their faith.

The Dark Night of the Soul:

This phrase was first coined by the Spanish mystic, John of the Cross, (1542-1591) and used subsequently throughout Christendom to denote a depth of spiritual unknowing. 'It describes the work of God upon the soul - not through joy and light, but through sorrow and darkness. The concept of the "dark night" has become an integral part of understanding the spiritual journey.' [Foster and Smith. 1993 p.41] It describes the sense of despair and desolation of the believer as they seek God in the blackness. The Christian's sense of sin and unworthiness, added to this barrier that seemed impenetrable, was felt to be between them and their God. The depth of dis-ease results in feelings of alienation and fragmentation.

Those who write of such an experience are those who have spent the most effort and time seeking God in solitude. It is the hermit, the introvert, probing deep into themselves who find, as they try to penetrate the fathomless

wastes, that they need to purify their souls in the presence of a holy God. The extrovert, who is out and about 'doing', has little time and much fear of such darkness.

As will be seen, at least two of those interviewed in this research had been through, and were still going through, these feelings of despair. What brings it on? How much is this despair to do with a loss of faith? For many years 'the debate has too often been about one of faith or reason.' [Watts and Williams 1988 p.53] With fewer people attending church and fewer coming forward to be ordained, parochial clergy wonder what their life is all about. One clergyman in the southern diocese said 'the Church is irrelevant and I am an irrelevance to the community here.' Though 'a process of personal transformation is necessarily involved in discovering God', [Watts and Williams 1988 p.55] yet there is nothing more likely to bring defeat than the apathy that greets the clergy's best proclamationary efforts Sunday by Sunday. However deep their own convictions, clergy struggle if the laity are not seen to share their enthusiasms - and the laity are much more fickle than they used to be.

How much of this experience is to do with personality, background, and mental or physical disease? Is the dark night of the soul linked to endogenous depression? Can it be tested for during a Selection Conference? Can it be prevented and what does it have to say about the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy?

Confident:

This category highlights those clergy who, whatever their life experience, appear to have a belief that God is and that He enjoys a relationship with them.

The subsequent categories emerged from the data collected.

1. *Healthy Doubts*

Int. 4 said, 'I've never lost my faith but I do have doubts. Then God calls me back to my senses. I've never gone under, as I talk about my doubts to my wife and immerse myself harder in work. If I'm getting on with God's work then that gets it OK again. I have said to God, "where are you? Is this all a

total sham? Have I wasted 30 years of my life? Where are all the converts?" Though I feel I should have been a Bishop or Archdeacon by now, I can shout at God about any perceived unfairness. I believe God can take it. He's broad-shouldered enough and can put up with my ravings.'

This clergyman's relationship with God seems personal and intimate. He is able to tell Him how he feels and expects God to listen.

2. *A Questioning Faith*

Int. 161, the priest who has retired because of a deteriorating disease, said, 'I have a very open relationship with God. On the day of judgement I will say to Him "the questions you've got lined up for me are only exceeded by the questions I've got lined up for you". I'm not subservient to God. I have a sense of humour; very important. I have never lost faith in God. I may not like Him, but I could never deny Him.' He said that he sees his priestly ministry as being involved in suffering. 'I have to teach people how to die.'

3. *An Isolating Faith*

Int. 195 quoted Julian of Norwich (1343-1413) when he said, "all shall be well, all shall be well, all manner of things shall be well". I have come to terms with isolation and loneliness. When I'm overwhelmed I'm in the hands of God. I have experienced darkness and had a changing understanding of God. It's felt like going through a crucible, a sort of melting pot. My faith came out deeper. I do have doubts but I can go into church to rant and rave and I lock the church door.'

This clergyman has been divorced twice and doesn't see the children. He has, in many ways, experienced the *dark night of the soul*.

4. *A Submitting Faith*

Int. 256, a female priest, said, 'I have finally submitted to God. My relationship with God has strengthened and deepened. I'm exploring differing ways of seeing and encountering God. I did have a loss of faith when my husband died. I have had doubts too about God's presence. It's as

though he has flitted off to look after someone else but it's always the same God.'

Int. 284 has 'never felt like giving up and I've never experienced a loss of faith but I do question aspects of faith like, "do we live on after death?" I've never felt like giving up.' This priest had also experienced loss. His first wife went off with someone from the church.

5. A Relational Faith

Int. 306 described his faith 'as Jesus pitching His tent among us. I've shouted at God about why He's so stupid. Once in Bangladesh I really shouted at Him, as I didn't have any money, then a large cheque arrived. I do have lots of doubts, though I have never lost my faith. I do wonder what happens when we die - if the light goes out.'

Int. 33 said, 'I've never lost faith except when praying for someone's healing and they aren't, but I've never lost faith in the love of God or atoning sacrifice of Jesus. But does God heal today? My mother-in-law is in appalling health

and we are praying for her healing.’ He struggles with the prayers God does not answer.

6. *A Repentant Faith*

Int. 43 said, ‘being a priest is my secret love affair with my Creator. When I’ve mislaid my faith temporarily, or the mirror has become blurred, the answer for me lies in repentance and getting on doing something. I’ve never been able to deny my call and my vocation or to talk it away. I’ve never experienced a loss of faith. I’ve sometimes thought, “there is no God”, but that is academic rather than an existential angst. I say, “if God has moved away, guess who is moved”.’

This man has experienced illness and the pain of being jilted.

7. *A Servant Faith*

The open Evangelical, Int. 58, has a simple rule. ‘Prayer is the way I talk to God and the Bible is the way God speaks to me. I’ve never lost my faith and I’ve never lost sight of being a servant of Christ. My faith has grown and

developed. Every moment I have of testing and disappointment I bring to God. I think of God in terms of fatherhood and friendship, but I try to get the balance that He is also King of Kings and Lord of Lords.'

Discussion:

There is a real divergence between religion and psychoanalysis and it is seen in the above data and succeeding interviews. 'The religious view of man is specifically supernatural; it envisions man as related to a divine Creator and as specifically ordained by that Creator with an idealised and supernaturalized existence. This aspect of the religious perspective has no corollary in the psychoanalytical approach.' [Meissner. 1984 p.216] Meissner goes on to say that a person's religious belief system is either accepted or not.

These clergy are describing their experience and understanding of faith and their own relationship with God. It is their statement and so there are no grounds for accepting it or rejecting it. It is. That has to be enough.

None of these clergy have experienced a loss of faith. They shout and argue with God and wonder what He is doing and why He isn't doing other things.

They wonder, at times, if He exists. They question many things – the afterlife and why God doesn't seem to heal and intervene in the many painful situations of life. They do not question their own calling to the priesthood or the fact that it was God calling them to this work. Underneath any stress they may or may not have suffered, and several of them have suffered a great deal, there is a confident and quiet faith that believes God cares and will not let go of them. They appear to have a confident faith. Int. 187 said, 'either God is or He isn't. I live dangerously with God and ask dangerous questions and peer into the abyss. It is a necessary place to stay with God. I study Masters, the Mystics and I'm not afraid of total darkness.'

Coping:

Those in this category appear to have a confident faith but with more doubts. They are, some of them, just coping. Their doubts are not causing them to sink but during the interviews it felt as though it was a struggle for some of them to hold on.

These categories derive from the data collected.

1. *An Intellectual Faith*

Int. 153 said, 'I have to believe God is there and He exists. My faith is intellectual rather than experiential, as I have not had a one to one encounter. I am an agnostic. I find God in the beauty, in music and the landscape. I believe if I did lose my faith I could go and talk to the Bishop.'

This single priest said that he lost his faith when he was 17 and he didn't believe in God. 'It was associated with depression and I did wonder then if I had the psychological stamina to be a priest. It is very frightening because if I lose faith, I lose job, house, everything. I had a period of depression in my last job. I doubted my own salvation, but I have learned to be more open and honest.'

This priest did appear to live on the edge. It felt, however, as though he was just coping when interviewed.

2. *An Incarnate Faith*

Int. 172 said, 'I've never lost faith in God. I do have doubts about God and eternity. Sometimes it's hard to believe there is a God who created everything but then I see what God does in people's lives and it is staggering. God achieves fantastic things through people who are open to Him and respond to Him and do His will. I just want to proclaim the gospel.'

This priest has experienced divorce and the feeling of failure that his broken marriage gave him.

3. *A Nurturing Faith*

Int. 190, a female priest, said, 'I escape into spirituality from the frustrations of Church structures and I ask God to feed me. I've never experienced a loss of faith.' However, she experiences the 'hierarchy as abysmal'. Her faith and God are an escape from people who let her down. Coping, for this priest, is about being able to find a safe place.

4. *A Doubting Faith*

Int. 14 said, 'I don't know what it feels like *not* to believe in God but I do question the sanity of the whole Christian enterprise. Faith always comprises doubts and criticisms. I don't know what it is to hate God. Occasionally the Church gets in the way of God.'

Int. 39, whose wife was very ill, said, 'God, where are you? Why don't you help? You've always come up with the goods before. I felt lost and abandoned but God did carry me through, though I didn't realise it.'

Int. 47 said, 'God is there however lousy life is. I've never lost faith. There's been a lot of crying out, "Father, why have you dumped me like this?" I shout at God and throw things around.'

Int. 48 said, 'I have experienced a loss of faith. Faith is a gift from God and if I have it I mustn't take it for granted but sometimes my trust goes. That's the reason for having regular prayer times and to keep the windows open and keep something going even if the desert is all around. I have lots of doubts. I

get them particularly when I look in the mirror and ask myself what I have done today that makes any sense. I shout at God in church but I've never felt like giving up, as I can't give up on God.'

5. *A Good Friday Faith*

Some clergy described themselves as 'Good Friday' people, experiencing in their lives the sacrificial life of Christ. Int. 66 said, 'I am an Easter person but I can't get that on the cheap without the cross. Priesthood involves taking up the cross. It is an awesome burden being a representative figure of the divine God. It has something to do with dying in order to live. Though I lost my faith when a teenager, I haven't since I was ordained. I keep asking God to remind me if He wants me to do the work but, if not, to let me know and let me off the hook. I have lost faith in the Church. I take all situations to God.'

6. *An Act of Will*

Many of the clergy have had traumatic experiences and yet have been able to remain connected to God.

Int. 117 said, 'I see my trust in God as a marriage and I have never let go of that from the beginning of my ministry. I put my hand in God's hand when I was 18 and I won't withdraw it. It is an act of will and I have never wavered from the fact that I believe Jesus is the Son of God and that He's gone through hell to prove His love for me. I offer depression and everything to God and say, "it's over to you". I try and turn it into prayers for those who do not know God.'

This priest's son was killed very tragically when about 19 years old.

Int. 117 continued, 'I feel frequently that God is a million miles away so I snarl at Him and feel He bloody well doesn't come up to expectations - and why the hell not! I feel he is too busy. I swear at God as it does less damage than swearing at my wife.'

When his son died he said, 'things really came together. There was such overwhelming love from people across the board. Divisions were broken down and there was a real immense tide of prayer, which was very precious to us. I felt close to God and my wife and God made a difference to us in ways

that were really wonderful. I felt I'd come to terms with the reality of God and of the reality of faith.'

7. *Transitional Symbols*

Int. 262 has doubts 'about doctrines of the creed. I wonder in the Eucharist if this is just a bit of bread I'm holding up. The whole thing seems so bizarre. I sometimes think God is not listening and is not paying a blind bit of notice. I shout and swear at God frequently.'

Discussion:

The difference between the coping clergy and the confident clergy is only in degrees. The latter clergy say they have never thought of giving up. They have not lost their faith, though they question God and do have doubts. The coping clergy have, at times, felt like giving up. Their doubts appear more severe and they have a greater need to shout at God.

Doubting:

It could be said that those clergy experiencing real doubts have reasons to do so. Two of the clergy, at the time of the interviews, had just been deserted by their wives. One other was experiencing profound depression, having had to move from his previous parish because an ordained woman priest arrived. There is evidence to suggest that such profound stress correlates with severe doubts about their faith. The two clergy whose wives have left have lost not only a spouse but a support structure as well. Those who are confident in their faith and are coping are able to talk to their partners.

These categories are implicit in the data collected.

1. *A Changing Faith*

For the priest who is against the ordination of women he, (with many others), finds it hard to understand how his world has been so profoundly changed. As he said, 'leaving my last parish I went through a dark night of the soul. The stress was real and palpable. In order to try and overcome this stress I try

and look for God in beauty and creation.’ Int. 204 had been able to paint his dark night of the soul.

Both clergy whose wives left have suffered breakdowns. Int. 123 said, ‘God and I have ongoing battles. We have, for years. I just don’t want to do things God tells me to do. My battle is, how do I cope?’

2. A Distant God

Int. 317 said, ‘I go through times of doubting and wonder if God is present. He is very distant and I wonder if there is any point in doing what I am doing. I wonder if God is out there. I didn’t feel Him there at the height of my breakdown.’

Int. 151, who has experienced ill health, said, ‘I wonder if it’s all a load of rubbish, though I have never lost my faith. My framework of daily offices and the Eucharist gives me a scaffolding to support me. I don’t totally give up on praying as my duty as a priest keeps me going.’

Int. 194 said, 'I have lots of doubts but I've not lost faith - but I'm not sure what it is anyway, as it is very elusive.'

Int. 340 'wonders where God was at Mass on Sunday. I've never lost faith.'

Listening to these clergy there is so much pathos in their disclosures. Their experience is very near the two clergy who, at the time of interview, were experiencing disbelief.

Disbelief:

Int. 116 expressed the Church, himself and the New Testament as being irrelevant to people. He said, 'I feel my spiritual well is dry. The Eucharist no longer communicates to me. I have crossed over from being quiet with God to being lonely. I wonder if prayer and meditation really work.'

It was very hard for this priest to talk about God at all. There did seem a direct link, however, with the fact that he had initially come into ministry through his admiration for certain other priests he had met or whose books he had read. In his interview his faith did not appear to have the experiential

quality of others. His failed first marriage, and the illness and depression he was suffering when interviewed, all added to his sense of despair. Nothing appeared to bear any signs of hope for him – certainly not the Church or Christianity.

Int. 19 appeared more buoyant. He openly talked of his 'loss of faith'. Though he is worried about the effects of it on his work, his home and his future, he is also excited at what he may discover. 'It is creative. It has been the death of my father four years ago, and working through my feelings about him, that have allowed me to let go of my faith. I'm not sure what will take its place – whether orthodox Christianity or something else.' God as a father figure is no longer needed. He has, however, nothing as yet to put in its place.

Discussion:

For both of these clergy God appeared to be dead. Not only could they not 'see' or 'experience' God in their lives, but it also appeared as though any faith they had had been a mirage; promising a lot, but without any substance. All the expectations of their 'call' to the priesthood had been burned in the fire

of their disappointment that the Christian faith itself had seemingly nothing to offer them.

Conclusion:

This theory question looks at the heart of the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy. Within the exploration of their emotional and spiritual health the cracks are clearly visible. Those clergy whose faith is seen to be a living, dynamic experience appear to cope emotionally. They dare to express their doubts but it does not deter them in trusting in a God they cannot see. They appear strong and buoyed up.

Several clergy expressed their disaffection with hierarchical support. They felt they needed affirmation and encouragement that the work they were doing was noticed. In spite of this, being a priest appeared to be compensation enough.

Support appeared a key word. Support of partners, colleagues and from the hierarchy. Those who experienced such caring relationships tended to have come from secure backgrounds. If not, they had managed to integrate and

work through the emotional traumas of the past. The clergy who, whilst expressing doubts about their faith, yet had a lively relationship with God, appeared to see the Almighty as outside rather than as an introjected parental figure. Those whose God seemed made in the image of past significant figures found they had 'grown out of' the need for such a relationship.

Clergy experiencing extreme trauma due to break-up of their marriages or deep depression found it hard to hold on to a loving God who cared for them. It is at these crisis points that there appears a sense of desperation and a need to know the Bishop is there and cares.

In exploring this last section it became clear that outside opinion, coupled with the lack of internal integration, affects the 'clergyperson's work, his/her own spiritual journey and every aspect of his/her life.' These findings appear to support the three hypotheses that were initially suggested.

Chapter XI

THE HIERARCHY'S CONCERN FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CLERGY

[Charlotte Elliott, 1789-1871]

Just as I am, without one plea
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
Oh Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within, and fears without:

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find:

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe:

Just as I am (thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down),
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone:

Just as I am, of that free love
The breadth, length, depth, and height
To prove,
Here for a season, then above:

[Songs of Praise 1956 - p.305]

The hymn encapsulates the reality of life lived out by every respondent in this research project. However impenetrable the masks for their congregations, the clergy know the truth of the words 'just as I am'. In the glare of their public parochial life, the privacy of their homes and the hidden depths of

their souls open to God, they can only be who they are. Vulnerable always, weak at times and full of pain on occasion.

This whole enterprise has been threaded through with themes of pain. My own fear of failure as a researcher has found an echo in the heart of many of the clergy as they spoke about their inadequacies.

This research has also produced a real dilemma. This has occurred between reporting and analysing as honestly as possible the sense of pain and the lack of supportive care many of the respondents have shared and the position of the Bishops. Bishops now occupy very high-profile public roles. Some have become international spokesmen for the Church of England and world-wide Anglicanism, as well as national figures. This creates enormous pressure and strain on their office. It also militates against their being able to sustain a personal pastoral role with each clergyperson in their diocese. Much of this work has now been delegated to other senior clergy, such as Archdeacons, though Bishops still retain the desire and commitment to be the chief pastor of their clergy.

It is not surprising, therefore, that though the will to pastor is there, the perception of many clergy is that Bishops are distant and even if they do care, they have no real time to be personally involved in their welfare. This was heard throughout the research project. There were, however, other clergy who felt the pastoral care was perfectly adequate. They felt they only had to pick up the phone and they would be able to speak to their Bishop about their concerns. It has to be said that these clergy managed parishes that appeared successful. They themselves came over as confident in the work they were doing and felt fulfilled in all the areas of life examined. The clergy in the project who felt unsupported and uncared for seemed to experience severe difficulties in the whole of their lives.

Married, as I am, to a member of the senior clergy, I found myself having much sympathy for the Bishops and their enormous workloads. I did, however, hear the clear voice of the clergy's anguish at the lack of care and their need to be heard.

Those Interviewed:

The parochial clergy were the focus of this research project. In order to provide a sense of cohesion, the views of several other significant Church people were included. The two Bishops of the dioceses where the research was carried out were interviewed and imparted important information to the questions asked. (Appendix IX)

The Director of the Ministry Division, (MD) the Venerable Gordon Kurht, was also interviewed. (Appendix IX) The MD oversees the whole national selection process, the training and ongoing training of future clergy and advises Bishops on clergy remuneration and conditions of service. He was able to provide an overview of the life of the clergyperson from their first contact with the institution until retirement.

Because training is vital it was important to interview a principal of a theological college. Dr. Christina Baxter, Principal of St. John's Theological College, Nottingham, was chosen. She is a well-known theologian and is Chair of the House of Laity within the General Synod. She is a member of

the Archbishop's Council.¹ Though she is attached to the evangelical wing of the Church she is widely respected and has been involved with theological training for over 20 years.

I also visited and interviewed the Wardens of centres of healing; Burrswood, The Society of Mary and Martha and the Dympna Centre. In various ways these places seek to offer space, counselling, time for spiritual reflection and the opportunity for clergy and Christian leaders to re-evaluate their ministry. The Church hierarchy refers the clergy to these centres during periods of crises.

The research has explored six areas pertinent to the life of the priest:-

1. Why they were ordained
2. Whom they see as having authority over them
3. What being a priest means to them
4. Their family relationships
5. The type of leadership they exercise
6. Their spiritual and emotional health

¹ Executive Council of General Synod

Each chapter has analysed the data collected within these six categories. In order to look at the Church's response, the two diocesan Bishops from the dioceses in the research, a theological Principal and the Director of Ministry were interviewed.

Themes from the Research:

The themes below will be seen to relate directly to the hypotheses. This is explored more fully in the last chapter. It is, however, these themes of irrelevance, isolation, despair, guilt and low self-esteem that affects the clergyperson's work, spiritual journey and every aspect of their life, as stated in the second hypothesis.

1. *Irrelevance*

One theme that has been heard throughout this research, especially in the southern diocese, is that of the irrelevance of the Church. The Church has

great difficulty in reaching out to the unchurched, the disinterested and the disadvantaged. Though many clergy opened their churches during the time of national mourning for Princess Diana in August 1997 and found their churches full, they were unable to capitalise on that to any great extent. The churches soon returned to their normally small congregations.

From the whole sample of 236 churches, only 20 had congregations of over 150 people. 170 churches had congregations of between 1 and 100 people. Ministering week by week to a handful of people can be very disheartening if it goes on long enough.

2. Isolation

This sense of who they are and what they are doing being irrelevant leads to a sense of isolation. This is experienced in different ways. Several clergy spoke of being unable to make friends within the community. 'Who would want to be friends with a priest?' Living in different housing, working from home, (even though that is more fashionable within the 21st Century), and working

for an institution that is often pilloried by the press alienates them from the rest of society. This is exacerbated if the clergyperson transgresses.

Clergy whose spouses have left are offered a lot of supportive care from the hierarchy even if that is not always experienced as such. It is often more difficult for the senior staff when the clergy have erred. Here the split between the ego ideal of the Church and the 'messiness' of the reality are clearly visible. Clergy who had themselves 'stepped out of line' described how hard it has been to be reinstated. They see a gospel that is about forgiveness and restoration and wonder why that cannot be applied to them.

The Bishop from the north spoke about the code of practice in operation in such an event. A structural discipline would include seeing 'a counsellor unrelated to me and having spiritual direction... with a view to reintroduction to ministry.' Though the process, from a Bishop's point of view, is fairly clear, it does not appear so from the transgressor's angle. Clergy in such a position, where they have lost their home, stipend and job, feel isolated and neglected as they seek to put their life back together.

In many ways the above highlights the experienced difference between being in secular employ or in that of the Church. Being ordained is about difference. It is about aloneness whilst offering an often uninterested community a gospel of repentance and restoration. In his book, *Models of the Church*, Dulles (1987) looks at five models of the Church; Herald, Servant, Sacrament, the Body of Christ and as an institution. It is not surprising with such a task that many feel not just daunted, but also isolated, from others.

3. *Despair*

Real despair was seen in very few of the clergy. Where it was apparent it was mainly because of a difficult life event they were negotiating. Others expressed times of despair, often equated with spiritual and physical malaise. Dr. Christina Baxter, Principal of St. John's Theological College Nottingham, said, 'I try to help people understand that physical, spiritual and emotional health are all interwoven and if you don't give attention to all of them, each or all may suffer.' The clergy who struggled had experienced, and were experiencing, various physical ills and/or emotional traumas. That this affected their spiritual life was not surprising.

Suffering from despair exacerbates the feeling of being out of control. If a clergyperson feels they are unable to carry on, they lose everything: their home, income and job. This only adds to the sense of desperation.

4. *Guilt*

Most of the clergy throughout the interviews expressed, at some time, their feelings that they did not do enough. One clergyman graphically expressed it when saying that at night, as he reviewed the day, he never felt that what he had accomplished had been right. He always felt the things he hadn't achieved he should have managed.

The problem of guilt produced, they said, a constant need for reassurance and affirmation. That is why it is so crucial that clergy feel supported by their partners and by the hierarchy. Several clergy stated that they could not manage without their wives. The single clergy expressed the need for close friends or colleagues to provide that sort of reassurance.

5. *Low Self-Esteem*

There is much that will militate against a sense of pride in the ministry. Constant denigration by the press or a lack of care by a sometimes disaffected laity produces feelings of lack of self worth. Many of the clergy came into the ministry with a clear call from God but from backgrounds of emotional deprivation. As a result of this they had a deep need to find a sense of self. The image and uniform of the priest provided this in large measure. The reality, however, often probed beyond the mask and exposed the raw nerves beneath. Feelings of inadequacy, being out of control, fear and not knowing what they were doing, were expressed; the latter especially from the young, who were recently made new Incumbents. Much of ministry is about getting on and finding out about the job themselves. One of the clergy lamented the fact that he had not been given a job description before he started.

Besides these negative themes many positive ones were also expressed. It was apparent that many of the clergy felt fulfilled within their work. When discussing the difference between the apparently successful clergy and those who fail, the southern Bishop said that success is not just to do with

spirituality. He said, 'the Church is looking for leadership skills..., an entrepreneurial get up and go-ness that often sorts out one priest from another.' The northern Bishop also used the word 'entrepreneur'. Both felt that the 'successful' clergyperson is the one who is able to get into the community, make contact and reach people where they are. They need to be innovative and creative.

It is, however, the psychotherapeutic needs of all the clergy that is under the microscope. All will, because they are human and fallible, have needs that require care and support. The negative themes from the research highlight those needs. How can they be met?

Response of the Hierarchy:

In discussing with the two Bishops, Gordon Kurht and Christina Baxter, the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy, all four felt these needs could be met under three categories: care of clergy; codes of practice and continuing ministerial education.

1. *Care of Clergy*

Dr. Baxter discussed the care and attention theological colleges direct towards the whole person of the ordinand and their families. There is plenty of opportunity throughout the course for the ordinands to discover about their own human growth and development. They have opportunities for ongoing counselling and much time and energy is devoted to the ordinand's spouse in order to enable both of them to come to terms with being in a clergy house and all that that entails. Where there are grave problems, students, (or spouses), will be referred for psychiatric help and pastoral care. It is also true that the above provisions are not available at all theological colleges, though every effort is being made to provide such facilities.

Dr. Baxter is well aware of the pressures that parochial life will present. She cited cases where students of hers, now in parochial ministry, had 'got into difficulties and made a shipwreck of their faith and marriage.' She said it is not always their fault. She gets angry when 'the diocese does absolutely nothing to help them, and I know that because they come crying to me.'

Both Bishops said that a lot of supportive care is happening though it is 'often crisis management'. Gordon Kurht spelled it out clearly. He felt that the care of the clergy should consist of:-

- (a) Care at the local level, through shared ministry with the laity and local ordained colleagues.
- (b) Easy access to the Bishop and his advisers when there are problems.
- (c) Specialist help, psychotherapy, spiritual direction or medical advice, easily available.

There does appear to be a real desire of all concerned to try to address the psychotherapeutic needs of the clergy.

2. Codes of Practice

Dr. Baxter said that many clergy are 'extraordinarily naïve about sexuality and on the whole don't have the kind of framework of teaching that would help

them handle difficult issues.’ She went on to say that this is exacerbated because clergy and their spouses are very loath to ask for help. They seldom do until there is a crisis, when it is often too late to resolve anything.

Dioceses are increasingly producing codes of good practice for their clergy in order to help them manage more effectively the boundaries needed in their relationships with people. Many clergy marriages have broken down because a clergyperson has been too zealous in the care of the bereaved and has not been aware of the inherent dangers of intimacy. It is within such relationships of pain and hurt that, often unawares, the clergy seek to meet their own needs of affirmation in offering inappropriate care and comfort.

3. Continuing Ministerial Education

Dr. Baxter was very direct about the need for each person to be responsible for their own continuing learning and psychological growth. Both Bishops and Gordon Kurht talked about the Continuing Ministry Education programmes that many dioceses offer to all their clergy. These comprise interviews with the senior staff on a regular basis, (sometimes every 18

months), for review or appraisal of their work and an exploration of the possibilities for future ministry. There are resources for in-service training.

In the north there is a brochure which helps clergy plan this for themselves, plus a check-list. Clergy are also encouraged to meet in triads or in twos, depending on the diocese. This meets with a mixed reception as clergy find it hard to share openly and honestly with their peers.

Listening to the response of these senior members of the Church, it is obvious that there is a great deal of concern for the welfare of the clergy. The rising number of clergy marriage breakdowns and the often visible distress of the clergy has provoked the hierarchy into looking at ways of addressing their needs. Yet for all that is being offered, it still appears to many clergy that it is not enough. Is it because the reasons for the clergy's distress are not something that is easily remedied? Like the rest of humanity, the clergy are caught up in a consumerist culture that has little time or space for the transcendental. Added to this is the advent of women ordained priest and the ripples that has caused.

The hypotheses that were explored were:-

1. *'the lack of respect for the Christian gospel and the more constraining conditions of service within the modern culture, where media and the greater freedom of the wider society often seek to denigrate traditional values, may be seen to cause the Anglican parochial clergy a loss of confidence which is often seen to have an adverse effect on their psychological health.'*
2. *'the dis-ease within affects not just the clergyperson's work and his own spiritual journey, but also has an effect on every aspect of his life' and*
3. *'the reaction of a clergyperson to the modern-day culture depends more on their own internal emotional strength, or ego identity, than on the changing cultural values.'*

In reading through the three hypotheses, how the clergy manage the changing culture appears to depend 'more on their own internal emotional strength and ego identity', as the third hypothesis suggests.

Much thought is employed in caring for the ordained workforce. As well as their own spiritual maturity, the psychological needs of the clergy cannot be forgotten. Anne Dyer, a clergywoman married to a clergyman, said, 'Roger and I work on the assumption that our health and well-being are entirely our responsibility before God. We assume nothing will come from outside. We do not expect the parishioners to care for us or to even think we have needs. That is very liberating for us to have got there.' [Personal communication - November, 1999.]

That, maybe, is the case for them. For many others their emotional deprivation prevents them handling their needs in such a mature way. It is for such clergy that their psychotherapeutic needs should be taken into consideration.

Implications for Psychotherapy:

Having reflected on the data gathered, it has become very clear that the main area of concern for the clergy is to do with conflict. This has been highlighted at several levels.

External Conflict

1. The conflict engendered between believing in, and propounding, a message in which the encompassing culture seemingly has little interest.
2. The conflict between fulfilling a role that the Church appears to value but which the community fails to understand. Many clergy are asked if they only work on a Sunday.
3. The conflict between being accountable to an authority that on the one hand offers pastoral oversight and yet, on the other hand, appears aloof and distant.

4. The conflict as the 'professional', who dispenses the faith to an increasingly theologically educated laity who do not always affirm the expertise of the clergy. There appears to be a noticeable hostility in many churches between clergy and laity. The anecdotal expectations of the laity have appeared to rise proportionately to the decline in church attendance.
5. The conflict produced through attending to what feels like the never-ending demands of the parishioners and balancing that with the needs of family life.
6. The conflict of living in tithed accommodation often totally at variance with the surrounding dwellings.
7. The conflict of living in a goldfish bowl.

Internal Conflict

1. Many clergy expressed the feeling that they were unable to meet everyone's needs. The feelings of failure and the guilt at never accomplishing the task is a constant internal conflict.
2. Preaching about a life that demands that the leader be 'above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable...' [Holy Bible NIV 1992 p.1375] whilst struggling with the inner realities of their own natural inclinations. That this produces enormous conflict was graphically expressed by those whose marriages had broken down.
3. Preaching a message that is no longer tenable for that priest. Many expressed such conflicts. All the clergy admitted doubts at various times. It is when the doubts form into a different belief-system that the inner turmoil becomes almost impossible to bear.

4. The clergy have a need to feel affirmed by the congregation but also by the hierarchy. When this is not forthcoming they can feel hurt. This will lead to feelings of anger at the Bishops whom they feel will not accept the role of 'Father in God'.
5. The almost unconscious awareness of gender issues, now that women are ordained priest, is barely recognised or acknowledged by most male clergy yet from the data it appears that this is of major concern to them, however it is expressed.
6. The conflict that is inherent especially in those from emotionally deprived backgrounds who struggle daily to feel 'good enough'. Their battle with the demons within may be acted out in various ways, such as inappropriate contact with people, in order to assuage their need for love.

These external and internal conflicts, if unmanageable, are all indications of the need for counselling. Most dioceses and Bishops provide the opportunity for such help. Centres like Burrswood in Kent and The Society of Mary and

Martha near Exeter offer a safe place away from parish pressures to work with some of the issues highlighted.

No research project can be an end in itself. It must always lead to the need for further in-depth scrutiny of the subject. This is certainly apparent at the end of this project.

Suggestions for Future Research:

1. There appears to be a need to look closer at 'why' men and women wished to be ordained. Many who are seem to have very fragile ego systems. Is that why they gravitate to a seemingly safe institution?
2. More research should look at the meaning of the priesthood for the clergy. They join a religious dogma and become part of the workforce. In doing so they are saying, 'define me, hold me, keep me safe.' The shocking thing is that it does not do that. Instead, the priest experiences often a real sense of dislocation as they juggle being in the world and yet not part of that world's cultural ethos.

3. The area of authority needs to be carefully looked at, both from the Bishops' perspective as well as the clergy's. Some Bishops exercise an autocratic role whilst others undertake a far more egalitarian partnership with their priests. Is that, again, to do with the Bishops' personal psychological agendas, the dictates of the whole Church or the seeming needs of the workforce? There appears no doubt that just as the priest sets the tone for the Church within a community, so does the Bishop within his own diocese.

4. Because relationships are at the heart of ministry, more research needs to be done on them at all levels.

➤ Family relationships and how that affects the clergyperson. Several couples now are both priests so that there are various different combinations within the clergy household.

➤ Relationships between clergy and congregations.

➤ Relationships between clergy and clergy, especially in the deanery setting.

This would provide interesting data concerning clergy envy and competitiveness.

5. More work needs to be done in order to explore the link between emotional and spiritual health. It appeared within the data that there was a direct association between the clergy's feelings of disappointment, disenchantment or experiences of betrayal and their loss of faith. It would be interesting to investigate whether the possibility of a loss of faith could be predicted at the selection stage. That may only happen if there is a greater appreciation of the candidate's background.

The opportunities for more research are legion, whilst the need for such a task is clear to see. Meanwhile, the clergy from these two dioceses, who work at the coalface of their societies, are the ones whose stories have been told within these pages. Their psychotherapeutic needs are embedded in the opening phrase of the hymn, 'Just as I Am'.

CONCLUSION

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

[Eliot, T. S., 1963 p.222]

There is no neat ending to research. The exploration opens up various areas of interest which it is then possible to analyse and evaluate. From such material certain conclusions may be arrived at, only to be discarded through further in-depth research. That is how it should be, for research is like a pilgrimage. The road ahead is unclear and only gradually unfolds. There are many surprises on the way and several areas of tough terrain to be negotiated. Stumbling frequently along the way, with much fear at times, this researcher has found, as Eliot did, that to arrive is to 'know the place for the first time.'

[Eliot, T. S., 1963 p.222]

The Aims of the Research:

The aim of this research is to analyse the clergy's view of the problems and conflicts they confront in their lives. This was explored under six headings:-

- Why Ordained: Impoverished Narcissism
- View of Authority: Super ego
- What it Means to be a Priest: Self-image
- Personal Relationships: Attachment
- Working within the Parish: Defense and denial
- Emotional and Spiritual Health: Dark night of the Soul

This broad approach, by investigating such concepts, (which are explained in greater detail in the empirical chapters), from the data produced may be seen to aim to validate the hypotheses arrived at. It is by investigating the clergy's perception of their life and work that an answer may be found as to whether the clergy perceive themselves to be 'successful' or 'failures'. This will depend more on their own internal integration than on the lack of credibility of the Christian faith to the surrounding community.

How the Aims were Met:

The aim of this research was to explore the relationship between the institution of the Church and the life of the ordained clergy. This was achieved first by sending out a pilot study questionnaire to each incumbent

clergyperson in the northern and the southern dioceses. Much valuable data was gathered from this study, which is in Appendix VIII. It was, however, in the willingness of the random sample of clergy who were prepared to share openly the problems confronting them that the data for the psychodynamic analysis emerged. A grounded theory approach was used, allowing the respondents to be listened to and the hypotheses and concepts to emerge from the data.

All the clergy were prepared to give their time to discuss their feelings and perceptions of the six areas to be explored. That is; why they were ordained, their view of authority, what it meant to them to be a priest, their personal relationships, their work within their parishes and their emotional and spiritual health. The data from the interviews became the voice of the clergy and it was their voice that produced answers as to whether the hypotheses were borne out.

The Validity of the Hypotheses:

The hypotheses, as stated throughout the thesis, (and which for reference can be seen on page 496), have been explored throughout the empirical data. This data appears to give validity to these hypotheses.

Int. 116 expressed throughout his interview his feeling that 'people are no longer interested in God. The gospel is irrelevant and so am I.' He, in many ways, exemplified the priests whose confidence in the Christian message had disintegrated in the wave of liberalism within society and the negative media attention given to the Church.

The clergy who were affected by the loss of Christian belief and standards in the wider society were those who found their work, spiritual journey and every aspect of their life affected. The aloneness of the clergyperson who said, 'no-one wants to talk to a priest', expressed the sense of alienation these clergy felt. Their loss of self-esteem as a minister of the gospel was experienced by some as clinical depression and by others as a loss of faith. Whatever the expression of their dis-ease, it was felt in every area of their life. The clergyman who said he had lost his faith, also expressed the ambivalence of

not being able to do anything about that because it would mean he would lose his job, his pension and his home. All that was open to him was to live a lie.

There were several clergy who had openly faced the modern-day culture. They had also faced their own vulnerability and fear of failure. Int. 321 had openly shared his homosexuality with his parish. Though he had experienced many times of 'crucifixion' in the past, he now depended on an internal emotional strength which emerged as he became more integrated. It was this integration of their fragility that allowed this clergyman and others to minister confidently within their recognised and accepted weakness, thus highlighting the validity of the third hypothesis.

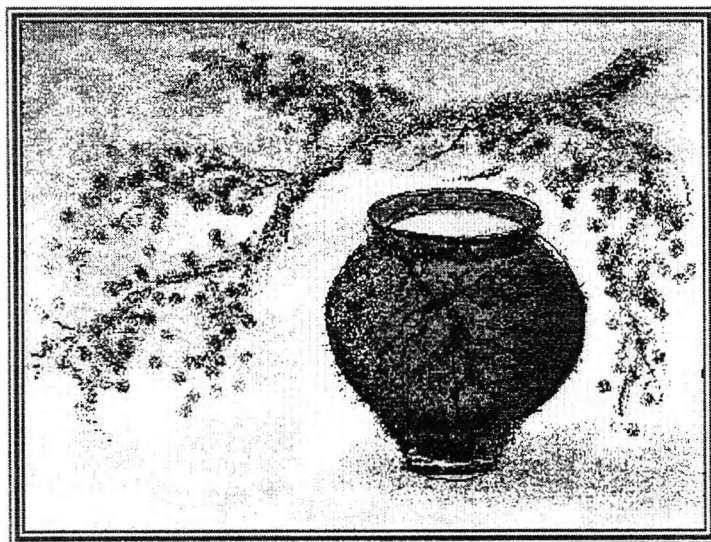
From the above, and the analysed data throughout the text, it will be seen that the three hypotheses have been explored extensively and appear to have been validated.

This research is, first and last, about the men and women who have heard God's call to the ordained Anglican ministry. Some have been prepared to leave lucrative and powerful jobs to obey that call. Others have found coming into the Anglican ministry has provided them with a status and a middle-class

way of life that would have seemed impossible apart from ordination. Whether they have moved from poverty to seeming wealth, riches to poverty, or from one status to another, the clergy have all spoken of the change that has occurred for them and their families through the choices they have made. It was their obedience to the call that changed everything.

What sort of people are prepared for such an upheaval and how has the outcome affected them and their families? More importantly, what psychotherapeutic needs have been highlighted during this research? Before answering that question it is important to look back over the pilgrimage of research and to understand the anthem that has accompanied me on the journey.

THE CRACKED POT
[Broken]



'It lay in fragments, shattered, broken, marred:
The vessel crushed – its beauty torn apart.
The pattern that had formed its outer glory
In dust and splinters split upon the ground.
The shape it once had held lay there no more –
The etched design of years we'd grown to know –
The potter's handiwork returned to nought,
Lay fractured, rudely scattered on the earth.

Anguish held me and torment choked my soul;
The agony of brokenness – the pain,
The severing of the known, the shadows of the past
Grief overwhelmed me, shook me as I cried.

The hidden inner parts were now displayed,
A myriad pieces in the seeing light,
Their covering, a mask, was swept away;
Unveiled, their shame and torture laid to view.
Some trod that way and trampled underfoot
Or threw aside the remnants as they passed;
Yet others would deride the crumpled flask
Seeing no beauty in the scattered clay.

Yet in the desperation of my heart
I see the Potter, weeping, stooping down;
Gently he cradles the fragments, lifting them close,
Not one is missed, each piece is sought and held.

My precious workmanship, the pleasure of my hands
I fashioned you and gave you life and form
How is your beauty scarred, your tenderness exposed,
Who plundered the secret places of your heart?
Who savaged the love I planted deep within?
Bruised and rejected you brought sorrow, tears?
Such pain I see, torment and misery,
Deep, dark despair – yet you were made for joy!
You were not made to bear this heavy load;
You have been crushed – but you are in my hands.

The Master Potter gently took each piece,
And built again a vessel as he chose.
Its shape was softer than before – its tracing fine,
He breathed His healing love to seal each join.
It was a patient work, he did not rush
To force the fractured remnants into place,
But held each one until the pain had ebbed,
Then quietly joined them in His new design.

I felt the newness of the Maker's touch,
And saw with wonder how He brought again
A treasure, fashioned to His glorious plan;
A new creation, out of brokenness.
He held it now with pleasure in His eyes,

Yes, and with love and set it in its place.
"You have come through the fire, my little one,
You have been ravaged - now you're made anew,
Rejoice to me my child born out of love,
And know that I was broken once - for you".

[*Sue Wharton - 1994*]

Looking from afar at the Church of England, the clergy and their relationships, has the semblance of looking at a broken pot. The Anglican Church has lost not only its power base within the country but, as has been seen, also much respect. Often this is due to its vacillating on doctrinal and moral issues. Though still involved in the ceremonial life of Great Britain and with its Bishops sitting in the House of Lords, its influence on the day to day life of vast numbers of the population is, nevertheless, minimal. Historically, through its buildings, the Church is still a recognised institution, but barely 2% of the population attend services on a regular basis.

The brokenness of the institution has affected the workforce. In many instances the clergy have lost confidence in their Bishops, in the Church and even, at times, in the message they proclaim. This gradual eroding of

certainties has occurred through sociological change, but also because of internal strife within the Church.

The impact of ordination to the priesthood of women was seen to be of earthquake proportions. It not only affected those who were against its happening. It has, and will continue to have, Richter Scale effect within the Anglican body. Once completely male dominated and male led, this ancient institution is experiencing a 'sex-change'.

Many able women are being ordained priest; as their numbers increase so the landscape will change due to the different insight and perspectives they bring. The cracks will widen as the women, once appearing to be second-class Christians, now begin to be heard with a priestly voice in the corridors or power.

These changes are far-reaching but no more so than if and when General Synod formalises homosexual relationships, thereby setting aside the dictates of the scriptures.

The fear of a fragmenting Church, or a fragmented clergy, appears like a motif running throughout this research.

However, brokenness, fragmentation and cracked pots are a theological, as well as a psychological metaphor. Throughout the Bible, in both Testaments, the people of God are seen to fragment through disobedience to God's law and inculturation. It is, however, this very brokenness that provides a seed of hope. As with the poem, from a theological point of view it could be said the Master Potter is at work to mend and repair. It is for this reason that the clergy first found a faith for themselves. It is also for this reason that the clergy feel they have something to say.

A cracked pot can be broken from inside or outside. Water freezing within and expanding may cause cracking. The roots of a plant pushing out may break the pot. Equally, weight or impact of any sort may destroy the pot from outside.

Within each clergyperson there is the possibility of the stress from within, (their lack of belief, family pressures), or pressure from without, (parish expectations and hierarchical demands), fragmenting such a fragile vessel. A

cracked pot may appear useless, unattractive. It can, however, be a thing of beauty. A lighted candle placed within a cracked pot will produce a diffused light. A cracked pot may adorn the top of a waterfall where the water seeps through the cracks at a gentle pace, irrigating the rock garden below.

It is such metaphors which provide rich and healing insights into the 'broken' Church or 'broken' priest. Each, if available, may be used for light to shine or water to flow through the broken parts and so reach way beyond their own pain to enhance the lives of others. The visibility of the humanity of the clergy, exposed in doubt and frailty, may become a stream of healing within the lives of the congregation. The laity may then feel that the clergy now understand the struggles they wrestle with.

The analyst sees the possibility of individuation out of the trauma of brokenness as the individual accepts, works through and integrates these once unacceptable parts of themselves.

The Christian sees in Christ's broken body and poured out blood the possibility of salvation for all who embrace that salvic work. Though many of

the clergy appear broken and inadequate for the task, it is that very 'crackedness' that provides the possibility of hope.

Ultimately the Church strives not for worldly success but, through brokenness, for a wholeness. The task of the Church and the hierarchy is to enable that to happen as effectively as possible.

Appendix I

Lambeth Palace London SE1 7JU

4 September 1996

Mrs Y Warren
The Archdeaconry
ROCHESTER
Kent ME1 1SX

Dear Yvonne,

The Archbishop has asked me to write and thank you for your letter and the outline of your proposed research.

Sadly I fear that his financial resources are very limited and on this occasion he has decided that he will be unable to help you in your request for funding.

Needless to say I am sorry not to be a bearer of better news than this and I do hope that your quest meets with more success elsewhere.

Yours,


The Revd Canon Colin Fletcher
Archbishop's Chaplain

Appendix II

I have just been accepted by City University onto the MPhil/PH.D programme at Regent's College, London to research into the needs of the Anglican clergy in an uncertain world. This starts in October, 1996. I am enclosing a copy of my Proposal for you to see what it is I am hoping to explore.

In order to research a sample of Anglican incumbents that is as much as possible a random group of clergy, I propose to target two dioceses. One diocese will be in the Northern Province of York and the other in the Southern Province of Canterbury.

I am writing to ask for your permission to use your Diocese as the diocese from the Southern Province. If you were prepared for me to use your incumbent clergy within my research, then may I send to each incumbent a letter explaining my project and with a short questionnaire? I have enclosed the proposed letter and questionnaire to be used.

Because your Diocese is so large and varies in containing within its boundaries rural, city and urban priority areas, it will, I hope, furnish me with valuable research material.

I am very conscious that such a project needs to be handled with great sensitivity toward all who take part. Consequently, I would wish to assure you that I would do all that is possible, without prejudicing the research, not to cause unnecessary distress or disruption to your clergy. They will be assured by me of their personal confidentiality and that any material will be used within the whole evaluation of the sample, so that no one person may be identified.

I have informed the Archbishop of Canterbury what I am hoping to do.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Yvonne Warren, MA

Appendix III

26th February, 1997

Dear

I have been accepted by City University onto the M.Phil/Ph.D programme at Regent's College, London, to research into "THE PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC NEEDS OF THE ANGLICAN CLERGY IN THE 1990'S".

My reason for doing this research is that I have been a clergy wife for over thirty years, and for twenty-six of those my husband was an incumbent before becoming Archdeacon of Rochester. I am also a marital therapist and practising psychotherapist, and in this Diocese I am the Bishop's Visitor and a Bishop's Selector. Because of this I have not only my own experience of the stressful life of the ordained minister to draw upon, but also that of others. This has given me a real concern for such research

In this research I will be looking only at the needs of incumbent clergy, because they have particular pressures not so often experienced by extra parochial clergy. I will hope to look in depth at the areas covered under sociological, emotional and spiritual headings. Hopefully, this will explore the whole life of the clergy person and not just one aspect of it. All the research will be carried out looking at the clergy person's perception of their life.

In order to do this, I will be using a qualitative method of research - grounded theory which, like a phenomenological approach, is based on listening to answers to questions and then trying to understand the response as a whole.

I am writing to you, with the permission of your Diocesan Bishop, to ask whether you would be prepared to help me in my research., first by completing the questions attached, and secondly by being prepared to meet for an interview so that I might understand your views more fully.

I do assure you I will carefully guard confidentiality, and no-one in your Diocese will have access to any information about individuals. I will use all your responses as part of the research material to be evaluated, but without any names or such personal details that would make it possible to identify any one clergy person.

If you are prepared to be part of the research sample, then I would wish to interview you for up to one hour. Because of the nature of the research, the interview will be taped, and the tape will be confidential.

I am very conscious that such an exercise could open up areas of vulnerability. For this reason, I will aim to approach the whole experience as sensitively as possible.

The aim is that this research will be completed within three years. My hope is that one result of it may be a greater understanding of the psychological needs of incumbent clergy by the Church hierarchy and a willingness to put into place such practices as will help the clergy in their ministry

Thank you for reading this letter and your willingness to partake in this task.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Warren

APPENDIX IV

RESEARCH PILOT STUDY

QUESTIONNAIRE

[THIS SHOULD TAKE ONLY APPROXIMATELY TEN MINUTES TO ANSWER.]

No names will be used. All identifying features will be disguised. Information derived from this will be restricted for use within the research.

SECTION ONE

Personal Details

- Age:

31-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	46-55	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 65	<input type="checkbox"/>
36-45	<input type="checkbox"/>	56-65	<input type="checkbox"/>		
- Sex:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------
- Married: Yes/No
- Children:

How many?	Age & Sex
-----------	-----------
- Year of Ordination:
- Average size of congregation:

Under 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	51-100	<input type="checkbox"/>
101-150	<input type="checkbox"/>	151-200	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 210	<input type="checkbox"/>		
- Type of Ministry/Orientation: *[Tick all that apply.]*

Conservative Evangelical	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open Evangelical	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modern Catholic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traditional Catholic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charismatic	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other <i>[please specify]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION TWO

Some people feel community life is dislocated, others don't. Parochial clergy, because of their position at the heart of the community life, may be susceptible to the community mood. These questions seek to explore what effect this has on you in your role as a parochial clergyperson, if any.

Sociological

1.	<u>Area in which you live:</u>	Yes	No	Unsure
(a)	Could you ever see yourself living in this parish?	[]	[]	[]
(b)	Does your income match the income of your parishioners?	[]	[]	[]
(c)	Do you feel you are accepted in the community and by the community?	[]	[]	[]

[In the following questions, please tick the applicable box: 1 = Never; 2 = Occasionally; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always.]

		1	2	3	4	5
2.	<u>The Vicarage/Rectory</u>					
(a)	Does it feel like home?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(b)	Do the congregation feel 'it belongs to them'?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(c)	Is it a place of retreat and recreation					
	(i) for you?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	(ii) for your partner?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
	(iii) for your children?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

SECTION THREE

The perceived dis-ease within society appears to affect family and social life today. Some feel they lack support, others feel that the support is adequate. The questions which follow ask whether you yourself feel happy about the support you receive.

Emotional

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	<u>Support System</u>					
(a)	Can you share your real feelings with your partner or a close friend, or both?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(b)	With some others in the congregation?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(c)	With some others in the parish?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(d)	With a Spiritual Director?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

[In the following questions, please tick the applicable box: 1 = Never; 2 = Occasionally; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always.]

	1	2	3	4	5
2. Do you ever feel:					
(a) extreme sadness?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(b) depression?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(c) hopelessness?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
Equally, do you ever feel:					
(d) a joy in living?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(e) a sense of hope and renewal?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(f) elation?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

SECTION FOUR

England is now a nation where many faiths are expressed and where a large number of people admit to having no faith at all. These questions try to explore the spiritual life of the clergy who are expected to ‘preach the Gospel’ in this context.

Spiritual

	1	2	3	4	5
1. <u>In a Multi-Faith Society</u>					
(a) Do you feel confident in preaching the Christian Gospel?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(b) Have you felt comfortable discussing spiritual issues with people of other faiths?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(c) Is mutual respect possible for you with people who have no faith?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(d) Do you feel able to turn to Christian leaders for spiritual support if you need it?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
(e) Have there been times of spiritual aridity during your life as a clergyperson?	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

If you wish to ignore any of these questions, then please feel free to do so. All answers will be treated in the strictest confidence.

If you are willing to participate in the main research project, please let me know. If, however, you do not wish to participate, then you have my assurance that I will not trouble you further. I hope we will have the opportunity of meeting. Please inform me of your intentions on the attached response sheet. Thank you for participating so far.

RESPONSE SHEET

I am willing/unwilling* to be further involved in this research.

* Delete where applicable.

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....

Postcode

Telephone

Thank you for your willingness to return this questionnaire.

Appendix V

25th April, 1997

Dear

Thank you so much for your swift return of the questionnaire.

There has been an overwhelming response and the data generated contains important insights for all of us concerned with the needs of Anglican parochial clergy.

Once again, thank you so much for returning the questionnaire so promptly.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Warren

*The Archdeaconry,
Rochester,
Kent,
ME1 1SX.*

25th April, 1997.

Dear

Thank you so much for your swift return of the questionnaire.

There has been an overwhelming response and the data generated contains important insights for all of us concerned with the needs of Anglican parochial clergy.

I appreciate your willingness to participate further. As mentioned, the interview will take the form of semi-structured questions which will give you the opportunity to expand on issues of particular interest to you. Again, may I reassure you of the confidentiality of this material.

I intend to do as much of the interviewing as possible over the summer and will contact you shortly with possible dates. I greatly look forward to meeting you. If it is convenient to you, I will interview you in your own home.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Warren

*The Archdeaconry,
Rochester,
Kent,
ME1 1SX.*

25th April, 1997.

Dear

Thank you so much for your swift return of the questionnaire that I sent you. I have had an overwhelming response. Because of this, it will unfortunately be impossible for me to carry out a semi-structured interview with all who have shown a willingness to be involved further in the research. However, the questionnaire that you have returned will produce valuable data for analysis. This will be extremely useful in my thesis.

I have decided that I am only able to interview around fifty incumbents. These I have chosen at random. I am writing to let you know that sadly your name is not among the fifty.

However, I am very grateful for your willingness to participate. Once again, thank you so much for returning the questionnaire so promptly.

With my very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Warren

The Archdeaconry Rochester Kent ME1 1SX

Medway (01634) 842527

Dear

This is just a short note to remind you that I will be coming up to interview you for my research on

..... at

I am very much looking forward to meeting you then.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Warren

Appendix VI

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the psychotherapeutic needs of Anglican parochial clergy today?

Theory Question 1

What were the psychological reasons for coming into the ordained ministry?

Informant Questions

1. What was the main influence on you to become a parish priest?
 - a) Have there been other clergy in your family?
2. How did your family feel about you being ordained?

Theory Question 2

Where does the priest see the focus of authority coming from?

Informant Questions

1. Who has authority over you in ministry?
 - a) To whom do you feel answerable?

- b) In what way does that affect your work?
- c) If you feel you are primarily answerable to the Church or the Bishop, what role does God play in your work?
- d) How do you discern the will of God?

Theory Question 3

Does the clergy's understanding of what it means to be a priest affect their work and how they see themselves?

Informant Questions

1 . Which words have the most meaning for you?

Word or Sacrament

Priest or Pastor

Father or Reverend

Mass or Holy Communion

Table or Altar

2. In what positive and negative ways does your view of priesthood affect your ministry?
3. In what ways does your view of priesthood affect people's attitude to you?
4. In what ways does this affect your relationship with God?

Theory Question 4

In what ways does the work of the incumbent affect your personal relationships?

Informant Question

1. How does your work as a priest affect your family?
2. How do you spend family time?
3. Has your partner's/family's attitude to your work changed over the years and, if so, how?
 - a) Partner
 - b) Family (i.e. children)

4. In what ways does the financial remuneration affect your lifestyle, if at all?
5. How does the work of a priest affect personal friendships?

Theory Question 5

Does the work of a priest produce transference/counter-transference situations and, if so, in what way?

Informant questions

1. In what ways did your training prepare you for the work of a priest?
2. What image do your parishioners have of you?
3. As you work with people do you find it provokes difficult feelings in you?
4. How do you handle people who expect more than you can give?

6. How do you maintain your professional boundaries?
 - a) What would you do if you realised that a parishioner was sexually attracted to you?
 - b) What would you do if you realised you were sexually attracted to a parishioner?
6. Are there aspects of your personal life which have been affected by perceived judgements from the outside world?
7. What do you do if a parishioner's needs overwhelm you?

Theory Question 6

Does the work of a priest affect his/her spiritual and mental health? If so, how?

Informant Questions

1. What does it mean to you to be a priest?
2. Have you suffered from stress and, if so, in what way?

3. Have you experienced a loss of faith? If so, how have you coped with doubt?
4. Have you experienced anger at times and, if so, how have you expressed it?
5. What has been the worst time of your ministry?
 - a) Are there any areas in which you might like to receive more support?
 - b) Have you ever felt like giving up?
6. What has been the best time in your ministry?

YVONNE WARREN

**The Archdeaconry
Rochester
Kent
ME1 1SX**

Dear

Thank you so very much for being prepared to give me time to interview you for my research. I do so appreciate you being prepared to answer the questions that I put to you.

With my very best wishes to all your work.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Warren

Appendix VII

A Summary of the Criteria for Selection for Ministry in the Church of England

A MINISTRY WITHIN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Candidates should be familiar with the tradition and practice of the Church of England and be ready to work within them.

B VOCATION

Candidates should be able to speak of their sense of vocation to ministry and mission, referring both to their own conviction and to the extent to which others have confirmed it. Their sense of vocation should be obedient, realistic and informed.

C FAITH

Candidates should show an understanding of the Christian faith and a desire to deepen their understanding. They should demonstrate personal commitment to Christ and a capacity to communicate the Gospel.

D. SPIRITUALITY

Candidates should show evidence of a commitment to a spiritual discipline, involving individual and corporate prayer and worship. Their spiritual practice should be such as to sustain and energise them in their daily lives.

E PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

Candidates should be sufficiently mature and stable to show that they are able to sustain the demanding role of a minister and to face change and pressure in a flexible and balanced way. They should be seen to be people of integrity.

RELATIONSHIPS

Candidates should demonstrate self-awareness and self-acceptance as a basis for developing open and healthy professional, personal and pastoral relationships as ministers. They should respect the will of the Church on matters of sexual morality.

LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Candidates should show ability to offer leadership in the Church community and to some extent in the wider community. This ability includes the capacity to offer an example of faith and discipleship, to collaborate effectively with others, as well as to guide and shape the life of the Church community in its mission to the world.

H QUALITY OF MIND

Candidates should have the necessary intellectual capacity and quality of mind to undertake satisfactorily a course of theological study and ministerial preparation and to cope with the intellectual demands of ministry.

Appendix VIII

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS FROM THE PILOT STUDY DATA (APP. IV)

At the time of this research there are a total of 10,004 full-time ordained clergy ministering in the Church of England. ('Church Statistics' 196 p.9) 7,050 work within the province of Canterbury and 2,954 within the province of York. Of those 10,000 clergy there are a total of 377 clergy dignitaries within both provinces. They comprise diocesan Bishops, Suffragan and Assistant Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans and Provosts. They have particular oversight of all clergy within the 43 dioceses and the 43 cathedrals. From the remaining 9,677 clergy, 313 are non-parochial diocesan clergy. They work as hospital, prison, industrial chaplains or within the Armed Services. Many of them work within the theological colleges and courses, whilst others occupy jobs within the diocesan structures. This leaves 9,000 clergy who work within the parish system, either as incumbents or assistant curates. Those of incumbent status may be part of a team ministry, comprising several parishes. Within such a team ministry one incumbent is designated the Team Rector,

whilst the others are Team Vicars, but usually with their own church and parochial area. There are 1,758 curates, or assistant clergy.

The focus of this research project is on the incumbent clergy, as there are particular pressures on them. A total of 347 pilot study questionnaires were sent out to the incumbent clergy of two dioceses, one in the north and one in the south.

Section One:

This section of the pilot study looked at the personal details of the clergy.

1. Age of Respondents

It can be seen from Fig. 1 that about 28% of the clergy sample from the north and 43% from the south were within the 46-55 age bracket.

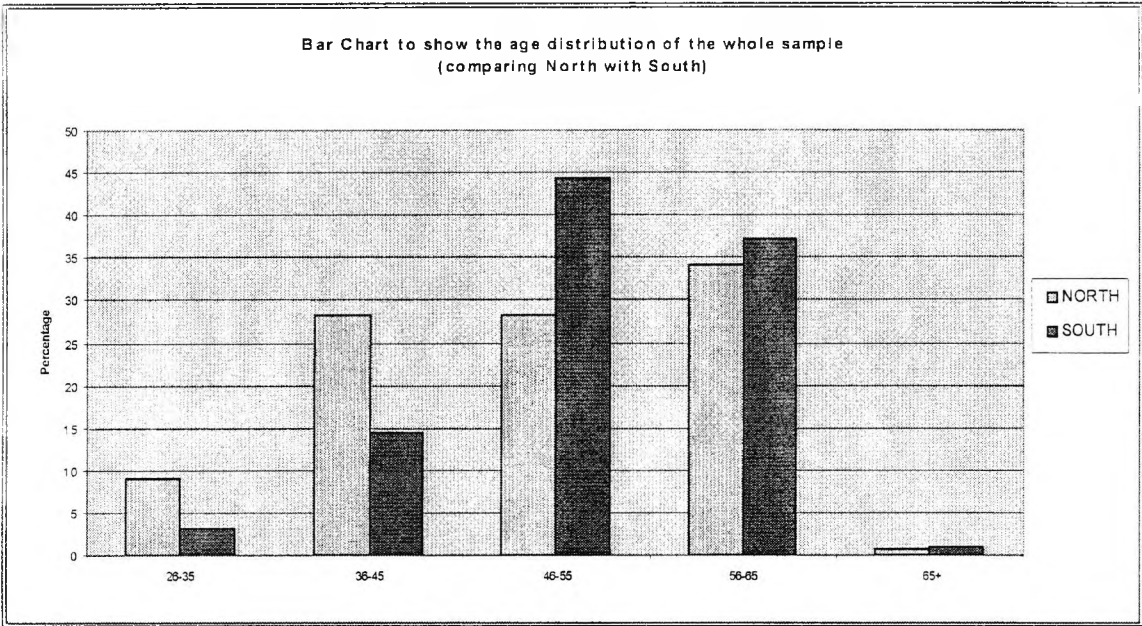


Fig. 1

37% from the south and 34% from the north were between the 56-65 age bracket.

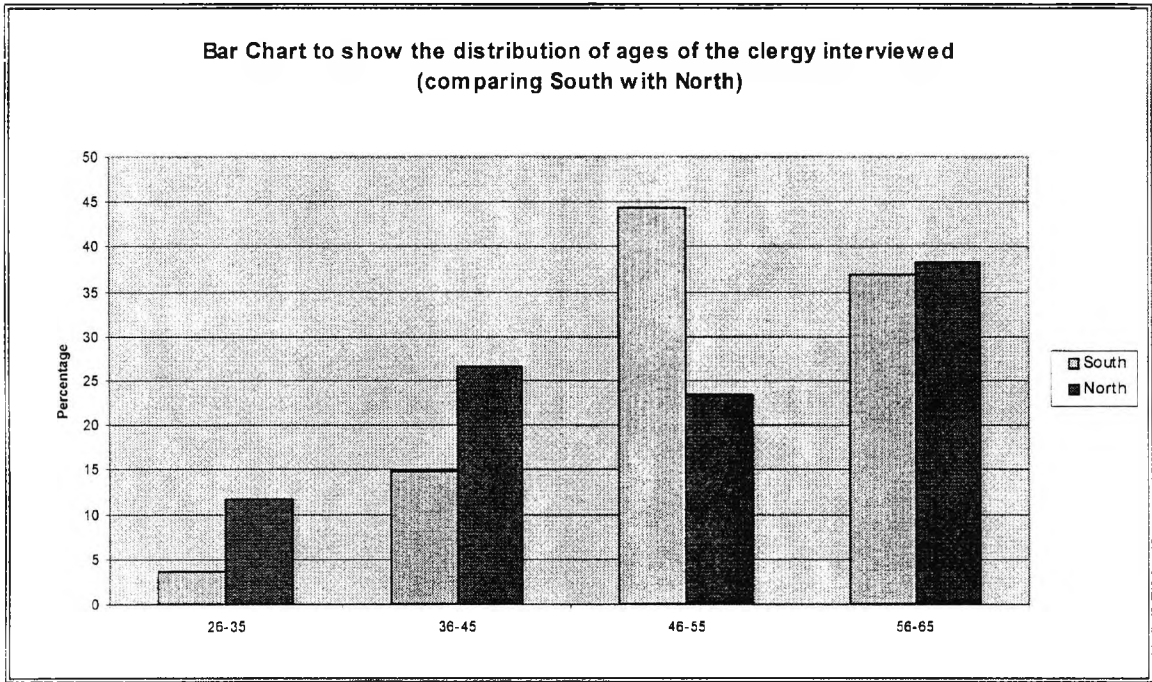


Fig. 2

In Fig. 2 it is seen that the largest number of clergy in the south were from the 46-55 age bracket, whereas from the north the largest number of clergy were from the 56-65 age bracket. Only 12% in the north and 4% in the south were interviewed from the younger age group. However, during the research it became apparent that one reason for the low percentage of young clergy in the ministry is because so many seek to do secular work after finishing their education. It has been noticeable for some years that the majority of those attending theological colleges or courses have already come from other professions.

2. Marital Status

It was found that 82% of the overall sample are married and that there is a higher percentage of single clergy in the northern diocese. Fig. 3 compares married/single status according to age distribution. This does not, however, highlight those who have been divorced or widowed and remarried.

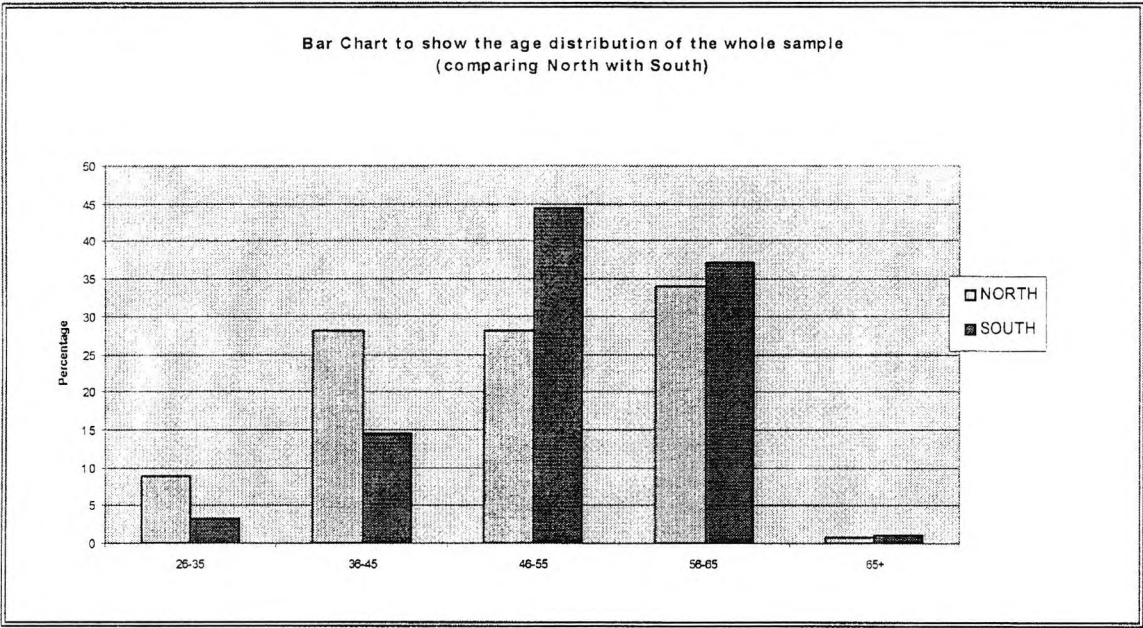


Fig. 3

During the semi-structured interviews I looked in greater detail at the ‘home’ status of the clergy. I had missed out several of these options from the pilot study questionnaire. Fig. 4 rectifies this.

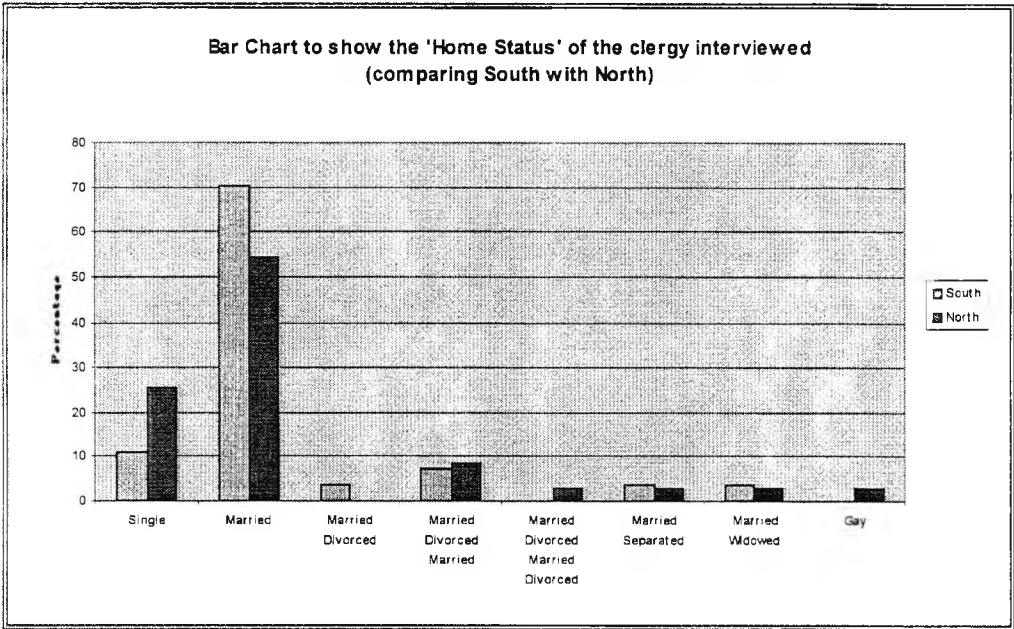


Fig. 4

3. *Types of Ministry*

The importance of the churchmanship or type of ministry exercised by the clergy will be seen in the chapter on their view of their own priesthood.

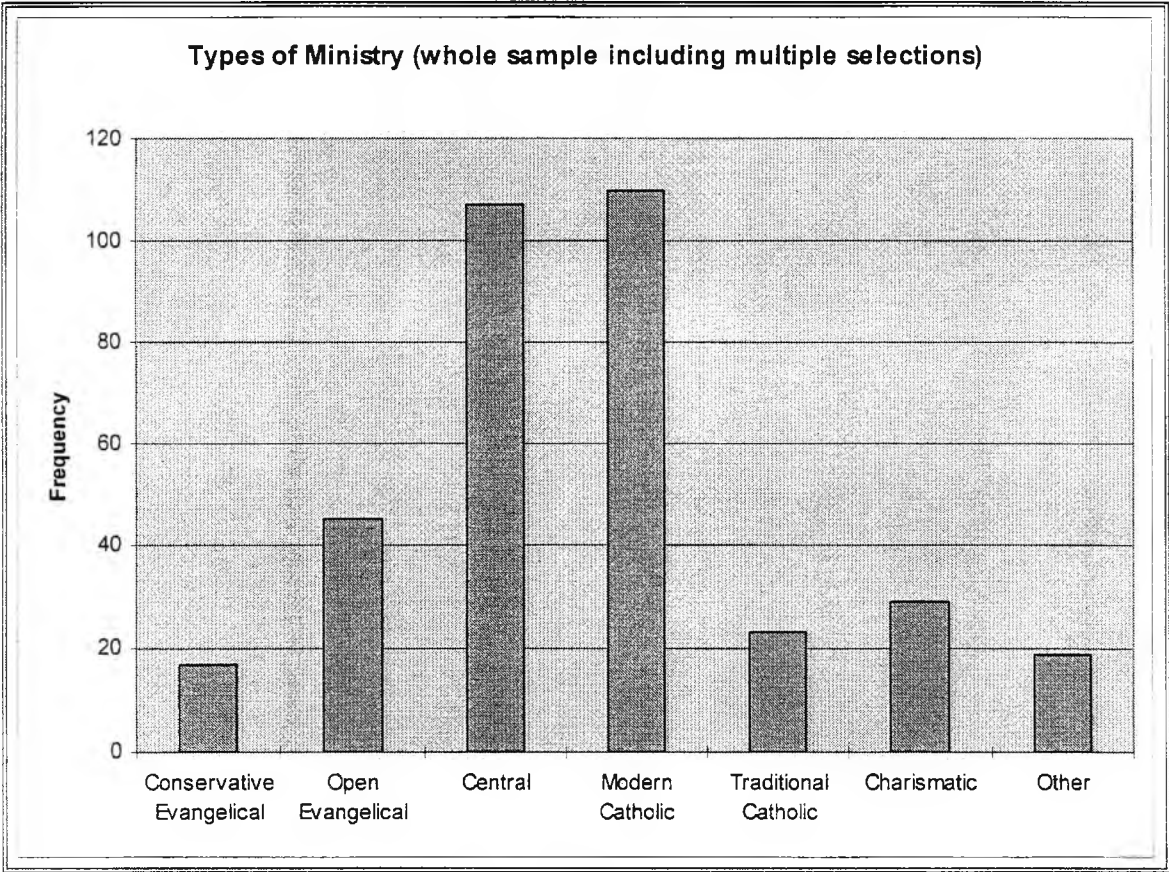


Fig. 5

Research that was carried out by Alan Bryman between 1971 and 1985 looked at ‘the degree to which there has been a change in the endorsement of different categories of churchmanship’. [Francis, L.J., and Jones, S.H., 1996

p.49] [Fig. 7] He found that fewer clergy would align themselves with the central/broad Church position. There are more conservative evangelical clergy than in 1971, though the number of open evangelicals is down. This research was carried out before the historic vote on the ordination of women to the priesthood and the consequent loss of Anglo-Catholic priests to the Church of Rome. [Francis, L.H. & Jones, S.H., 1996 p50]

Fig. 5 shows that within the whole sample those from the Modern Catholic and the Central Church wings were more conspicuous. Was that because they were prepared to reply to the initial questionnaire more than the Evangelical or Charismatic clergy were? Or is it, as will be seen in some of the data, that clergy who started from an evangelical position have moved to one where ritual and sacramental worship have more to offer them?

4. *Gender Response*

The ordination of women to the priesthood has been crucial within the life of the Church of England. This is apparent throughout the research. However, the vote for the ordination to the priesthood for women had only occurred in

1994. It was therefore not unexpected that the number of women in the whole sample was so small as shown in Fig. 6.

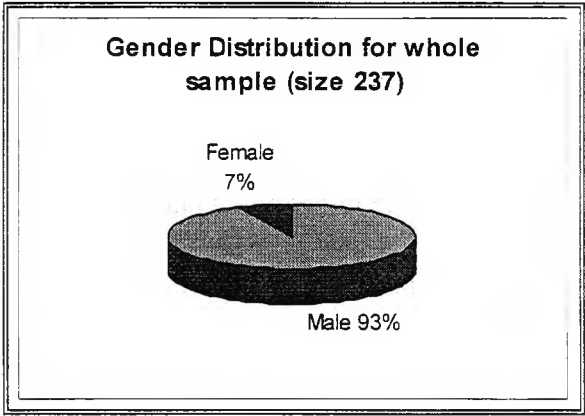


Fig. 6

Section Two:

1. *Living in the Parish*

This section looked at the sociological impact on the clergy family. Looking at Fig. 7, the older married southern clergy could imagine themselves more easily living within their parishes.

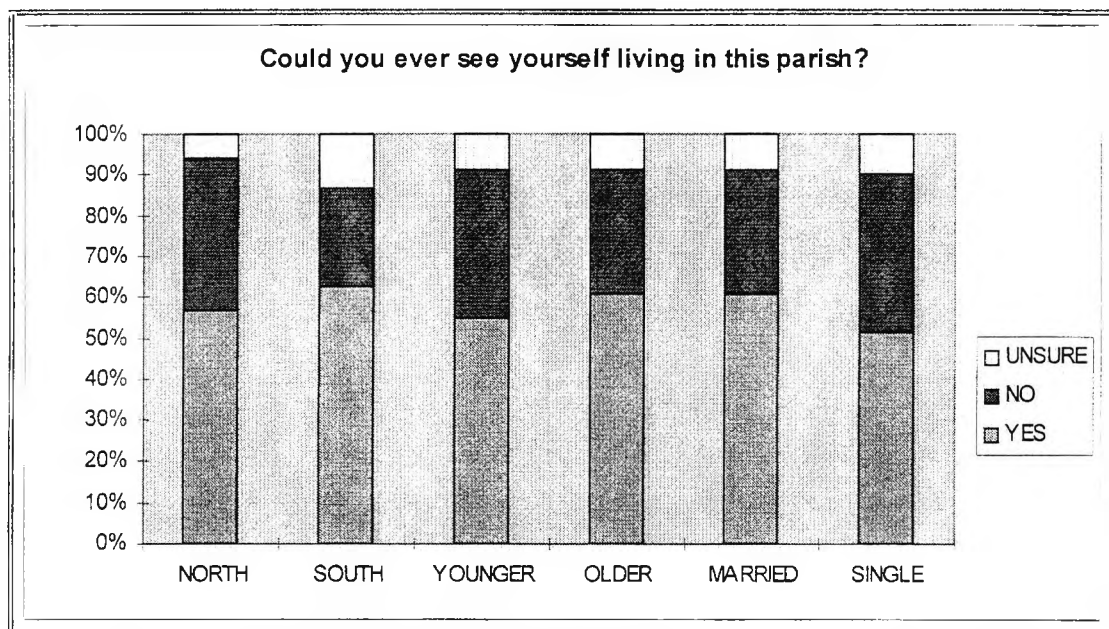


Fig. 7

Over 80% of all the categories felt accepted within the community though about 40% felt their income did not match the incomes of their parishioners, as shown in Fig. 8. . Over 30% of northern clergy felt that their incomes were on a par with their congregations and 40% of southern clergy felt the same. That could be due to the fact that wealthy parishes in the south are prepared to supplement their clergy's salary so that their standard of living does not fall below that of the rest of the community, whereas in the Northern diocese the low pay of the clergy matched that of their congregations, even though in many areas there was a high level of unemployment.

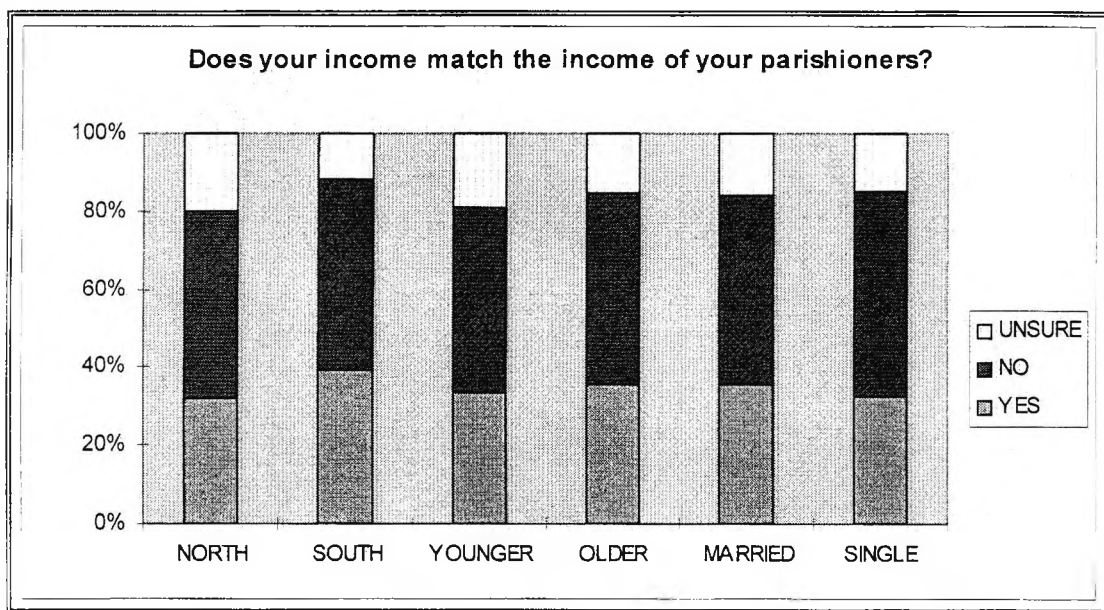


Fig. 8

2. *The Vicarage as a Home*

Many clergy families experience the Vicarage as a goldfish bowl. Figs. 9, 10 and 11 make interesting reading. There is a great degree of ambivalence about how much their home is a place of retreat for clergy, partners and children.

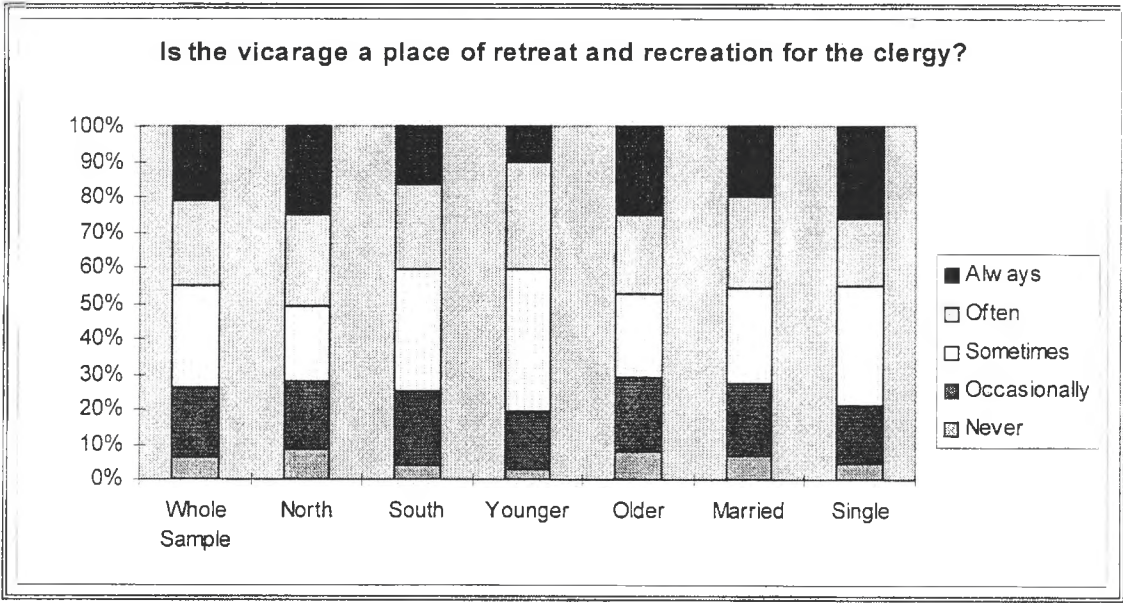


Fig. 9

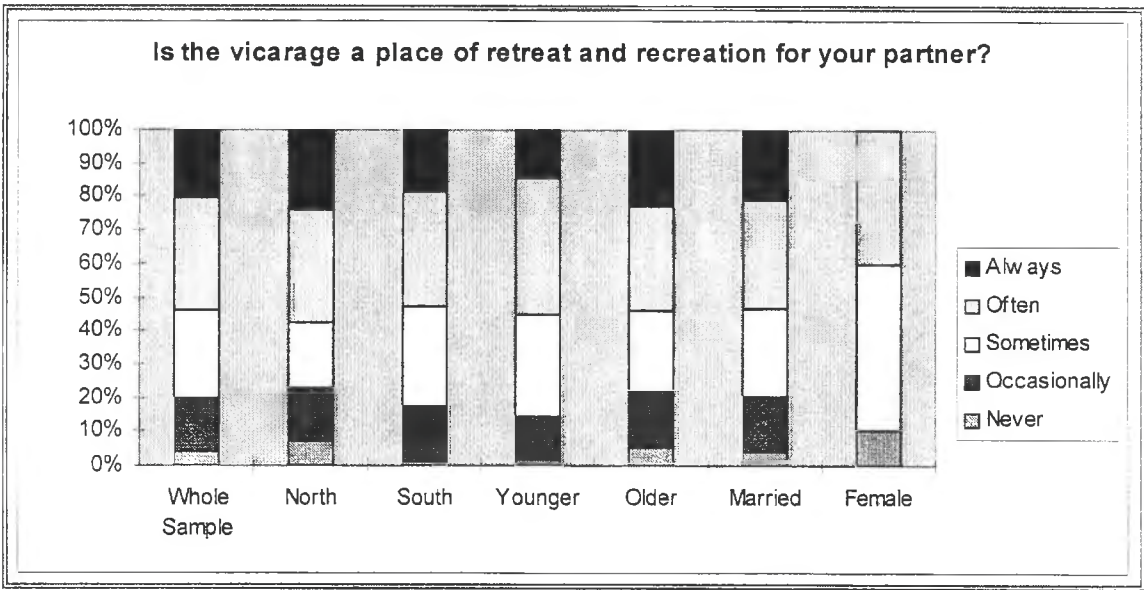


Fig. 10

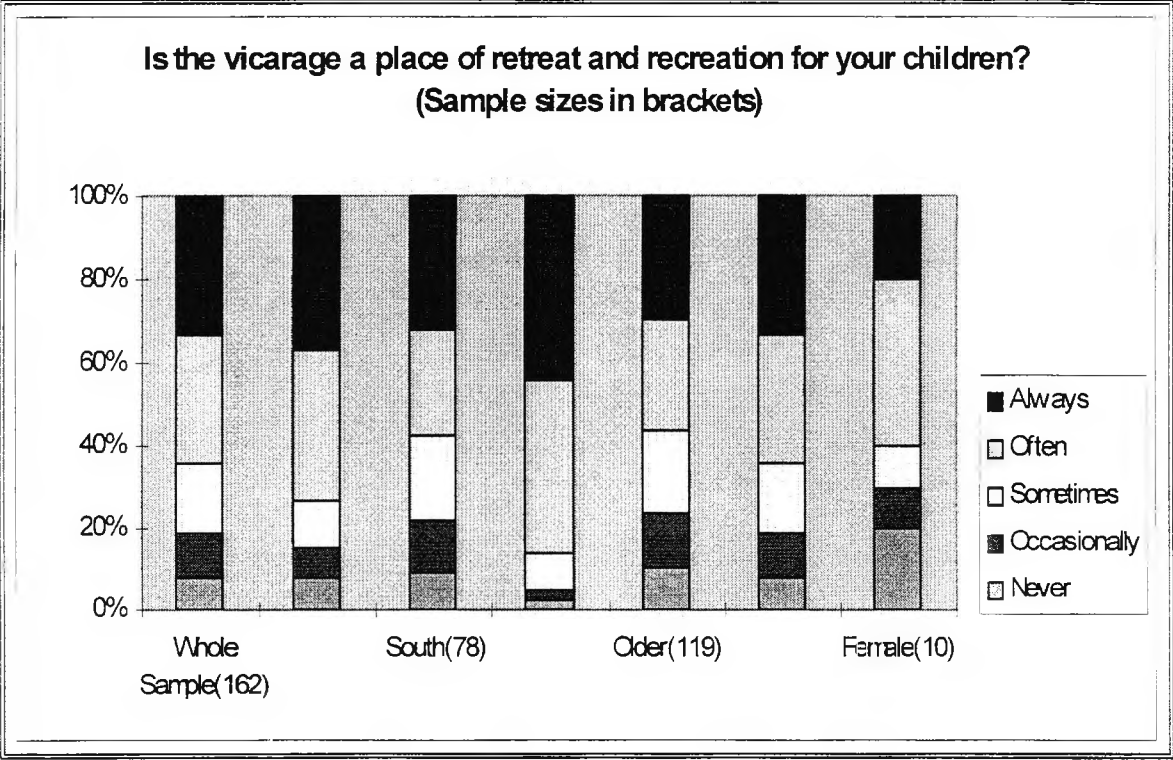


Fig 11

Section Three:

This section explored the amount of support the clergy perceived they received, as well as their emotional strength.

Support Systems:

1. *Married or Single Clergy*

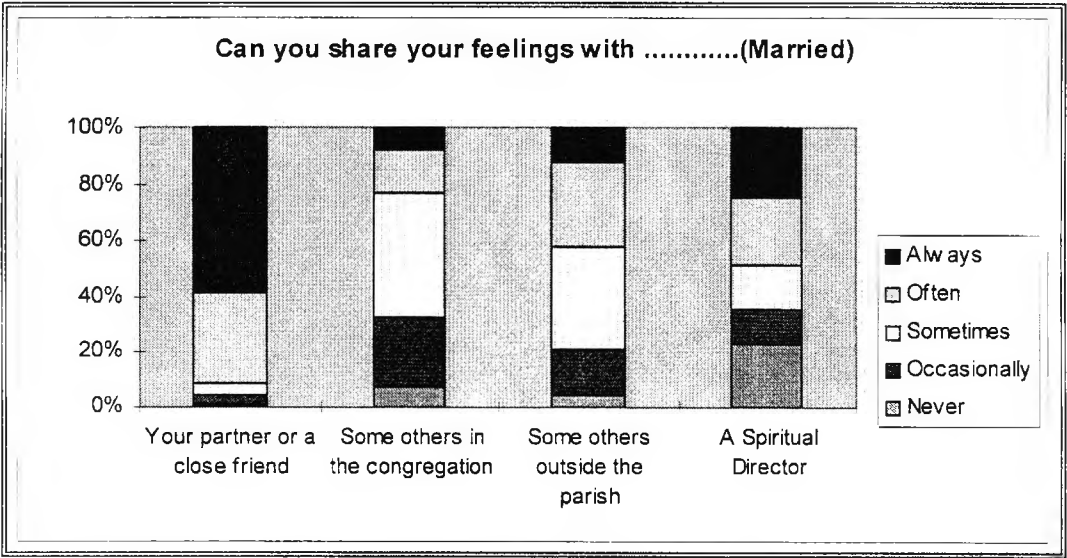


Fig. 12

As might be expected, it is the unmarried clergy who have the greatest needs to share with a Spiritual Director or close friend. [Fig. 12 and Fig. 13] About 50% of unmarried clergy share with their Director whilst only just over 20% of married clergy do so. 60% of married clergy, however, (and that includes gay clergy with partners), share with their spouse or close friend as opposed to only just over 40% of unmarried clergy sharing with their close friends.

Likewise, it is the unmarried clergy who are prepared – and, perhaps, in the most need as well – to share with others in the congregations.

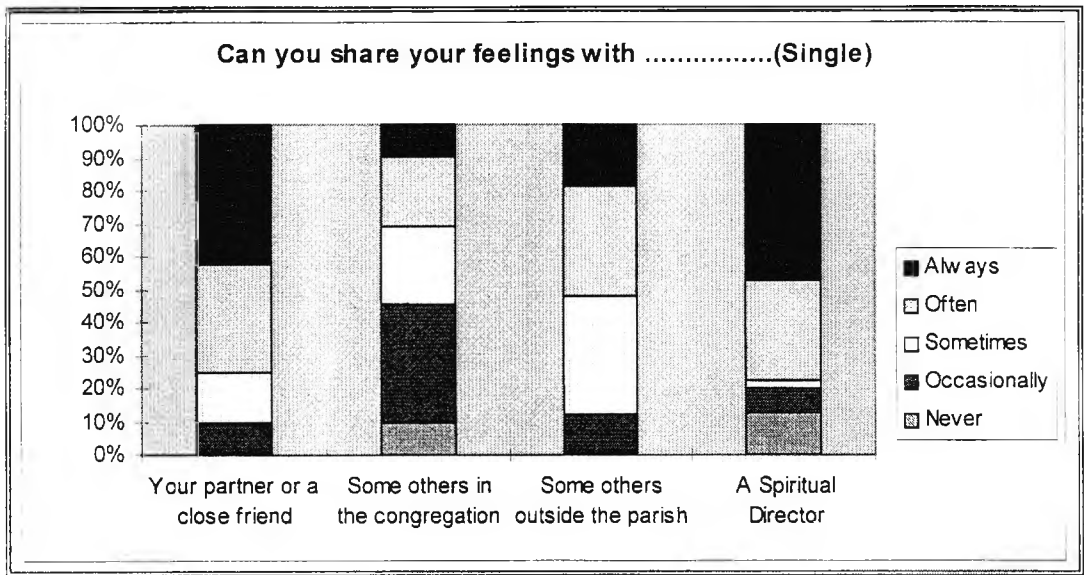


Fig. 13

2. North/South Differences

There is very little difference between the north and south data in Figs. 14 and 15 except that 30% of southern clergy are prepared to share feelings with a Spiritual Director and only 28% of the northern clergy will share their feelings. However, that 2% is of little significance.

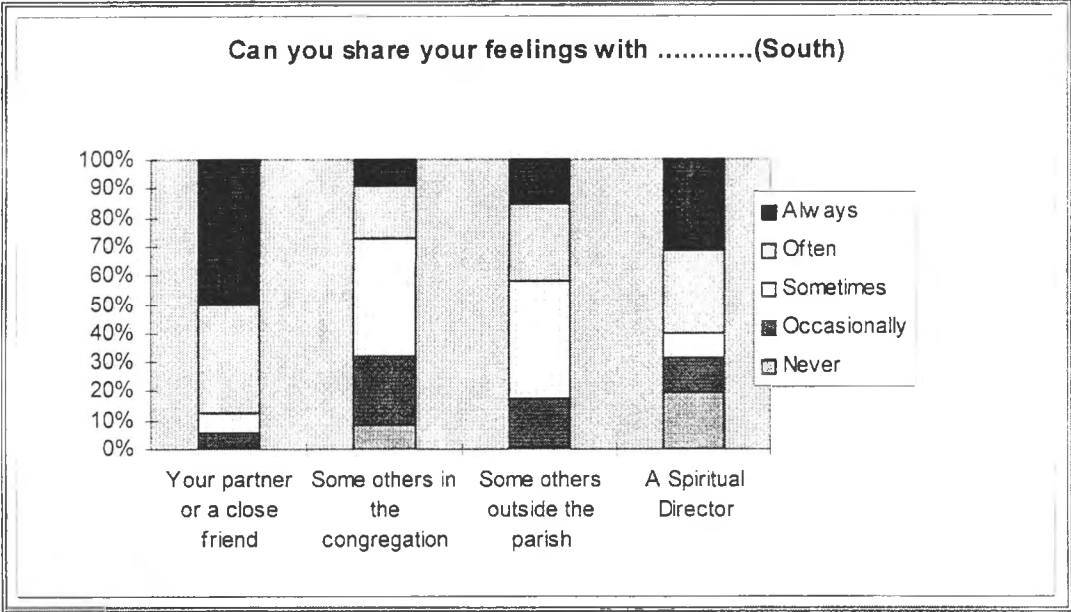


Fig. 14

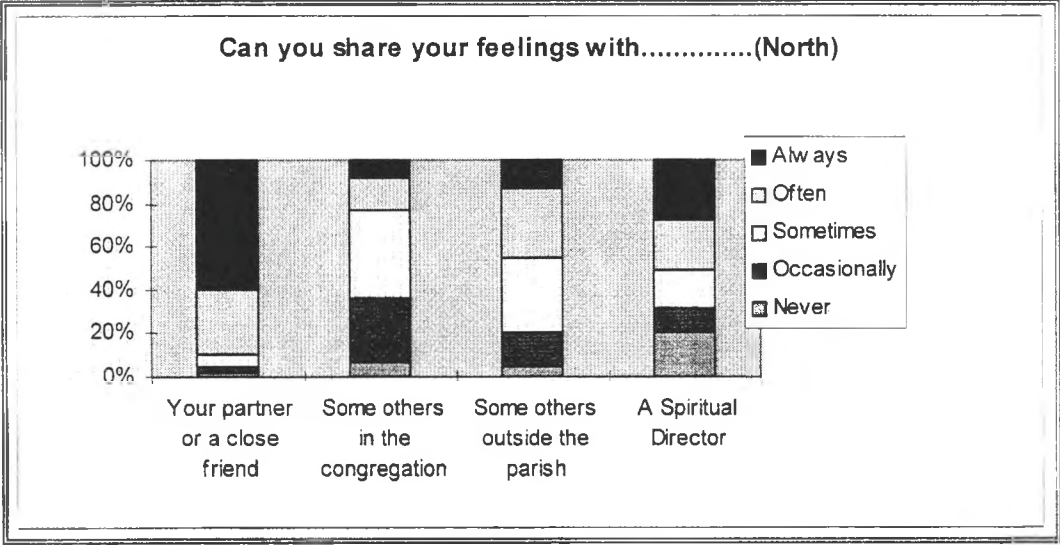


Fig. 15

3. Age Difference

Looking at Figs. 16 and 17, there seems little discrepancy of real importance. More of the older clergy, however, appear not to share their feelings with anyone.

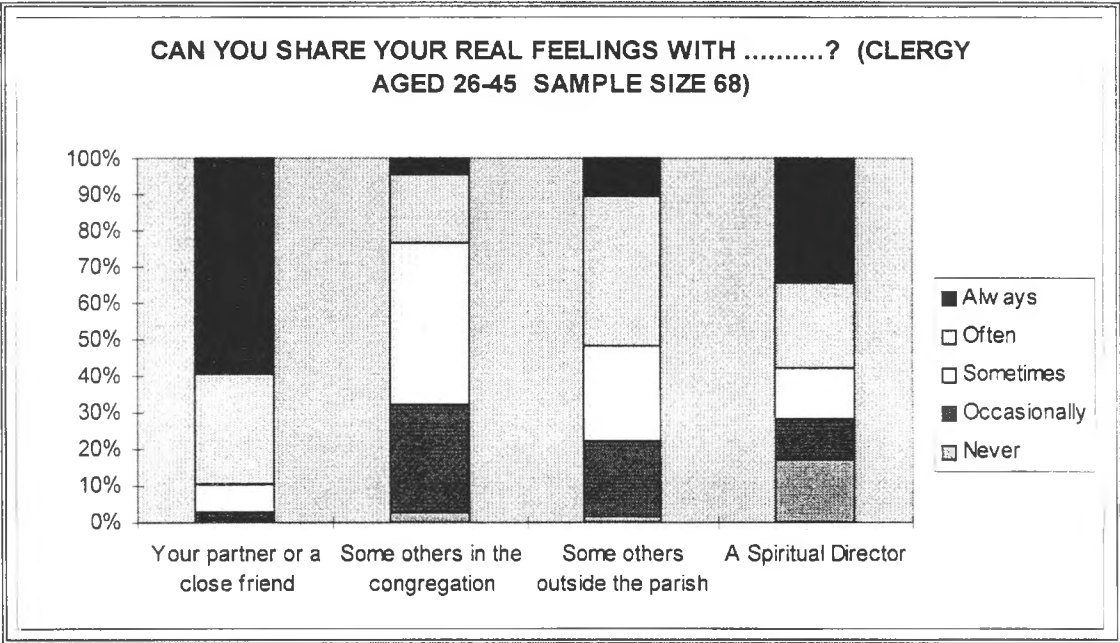


Fig. 16

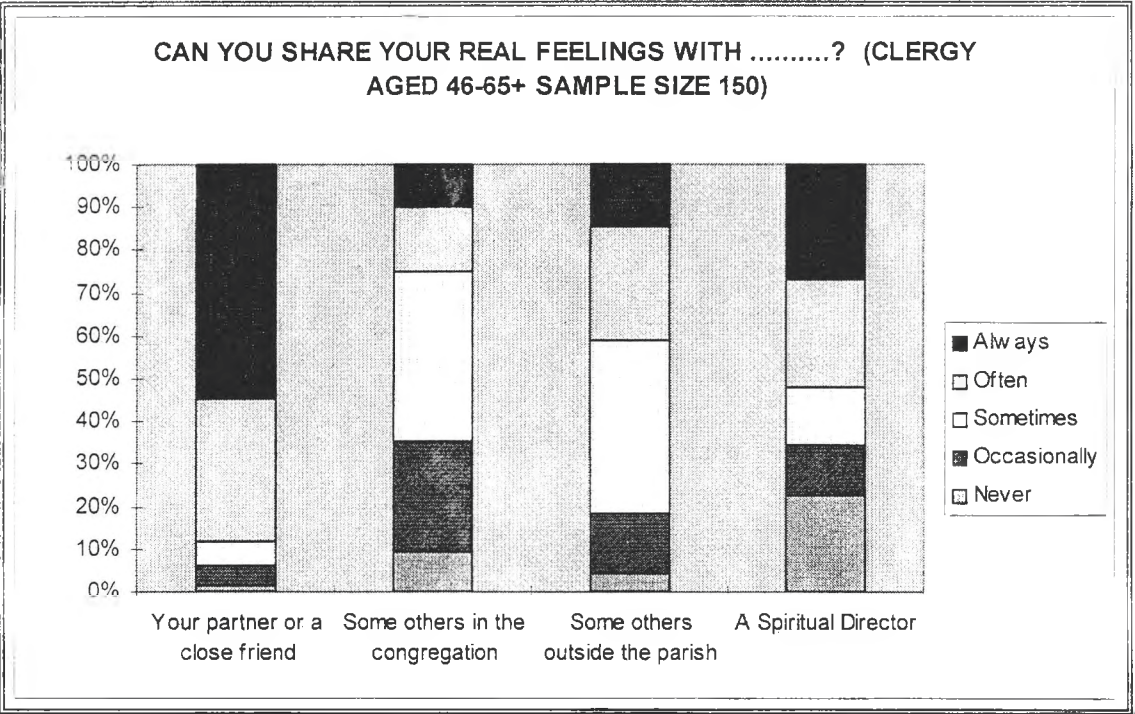


Fig. 17

Emotional Strength:

In order to explore this, certain categories from extreme sadness to elation were used. It will be noticed that within the whole sample (Fig. 18) about 40% of the clergy admitted to occasional feelings of extreme sadness, depression and hopelessness. Many more admitted to ‘often’ feeling joyful.

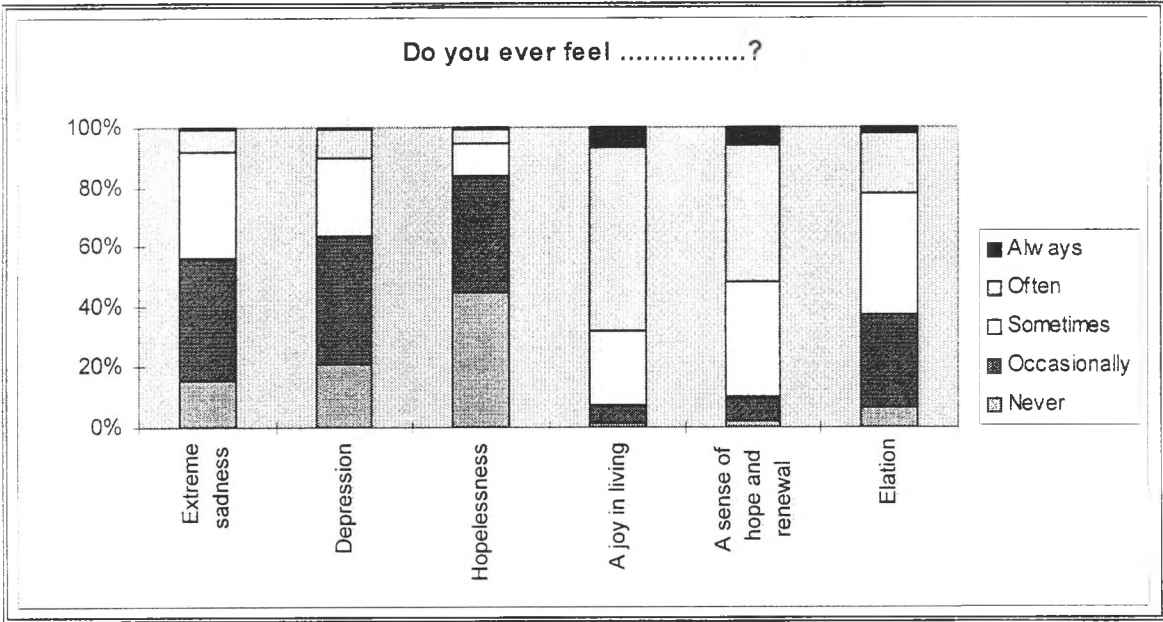


Fig. 18

1. *Diocesan Response*

Fig. 19 and Fig. 20 show that whilst clergy in both dioceses experience similar degrees of extreme sadness, the southern clergy ‘occasionally’ experience depression more often than the clergy from the north. There are, however, about 2% of northern clergy who ‘always’ feel depressed. This may well correlate to the greater sociological problems in that region.

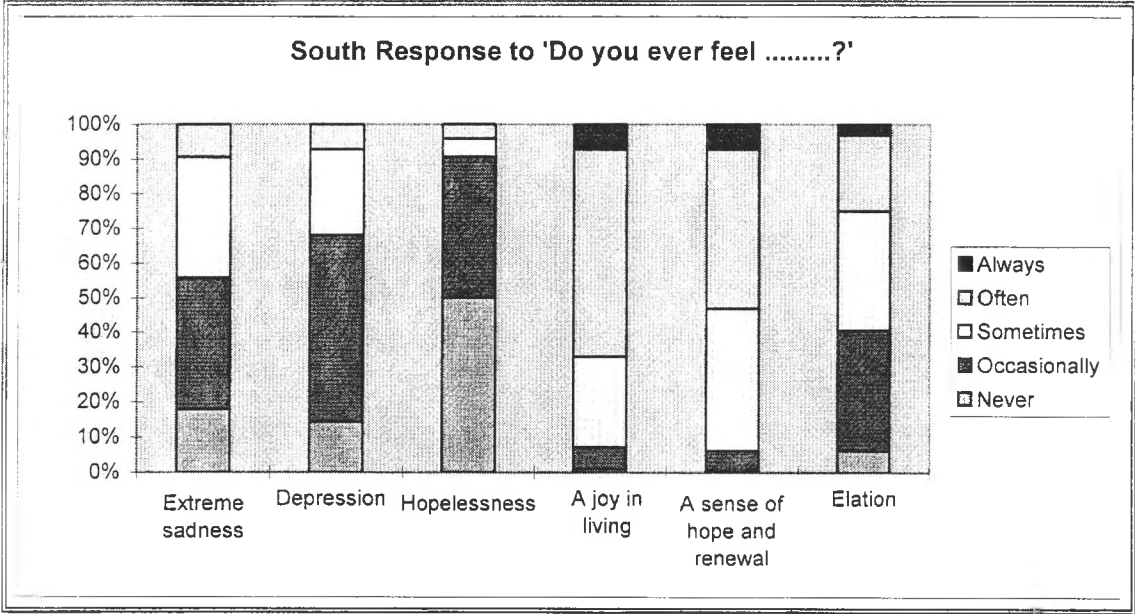


Fig. 19

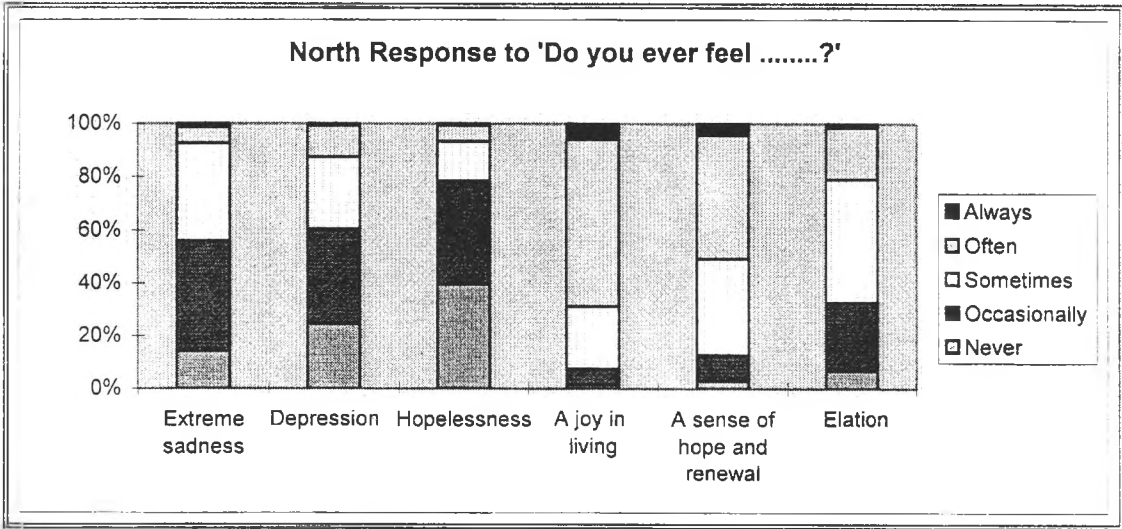


Fig. 20

2. Married/Single Clergy

As might be expected, Fig. 21 and Fig. 22 single clergy experience ‘occasional’ extreme sadness 50% of the time, as opposed to about 40% of the time for the married clergy. However, it is within the married clergy that about 2% of them ‘always’ experience extreme sadness. Slightly more of the single clergy said they experience ‘often’ a joy of living than did the married clergy.

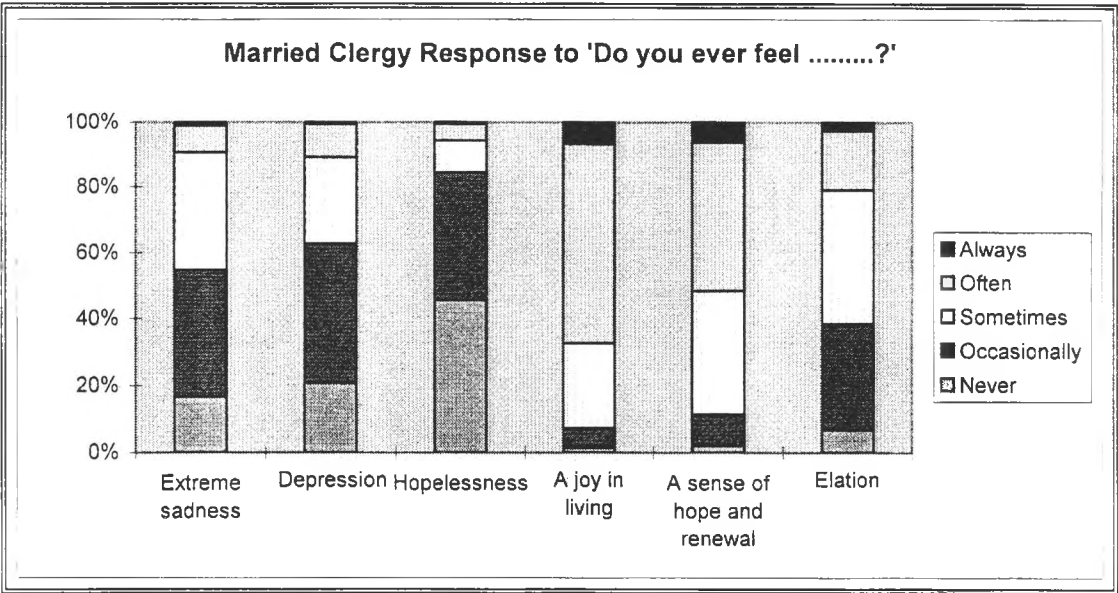


Fig. 21

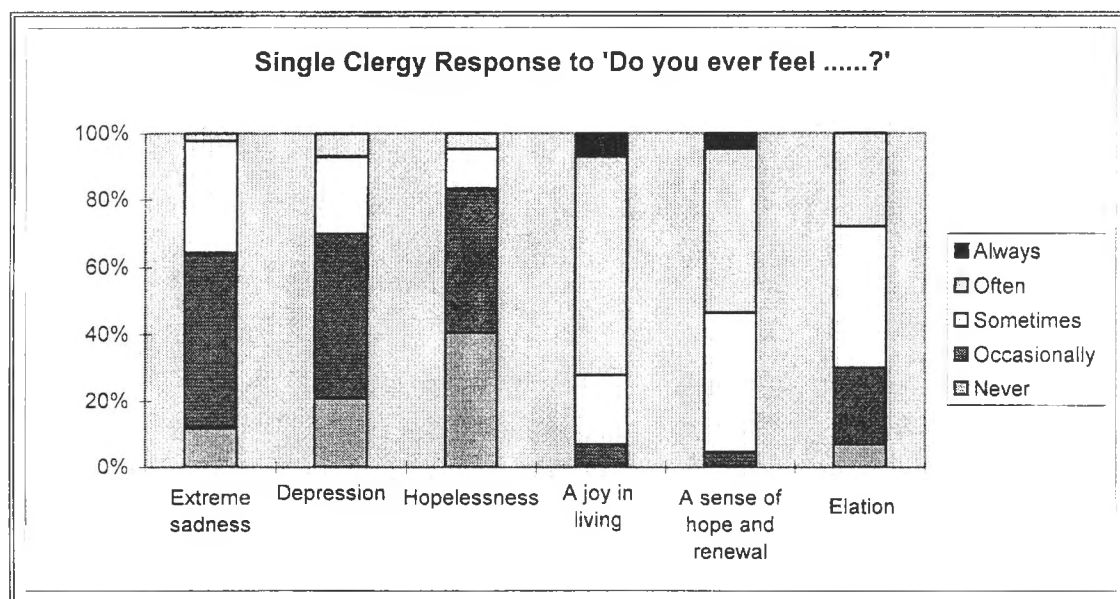


Fig. 22

3. Age Response

The most noticeable feature about Fig. 23 and Fig. 24 is that the older clergy 'always' experience each of the categories, whereas the younger clergy only 'always' experience joy, hope and renewal. The age differentiation between young and old was rather arbitrary, younger clergy being those up to 46 years and the older clergy those above.

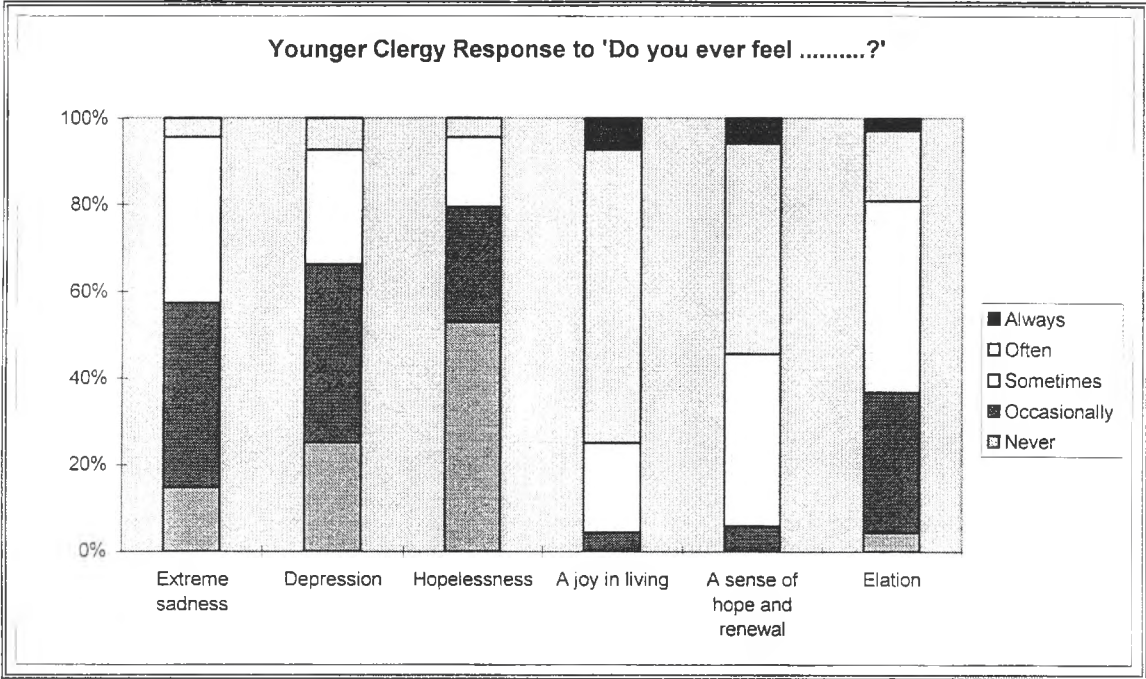


Fig. 23

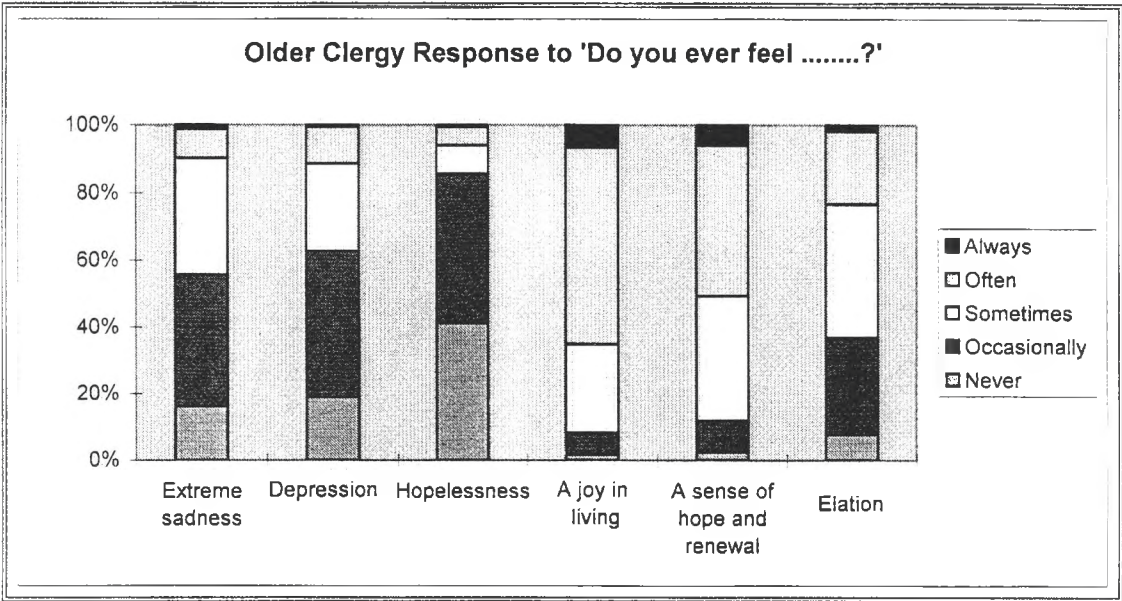


Fig. 24

4. Female

Because there were so few, the whole sample of the female priests' data was looked at. Many of them said they 'never' (Fig. 25) experienced feelings of extreme sadness, depression and hopelessness. This correlates to the sense I had that now they have what they have striven so long for. It may be a very different result in 20 years' time.

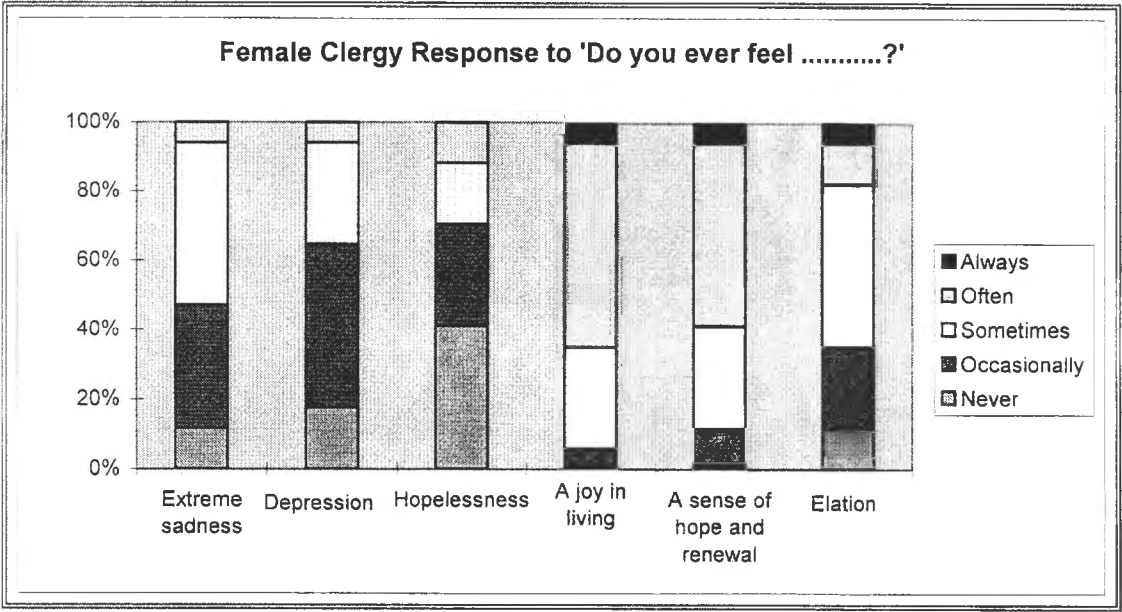


Fig. 25

Section Four:

This section aimed, in a very limited way, to explore the spiritual life of the clergy by looking at how confident they feel in the faith they proclaim within a multi-faith society. Because it also sought to show on the same chart whether the clergy feel supported by the hierarchy and if they have experienced spiritual aridity in their working lives, the results are only partially useful. It was in the qualitative data that much greater clarity was able to be achieved. That then provided a much clearer picture of the emotional and spiritual state of the clergy in the final sample.

1. Gender Response

The male clergy (Fig. 26 and Fig. 27) are 'always' more confident in preaching than the female clergy, whilst the female clergy appear to have 'always' more respect for non-Christians than the male clergy. Both, however, appear to experience similar 'occasional' spiritual aridity.

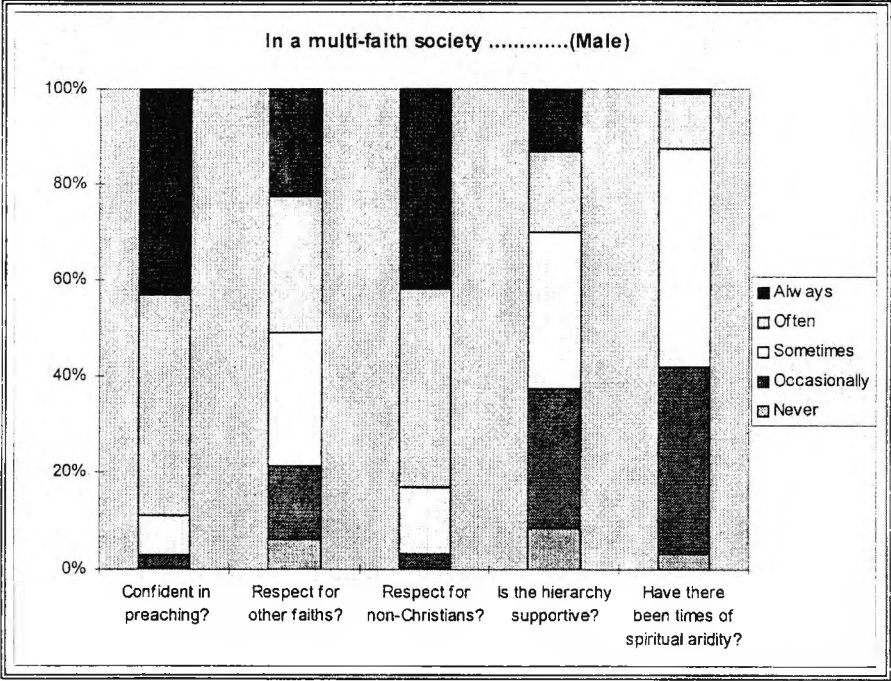


Fig. 26

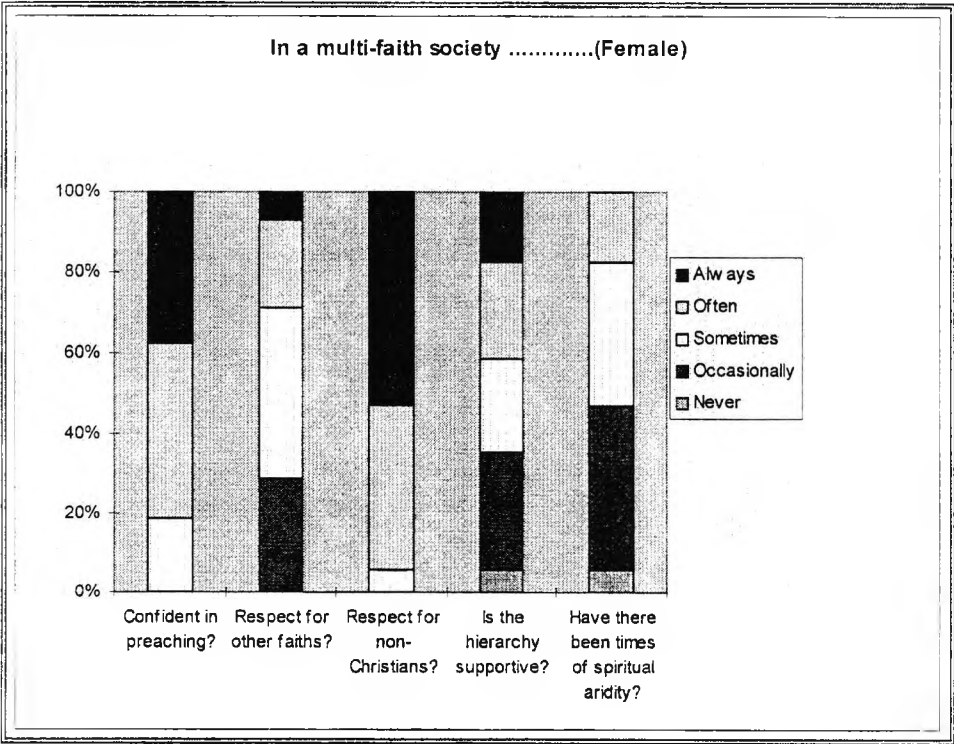


Fig. 27

2. Diocesan Response

Fig. 28 and Fig. 29 show very little difference between the clergy in the two dioceses as to their response to the various categories. Surprisingly, a greater percentage of northern clergy ‘always’ respect those of other faiths. That may correlate to the fact that the southern clergy appear to have more immediate experience of those from other faiths than the northern clergy.

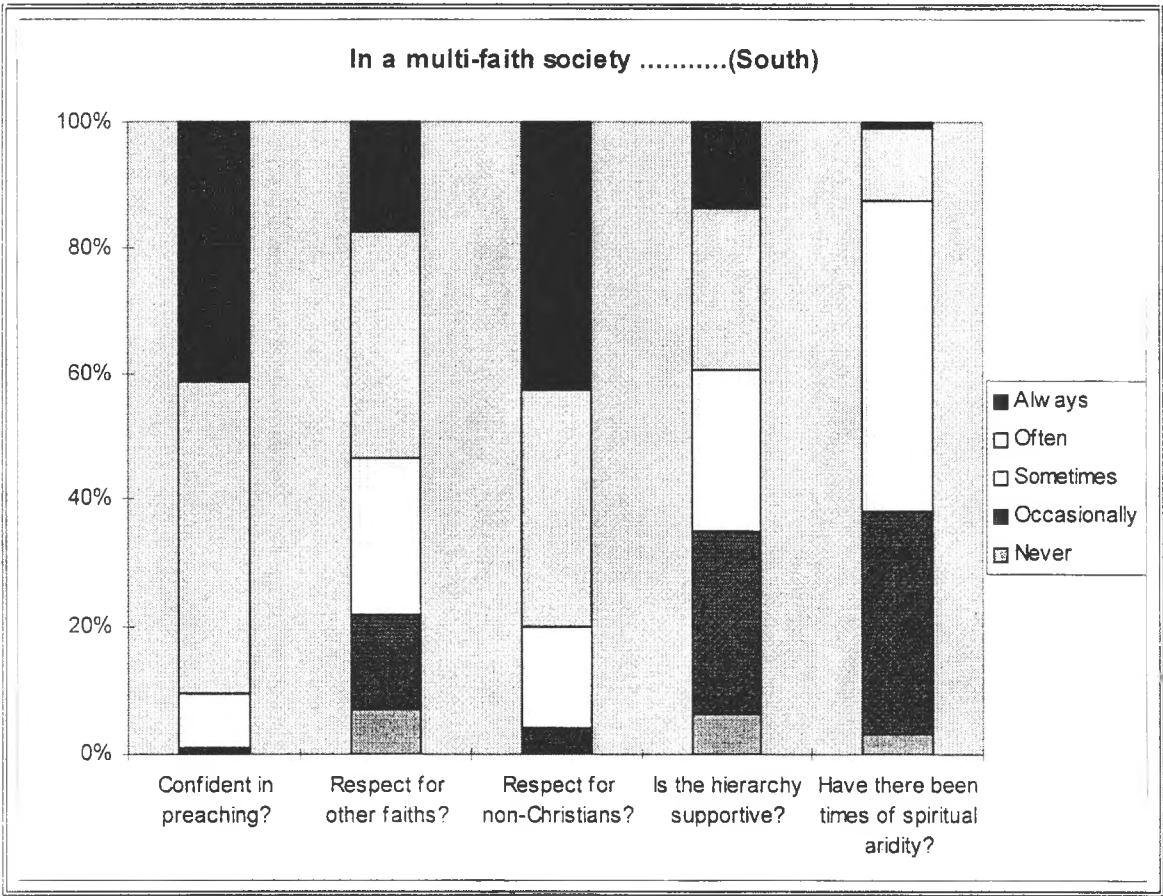


Fig. 28

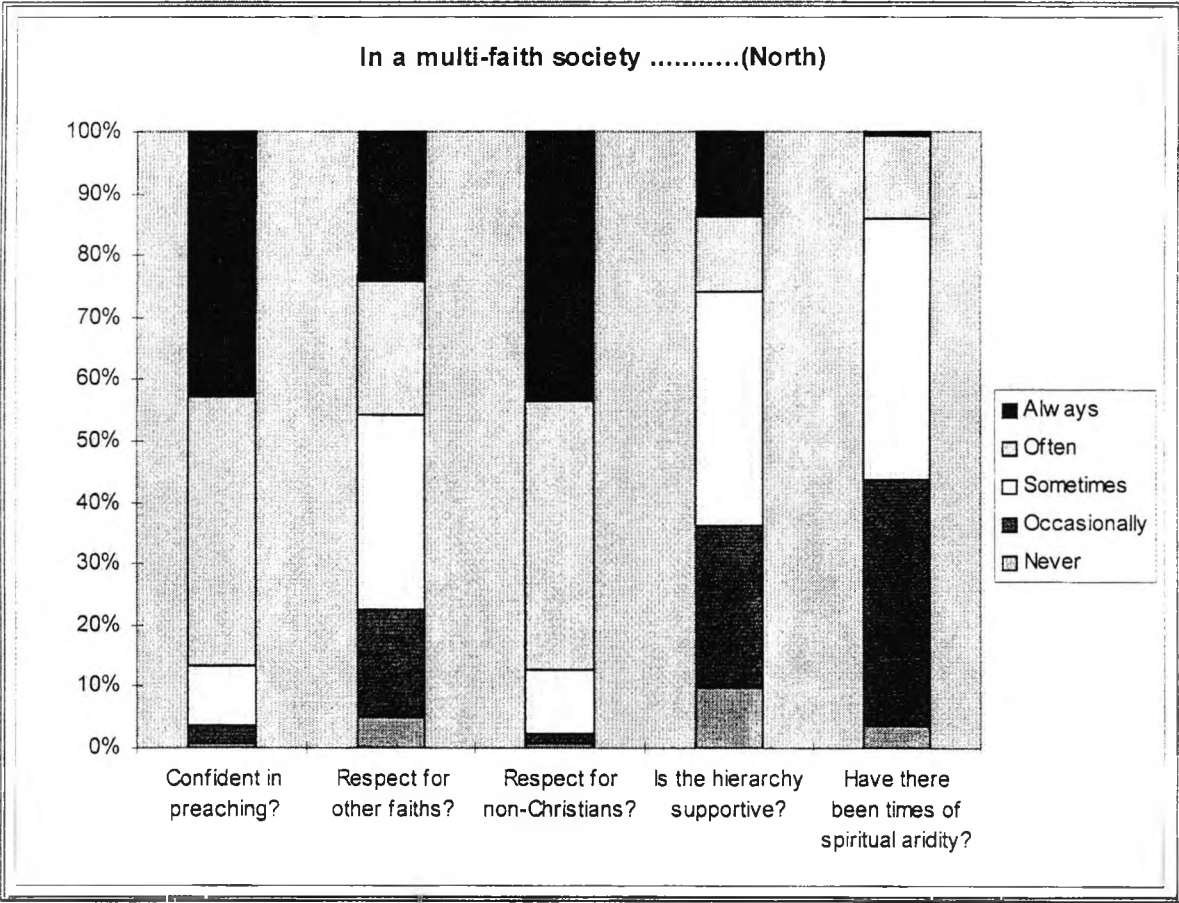


Fig. 29

It is interesting to note that few clergy from the northern and southern dioceses were prepared to say that he/she 'never' feel confident in preaching the Christian gospel. Few were prepared to admit to feeling uncomfortable discussing issues of faith with those of other faiths or no faith at all. In the

column denoting spiritual aridity 2% of clergy from the north and south confessed that they always had times of spiritual aridity in their lives.

The southern clergy appeared more confident with discussing spiritual issues with others whilst seeming to have more respect for those with no faith. This may be because clergy and laity alike tend to be more middle-class in the south and are therefore used to debating all types of issues. Clergy from the south sought out their leaders for spiritual support more frequently than the northern clergy. A larger percentage of northern clergy said they 'never' turned to their leaders for help than did the southern clergy. During the in-depth interviews, it was noted that there were more male clergy vehemently opposed to the ordination of women to the priesthood than encountered in the south. That could account for the greater reticence of the northern clergy to approach a hierarchy already involved with promoting the ordination of women.

Married/Single Clergy

Comparisons between the married and unmarried clergy also provide interesting data. These show that 90% married clergy 'always' and 'often' feel confident to preach the gospel whilst it was only 80% of unmarried clergy. It is interesting to speculate on whether the extra 10% can be related to the fact of clergy in a supportive relationship having more confidence generally. The percentages are similar for both groups in discussing spiritual issues with those of other faiths. The married clergy are about 8% 'always' and 'often' able to respect those with no faith. (Fig. 30 and Fig. 31)

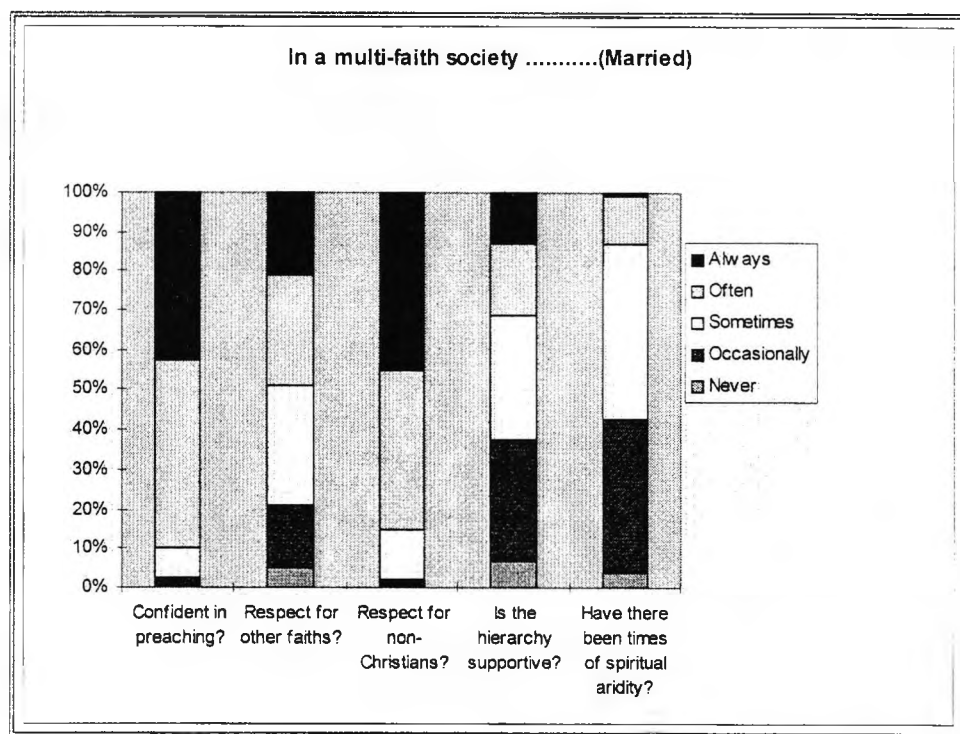


Fig. 30

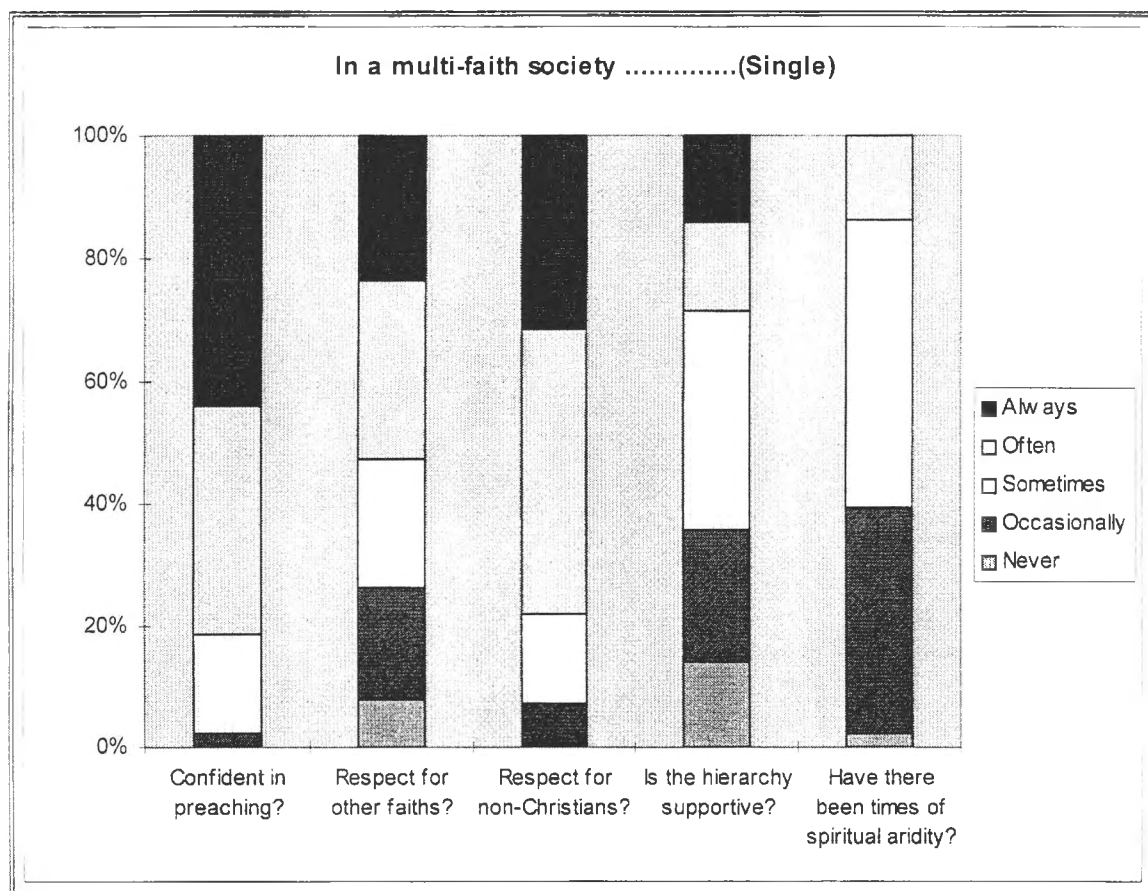


Fig. 31

A greater percentage, 47%, of older clergy says they ‘always’ feel confident to preach the gospel compared to 38% of younger clergy. [Figs. 32 and 33]. 23% of older clergy appear more comfortable to ‘always’ discuss spiritual issues with those of other faiths than the 18% of younger clergy and 45% older clergy and only 38% of younger clergy ‘always’ respect those of no faith. These discrepancies could be seen as correlating to the length of time within

the ministry so that the variable of time spent on the job would be seen to correlate directly with the sense of identity and confidence.

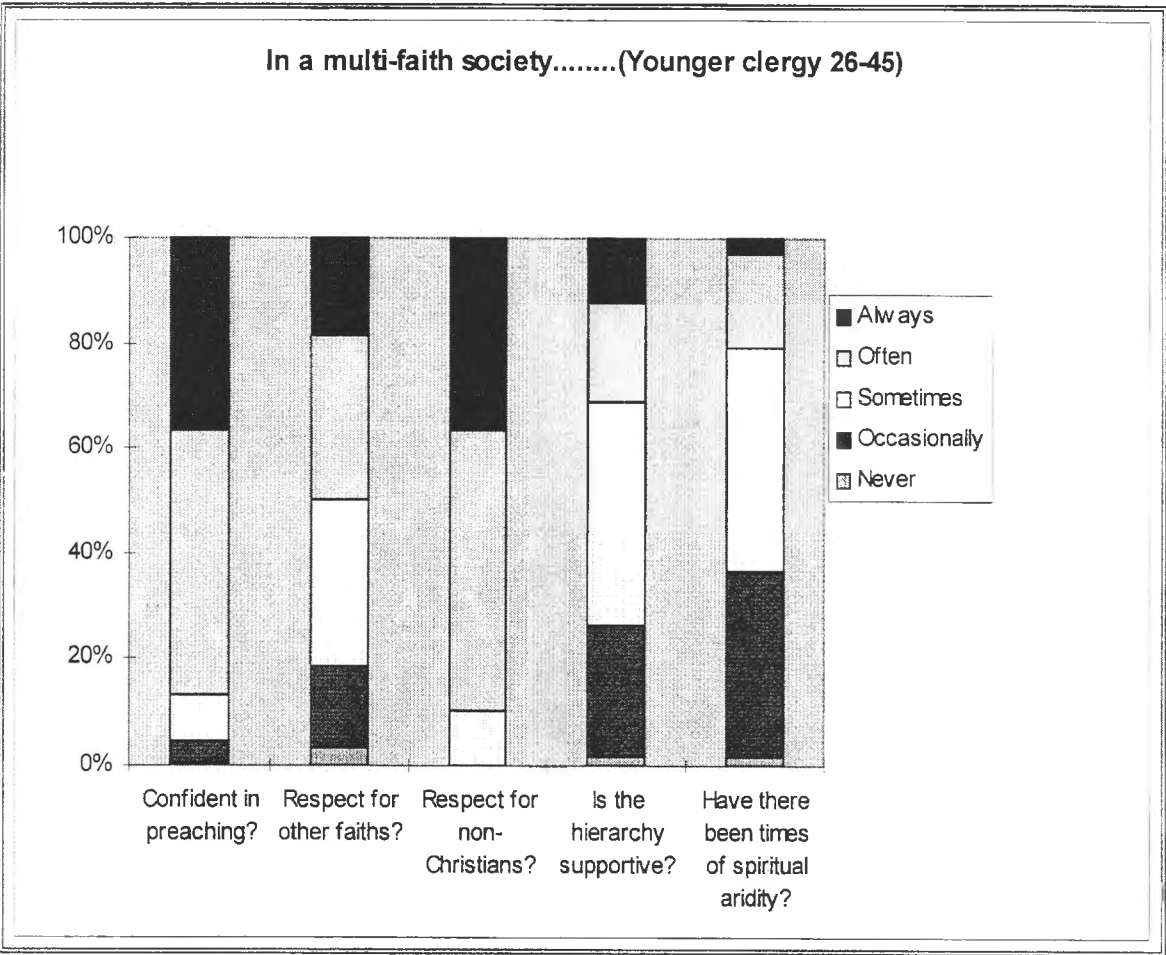


Fig. 32

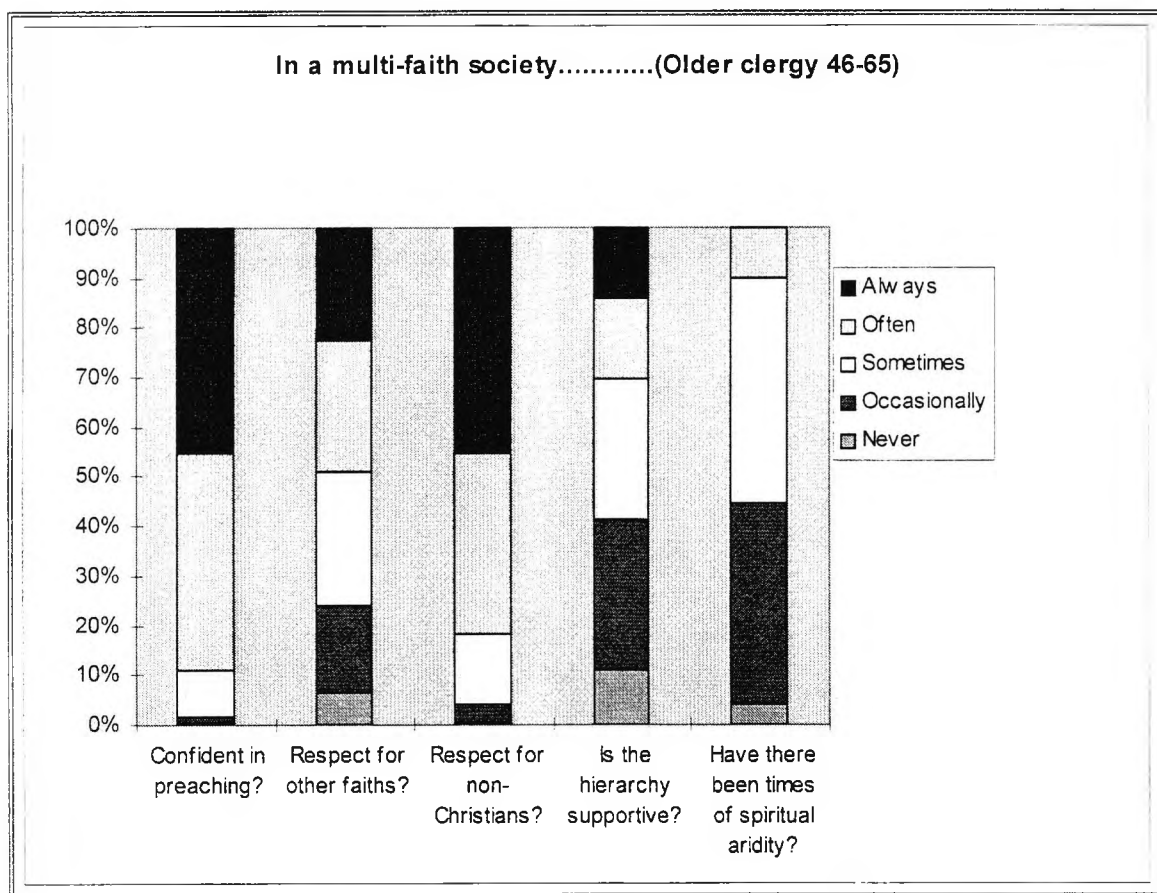


Fig. 33

Whilst the main method of research used to analyse the bulk of the data is a qualitative one, it was also important to provide a contextual framework. The quantitative data from which this framework was derived show interesting links between the different variables and depict the objective reality in which the participants lived their lives.

QUESTIONS TO PRINCIPAL OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

1. What should be the aims and objectives of theological training?
2. Is that happening? If not, why not?
3. Where do you see the spouse/family of the ordinand fitting into all of this?
4. How concerned should Selectors, DDO's, Dioceses, Bishops and yourself be about the marital relationship and how it will impact on the ministry?
5. What are the occasions when you prevent an ordinand going forward to ordination?
6. How receptive are Bishops and Dioceses to your negative evaluations of an ordinand?
7. How do you see the future of the Church of England?
8. Please give me your views of the state of clergy marriages and what the Church can do about it.
9. What psychological reasons do you think bring someone to seek ordination?
10. Emotional and spiritual health – which affects which? Is faith determined on a strong self-image or, if not, on what?

Appendix IX

QUESTIONS TO THE DIRECTOR OF MINISTRY DIVISION

1. Looking at the selection process, what are your feelings about it?
2. How could it be improved?
3. How has the ordination of women priests changed or affected the Church at large?
4. What other changes do you see happening?
5. How should the Church deal with inadequate clergy?
6. In the selection process and later on in their ministry, what role or importance do you see the clergy spouse or family taking?
7. What are your thoughts about clergy marriage breakdown?

QUESTIONS TO BISHOPS

1. What are the particular problems in the diocese?
2. What are the problems the clergy have to contend with?
3. Why do some clergy 'succeed' and others fail?
4. What support systems are in place?
5. Are they adequate? If not, how could they be improved?
6. How have women priests changed the Church in your diocese?
7. What is your role with your clergy?
8. How important are clergy family/spouses to you and to their work and what role should the diocese have with the spouse/family?
9. How much of a concern should the marital relationship of someone seeking ordination be to the Church?
10. Describe your thoughts about clergy marriage breakdown.
11. What more should the Church do about it?
12. What psychological reasons do you think may bring someone to seek ordination?
13. How do you cope when a priest loses their faith?

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