

# Perfidious Pedophilia

## Christianity's Role in Criminal Conduct

Professionals agree that pedophiles, sexual abusers of children, often seek out professions or activities which bring them into contact with children. Largely unexplored is the role Christianity may play in possibly molding criminal abusers. Researchers know that a typical child molester is a "good Christian" and often a church-goer active in church activities.

Religious doctrine encourages power toward women and children, and such inequities invariably lead to abuse. Christian doctrine emphasizes submission and teaches the exemplary Christian to follow like sheep, and "become as little children". (Matthew 18:3) The classic Christian concept that human nature is innately "depraved" and sinful may also be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Does the Christian ministry attract sexual deviants, or mold them? It may be an unanswerable riddle. When one looks at fallen televangelist Jimmy Swaggart, one may surmise that the more he ranted against the temptations of pornography and illicit sexual relations, the more he was trying to overcome his own impulses, and fighting his own nature. Or one may speculate that the deep sexual repressions of the fundamentalist religion, coupled with the unhealthy adulation he received as one of God's chosen, corrupted what was once an innocent nature.

In either case, the mixture of ministerial power with religion's social inequities and repressive doctrines is demonstrably explosive.

-- Annie Laurie Gaylor

## Most Pedophiles are Respected and Trusted

The social myth persists that a child molester is most apt to be of low-class breed lurking in dark hallways, interested in abduction of children he does not know. In fact, most sexual abusers of children are respectable, otherwise law-abiding people who cultivate friendly relationships with their chosen prey, and may escape detection for precisely those reasons. Research agrees that the typical child molester is able to harm large numbers of children without being caught, in part, because he has already established a trusting relationship, playing on children's sense of loyalty, vulnerability, shame, and naïveté, and fortifying his power to silence them through bribery, coercion, and violent threats. In case of a molesting man of the cloth, add to these threats the supernatural ones of God's wrath or hellfire.

One study from March 1990 found that a quarter of all clergy have engaged in sexual misconduct. The largest (8-year) study of pedophiles revealed that molesters often become youth ministers, daycare workers, Boy Scout leaders, teachers, Big Brothers, and pediatricians. He is often an active Christian who is involved in his church. The study also found that 403 pedophiles had molested more than 67,000 children! Pedophiles who targeted male victims averaged 282 victims, while pedophiles who targeted girls averaged 23 victims. (Other studies have uncovered more traditional findings of higher incidences of abuse of girls.)

Roman Catholic canon attorney Father Thomas Doyle has estimated that about 3000 Roman Catholic priests are pedophilic abusers. That's an average of 16 priestly sex abusers per diocese.

-- Annie Laurie Gaylor

## Christians Are Pedophile Enablers

One study revealed that Catholic priests were acquitted or dismissed of child molestation charges at a higher rate than Protestant ministers. Catholic priests also received a higher rate of suspended sentences when convicted, and when sentenced, spent considerably less time in jail or prison.

In the study, involving 190 ordained clergy and 60 non-ordained clergy staff (such as Sunday school teachers), crimes mainly occurred at church locations. One convicted priest molested victims just before giving Mass. Sexual abuse occurred at the sacristy, in the rectory, or in the church van. About half of the clergymen were officially involved in youth functions. About a third were accused of molesting youths during camping trips, youth group activities, retreats, and crusades. About 20% were accused of molesting children at religious schools, 21% at church homes for children or through foster care. Eleven percent were accused of abusing children only during counseling sessions, although other cases also involved counseling.

Another study confirmed the earlier findings of a Catholic versus Protestant double standard, with priests receiving lighter sentences than Protestant ministers, and non-ordained clerical staff receiving by far the heaviest sentences. Catholic priests accused in 1990 were prosecuted mainly for molesting boys, while about half of the Protestant clergy were charged for crimes involving female victims.

Cover-ups were specifically noted in newspaper reports in 38% of the cases. The most blatant cover-up that year involved a Salvation Army minister who was permitted to keep his job and was given continuing access to children after back-to-back arrests for sexually abusing children during bible classes.

Shockingly, 11 out of the 46 Protestant ministers charged in 1990 with criminal sexual abuse had prior convictions -- nearly a quarter of the cases, all dating since 1985. Most of the men had received light sentences, enabling them to return to the pulpit, and resume sexual abuse of children, quickly. Churches are not only failing to check ministers' records, but in some instances are knowingly hiring convicted child molesters. Defendants often unabashedly used their piety and positions to ask for (and sometimes receive) court leniency.

-- Annie Laurie Gaylor

## Rita Mills

The first nationally breaking news story about church cover-ups of sex crimes broke in 1984, when attorney Gloria Allred brought the country's first "clergy malpractice" lawsuit on behalf of Rita Mills, a devout Catholic teenager. One day Father Santiago Tamayo reached through the broken screen in the confessional to fondle her breast. By January 1980, he was engaging in sexual intercourse with her. He introduced her to Father Cruces, who also used her sexually. In all, five other priests encouraged her compliance, flaunting their religious authority over the sheltered teenager. Rita later told news media that the priests had told her sex was natural, and that "priests get lonely, too". She was purportedly aiding them in their religious work.

When she became pregnant in January 1982, she was packed off to the Philippines. She told her family she would be "studying medicine". The priests intended for her to have her baby in secrecy and leave it there, giving her only \$450 to last seven months. She lived with cockroaches and ate only one meal a day, nearly dying during childbirth of eclampsia. Her family rescued her, and Rita and her baby daughter returned to the states, after Bishop Abaya of the Philippines promised to help her.

When that aid failed to materialize, Rita went to Bishop Ward of Los Angeles for help. He said there was nothing he could do. After that final betrayal of trust, Rita and her mother filed the landmark clergy malpractice suit, seeking to establish paternity, set up child support, and sue the priests and the church for civil conspiracy for breach of fiduciary duty, fraud, deceit, and clergy malpractice -- and "to protect other young women from the pain and suffering caused by priests who abuse their position of trust". The court dismissed the case, citing a one-year time limit.

When Allred called the press conference to expose the scandal and announce the suit, all seven priests mysteriously vanished without trace, according to the archdiocese of Los Angeles. In 1991, Tamayo finally resurfaced, documenting to media that the diocese had warned him and his cohorts to flee the country. Tamayo offered proof that the church had known his whereabouts for years, including during the time when Allred tried unsuccessfully to serve him and the other priests with legal papers. The archdiocese had sent him monthly payments for years while he hid out in the Philippines.

In 1988, the church had finally set up a \$20,000 trust fund for Mill's daughter, after she agreed to drop a slander suit against a bishop. The church lawyer maintained it was not an admission of liability, but an act of benevolence for the child.

-- Annie Laurie Gaylor

## Christian Co-Conspirators

A nationally renowned case was filed in 1985, focusing public attention on Catholic cover-ups. Father Gilbert Gauthe, of Louisiana, admitted to molesting 37 boys and one girl. He pleaded guilty on various charges in October 1985 and was given a 20-year prison sentence with no possibility of parole. The families of many of his victims went to court when they learned that a bishop and monsignor were aware of child molestation reports against Gauthe for more than ten years before his abuse was halted. Gauthe had molested some of the children as many as 200

times, including anal and oral rape, during church outings, when alone with children, in the rectory, sacristy, confessional, and the priest's camper.

Small-town Catholics turned against the families as trouble-makers. All but one family agreed to settle their civil lawsuits out of court. But Faye and Glenn Gastal had their day in court. After their son, eleven, testified in court, he received a one-million dollar award for damages from the Catholic Church on February 7, 1986. His parents received \$250,000 as compensation for their pain, ostracism, and harassment.

The Gastal boy testified that he was led to believe that being molested by priests was part of his job as altar boy. He thought his parents knew what was happening: "I thought he was doing the right thing because he was a priest". Later, the priest guaranteed his silence by threatening that "he would hurt my daddy, he'd kill him".

In what is the classic Catholic "musical chairs" mode of dealing with accusations against priests, it was revealed that the church had simply transferred Gauthe to new, unsuspecting communities. Parents had confronted the priest as early as 1972. In 1974, Gauthe admitted to a bishop that he had made "imprudent touches" in "one isolated case". The following year, the bishop appointed him chaplain of the diocesan Boy Scouts. In 1977, more parents complained. Gauthe was directed to seek psychiatric treatment by church officials, but in 1978 he was transferred to another family parish. The sworn statement of one church official was, "I am trained as a priest to forget sins". The enormity of the scandal prompted even the National Catholic Reporter to condemn the cover-up. The church has paid at least \$14 million to the victims of Gauthe alone.

-- Annie Laurie Gaylor

## Christian Criminal Complicity

The willingness of congregants to support an accused clergyman has numerous illustrations. One 1986 criminal case revealed the extent to which fundamentalist backers of a convicted molesting preacher would go. Christian supporters from three states filled the courtroom during hearings against Rev James Britton Myers of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Although he was convicted of the heinous crime of raping a little girl at this Christian school over a five-year period, starting when she was five, one member of his congregation called the crime "one drop of ink in a crystal-clear water".

A judge in California was inundated with letters of support asking him to pardon Father Andrew Christian Andersen, who was found guilty in 1986 of 26 counts of child molestation. Following the guilty verdict, Andersen was hugged by a church pastor and dozens of supporters. The judge sentenced him only to five years' probation, with the condition that he serve it at a church-owned treatment facility in New Mexico. Although the Diocese of Orange had received a report by a mother that her son had been abused by him, Andersen had been permitted to continue regular contact with altar boys for the following three years.

The church never reported anything. He had been sent for some counseling, but quickly resumed molesting, and was not removed from positions involving the supervision of boys. He was finally reported to authorities by a psychiatrist counseling a 13-year-old altar boy. The postscript of this cover-up is that Andersen's probation was revoked in 1990 and he was

sentenced to six years in state prison, following his arrest in New Mexico for forcing a teenage boy into a car, assaulting him and trying to sodomize him.

The extent to which a minister-molester is held above suspicion, despite blatant criminal acts, is exemplified by a 1987 criminal suit in Nashville. The arrest of Rev Jack Law, a Baptist minister, was heralded by a headline, "Girl, 5, Raped Under Pew". He was accused not only of that, but of molesting and raping her two sisters. These crimes took place at the family home as well during an outing arranged by him so the girls could help him distribute religious tracts. The girls had tried to tell their parents, but were not believed. "Being a preacher", the father said of him to local media, "we thought he was a good man". Law killed himself that year rather than face trial.

-- Annie Laurie Gaylor

## Ecclesiastical Exemption

Why are churches often a safe harbor for criminal child molesters? It is, in part, because children are taught to give "men of God" special deference and obedience. Children are taught that their body belongs to God. A young child who assumes his or her body is not their own, but is "owned by God" will be vulnerable to abuse by an esteemed "man of God".

Clergy whose role includes "pastoral counseling", are trusted and sought after for confidences and guidance. Clergy are often in contact with depressed or hurting parishioners, who are expected to confess and confide deeply personal feelings. The Catholic Church's traditional ritualistic confession of "sins" sets up an opportunity for children to be inappropriately questioned by priests on intimate or embarrassing topics.

Churches are used to operating as though they were above the law. They treat these cases as a crisis of faith, rather than as criminal actions. Churches are not policing themselves, and are often unpoliced by the state. Even under fire, churches are dragging their feet to institute reforms.

Since 1986, the Church Mutual Insurance Company has formally advised church clients to fingerprint all applicants for church positions, to carefully check out resumes and gaps in resumes, to call references and demand them for work with children, to institute careful monitoring of church day cares, to make sure two adults act as chaperons of field trips, to take, in short, the kinds of precautions that public schools and better child care facilities have been taking for years. Are the churches doing it? No.

In 1990, Auxiliary Bishop A James Quinn of Cleveland told a conference of canon attorneys to consider hiding the crimes, by sending files on priests accused of child molestation to the Vatican Embassy in the District of Columbia, which he maintains is outside the reach of the US Courts. "If there's something there you really don't want people to see, you might send it off to the Apostolic Delegate", said Quinn.

In addition, church officials are either exempt by law from the mandatory child abuse reporting laws, or prosecutors are interpreting those laws as if they were exempt. Any action taken by churches largely has been in reaction to civil suits against them, when their pocketbooks are threatened, and, to a lesser extent due to unfavorable publicity. The Catholic hierarchy in particular has been outspoken in trying to minimize or defend abusers within its ranks.

With such attitudes, was it surprising that Cardinal John O'Connor of New York City wanted to offer Father Bruce Ritter a job, even after a probe of his Covenant House network for runways found him guilty of sexual and financial misconduct in 1990? Ritter was never prosecuted for a 20-year pattern of sexual misconduct.

-- Annie Laurie Gaylor

## The Church Aids, Abets, and Perpetuates Pedophilia

A process addiction that today demands much attention is that of clerical pedophilia -- specifically that of Catholic priests sexually abusing children.

The celibate male hierarchy of the Catholic Church, in which I participated as a missionary priest, has historically needed to cover its dysfunctions with secrets in order to maintain its strict control over large segments of the populace. Principal among the tools employed by the Catholic Church for such control are: the manipulation of beliefs and establishing of the hierarchy as the determinant of appropriate sexual behavior.

From that perspective it follows that the Church would prohibit the questioning of authority and that it would preoccupy itself and its members with what it considers to be, and what it condemns as, sins of sexuality. However, the hierarchy seems to have forgotten that "He who casts the first stone . . ." is always relevant for those who consider themselves the designers of social morality.

Having long disregarded the fact that suppression of healthy sexuality leads to pathology, and having established itself as the standard-bearer of sexual mores by vowing to lives of carnal and reproductive abstinence, the hierarchy is now experiencing a long-overdue backlash. Its own priests are being identified as frequent violators of society's basic morality and as perpetrators of child sexual abuse. The same hierarchy that has long condemned the laity is now confronted with humiliation, embarrassment and shame as a growing number of its members are being caught and exposed, not simply in the common sins of sex on which the church has commonly judged the laity, but in sins of deviant sexuality that are illegal as well as immoral.

I have difficulty feeling compassion for the distraught bishops, who, trained and skilled in the art of control, have lied and conspired to keep the clerical pedophiles and their behavior hidden, and thus have abetted and perpetuated the sexual transgressions against innocent children.

Child molestation by clerics has long been a secret part of the Church's history, with the well-connected and powerful hierarchy able to hide the truth by using tactics of pressure, politics, and deceit. Only when the American judicial system finally became involved were the secret sins of the sanctuary forced into the open. A bishop can no longer save face by simply transferring the sick priest to another parish as a potential predator to a new batch of innocents.

Strengthened by recent revelations, victims and their families are finding the courage and legal support to confront the hierarchy for past and present abuses. The cases seem endless and financially overwhelming. An already questioning laity is angry and confused.

-- Arthur Melville, who holds a BA in philosophy, a Master's in Religious Education, and a PhD in Clinical Psychology. He is a former Maryknoll missionary priest, and he worked six years in the mountains of Guatemala. He is a psychotherapist, with a private practice on Long Beach, California. He is the author of *With Eyes to See, A Journey from Religion to Spirituality*.

## Bishops are More Concerned with the Church than with the Children

Even with the costly legal damages being awarded to the victims of the priests and growing distrust of a large segment of the laity, the American bishops refuse to take effective action. They remain stymied by the possibility of further loss of trust and subservience on the part of the faithful and the effect on financial contributions. Also knowing that any broadening of the clerical scandal could diminish their traditionally prestigious position among governing structures, the bishops are caught between revealing the whole truth and loss of control. The result is that they only choose to establish remedial steps for dealing with identified violators and their victims, thus hoping to somehow curtail continued fallout.

The bishops lack the integrity and motivation to heal. I sincerely doubt that they possess the necessary strength of character and the indispensable humility needed to deal with the essence of the problem -- to reach into the soul of the structure of the Church and bring forth and confess before the laity the underlying truth -- that the very nature of the institution cultivates and fosters the sexual deviancy of its celibate members.

We will know if and when the Church is sincere in wanting a healing when the bishops choose to go to the source of the problem, acknowledging that the sin lies not simply with the perpetrators, but also with the hierarchy itself, and even more so with the very institution that gives the hierarchy its position of power. Can we expect any less from the "successors of Jesus" than that they confess their own inadequacies and hypocrisy, and evaluate publicly and reveal fully the humanly developed historical context of the problem found in the institutional traditions, attitudes, beliefs, and teachings?

-- Arthur Melville

## Religious Structure Leads to Sexual Abuse

These are some aspects of the religious structure through which dysfunction, control, and secrets lead to sexual abuse:

- 1) The rewarding priestly life of prestige and power that prohibits intimate relationships draws like a magnet those who harbor sexual inhibitions, inadequacies, and fears, men not capable of the prohibited relationships who in turn are not expected to recognize their symptoms or deal with their psychological problems. Prolonged isolation, such as all-male seminary, becomes a fruitful breeding ground for unhealthy social behavior that seeks dysfunctional and deviant relationships.
- 2) A priesthood that holds as divine mandate the exclusive participation of men and thus the implicit superiority of men will attract men who feel inferior to women. Such an environment

becomes a hotbed for socio-sexually maladapted personalities and their accompanying problems. Adults who feel incapable of relating to their peers are attracted to life in which they are free to and expected to relate to children.

- 3) That only men can be called to the highest service of the Church obviously creates general but subtle arrogance among "the chosen". Presumed supremacy leads to permissiveness in acting out hidden or unacceptable behavior.
- 4) Celibacy is accepted as a necessary means to the goal of the priesthood. But when the thrill of the goal withers and frustration has no acceptable outlet, latent pathology easily unfolds.
- 5) Alcoholism is endemic among the clergy, the bottle frequently being the only legally and ecclesiastically acceptable answer to the pain and loneliness of even the committed celibate. And, as is well known, it lowers social inhibitions.
- 6) A hierarchy trained to distance itself from the people and distrust its followers with the truth, keeps secret the deviant behavior of its members, encouraging further deviancy.
- 7) A hierarchy with its focus on eternal salvation tends to overlook common worldly knowledge, such as the fact that abused children become abusing adults. With a longstanding and high incidence of abuse among the clergy, it is unacceptable that clerical applicants have never been examined or evaluated for incest or other forms of childhood abuse.

-- Arthur Melville

## Nuns Don't Trust Bishops

Catholic nuns are conducting surveys to identify the number of incest survivors among their ranks. Though many predict that the survey results may be shockingly high, these studies are not being done at the request of a secretive hierarchy. Instead, to avoid being controlled, blocked, and possibly punished by the hierarchy, the nuns are keeping their surveys away from the bishops until they are completed.

-- Arthur Melville

## Catholicism Fosters a Dysfunctional Environment

After having spent nine years in the seminary, six years in the priesthood, and the past fifteen years as a psychotherapist working with addicts, I am familiar with what sexually addicted priests have to go through in their recovery process, and wonder if the bishops will provide the supportive and loving environment, an environment committed to integrity, that is needed for recovery.

That the bishops send the offenders into isolation, therapy, or rehabilitation does not mean healing, nor does it end the bishops' responsibility, or even begin to identify the source of the problem. One of the keys to recovery from any addiction is full disclosure of the behaviors and the making of amends, none of which is possible in an atmosphere which insists on secrecy and the hiding of the problem.

Addictions do not go away. They must be managed every day for the rest of one's life. Controlling or dysfunctional systems that generate and support addictive behavior must be exposed and those addicted must be able to separate from such an environment in a healthy manner. If the secrets or lies of the system are encouraged or permitted, regression and the continuance of the problem are guaranteed. By its very nature, Catholicism, with its extreme position on sexuality, fosters a dysfunctional environment.

Perhaps the healing must begin with the laity. A healthy laity would do well to distinguish between a religious system and spiritual development, and to commit to personal growth rather than to a religious leadership in denial. And the Catholic bishops must see that the recovery process is important not only to the perpetrators, but to themselves and especially to their disheartened laity.

The same rules and principles of recovery apply to all: rigorous truth and loving support are basic and essential. Nothing less can be expected from those who would follow in the footsteps of Him who said, "Suffer the children to come unto me". Nothing less can be accepted for the children abused by clergymen, already cast in the role of sexual abusers of the future.

If the steps taken by the bishops today regarding clerical pedophilia are only meant to maintain control and contain the existing problem, we are then witnessing a serious step in the weakening and possible demise of one of the West's most ancient and revered institutions.

-- Arthur Melville

## Geographic Cure

Instead of weeding out the offenders, the Catholic Church's policy has been "geographic cure" -- or moving offenders out of the area. Very few times has the Church lived up to its responsibility .

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-- Jason Berry