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**COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CHURCH**

**POTENTIAL AND PRACTICE**

**by**

**Elizabeth June Mann**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Psychology**

**Department of Psychology  
The City University  
London  
March 2001**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge my immeasurable debt to my research supervisor, Professor Michael Carroll. His creativity, logical thinking and experience and depth of knowledge of counselling in organisations have been a continual source of guidance and inspiration. His unfailing cheerful encouragement and support have been a sine qua non of this work.

I also wish to record the pleasure it has been to work with the Right Revd David Bentley, Bishop of Gloucester, in exploring ways of making counselling psychology practice available in his diocese. His graciousness, openness and wisdom have made this a rewarding experience. Together we have proved that dialogue at the interface of the worlds of church and psychology is not only possible but potentially highly productive for the lives and ministry of clergy.

I am indebted to Professor Mary Watts, Dr Don Rawson and my colleagues in the Centre for Counselling Psychology, the City University, London for the stimulus they have been to my thinking on my journey as a scientist-practitioner in counselling psychology.

I am grateful to the six people who gave their time so generously in participating in the inter-rater reliability exercise described in part III.

Especially, I want to thank my family, Ralph, Ruth, John, Michael, Adrienne, and Alissa. Each of them has in their own different ways supported and energised me greatly during this research with their unfailing love, interest and understanding.

## **DECLARATION**

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**COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CHURCH**

**POTENTIAL AND PRACTICE**

**PART I**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS**

This practitioner doctoral thesis is concerned with the potential and practice of counselling psychology in the church. The thesis comprises a case study of the setting up of a counselling service for clergy, a qualitative analysis of bishops' perceptions of the potential of counselling psychology in the church, and a literature review on the subject of the counselling needs of priests.

Parts II and III are specifically focused on the Church of England. Part IV relates to the wider church, Anglican, Catholic and Nonconformist, in an international context.

The Church of England is the legally established church in this country. In this church, governance is effected in regions (known as dioceses) under the authority of the diocesan bishop, in whom is vested the final responsibility for ordination of priests (alternatively referred to as clergy) and for the management of their work of ministry. The diocesan bishop has the pastoral care and the judicial responsibility for the priests working in his diocese. Under the diocesan bishop's authority, priests are responsible for the ministry of the Church in the ecclesiastical parishes that are the geographical units into which dioceses are divided.

The speed of societal change in the last few decades has put strong pressures on the Church of England to make many changes in the culture and structure of its organisation and style of ministry. These pressures have been compounded by a diminution of economic and personnel resources, which in turn has resulted in a redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of bishops and clergy. A concept of "clergy stress" has been identified and discussed as a growing problem in the church. Questions have arisen about how such changes and problems may be managed. Carroll (1996: 3) describes the generic problem:

Change is never easy: it disrupts, disorientates, causes grieving and takes time. Support is needed for individuals and teams as transitions in organisations are managed. Counselling is one way of supporting employees as they cope with organisational change. Counselling can be seen as a way of improving mental health.



Counselling psychology is one kind of applied psychology. Counselling values are about the importance and process of change, empowering people to manage their lives, to take responsibility for themselves and to be able to make decisions (Carroll 1996: 5). There is also a recognition of the value of counselling psychology as a framework for human resource development within organisations (Woolfe, 1996: 5). Counselling psychology has been described as the professional application of the integration of psychological research in the amelioration of distress and the improvement of quality of life (Clarkson, 1998: xv). It has its own particular relevant values at the heart of its practice within the wider discipline of psychology. There is an emphasis on the importance of the helping relationship as a particularly significant variable in working with people. This therapeutic relationship is characterised by the profession's core person-centred conditions of empathy, acceptance and congruence (Rogers, 1951). There is a move towards focusing the work of helpers on facilitating well-being rather than responding to sickness and pathology. These values are compatible with the Christian values of the church.

Counselling psychology is not identical with counselling. They have in common "the skilled and principled use of relationship to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth and the optimal development of personal resources. The overall aim is to provide an opportunity to work towards living more satisfyingly and resourcefully" (BAC, 1989:1). Additionally, counselling psychologists consciously use academic psychology alongside practical counselling skills (Clarkson, 1998: 2). Counselling psychology aims to integrate theory, research and practice. The model of the scientist-practitioner is seen as central to the discipline (Woolfe, 1996: 9).

By integrating psychological research, theory and practice in this thesis, the author aims to address contemporary problems and changes in the church from the counselling psychology perspective. The author is a Chartered Counselling Psychologist who has been engaged in counselling over a period of seventeen years. During this time she has counselled in a variety of settings including a psychiatric unit in a hospital, a college and private practice. She is an Associate Lecturer at the City University in the Centre for



Counselling Psychology. A professional background in educational practice and management led her to take an interest in the organisation of systems of professional counselling in general, and in the Church of England in particular, where employee counselling systems have been apparently less developed than in any other of the caring professions.

From the beginning of her professional practice, the author has been counselling priests, ministers, missionaries and ordinands belonging to a cross-section of churches in England and overseas. First, she had a role and responsibilities for seven years as Counsellor for the Oxford Ministry Scheme, which was a training scheme for ordination of mature professional candidates in the Church of England. Second, she worked as a counselling psychologist member of the clinical team of Heronbrook House International Therapeutic Centre for Clergy and Religious until the time of its closure in 1996. This was an ecumenical centre serviced by an Order of Catholic Religious sisters. "Ecumenical" implied an openness to accept clients from different mainstream churches. "Religious" is used here as the formal nomenclature of those priests and lay people who live under vows in religious communities which have a structured lifestyle based on contemplation or specialised ministry or both. Third, she has worked as an independent practitioner carrying out psychological assessments and working therapeutically with ministers, priests and Religious of the Anglican, Catholic and Nonconformist churches in England and overseas. Fourth, she holds a responsibility as Bishop's Adviser for Counselling in the diocese of Gloucester, in which role she has worked with the bishop to set up a diocesan professional psychological counselling service which was the first of its kind in this country. This service is described as a case study in Part II of this thesis.

The author therefore comes to this research from the standpoint of professional training and experience in counselling psychology. Out of this she has reflected upon a detailed contextual knowledge of the culture and organisation of the church in its different forms both in England and worldwide.

In the last two decades, most bishops have appointed a pastoral care functionary with some delegated responsibility for helping diocesan clergy in times of crisis. This functionary has traditionally been an older priest in whom the bishop has confidence because of his pastoral skills. The role was often defined as “Adviser in Pastoral Care”. With the advent of the use of counselling skills in pastoral work, this role has in some cases been renamed “Adviser in Pastoral Care and Counselling”. A series of six biennial conferences (the “Launde Conferences”) for these advisers has taken place, the organisers striving to encourage every diocesan bishop to send a representative. The motivation of the diocesan representatives to generate more therapeutic help for clergy was high. However, because their background was theological, rather than psychological, the bishops’ delegates did not necessarily readily envisage help for clergy taking the form of professional psychological counselling systems. Though many were aware of, and some trained in, counselling skills, the potential of counselling psychology per se as a discipline was unexplored. They were unaware of its ability to use academic psychology in an organisational context as well as with individual clients, and to synthesise counselling, clinical and occupational psychology in a counselling service.

In her role as Bishop’s Adviser for Counselling, the author conceived the idea of developing a counselling psychology service in her own diocese for the care of the clergy. The concept of this system was to be differentiated from the other pastoral care systems in the church, in that the system was designed to be operated by professional counsellors, the majority of whom would be chartered counselling psychologists. The process of setting up this system is described in Part II of this thesis, “Setting up a diocesan counselling service: An organisational case study”. This involved exploring the philosophical basis and the organisational practicalities inherent in such a system in a way that had not been done before in the church context. A multi-modal assessment procedure was designed and refined so that clients’ psychological needs could be analysed. In the setting up process, issues arose which demanded knowledge of the academic literature in order to respond appropriately. It became apparent that further research was required into the needs of the



church organisation from wider ecclesiological and psychological viewpoints. These issues are analysed in the case study and pursued more widely in the research in Part III.

In developing the particular diocesan counselling system described in the case study, and at the same time undertaking the role of Secretary of the Bishops' Advisers' Working Party for the Launde Conference, it seemed to the author that there were substantial blocks hindering the development nationally of similar professional models. First, there had been no precedent for such a development. Second, there were only two chartered psychologists in role as bishop's advisers, one of whom was the author. Dissemination of criteria for professional counselling services was not a speedy short-term task. Third, there was no national forum in which advisers could discuss and negotiate underlying principles of professional counselling with diocesan bishops. Fourth, and importantly, there was a pattern of individual advisers frequently reporting that they had difficulty in establishing communication with their bishops about setting up counselling for clergy. There seemed to be an assumption that the bishops were not at all motivated to co-operate in what the advisers perceived as developments of immediate priority. The author had heard strong frustration expressed at times about this.

In fact, the perceptions of the diocesan bishops about counselling the clergy were unknown. Clearly there was a need to research these perceptions as the next step in a longer term process of organising psychological counselling for clergy throughout the dioceses of the Church of England. The writer had already been sensitised to the relevant therapeutic and organisational issues from the experiences described above. This is reflected in the review of psychological literature in Chapter 2 and in the analysis of the research interviews with the bishops in Chapters 5 to 9 of Part III. That part of the thesis researches bishops' perceptions of the potential of counselling psychology for supporting the clergy and for facilitating organisational change in the Church of England.

In the course of counselling priests over a period of seventeen years, the author has observed in her practice the high incidence of underlying problems in clergy and Religious

concerned with intrapersonal and interpersonal issues of identity, sexuality and intimacy (Mann 1997, 1999a, 1999b; Mann & Doyle, 2000). This called for a review of the research literature of these psychological issues in the context of this cohort of clients. This is presented as Part IV of this thesis: “Identity issues in counselling priests, ministers and Religious: A review of the literature”.

In the general context of the practice of counselling psychology in the Church, Parts II and III of this thesis focus on the author’s experiences as a scientist-practitioner, first, in setting up a counselling service in one diocese and second, doing qualitative research among the bishops of the Church of England. Part IV makes a different contribution to the thesis by turning attention to individual client counselling rather than to the organisational systems. This part reviews psychological research into ministers, clergy and Religious in the UK, the USA, Europe, Canada and Australia. It focuses on the fundamental issues of identity, intimacy and sexuality that the author has identified in her professional practice as problems of high incidence.

The author has been invited to disseminate the outcomes of her research in Part III to the House of Bishops in the Church of England, and also to the Advisory Board for Ministry which is the central assessment agency for candidates for ordination.

It is hoped that the specifics of this thesis may be a stimulus for providing systems of counselling care for clergy and further cultural change in the Church of England and other churches in England. It is also hoped that this thesis may contribute to reflection upon theory, practice and research in counselling psychology in a wider religious context, both in the increasing changes involving the leadership of the churches in the UK and overseas and in the individual problems of priests and ministers in the context of different religions in contemporary society.

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**COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CHURCH**

**POTENTIAL AND PRACTICE**

**PART II**

**SETTING UP A DIOCESAN COUNSELLING SERVICE**

**IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

**AN ORGANISATIONAL CASE STUDY**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

**The Right Revd David Bentley BA, Bishop of Gloucester,**

**has kindly given his permission**

**for this case study to be included in this thesis.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This case study describes the organisation inherent in the initiation and development of a counselling service in the Church of England Diocese of Gloucester. The aim was to provide counselling for clergy and their families which was based on professional standards of counselling psychology for both the client and the organisation of the diocese. The history of the situation in the diocese and the author's prior involvement which had led to this initiative are recorded in the background to this study in Appendix 1. This describes how the need for an organised professional counselling service had become increasingly evident as a result of:

- [i] a vacuum left by the breakdown of the previous network of professionally unqualified helpers
- [ii] the growing incidence of clergy client work
- [iii] the bishop's need for clergy psychological assessments to assist in his decision making
- [iv] the lessons learned from the experience of the Diocese of Sheffield.
- [v] the need for competent practice by professionally qualified and supervised counsellors.

The author became increasingly aware that such a counselling service needed to be formally and clearly structured, easily accessible, and reflect both high standards of counselling from the profession of counselling psychology for the client and also the theory and research which was currently emerging about counselling in organisations.

The clergy counselling service aimed to be tailor-made to suit the size, culture, ministry, location and workforce of the diocese. The Diocese of Gloucester is a predominantly rural diocese. It comprises a large part of the Cotswolds with their traditionally wealthy farming communities, the Forest of Dean which is an impoverished former mining area, and the large towns of Cheltenham and Gloucester between the two. The diocese has 325 parishes, 238 licensed clergy and 225 licensed (lay) Readers.

## **2. THEORETICAL BASIS FOR ORGANISING A COUNSELLING SERVICE**

Theory about counselling provision in organisations has been developed by Carroll (1996) who developed a paradigm of counselling in the workplace which focused upon the interfaces between counsellor, client and organisation. Previously, counselling had been generally perceived as a one-to-one engagement, concerned only with the internal world of the client. Without diminishing this, Carroll argued that counselling in organisations also brings its own issues of roles, responsibilities and management. In particular, he highlights the need to understand and work with the dynamics of a particular organisational structure and culture. He addressed the practicalities of introducing counselling into an organisation and offered a systematic model of five chronological stages for doing so, namely:

<p>Preparation for counselling in an organisation</p> <p>Assessing an organisation for counselling</p> <p>Contracting for counselling in an organisation</p> <p>Evaluating counselling in an organisation</p> <p>Terminating counselling within an organisation</p>
---

In addition Carroll posits theories of evaluation, ethics and professionalism, training and supervision in organisational settings.

Subsequently, the theoretical basis of the role and dynamics of counselling in organisations was developed further (Carroll and Walton, 1997) by means of a recognition and a collation of the work of nineteen professional and/or academic counselling psychologists who were developing theory, research and practice in this field. Models of counselling in organisations from different perspectives were offered. Issues of the understanding of organisational culture by counsellors working with an organisation are highlighted. Themes which cluster around the process of introducing counselling into an organisation are taken up. Recent research into counselling in organisations is described. Particular

issues of line management and supervision in counselling in organisations are addressed, and theory and suggestions for improvements in training are posited.

The author of this case study has also used the research of Selvini Palazzoli et al (1986), a systemic therapist at the Catholic University of Milan who investigated the experiences of psychologists who worked for change in different organisations. The research team found that the psychologists experienced serious methodological problems in implementing their programmes. Mistakes made when the psychologists had started work with the organisations were identified. One important mistake had been to adopt a medical model which considered the organisation to be “sick” and then searched for an appropriate cure. An analysis showed that different organisations will, in certain circumstances, produce identical processes. The interaction between the psychologists and these organisational processes was responsible for many situations in which the psychologist’s hands were tied. Understanding this opened the way for conclusions to be drawn from which concrete strategies were developed towards successful constructive influencing of the organisations.

These concepts, theories and research results are the bases of the methods of the initiation and development of the counselling service and the critical evaluation described in this case study.

### **3. THE PRACTITIONER’S THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

The author’s working paradigm is integrative (Dryden and Norcross, 1990), which in her case combines a psychodynamic basis of insight (Jacobs, 1988) with a strong emphasis on the therapeutic relationship (Clarkson, 1995) as a safe containment in which to share the client’s issues and development. She works in a non-hierarchical, person-centred style (Mearns and Thorne, 1988) which is theoretically based on a fulfilment model (Maddi, 1989), oriented to personal growth, and making sense of experience through process, reflexivity and the self (McLeod, 1996). She uses systemic thinking to inform her understanding of contextual relationships (Bor, Legg and Scher, 1996). In counselling, she



works for awareness by means of a dialogue which is interactional and relational (Chirban, 1996), based on a mutuality in the relationship (Friedman, 1995), by reflecting back the metamessages underlying clients' communications, and by reinforcement of developing insights.

#### **4. PREPARATION FOR THE DIOCESAN COUNSELLING SERVICE**

The framework for preparation posited by Carroll (1996: 88) is:

- setting up a team for discussion and negotiation of counselling provision
- engaging an independent consultant
- finding out what the organisation needs from counselling
- investigating costs
- checking the commitment of key people in the organisation
- drawing up a list of potential providers

The process which took place in the Diocese of Gloucester will be described below within this framework. The process began with a paper to the Bishop of Gloucester on the counselling of individuals referred by the diocese. (Appendix 2) A letter to the bishop following a psychological assessment of a clergyperson commissioned by him made suggestions about setting up a list of diocesan professional counsellors (Appendix 3). A further letter to the bishop summarising a meeting with him in response is found in Appendix 4.

##### **4.1 Setting up the team**

Carroll (1996) posits the need for a representative team from within the organisation to steer the discussions and negotiations for providing a suitable counselling service. Carroll maintains that it is crucial that this group be representative and that if staff councils are part of the workforce, they should have delegates on the team. The author's experience was that such representation in the Church is very hard to achieve. Logically, such a group would have representatives of Diocesan Officers, ordinands in training, curates,

incumbents, the diocesan selection and training teams, the Bishop's Senior Staff and the employees of the diocese in Church House. This suggestion was made but not taken up. An initial group called together by the Bishop comprised only the Diocesan Bishop himself, one of his two Archdeacons, his Chaplain and the author, who was asked to be the Co-ordinator of the counselling service. The group met first in December 1995 with an ongoing commitment to continue through the development life of the service to discuss needs, requirements and future provision. The Archdeacon did not attend any further meetings, so the resulting triad was even more unrepresentative of the organisation of the diocese. Subsequently the meetings reduced to the dyad of the bishop and the counselling psychologist. This is a normal way of working in the church, illustrative of the hierarchical church culture in which the bishop holds ultimate authority and power in new initiatives. The meetings were arranged at the Bishop's invitation at intervals of two to six months and took place in his study.

#### **4.2 Engaging an independent consultant**

In line with Carroll's theory, a consultant independent of the diocese was suggested to the bishop. A Chartered Counselling Psychologist, who had taken a leading role in the development of theory, research and practice in counselling in organisations, and who understood the culture of the church, agreed to act as consultant. The bishop welcomed the establishment of a supervision relationship between the Consultant and the Co-ordinator, but wanted this to be otherwise independent of the Diocese.

#### **4.3 Finding out what the diocese needed from counselling**

A paper was submitted to the first meeting of the group by the counselling psychologist with questions to facilitate discussion and decision-making (Appendix 4). From this, the bishop articulated his perceptions of the nature of a possible counselling service. The Archdeacon and Bishop's Chaplain offered suggestions from their own experience of clergy who had asked for help. The author explained the nature of counselling, and facilitated discussion from the standpoint of a counselling psychologist about what would need to be decided in setting up a diocesan counselling service. By a process of iteration, in a series of ongoing meetings from that time, principles were established which provided



a framework for a counselling service tailor-made to the needs of the diocese as perceived and agreed by all the members of the group. The Bishop gave the service the title “Diocesan Professional Counselling Service”, to be known by its acronym “DPCS”.

#### **4.4 Investigating costs**

The cost of counselling had to be reviewed. There was a felt tension between the cost of the normal fees of professional counsellors and the perceived economic situation of the diocese which would put limits on the amount which could be paid. The Bishop decided to pay the counsellors the normal professional fee of that time, which was £30 per session, and to review this every year. The corollary of this was a limit set on the number of sessions available for a client. Exemplars are the systems in the Post Office (Tehrani, 1997) which is an in-house counselling service, and the Independent Counselling and Advisory Service (ICAS) which is a high quality counselling provider for industrial and commercial organisations. The Post Office offers an assessment session followed by a maximum of four sessions in their “First Line Counselling programme”. This provision is completely free to clients. ICAS provides a number of sessions agreed with each commissioning organisation, which is usually between five and eight in number. In these cases also, the counselling is paid for entirely by the employee’s firm. In both cases the counsellors are paid the normal current professional fee.

In contrast to these free services, the bishop felt strongly that the counselling offered by the DPCS would be more valued by the clients if they made some contribution to the cost. He recognised that there was a wide variation in the financial circumstances of potential clients. Some would be able to afford the whole cost with no hardship. Others, for example a curate with four children and a wife not working, would be able to afford very little. It was agreed that if clients wanted help with fees, the Co-ordinator should negotiate with them in a first session to pay what they could afford. This would be paid direct to the counsellor who would invoice the Diocese for the remainder. The Bishop decided that counselling sessions would be limited to six in the first instance. If a counsellor believed more sessions were required, he or she should seek agreement from him for them through

the Co-ordinator. Long term counselling was not promised. Referrals to the GP or other appropriate agencies would usually be expected instead.

Administrative costs would comprise the cost of a dedicated phone line for the Co-ordinator, postage, the Co-ordinator's travel costs to meetings and inter-diocesan conferences for bishops' advisers and the cost of her supervision by the independent consultant to the service.

Although the principles for subsidising fees seemed to have been clearly established, the author encountered a long struggle for agreement to disseminate this information clearly to the clergy. It seemed that although the funding principles had been established, there was reluctance to express any clearly defined offer of subsidy. There seemed to be quite considerable reluctance and fear around this. The author was frustrated because a seeming taboo on being explicit about funding affected the ease of access and confidentiality of a potential self-referral by a clergyperson. At the time of writing, this is not completely resolved, though it is planned to raise it again at the evaluation meeting in April 2000.

#### **4.5 Checking the commitment of key people in the diocese.**

The author found that the amount of time she spent with key people in the diocese discussing the potential of a counselling service was as great as, and often greater than, the amount of time she spent counselling individual clients. This was due to a necessity not merely to check commitment with the key people, but to build relationships with them to facilitate development, and this employed all her counselling psychology skills (see Section 3). The key people were the Archdeacons, the Diocesan Secretary, and the Diocesan Officers for Ministerial Training, Continuing Ministerial Education, Social Responsibility, for ordinands and for Readers. Organisational networking provided a picture of the current culture and politics within the diocese and proved to be a *sine qua non* of the whole development of the service. Almost all the Diocesan Officers became supportive of the development of a clergy counselling service when the implications were explained to them, although this process took longer than expected (see section 11).



#### **4.6 Potential providers**

The criteria for counsellors in the diocesan counselling service were worked out. The bishop did not believe it was necessary for counsellors to be members of the Church of England, but he did expect that they would have an understanding of and sympathy with the context of ministry in the wider church. The author supplied definitions of professional levels and explanations about professional ethics in counselling psychology. It was agreed from this that providers should be qualified at least to Diploma level, and either be accredited by the British Association for Counselling or be chartered psychologists of the British Psychological Society. This meant that counsellors could not be used directly from an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), because no EAP could meet all these criteria. Counsellors would have to be identified and contracted with individually. Achieving this posed some problems because, as one Diocesan officer cautioned, *“there are people with drums to beat”*. This was a reference to the cohort of people in the diocese who considered themselves to have an inviolate role as counsellors of the clergy, in spite of not being professionally qualified. There was resistance of both passive aggression and explicit anger which had to be overcome from these people. Further resistance came from a diocesan officer who had had a negative experience of a psychodynamic therapist which had left him with a stereotyped view of the whole counselling profession.

### **5. ASSESSING THE DIOCESE FOR COUNSELLING PROVISION**

The assessment of the diocese is described by means of the framework of questions posited by Deverall (1997: 121), namely:

- how many counsellors are available and what is their availability?
- where are they located?
- where will the counselling take place?
- what will the cost be to the organisation?

- what are the counsellors' qualifications?
- are their value systems uniform or diverse?
- what sort of service is being offered? Availability scope, telephone remedial or developmental long term or short term, flexibility?

### **5.1 Number of counsellors and their availability**

It was agreed that a team of eight to ten diocesan counsellors should be the aim. The bishop opted for personal selection rather than inviting applications, and the Co-ordinator was asked to identify possible persons.

### **5.2 Location of counsellors**

It was agreed that it was desirable to have some counsellors available in or near the centre of the diocese, and some beyond its boundaries, so that clergy clients had the freedom to choose whether they wanted to go outside the diocese for their counselling.

### **5.3 Place of counselling**

There was no suitable room in the diocesan premises for counselling. The author had already tried out suggestions made by a Diocesan Officer of using rooms in the diocesan retreat centre, in the School for Ministry and in the home of a diocesan official. All of these had proved to be unsatisfactory, either because of the visibility of the client on access, or in the inadequacy of the sound-proofing for confidential dialogue. It was therefore agreed that counsellors contracted to work in the DPCS would meet clients in their own consulting rooms, and the diocese would have no responsibility for providing accommodation for the counselling service.

### **5.4 Cost to the diocese See 4.4**

### **5.5 Counsellors' qualifications**

The author found it quite difficult initially to find the agreed number of qualified people (see 4.6) because of the shortage of professional counsellors in the region. At the same time, the prophecy of the Diocesan Officer (see 4.6) showed up in reality. Three people who were practising as clergy counsellors at the time and had expectations of joining the



service but did not meet the qualifications criteria were resentful of the requirements and put pressure on the bishop to be included. The author learned from inter-diocesan meetings that this was a common experience for those who were trying to develop professional clergy counselling. The usual outcome was that the inadequately qualified practitioners would eventually select themselves out, and this is what happened in this case, but not before the author had received some angry phone calls. In time, ten well qualified, experienced counsellors accepted invitations to join the service. Five of these were chartered psychologists, four with masters' degrees and one with a PhD in clinical psychology. A further four had master's degrees, and, with another, were accredited BAC counsellors. Two counsellors who were due to qualify in the short term, one on finishing an MSc dissertation, and the other a Diploma course, were invited to become diocesan counsellors because they were so close to qualification. Two of the chartered psychologists were appointed as specialist advisers to the bishop for problems of sexual abuse and alcohol addiction.

### **5.6 Counsellors' value systems**

By this, Deverill meant whether they could operate flexibly or needed a formal procedural and process-driven base from which to operate. In fact, by virtue of their professional training and experience, all the counsellors who accepted invitations to join the service were used to working autonomously; none were appointed who were unable to do this. At the same time, certain formal procedures and processes had to be clearly defined, in the nature of counselling in organisations. In particular, the Co-ordinator needed to work out procedures of client access, referral to other members of the counselling team, the administration of finances and the procedures for evaluation of the service. The counsellors made contributions to the discussion and implementation of these procedures and processes in meetings with the Co-ordinator.

### **5.7 Nature of the counselling service**

The Co-ordinator drew up a document which explained the counselling service in terms of

- [i] the philosophy of the service
- [ii] management and accountability

- [iii] publicity
- [iv] finance
- [v] organisation and administration
- [vi] ethical and professional issues
- [vii] register of professional counsellors
- [viii] counsellor contracts (see Appendix 6).

## **6. CONTRACTING FOR COUNSELLING**

This section describes the more formal agreements and contracts covering roles and responsibilities and the practicalities of working in the DPCS. These agreements will be described in terms of philosophy, policies and procedures (Carroll, 1997: 152) and the specific issues summarised by Bull (1995: 8-9), namely:

- boundaries for confidentiality
- an ongoing strategy for publicising the service
- number of sessions
- external supervision
- counsellors' professional indemnity
- evaluation of the service

### **6.1 Boundaries for confidentiality**

See Appendix 6, section 6.2. A specimen contract 3-way contract is in Appendix 7.

### **6.2 Strategy for publicising the service**

In the first instance, the author wrote to the bishop prior to the first meeting in December 1995, positing “*the desirability of a collation of information for a Diocesan Directory of professional counsellors, whose qualifications, special interests and expertises, experience and professional affiliations were published therein. The diocese would then know its resources and the clergy could choose whom they might consult*”.



When the counsellors had been appointed, their information was gathered by name, telephone number, answerphone if any, address, qualifications/training, professional membership, counselling offered. The author sent notes to the bishop for his approval in August 1998 of a suggested presentation of the information in a booklet. These notes are found in Appendix 8. This booklet was sent to the clergy in October 1998 and recommended by the bishop at his Maundy Thursday gathering for the diocesan clergy in 1999. The introduction to this booklet is seen in Appendix 9.

### **6.3 Number of sessions See 4.4**

### **6.4 External supervision and counsellors' professional indemnity**

Agreements for these are contained within the contract between the diocese and the individual counsellors. A copy of this contract is found in Appendix 11.

## **7. EVALUATING THE SERVICE**

Carroll (1996: 144) suggests a number of methods for evaluating counselling in an organisation, namely

statistical evaluation
client evaluation
counsellor evaluation
organisational evaluation
supervisor evaluation
process evaluation
outcome evaluation.

The first evaluation was set for the year 2000. The start would be a statistical survey carried out by the Co-ordinator among the counsellors of numbers and types of clients and an analysis of the presenting problems. A copy of a one-sheet summary requested by the

bishop is found in Appendix 12. A client evaluation form has been devised and circulated to all counsellors. The first organisational evaluation is planned to take place on 06.04.00 at the Bishop's Senior Staff residential conference, to which the Co-ordinator has been invited for this purpose. The consultant to the DPCS will be asked to send a written evaluation from his viewpoint to this meeting. Variables for process and outcome evaluation have yet to be worked out. It is expected that work will be done on this at the Senior Staff meeting.

## **8. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

At the first planning meeting, the author proposed the development of some form of psychological assessment for candidates for ordination to the priesthood and also in the selection process for Readers (i.e. licensed lay ministers). It was agreed that this should be developed as a resource of the DPCS to the diocese.

When assessing one of the earliest clients referred by the bishop, the author and a clinical psychologist colleague began to develop a concept of a multi-modal psychological assessment into a clearly defined framework. This was effected by means of two or more interactional relational assessment interviews (Chirban 1996) of one or one and a half hours in length. As well as the client's family story, other stories of school and college, of significant relationships both positive and negative, of vocation and ministry and of identity development, were found to be rich sources of insight into a client's underlying emotional problems and personal growth issues. The findings from these analyses were checked out by the use of a battery of psychometric tests.

The client was also asked to complete a personal history form which gave the factual information needed as background to the psychological interviews.

The author subsequently developed a therapeutic use of these assessment results in feedback to the clients at the levels at which they could receive the insights and work with them positively (Newman and Greenway, 1997). The responses to the tests usually provided good confirmation of the psychologist's analyses, and sometimes gave pointers for further assessment. The bishop and his senior staff team particularly appreciated the duality of assessment by interviews and by what they saw as objective testing.

The most demanding, but also the most valuable, part of the assessment was the processing of the outcomes of all these modes in the framework:

Identity
Autonomy
Sexuality
Emotional maturity

This analysis was used to underpin the strengths and growth points, conclusions and recommendations offered to the client, and to the bishop where contractually agreed, in the form of a "Psychological Profile Report". The complete framework for this psychological profile will be found in Appendix 10.

## **9. A TRAINING RESOURCE**

In line with the author's theoretical stance on a fulfilment model of personal development (see 3), she conceived the Diocesan Professional Counselling Service as being a resource for training. Courses were delivered to two successive cohorts of new curates on professional boundaries, and the author and the clinical psychologist member of the DPCS team facilitated a conference on ministry support in another diocese. The author also ran courses on bereavement for Local Ministry Teams in training and in human development for Readers.



## **10. USE OF SUPERVISION**

Supervision with a consultant who understood both the theory of counselling in organisations and the structure and culture of the Church was a sine qua non of the whole initiative. The author elicited the client and organisational issues which needed to be resolved. In supervision, these were analysed both separately and at the client-diocese interface. The philosophy of the counselling service, its aims and goals, the governance of the scheme, the financial implications, the ethical and professional issues and the dissemination strategy were explored, rehearsed, refined and shaped into policies. She role-played her approaches to the bishop with these policies and then also role-played the responses of the diocesan management in a search to understand their problems. Not least, supervision was a place to bring questions and feelings about the organisation. Supervision enabled her to adjust her perspectives and strategies when she experienced negative feelings which might otherwise have inhibited her work. Additionally, supervision provided a place where she could feel confident she would be monitored in looking after herself professionally in a way she could not necessarily expect from the diocese she was serving. (Mann, 1999: 175).

## **11. CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND SELF-EVALUATION**

The DPCS met all eighteen criteria for setting up a counselling service within an organisation which were delineated by Bull (1995: 8-9). All the criteria had been discussed and negotiated with the bishop i.e. at the organisation-counsellor interface.

Hay (1992) posits three levels of contracting within organisations in the setting up of counselling services, namely the administrative, the professional and the psychological. This provides one model for evaluation of what was achieved.

The administrative contracts with respect to responsibilities were effected easily and well. Contracting with respect to payment was more difficult. This was largely because payment



in the church context has traditionally been a taboo issue. There has been an expectation that “pastoral help” will be given voluntarily, and payment for professional services is a change that has to be managed. In this case, the author had sensitively to combine an empathic understanding of the traditional expectations with sufficient assertiveness to negotiate a fee which met the expectations of the diocese, the professional counsellors and the clergy clients. This proved to be a challenge which was more easily achieved for the counsellors on the team than for the Co-ordinator. Initially there were no financial offers from the diocese and attempts to discuss it seemed to be deflected. Consultations with other diocesan advisers revealed that this was a normal experience. Clergy advisers were given a small parish as a means of livelihood. Lay advisers, who are greatly in the minority, usually accept their non-stipendiary position as the only way of furthering development. However, the author’s experience in her diocese is that a Co-ordinator’s contract is emerging gradually. To date, the agreement covers the expenses of office, Advisers’ conferences, and some professional supervision and training costs. A step forward towards building her Co-ordinator’s contract is made at each meeting with the bishop.

Professional contracting is concerned with policies, objectives, tasks and roles of individuals and groups, and methods of implementation. The author’s commitment to setting up a service “tailor made” to the Diocese of Gloucester resulted in a degree of good fit which satisfied the bishop.

By a psychological contract is meant a contract based on respect and trust, and concerned with relationships. In 4.5 above, the author referred to her experience of needing to spend as much time, and maybe more, in developing relationships with key people in the diocese, as in working therapeutically with the clients. This confirmed the need, in setting up counselling systems in the church, to generate trust at all three interfaces, namely the diocese-counsellor interface and the diocese-clergy client interface as well as the clergy client-counsellor interface. The author evaluates herself as managing the first and third of these fairly consistently through the use of her counselling skills, but needing to reflect and

research further on the more demanding second. This includes the systemic question in the church of “What is the organisation doing to the client?” and the church culture issues which underlie that.

A psychological level relevant to setting up counselling services in organisations, which Hay did not consider, is the degree of virulence of organisational politics, power, agenda and resources. Virulence is correlated with denial by Egan (1994) who is a priest himself, albeit in the Catholic Church. Yates (1985) posited that when government agencies, businesses, churches and educational institutions are ranked for the virulence of their politics, churches are the easy winners. Part of the author’s self-evaluation has been to recognise that she needs to check out these hypotheses. Inherent in this is the whole area of the shadow side of organisational dynamics. In the case of the church, this includes the dynamics of the hierarchical structure in governance.

In initiating change within the Church, the author has learned the importance of recognising and accepting this formalised hierarchical structure. This means accepting that institutional interactions are bound by the hierarchical order. A psychologist entering any organisation is subjected to this in her interactions with the institution, and this requires her to accept some form of hierarchic dependence (Ugazio, 1986). The author experienced this in the issue of the planning group, which was not accepted on a representative basis but which had to be accepted as an engagement between the bishop and herself. In this it was not possible to align with Carroll’s theory in practice. She had to be sensitive to this limitation and work within its contractual possibilities. There is an important difference between this situation and the freedom of a counselling psychologist working in private practice.

Ugazio’s research claims that the psychologist must follow the hierarchic path, both during the contractual negotiations and when he seeks the organisation’s genuine agreement to his initiatives. In learning this experientially, the author found that one important difference from her private practice work was that of being bound by the



organisation's time scale. She felt anxious about the long time this entailed to generate the setting up and development of the counselling service. Initially, she had hoped for a more pro-active approach leading to speedier outcomes. However, Selvini Palazzoli (1986) posits that when a psychologist is working in an organisation, the importance of the variable of time must never be underestimated. The very act of setting up a planning discussion shows both a wish for change and an assumption that changes are bound to take time. Ricci (1986) posits that it is possible to qualify every communication differently according to the value of the time (T) within which the other variables of content (X), relationship (Y) and field (N) occur. Hence interpersonal communications C can be represented as a function  $C = (X, Y, N, T)$ .

It was a learning point for the author to discover experientially the power of the variable T in the function of essential communications to expedite or delay organisational development. The organisational norm of planning meetings at intervals of anything up to six month intervals resulted in the counselling service taking four years to reach a well developed form. In terms of Ricci's expression in this particular context, T was itself a function of the field variable N which contained the hierarchical structure and culture of the Church of England organisation.

Selvini Palazzoli's group (1986) drew the conclusion from their research that the psychologist must first examine his place in relation to the organisation's hierarchical structure and adapt his operational strategy to that. This has been an important learning experience for the author in working with a diocese in the Church of England. She learned that this had implications both for frequency of meetings and for the attitudes of the psychologist in making approaches with her ideas. Although working through meetings, a practicality of a psychologist's relationship with an organisation is that she is dependent upon invitations to those meetings. She has no authority to set them up unilaterally. She had to accept the invitations which were offered to her by the bishop. In terms of her attitudes, it was an important insight that a psychologist is at risk of applying relational models she has used successfully in her own professional context. Anolli (1986) posits that

to work successfully in a new organisation with his own criteria of intervention and analysis, the psychologist inevitably arrives at a point where he must adjust his own ways of relating to those of others. If he fails to do so, he runs the risk of committing repetitive errors that will paralyse his activity. Ugazio (1986) describes a psychologist who sealed his fate with the organisation by placing himself in a “one-up” position which was incompatible with his hierarchical dependency. Bor and Miller (1991) conclude that a “one down” position and a “curious” stance in relation to problems are less threatening. This was to be an important insight for the author. It may explain the difficulty some psychotherapists have commonly experienced in communicating with their diocesan bishops by taking a “one up” didactic position. The author has observed conflicts and communication breakdowns as a result of this. She argues from this experience for a methodology of beginning to implement change by researching bishops’ perceptions of their needs and hopes, rather than trying unilaterally to impose upon them a psychotherapy culture without sensitivity to the differences between the two worlds of Church and psychology. An important lesson was the supreme value of initiating, building and maintaining relationships (Duck, 1988) in the whole process of setting up and developing the counselling service. In achieving this, the writer’s strong commitment to a therapeutic alliance in her work was a very significant helpful factor.

As well as adjusting to the cultural world of the Church, the author had to manage communications with others who were occasionally aggressive, dismissive or obsequious (see 4.6) and build her own relational models to manage these attitudes. However, the long time span was fruitful in the emergence of an excellent working relationship with the bishop. He has owned the counselling service and gave a very great degree of trust to the author in her capacity of Co-ordinator and subsequently in his appointment of her as Bishop’s Adviser in Counselling. As a result, the author is in an excellent position to discuss difficult questions freely and openly with the bishop and his senior staff in the evaluation process in April 2000. More widely, the bishop’s trust has generated discussion of some quite difficult problems in meetings to good outcomes.



## **12. SUMMARY OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES**

The author learned experientially that:

[i] issues of costs are sensitive matters in the church. Payment for professional psychological services is a change in the church culture that has to be managed.

[ii] encountering the shadow side of the church organisation can be stressful for a psychologist working for change. There are challenges in encountering political manoeuvres and negative behaviours. Building trust at all levels of the hierarchy is a sine qua non of managing the changes.

[iii] a psychologist needs to accept dependence upon the formal hierarchic structure of the church and the way decisions are made with the bishop as authority. This affects channels of communication.

[iv] changes take time to implement in an organisation such as the church which has a long traditional history of culture and structure. A psychologist has to work with the time schedule of the bishop rather than be driven by her own plans and expectations.

[v] the language of the church and the language of counselling psychology are rooted in two different cultural worlds. Problems in counselling organisation can arise from one side not understanding the language of the other. A counselling psychologist working in the church has in this sense to be bilingual.

[vi] boundaries in the church can be loose or fuzzy. This can frustrate the counselling psychologist who is committed to working with very clear boundaries.

[vii] a counselling psychologist needs to be very flexible in working with the church organisation and respecting its culture whilst maintaining and respecting the culture and boundaries of her own professional ethical stance.

[viii] it is more helpful to the bishop to be available as listener to his needs than to be didactic with one's own agenda in the early stages of negotiation.

### **13. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS: THE NEXT STEP**

In a letter to the diocesan bishop in August 1996, the Co-ordinator wrote of her plans for research for the development of diocesan professional counselling services across the church:

*“It is my hope in my research to discern how systems may be set up to facilitate what the bishops want and need.”*

This case study illustrates how the experience of setting up a diocesan counselling service in collaboration with one bishop generated insights for a new approach in the impasse in developing professional counselling help for the clergy. The learning from this experience pointed to a next step of researching bishops' perceptions more widely about the usefulness of counselling psychology to the church. Such a research project follows in Part III of this thesis.

## **APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND TO THE CASE STUDY**

Traditionally in the Church of England clergy were offered “pastoral care” in times of need by a superior in the hierarchy, for example their archdeacon, rural dean, and/or, in the case of the Diocese of Gloucester, by other clergy who had some kind of informally recognised role for the purpose. In its nature it was in some ways analogous to the traditional welfare services offered by secular organisations where the helpers were not psychologically trained. In the 1990s, the development of counselling in the workplace wrought a radical change in the concept of employee care. The history and justification of this change is described by Carroll (1996) in his seminal text on workplace counselling. The change was summarised by Tehrani (1997) in her article on internal counselling provision for organisations, where she emphasised that with the increasing need for organisations to address the psychological and social areas of employee well-being within existing Health and Safety policies, it was important that the organisation recognised the need to seek specialist psychological advice. Further, she emphasised that counselling and related psychological interventions which are provided in the areas of stress, trauma and burnout need to be delivered by qualified, professionally trained staff who are monitored by a competent chartered psychologist.

This kind of change in the Diocese of Gloucester began gradually when the facilities under the broad umbrella of pastoral care in the diocese were supplemented by a small number of clergy and lay people who had some training in the use of counselling skills. However, this limited provision continued to be challenged by the growing professionalism in employee care such as that described above by Tehrani. There was a further challenge coming from the development of ethical codes of the professional counselling associations to which members were required to subscribe. In particular, the British Association of Counselling distinguished in its ethical codes between professional counselling and the use of counselling skills in other roles (BAC, 1993). Under these new pressures, those who had been engaged in “counselling” the clergy in the Diocese of Gloucester chose to give



up their practice rather than commit themselves to membership of a professional association. This left a vacuum that was recognised by a previous diocesan bishop. In 1990 he invited the author to become involved with counselling diocesan clergy on the grounds that she was a trained counselling psychologist.

She began counselling clergy clients on an individual basis. This was usually on a low fee, or no fee, basis because the clergy usually could not afford professional fees. The number of clients increased. They included some referrals from the bishop for psychological assessment and/or counselling of clergy or ordinands because he had to make difficult decisions about their work placements or take the responsibility of ordaining them to the priesthood. Additionally, there were some instances of breakdown of relationships between clergy and parish, or between clergy on a ministry team, which needed to be assessed and resolved. A subsequent bishop, the Right Revd David Bentley, continued to commission assessments and therapy from the author when he became aware of her professional status as a counselling psychologist. This bishop found the depth and objectivity of psychological profile reports to be helpful in making his decisions in some of the problems referred to him. From these experiences, the author drew up a paper in March 1995 entitled "A suggested framework for the counselling of individuals referred by the diocese" (Appendix 2). This distinguished between individual counselling when the bishop was not directly involved and counselling arising from a referral by the bishop, when he requires a report afterwards. The paper clarified in particular a three-way confidentiality contract that would be needed in some cases between the bishop, the client and the counsellor for ethical reasons.

In August 1995, the need for the ready availability of professional counselling in the Church of England dioceses was highlighted nationally by the "Nine o'clock service" scandal in the Diocese of Sheffield. It was discovered that some fifty parishioners had been pastorally and in some cases sexually abused by a young priest. At the time that diocese had no resources for psychological assessment and therapeutic treatment of either the

priest or the parishioner victims. It was realised with hindsight that a psychological assessment of the priest before ordination might have prevented the damage.

At that time, at the conclusion of a psychological assessment of a client sent to her by the Bishop of Gloucester, the author wrote a letter to him, referring to the resolution of the client issue and at the same time to the learning experience of the diocese of Sheffield. This letter suggested that a list of approved diocesan counsellors might be drawn up to provide ready help for the wide range of problems which counselling psychologists were fitted to give. (Appendix 3)

## **APPENDIX 2 : A SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK FOR THE COUNSELLING OF INDIVIDUALS REFERRED BY THE DIOCESE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 It is to be expected that the assessments made by the Diocese or the Advisory Board for Ministry (ABM) will identify areas in a person's life where self-development is desirable or unresolved issues from the past need to be addressed, for example :
- (a) when an individual is approaching ordination and there is a question as to whether the required maturity has been reached
  - (b) when personal life crises arise for clergy and their families
- 1.2 A positive way of effecting this might well be to give the individual the opportunity of receiving personal counselling from a professional counsellor who is experienced in working with clergy. In cases of those preparing for the priesthood, this could run concurrently with the ordination or post ordination training.
- 1.3 There is a difference between counselling arising from referral from the Diocese and individual private counselling. In the former, there are three parties involved. This means that special consideration needs to be given to the roles, responsibilities and boundaries of the persons concerned.
- 1.4 It would be helpful to have a framework for the organisation of a counselling arrangement which would both protect the confidentiality of the client's personal information and assist the Bishop in making decisions about the individual's future.



## **2. PARTIES INVOLVED**

2.1 The framework would need to serve the needs of at least three parties :

[i] the Diocese as represented by

(a) the Bishop, in his responsibility in making decisions about individuals

(b) the Diocesan Officer(s), to whom responsibility for pastoral care and training is devolved, including the Diocesan Directors of Ordinands.

[ii] the individual, in his or her personal development and vocation

[iii] the counsellor, in facilitating the process of the counselling.

2.2 The framework would need to show the nature of the contracts necessary between the parties, what information needs to be shared, and in what ways.

## **3. INFORMATION WHICH NEEDS TO BE SHARED**

3.1 The individual needs to know the requirements of the Diocese in terms of the development and changes which are expected as outcomes of the counselling.

3.2 The counsellor needs to know the diocesan objectives of 3.1 in order to focus upon them in working with the client.

3.3 The bishop, or his appointed delegate, needs to know to what extent these objectives are being achieved in order to make the decision for which he is responsible.

## **4. CONTRACTS AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

4.1 The personal information of the individual (the client) should be held confidentially within a contracted agreement.

4.2 This agreement might most helpfully contain a signed statement on the part of the client that a report on the counselling may be sent in strict confidence to one named person (presumably the Bishop or his appointed delegate).

4.3 This report would state

- [i] the issues which were addressed in the counselling
- [ii] the counsellor's professional opinion of the client's personal development as a result of the counselling

4.4 Part of the agreement would be that the client would see a copy of the report, and share in a three-way discussion of it with the named person and the counsellor.

4.5 The client contract would have the following further requirements to which individuals would sign their agreement at the beginning of the counselling :

- [i] the client would attend the counselling as agreed by the contract.
- [ii] if the client decided to terminate the counselling earlier than the time originally agreed with the Diocese, attendance for a termination period of three sessions would be agreed, in order to complete unfinished business and terminate the relationship in an adult manner.
- [iii] it would be the responsibility of the client to inform the Diocese why the counselling was being terminated, if this was premature with respect to the original agreement.

4.6 There would be a written contract with the counsellor which would state the aims of the counselling as defined by the Diocese and the responsibilities of the counsellor in reporting these.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1** Counselling in a diocesan context should have a three-way client contract between the parties involved so that roles and confidentiality are clear.
- 5.2** This suggested framework is suitable for the resolution of unforeseen problems which arise in the discernment and training for the priesthood.
- 5.3** It has potential for facilitating personal development in vocational training.
- 5.4** It is useful in the pastoral support of clergy experiencing life crises.
- 5.5** Further exploration of the issues raised in this paper could be facilitated by arranging a consultation between acknowledged authority on counselling in organisational settings, the bishop and his delegates and any professional counsellors approved by the diocese.

**Elizabeth Mann**

**Counselling Psychologist**

**12.03.95**



### APPENDIX 3: LETTER TO BISHOP

*Dear Bishop David*

*I was very pleased to hear that your meeting with this client had gone so well...As an outcome of perceived needs, both in this situation and in the difficulties faced by the Bishop of Sheffield and his Archdeacon, I wonder if you would consider the suggestion of drawing up a list of suitable people from which you could advise your diocesan staff in issues of pastoral care of clergy.*

*There is a current trend within some dioceses for the establishment of a Bishop's Approved List of professional counsellors/psychologists, to whom licensed ministers could be referred. This would be of great value to have available readily in emergencies, and also when ministers wanted to seek help of their own choice. Additionally when there are instances of victims of pastoral abuse the diocese might feel an ethical responsibility, and wish to be able to recommend a professional source of help.*

*My opinion is that the counselling of clergy and victims of pastoral abuse should be directly under the control of the Bishop, who may delegate the help given to those whose professional training and experience are adequate for the situation.*

*I would like to recommend that you invite applications, or otherwise generate research, for suitable people for a Bishop's Approved List. This could be kept confidential or published as you wished. In the case of counsellors and psychologists, the minimum information required would be details of training, qualifications, experience, special expertise (e.g. counselling for depression, sexual and marriage problems, sexual abuse etc) professional registration (one of three national registers), code of ethics and professional supervision arrangements. It would be easy to draw up a pro-forma for this, and I would be glad to help as part of my service to you as Bishop if you would like that.*  
(27.08.95)

## APPENDIX 4 : SUMMARY OF MEETING WITH THE BISHOP

Excerpt from a letter to Bishop David Bentley from Elizabeth Mann in November 1995 summarising a meeting in response to the letter of 27.08.95.

*What seemed to be emerging clearly was*

*[i] the wisdom of keeping the roles and responsibilities of episcopal management separate from those of the pastoral care of the clergy. Clear boundaries will enable both functions to be carried out the most effectively.*

*[ii] the delegation of the arrangement for the structure and operation of professional counselling provision for the clergy to a small group. You would inaugurate this, and the small group would ultimately be responsible to you (perhaps making half yearly reports to you?) for your monitoring.*

*[iii] a process of decision-making by the group about the practicalities of Diocesan counselling provision, integrating these with the circumstances and policies of the Diocese of Gloucester at the present time to give a "tailor-made" service.*

*Your presence at the first meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> December will be the opportunity for us all to hear what you feel is important. I will be pleased to help in any way which you see as being useful.*

(November 1995)

## APPENDIX 5 : ISSUES TO BE DECIDED

*To: Bishop David*

*From: Elizabeth Mann*

*Re: Counselling the Clergy*

*This paper summarises some issues to be decided in making available professional counselling/therapeutic help for clergy.*

### *1. Bishop's Adviser: Provision of professional advice*

*[i] Formal or informal appointment?*

*[ii] Full-time, part-time or occasionally as needed?*

*[iii] Lay or ordained?*

*[iv] What professional criteria are essential?*

*[v] From what source will this be funded?*

### *2. Diocesan Structure*

*[a] Responsibility in practice for appropriate provision*

*[i] Bishop?*

*[ii] Bishop's nominee e.g. Archdeacon?*

*[iii] Defined group?*

*[iv] other?*



*(b) Professional help resources*

- [i] Bishop's list of professional counsellors?*
- [ii] List confidential or circulated to clergy?*
- [iii] Number on list?*
- [iv] Minimum professional level required?*
- [v] Mandatory requirements (supervision, insurance...)?*

*(c) Budgetary provision*

- [i] Allocated diocesan budget?*
- [ii] Bishop's contingency fund?*
- [iii] Trust fund?*
- [iv] Other?*

*(d) Eligibility for financial and counselling provision*

- [i] Clergy?*
- [ii] Clergy spouses?*
- [iii] Clergy children/other dependents?*
- [iv] Readers and other licensed ministers?*
- [v] Diocesan employees?*
- [vi] Victims of pastoral abuse?*
- [vii] Candidates for ordination with conditions?*
- [viii] Ordination candidates who were rejected in the selection process?*
- [ix] Lay people referred by clergy?*

*(December 1995)*

## **APPENDIX 6: THE DIOCESAN PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING SERVICE (DPCS)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The service is described in seven parts as follows:

- [i] philosophy
- [ii] management and accountability
- [iii] publicity
- [iv] financial implications
- [v] organisation and administration
- [vi] ethical and professional issues
- [vii] a register of professional counsellors, clinical and counselling psychologists.

### **1. PHILOSOPHY OF THE DPCS**

1.1 The DPCS is designed for two main purposes. First, to make professional services available to the bishop in his pastoral care responsibilities for his diocesan clergy, ordinands, lay ministers and diocesan employees, and their dependent families. Second, it is designed to make confidential counselling easily accessible to those in these groups who wish to seek it for themselves, either for help with personal problems or for their own personal development.

1.2 Additionally, this service has the potential

- [i] to make individual psychological assessments for candidates for ministry and clergy with mid-ministry issues
- [ii] to work therapeutically with clergy under discipline
- [iii] to provide support to victims of pastoral abuse
- [iv] to contribute to diocesan training and development processes in the areas of relationships, human development, and the use of counselling skills in ministry.

1.3 Because the work of the proposed counselling service must be cost effective in empowering clergy in their ministry, it is important that those who implement it should have the highest possible professional training and experience. In order to ensure this, it

has been decided that the participating counsellors must be professionally trained and qualified, and should be members of one of the established professional bodies, i.e. the British Psychological Society, the British Association of Counselling or the UK Council for Psychotherapy. They will subscribe to one of these codes of ethics in their practice. (BPS 1993, BAC 1993)

1.4 Professional counselling is distinguished from spiritual direction, advice giving, sympathetic befriending and the use of counselling skills in pastoral care. The distinction between professional counselling and the use of counselling skills in other roles is important. It is emphasised by the British Association of Counselling to the extent of publishing separate codes of ethics for each. (BAC 1990)

1.5 In the service provided, it is expected that the counselling offered would normally be on a focused counselling model, i.e. the counselling would be addressed specifically to the individual client's issues and concerns at the time. It is currently becoming recognised that, for some prospective clients, short term counselling is not only a possible option, but the most desirable and potentially the most effective ( Mearns 1995).

1.6 In the church today there are many pressures upon clergy and those who have other roles and responsibilities (Doyle 1996). The DPCS is designed to help in dealing with these pressures in the following ways:

- [i] with personal problems
- [ii] with issues blocking a person in his or her ministry or work
- [iii] in providing a referral service to other professionals or agencies who could give necessary specialised help
- [iv] in helping to make significant decisions for the future
- [v] in times of major transition in ministry or personal life
- [vi] after experiences of trauma
- [vii] in situations of ministry or work termination or redundancy
- [viii] in bereavement
- [ix] in marriage stress or breakdown
- [x] in difficulties in relationships
- [xi] with issues related to alcohol, drug or sexual problems



[xii] with experiences of sexual abuse

1.7 The service would additionally be a clearing house of factual information about other resources of pastoral care.

1.8 The professional counselling scheme will serve the bishop in the following ways:

[i] it would affirm the value of the diocesan clergy and the others eligible, and confirm that they are being actively cared for within the diocese.

[ii] it would be cost-effective in preventing vocational breakdown and loss of personnel with expensive training

[iii] it would be a long-term resource for support throughout the transitions inherent in ministry from ordination training to curacy to responsible incumbency

[iv] it would provide a safe but challenging place for personal development

[v] it would help to "nip in the bud" potential problems such as unprofessional relationships which in the long term will not serve the ministry or might be destructive.

[vi] it will demonstrate to the world at large that the church is taking the role of its ministers and employees very seriously, and supporting them in their work in a professional and responsible manner

[vii] it will be protective against litigious and media pressures upon the Diocese

## **2. MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

2.1 The governance of the scheme will be entrusted to a management group to whom all those involved in implementing the service will be accountable.

2.2 Its membership will comprise the bishop, the Diocesan Officer for Ministry, the Bishop's Co-ordinator of Counselling for the Clergy and up to two other people to be nominated by the bishop.

2.3 The service will be monitored by the management group for cost-effectiveness and professional performance.

2.4 Statistical records of use of the service will be maintained by the Bishop's Co-ordinator. Evaluation will be carried out annually by an appropriate professional person independent of the DPCS, who will submit an evaluation report to the management group. Evaluation is central to the assessment of service needs, patterns of use, and the

cost/benefit ratio of services offered (Falvey, 1987). It is helpful in publicising the service and is a good way of ensuring that the present service is meeting the current needs of the clients (Carroll, 1996)

2.5 The resources of the DPCS may be made available on a wider diocesan front to those responsible for ministerial development.

### **3. PUBLICITY**

3.1 The counselling service will be formally launched by the bishop on a date to be decided by him. A letter will be sent from him to all those eligible to use the service, describing its main characteristics. A directory will be circulated to clergy and their spouses, and to all other eligible users, which describes in detail how the DPCS operates and gives a list of available counsellors.

3.2 The Bishop's Co-ordinator will be the first contact, and will be available for anyone who wishes to have a consultation for guidance about seeking help or for an initial assessment.

3.3 The information about counsellors will give names, addresses, contact phone numbers, professional training, qualifications and experience, membership of professional bodies and code of ethics to which they subscribe, and also information about their special professional expertise and interests.

3.4 The directory will be updated annually.

3.5 Copies will be sent to all new diocesan personnel, ordained and lay, and all those undertaking licensed ministry.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The fee offered initially to the counsellors on the published list will be £30 per hour. The management group will review the level of the fee annually, to align it with a reasonable level of current professional fees.

4.2 There will be some secretarial and travel costs incurred by the co-ordinator. Provision for this will be made in an annual diocesan budget initiated for the counselling service.



4.3 Those who make use of the DPCS will be responsible for the cost, though some discretionary financial support may be available according to need. Those who are required by the bishop or his representative to use the DPCS in the course of their training or subsequent ministerial development will have the cost met.

## **5. ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

5.1 The Bishop's Co-ordinator will be responsible for setting up and managing the service in the first instance, and in particular for the following tasks :

[i] producing the directory of counsellors

[ii] making clear to the counsellors the relationship within the organisation of the diocese between the counsellor, the person being counselled and the bishop as represented by the management group, and the lines of accountability.

[iii] making recommended pro-formas available to the counsellors for contracts between counsellor and client and between counsellor and diocese.

[iv] providing pro-formas for statistical returns and evaluation to the counsellors.

5.2 Counselling will normally take place within the counsellor's usual private practice. The accommodation must meet acceptable professional standards.

## **6. ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUES**

6.1 The DPCS will be designed to be seen to have a sound ethical basis, to be preventive of damage and to maintain high professional standards.

6.2. Individuals making their own independent arrangements with one of the counsellors will have the assurance of the normal professional confidentiality arrangements of a private counselling contract.

6.3 Those who have an arrangement for individual assessment or counselling which has been agreed as part of a larger training or other Diocesan programme or situation, will make an agreement in advance that some information will be shared on a three way basis with the bishop or his representative.

6.4 Professional ethical standards will be maintained with respect to permission for the release of personal information i.e. this will be done by agreement in writing.



6.5 As indicated above, all counsellors publicised by the directory will be members of a recognised professional counselling or psychological body. They will subscribe to a professional code of ethics and have an acceptable arrangement for professional consultative support or supervision. They will also have their own personal professional indemnity cover.

## **7. REGISTER OF COUNSELLORS**

7.1 All members of the DPCS Register, being professionally trained, qualified and experienced, will have understanding of, and commitment to, the ministry of the Church.

7.2 The register will comprise twelve counsellors and the co-ordinator.

7.3 Members of the register will have a written two-way agreement with the Diocese confirming their professional and ethical stance and their responsibilities in their counselling engagement with the diocese. They will be accredited by the bishop at a service in his chapel.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In developing this model of a diocesan counselling service according to the relevant current developments in theory, research and practice, I would like to acknowledge in particular the work of Professor Robert Bor, Dr Michael Carroll and Dr Michael Doyle.

## **REFERENCES**

- British Association for Counselling (1993). Code of ethics and practice for counsellors. Rugby: British Association for Counselling.
- British Psychological Society (1993). Code of conduct, ethical principles and guidelines. Leicester: BPS.
- Carroll, M. (1996). Workplace counselling. London: Sage.
- Doyle, M, Caring for the Carers, *The Month*, August 1996
- Falvey, J. (1987). Handbook of administrative supervision. Virginia: ACES Publication.
- Mearns, D. (1995) Developing person-centred counselling. London: Sage.

**APPENDIX 7: THREE-WAY CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

**between the Bishop, the Revd A. B. and Elizabeth Mann**

This three-way agreement is written so that all parties involved in the assessment and counselling are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

In response to Bishop David Bentley’s request, Elizabeth Mann will write a psychological profile report, in the light of which the Bishop can make sound judgments about the Revd A. B.’s priesting and ministry.

An initial copy of the report will be drawn up by Elizabeth Mann and this will be discussed with the Revd A.B. The final report will be drawn up after this discussion, and the Revd A.B. will be asked to append his comments. The report will then be sent to the Bishop by Elizabeth Mann.

In accordance with the Code of Practice of the British Psychological Society, if the assessee or anyone else is at risk of harm, Elizabeth Mann has a professional ethical responsibility to disclose that risk.

**I have read and understood this three-way confidentiality agreement and I agree to the above.**

Signed (Assessee) .....Date.....

Signed (by or on behalf of the Bishop).....Date.....

Signed (Counsellor).....Date.....

## **APPENDIX 8: PRESENTATION OF THE PUBLICITY BOOKLET**

- 1. The information is to be printed in an A5 size booklet.**
- 2. The booklet shall have a coloured cover of stiff paper or card**
- 3. The front cover shall bear the diocesan name and logo, with the full name of the counselling service placed centrally and the dedicated telephone number printed clearly below.**
- 4. The first page shall give the reason for the introduction of the service, in terms of the bishop's wish for the care of his clergy.**
- 5. There shall be a mission statement and Code of Practice.**
- 6. There will be an explanation of the professionalism of the counsellors in terms of membership of a national professional body i.e. either the British Psychological Society (BPS), the British Association of Counselling (BAC) or the United Kingdom Register for Counselling (UKRC). It will be explained that membership of these bodies requires a formal agreement to abide by their codes of ethics and practice, which may be inspected by clients on demand.**
- 7. There will be information about the kinds of help available.**
- 8. There will be instructions on how to start.**
- 9. There will be information about financial help with fees.**
- 10. There will be an invitation to seek any further information desired from the Co-ordinator.**
- 11. The booklet shall be distributed to each diocesan clergyperson in the bishop's clergy mailing.**
- 12. Arrangements shall be made for the booklet to be sent to the spouses of clergypersons in a separate mailing.**
- 13. Copies of the booklet shall also be sent to licensed lay ministers and to employees of the Diocese at Church House, Gloucester.**



## **APPENDIX 9: INTRODUCTION TO DPCS BOOKLET**

Circulated by the bishop to the clergy of the Gloucester Diocese in October 1998

### **THE DIOCESAN PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING SERVICE**

#### **1. CARING FOR THE CLERGY**

In the Church today there are increasing pressures upon clergy, their families, and those with other diocesan roles and responsibilities. These pressures call for increasing support. This is true of all the caring professions at the present time, where counselling and support systems are well under development. It is particularly important that a similar provision should be developed in the Church, where the vocation to care is deeply rooted in the lives of its clergy and ministers, and the context of ministry is becoming increasingly wide.

Under the pressures of their work of caring for others, clergy often find it difficult to care enough for themselves. It is not easy to find someone away from the parish to talk to in times of stress, someone who will listen in a non-judgmental way, understand feelings and help to find a way forward. There is a need for an easily accessible, yet safe and confidential place, where this kind of support is available to those who want it. In recognition of this, the bishop has set up the Diocesan Professional Counselling Service (DPCS).

#### **2. WHAT THE SERVICE OFFERS**

It is the bishop's wish that the normal sources of pastoral care for clergy should be supplemented by a counselling service which offers professional services for his diocesan clergy and their dependent families, and for ordinands, lay ministers and diocesan employees. An important dimension of this service is a commitment to high ethical standards which will protect the client on an agreed basis of confidentiality.

The bishop wants to make such confidential counselling easily available to anyone in the above groups who feels the need of help with personal or work related issues, or for whom a doctor, spiritual director or other responsible person recommends counselling. The service is available for assessment of need, for short term help with problems and for personal development.

### **3. DPCS MISSION STATEMENT**

We will help to promote and maintain the well-being of clergy and their dependents, other ministers and diocesan employees by providing the highest quality professional counselling services. We will anticipate and meet the changing needs of our clients by combining professionalism, objectivity and care with value for money in a context of confidentiality, trust and commitment to the ministry of the church

### **4. DPCS CODE OF PRACTICE**

We will

- provide a diocesan service to the highest professional standards, both ethically and in terms of delivery for all our clients
- combine our professional insights with our knowledge and experience of ministry to identify the particular needs of clients and to counsel appropriately and relevantly
- undertake research to develop and provide new services to benefit the well-being of our diocesan clients and so maintain a lead in diocesan counselling practice and contribute positively to this specialism
- provide counsellors who have professional qualifications and training to carry out our mission and create an atmosphere of mutual trust and commitment in which they can give of their best in serving the diocese.

### **5. REGISTER OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLORS**

In order to offer a service which is as effective and enabling as possible, the bishop has initiated a DPCS Register of the counsellors he has commissioned. Members of this register are required to belong to one of the national professional bodies of counselling i.e.

either the British Psychological Society (BPS), the British Association of Counselling (BAC) or the United Kingdom Register for Counselling (UKCP). Membership of these professional bodies requires a formal agreement to abide by their Code of Ethics and Practice. These Codes are always available for inspection by clients. All counsellors on the DPCS register are required for ethical reasons to have a professional arrangement for consultative support or supervision. The DPCS register will be reviewed and updated annually.

## **6. KINDS OF HELP AVAILABLE**

The kinds of support offered by the DPCS are many and varied. For example, a professional counsellor can help in difficult times with personal relationships, in bereavement, in making significant decisions for the future, in marriage stress, after experiences of trauma, and with issues related to sex, illness, disability or sexual abuse. The counsellor may work with individuals, couples or families. The agreed confidentiality of the service can also offer a safe place to take ministry- or work-related issues, such as difficulties with pastoral relationships, burnout, and the issues of major transitions in ministerial career.



## **APPENDIX 10: PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE FORMAT**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- [i] age and reason for assessment
- [ii] date, place, times and nature of assessment
- [iii] confidentiality agreement

### **2. FAMILY BACKGROUND**

- [i] parents and ?grandparents
- [ii] relationships with father, mother, siblings
- [iii] effects on adult life

### **3. EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

- [i] school and college, qualifications
- [ii] employments (reasons for leaving)

### **4. VOCATIONAL HISTORY**

### **5. RELATIONSHIPS**

- [i] most significant, positive and negative
- [ii] sexual

### **6. PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING**

- [i] MMPI-2 Personality Inventory
- [ii] SCL-90-R Symptom Checklist
- [iii] UCLA REL-REM Relationships Questionnaire
- [iv] Rotter Sentence Completion Test

## **7. IDENTITY**

- [i] Identity development
- [ii] Sexuality
- [iii] Autonomy
- [iv] Emotional maturity

## **8. STRENGTHS AND GROWTH POINTS**

- [i] affirmation of personality strengths
- [ii] specific growth points for personal development

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- [i] priorities to address
- [ii] suggestions for further assessment or referral if relevant

## **10. CONCLUSION**

Brief summary referring back to the reason for assessment.

## **REFERENCES**

- Derogatis, L.R. (1993). *SCL-90-R Symptom Checklist*, Minneapolis : National Computer Systems.
- Hathaway, S.R., (1989). *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory - 2*, Minneapolis : The University of Minnesota Press.

## **APPENDIX 11: CONTRACT BETWEEN COUNSELLORS AND THE DIOCESE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED**

[i] counselling clients on a self-referred basis negotiated directly between counsellor and client for which the client bears the total cost and for which the Diocese will not require a report

[ii] counselling clients referred through the DPCS Adviser/Coordinator. Payment will be arranged between the counsellor and the Adviser/Co-ordinator.

[iii] counselling within a written three way agreement with the Diocese when a report might be required. The price of the report will be negotiated.

[iv] providing counselling at the counsellor's place of private practice.

[v] seeking approval from the DPCS Adviser/Co-ordinator in cases of where specialist resources are needed.

[vi] informing the DPCS Adviser if a client is likely to be of harm to self or others.

[vii] participating in an annual evaluation of the service, outlining generic problem areas but without disclosing names of individual clients

### **2. PROFESSIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS**

The Counsellor shall be

[i] accredited by the British Association of Counselling as an individual counsellor, or a member of the British Psychological Society with GBR or Chartered status, or registered with the United Kingdom Council of Psychotherapists.

[ii] in ongoing professional supervision.



[iii] the holder of a current professional indemnity.

[iv] experienced in short term counselling

[v] informed of and in sympathy with the Church and its ministry.

### **3. COMMENCEMENT DATE**

This contract is effective from 01.01.99 for the period of one year.

### **4. PAYMENT**

[i] Each counselling session is priced at £30.00.

[ii] Where the Diocese has agreed full or part payment, this will be made monthly in response to invoices from the counsellor to Elizabeth Mann, 12 Bondend Road, Upton St Leonards, Gloucester GL4 8AG.

[iii] Any part of the cost which has been agreed as the responsibility of the client will be paid directly to the counsellor by the client.

### **5. REVIEW**

The Service will be evaluated and reviewed annually.

### **6. SERVICE FAILURE, DISPUTES, DISAGREEMENTS AND ARBITRATION**

Any dispute, disagreement, or failure to deliver the service, or any differences in the interpretations of this agreement shall be referred to an independent arbitrator to be agreed between the parties, should they fail to reach an agreement together.

### **7. TERMINATION**

This contract can be terminated only by giving two months' notice on either side or in accordance with Section 6 above.

**8. RENEWAL**

The service specification here described and the price agreed per session will be re-negotiated annually. If either party does not want to renew the contract, then notice must be given in writing two months before the end of the current agreement.

**9. SIGNATURES TO THE CONTRACT**

Signed on behalf of the Diocese of Gloucester.....

Date.....

Signed by the contracted Counsellor.....

Date.....

## **APPENDIX 12 : DPCS BRIEF SUMMARY REPORT**

**October 1998 to March 2000.**

### **1. CLIENTS**

34 including 8 married couples and three children; 2 couples and two individuals were parishioners referred by a clergy person.

### **2. PRESENTING PROBLEMS**

Depression, reactive, grief and endogenous; work overload, role conflict and role strain

Marriage problems and breakdowns; Parent and children relationships

Disability and ill health; Relationships in ministry; Ministry support

### **3. SESSIONS 120.5 hours**

### **4. TRAINING**

[i] a one day training for curates on personal and professional boundaries

[ii] a second training as in [i] is planned for the next cohort of curates

[iii] two multi-media training days on bereavement for Local Ministry training

[iv] three sessions on human development for Reader candidates

### **5. TRENDS**

[i] lack of boundaries at the work/family interface leading to marriage problems

[ii] marriage problems linked with ordination

### **6. FINANCE**

Accounts of the DPCS expenditure are held by the Diocesan Secretary. Most clients make substantial contributions. There is a firmly expressed view that ministry support should be a diocesan resource provision for clergy. They should not have to pay. [Agreed 06.04.00]



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**COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CHURCH**

**POTENTIAL AND PRACTICE**

**PART III**

**THE POTENTIAL OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY**

**IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

**THE BISHOPS' PERCEPTIONS**

**A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY**



## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE POTENTIAL OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CHURCH: BISHOPS' PERCEPTIONS**

The contemporary psychological problems of clergy as seen by Church of England bishops is the main focus of this qualitative research. Twenty-five of the forty-four Church of England bishops responded positively to an invitation to give their thoughts, ideas, opinions and feelings on the potential of counselling psychology to help the church in a range of issues arising from rapid societal change and new economic pressures.

The bishops identified a number of areas which had not been previously made explicit: a wide variety of contemporary clergy problems; bishops' own roles and responsibilities within the church; the need for counselling psychology consultants to help bishops in some of their challenging decisions; and the need of and criteria for professional counselling services for clergy. Further, the bishops asked for a psychological assessment method for selection for ordination, for diagnosis of clergy problems and for clergy growth and ministerial professionalism.

It emerged that bishops were strongly committed to changing the culture of the church to match the present changing social environment and challenging economic situation. A model of organisational change to fit these perceived needs was derived from counselling psychology theory.

Using a combination of grounded theory and content analysis, five major categories and twenty-two sub-categories of perceptions were identified. Reliability of the results was confirmed. Each category and sub-category is identified, discussed in the light of the research and literature particular to that area and recommendations for implementing sound counselling psychology approaches are made.

This is the first time such a large number of Church of England bishops has been interviewed on this subject. The investigation is the first use of qualitative research methods to research counselling psychology in the Church of England and the first attempt to apply a wide range of counselling psychology concepts to contemporary Church of England problems.

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 REASON FOR THE RESEARCH**

At the present time, the Church of England is trying to respond to rapid societal change in order to maintain its *raison d'être* and credibility. Additionally, economic pressures are forcing major organisational changes at both grassroots and national level. These changes are generating new kinds of stress on clergy and raising new questions of cultural and structural change in an institution which has stayed much the same for the last four centuries. This practitioner research is focused on the contemporary psychological problems of clergy which are arising from these changes and the associated organisational developments which are needed for their resolution.

Traditionally, the Church of England has depended on a theological form of thought as the basis of its culture and practice. In the greater part of the last century, the church distanced itself from, and often rejected, psychology for fear that it might explain away faith (Arbuckle 1988). This gap is now being bridged by some psychologists who are showing that the two disciplines are not mutually exclusive, but rather that psychology can be useful to the church (Psychology and Christianity Project, 1998). Some calls for dialogue and co-operation are to be found in the literature (see Chapter 2). Some ways forward have been examined in this research project, which is one more initiative in forwarding the process of collaboration between the disciplines and practitioners of theology and psychology.

The researcher is one of a small number of practitioner counselling psychologists who have specialised in counselling the clergy. In the course of this practice, she has become interested in the issues which have arisen at the interfaces between the Church of England as an organisation and the clergy as clients, and between the Church of England and a counselling psychologist as a bishop's adviser. In setting up and managing a diocesan



clergy counselling service, she began to explore the systemic issues behind the problems brought by her clients. She became interested in researching the contribution counselling psychology might make in promoting a greater awareness of contemporary clergy problems and the resulting institutional changes which would facilitate their resolution.

Part I of this thesis has described the context in which this research in Part III is set and explained its links with Parts II and IV. In general, the broad aim of this research in Part III is to generate theory for the organisation and practice of counselling psychology in the Church of England. In particular, this research project is a development from the example of practice described in the case study in Part II. This described the organisation and development of a diocesan professional counselling service which was set up through the co-operation of a practising counselling psychologist (the author) with one bishop in one diocese. The success of that venture encouraged the exploration of how such an initiative might be developed more widely throughout the other dioceses of the Church of England. In making a start to this, the most immediate need seemed to be to focus upon the diocesan bishops' perceptions of the potential value of counselling psychology in their pastoral and judicial responsibilities for their diocesan clergy.

Part I of this thesis indicated the absence of a forum for discussion between those who were motivated to develop counselling for the clergy on the one hand and the diocesan bishops who are the senior managers who are responsible for implementing change on the other. Part II led to the conclusion that the most immediate need seemed to be to elicit the perceptions of the bishops about meeting clergy needs with psychological knowledge. Prior to this research project, these perceptions were unknown. This project was therefore designed to research these and to offer feedback from the analysis of the outcomes. Specifically, this feedback is to be given by request to the House of Bishops (the bishops' forum) and to the Advisory Board for Ministry (the central assessment agency for candidates for ordination in the Church of England).



This project collects and collates data that will be analysed, discussed and then fed back to the participants as a resource for institutional change in the church.

## **1. 2 RESEARCH QUESTION**

How do Church of England diocesan bishops perceive the potential of counselling psychology in the church?

## **1.3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

A deconstruction of the research questions leads to initial background theoretical concepts as: dialogue at the interface between psychology and the church; counselling in organisations; psychologists working in organisations; bishops' concerns; psychological issues of clergy; and the psychological contract between bishops and clergy. The psychological and other literature apposite to these concepts will be reviewed in Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter “nests” (Wolcott, 1990: 17) the research question (see 1.2) in the most relevant psychological theory and research literature. Since in qualitative research it is impossible to know prior to the investigation what theoretical concepts will emerge, the theoretical model of literature review of Strauss and Corbin (1998: 48) has been used. This model posits that it is not necessary to review all the literature in the field beforehand, as is frequently done in other research approaches. Rather the model posits an initial review of the literature in domains that seem relevant to the research question (see 1.3) to formulate an initial list of conceptual areas to be investigated. The initial review serves to provide a prior source for making comparisons with data, to enhance sensitivity to, and differentiation from, emergent concepts and to stimulate questions in the data analysis and discussion. It is designed to leave room for creativity and discovery in the generation of new conceptual areas (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 49, 50).

Subsequently, when the data has been collected and analysed, and new conceptual areas have emerged, Strauss and Corbin’s model has been used with further appropriate “technical” [psychological] literature to aid and enhance, rather than constrain, theory development. The model posits that such literature may be used

to confirm findings, and, just the reverse, findings can be used to illustrate where the literature is incorrect, is overly simplistic, or only partially explains phenomena (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 51).

Literature appropriate to emergent concepts from this research is therefore used in Chapters 5-9 in these ways in the data analysis and discussion (Silverman, 2000: 231).

In addition to psychological “technical” literature, there is a concept in this model of “non-technical” literature i.e. other materials which

can be used to supplement interviews and observations. For example, much can be learned about an organisation, its structure, and how it functions (which might not be immediately visible in observations and interviews) by studying its reports, correspondence, and internal memos (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 55).

Some such literature has been referred to in this chapter when it illuminated an area where there was no psychological literature extant.

In summary, domains of background theory and non-technical literature that are considered to be pertinent in connecting the research topic to directly relevant concerns of the broader research community have been reviewed in this chapter. Further theory will be discussed in relation to emergent concepts in the data analysis where appropriate in Chapters 5-9. A summary of the relationship of the findings of this research to the body of technical and non-technical literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 5-9 will be given in Chapter 10.

## **2.2 BACKGROUND THEORY TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

The theoretical background to domains derived from the deconstruction of the research question (see 1.3) i.e. domains pertinent to the potential use of counselling psychology in the church (see 1.2) are reviewed in this chapter as follows:

2.2.1 Psychology and the church: a historical review

2.2.2 Counselling in organisations: contemporary theory for professional practice

2.2.3 Psychologists working in organisations: theories of attitudes and behaviour

2.2.4 Bishops’ concerns: a context for this study

2.2.5 Psychological issues of clergy: landmark studies

2.2.6 Psychological contract between bishops and clergy: a study of clergy perceptions.



### **2.2.1 Psychology and the church: a historical review**

In the past there has been some resistance to giving access to psychologists to work in the church. An article by Arbuckle (1988) claimed that social scientists have been marginalised within the church, owing to the church denying the reality of crises which are disturbing to the hierarchy, or attempting to cope with crises by withdrawing into an unreal spiritual world. Yates (1985), quoted by Egan (1994) who is himself a priest, had already made a strong critique of the church in this respect. He claimed that the churches are easy winners above all other organisations in the virulence of a vehemently denied political manoeuvring, which can be costly in human anguish. Both Arbuckle and Yates implied that resistance to psychologists has been rooted in political issues of preserving external image and internal power. These strong claims are not backed by research findings, though confirmatory examples of Arbuckle's claims are plentiful in counselling practice.

More recently, there has been an increasing desire to collaborate across the professional boundaries that had originated from the discrete disciplinary identities. Traditionally in the church a theological identity has been held as distinct from, and even incompatible with, a psychological form of thought. This sense of incompatibility may have been exacerbated by some tradition of separation of the religious from the secular, the church from the "world" (Epistles of Paul: 1Cor 1 v 20, Rom 12 v 2) which has resulted in a cautious approach by the church to social science theory. However, moves towards co-operation in professional practice have been mooted. Grant (1986) claimed that there is a lack of religious variables in psychiatric research, and voiced strong support for increased contact between the profession of psychiatry and religion. Whilst welcoming the advantages to be gained by such a closer co-operation, Daborn (1997) argued that, due to the nature of organised religion, this should not be a strictly monogamous relationship. Links should also be made between psychiatry and other potentially helpful psycho-social constructs. This argument could be extrapolated to posit a collaborative network of discussion in the church and the human sciences. Wallace (1985) had already claimed that the issues brought to therapy by priests are no different from those of psychotherapy clients in

general. However, because of their unique lifestyle, the manifestations and the resolutions of the issues may differ. This seems to argue that both an ecclesiological understanding and a psychological understanding are necessary for counselling psychologists to help clergy. A relevant review of the literature in American Psychology Association journals (Weaver et al, 1997) supports this with the suggestion that psychology lacks an original empirical literature on psychologists working with clergy, and that professional psychology should give greater consideration of and collaboration with clergy. McMinn, Chaddock, Campbell, Edwards and Lim (1998) investigated the obstacles that impede church-psychologist collaboration. They defined collaboration as both parties working together, each offering important expertise to solve a problem or help others. This is a useful model for the church. McMinn et al further gave sixteen examples of effective collaboration. A critique of the model is that the benefits of collaboration have been perceived as less significant among clergy than among psychologists (Kloos, Horeffer and Moore, 1995). This supports Arbuckle's (1988) claim above. McMinn et al (1998) posited that strategies to promote such collaboration include challenging unidirectional referral assumptions, building trust through proximity and familiarity, and considering the importance of shared values and beliefs. There remain questions about how trust may be built, whether common values need to be supplemented by the same creed and doctrine and whether spiritual interventions should be part of religiously informed therapy. These questions form part of an agenda for ongoing research.

In summary, a review of the process of church-psychology collaboration thus suggests some possible reasons for the slow development. These include: lack of study in psychology of religious variables and a spiritual dimension in human life (Grant, 1886; Weaver et al 1997)); a theology of separation which has hindered development of knowledge of social science in the church; internal political power tensions in the church hierarchy taking precedence over the care of the clergy (Yates, 1985; Arbuckle, 1988); and a lack of motivation in the separate disciplines of psychology and theology to explore the benefits of collaboration (Kloos et al, 1995; McMinn et al, 1998).



There is, however, a current more positive debate about the relationship between Christianity and psychology, though little of this has as yet appeared in the psychological literature. Myers (1996), in his paper on an integration of psychological science and Christian faith, applied psychological insights to the life of the church and studied determinants and effects of religious experience. A research project on Psychology and Christianity has been established in the Centre for Advanced Religious and Theological Studies in the University of Cambridge. The Project's Research Fellow confirms that the literature from this has been largely written for people in the church rather than for psychologists (Nye, 2000). However the very church focus of the work of this project by psychologists is in itself a trust-building initiative which has the potential to contribute to a continuing healthy dialogue between the two worlds.

In contrast to the earlier dichotomy between psychological and ecclesiological practice, there has latterly been some discussion of problems of dual relationships in the practice of professional counselling in the church. A particular case of a dual role problem arises out of a common belief that priests can best be helped by other priests. There is some evidence that a shared religious belief system between therapist and client may act as a resistance in therapy (Kehoe and Gutheil, 1984). Miller and Atkinson (1988) claimed an inherent and unethical conflict of interest between the clergyperson in role as minister and in role as counsellor. They reviewed the conclusions of Krebs (1980) who claimed irresolvable problems of transference, role confusion, misplaced pastoral priorities and expectations of cheap therapy. Miller and Atkinson (1988) analysed these four areas and discerned a potential for all kinds of transference and countertransference to occur which can quickly subvert the possibility of a therapeutic relationship. They also concluded that in ministry it is apparently impossible to prevent the dual relationships that could impair the counsellor's professional judgment and contravene their professional code of ethics.

There is no contemporary research investigation into transference and countertransference between priest-counsellors and priest-clients. Given that Francis (1979) found a significant difference in the direction of increased score falsification when an attitude test



was administered to students aged 15-20 by a priest rather than a lay person, this seems to be an important area for further exploration.

Dilemmas arising from this may militate against an effective therapeutic relationship. One inherent issue may be a shared loyalty to the image of the church, which priest-counsellors and priest clients may collude to preserve as good, since the church is the context where their identity is rooted. In practice, this collusion in counselling may result in a mutual avoidance of issues which are seen to be damaging to the image of the church. It has to be noted that the psychological literature about psychologists working in the church originates from the USA and much of it from the Catholic Church. The commonalities and differences of these cultures with the Church of England culture must therefore be borne in mind, but there are nevertheless cogent common issues in the use of psychology in different religious contexts.

The argument about priests counselling priests remains open. There are, however, issues which the ethics of professional counselling psychology clarify. In the Church of England tradition, it has been assumed that clergy without psychological training were suited to counsel other clergy under the broad umbrella of pastoral care. A strong critique of this tradition is that multiplicity of roles has not been monitored or evaluated in priest-counsellors' practice, because issues of training and supervision have not been understood or their practice encouraged. The boundaries between pastoral care and professional counselling have commonly been fuzzy or collapsed, and a sometimes unbounded concept of "counselling" has become part of the terminology of pastoral care, which carries a risk of ineffective or damaging outcomes due to a lack of professional insight.

In summary, the dialogue between the worlds of psychology and the church has been slow to develop. Change is, however, taking place with positive outcomes. A model of collaboration for psychologists working in the church has been posited. The debate about psychology in the church needs to be better informed by a greater awareness of ethical issues of clear boundaries, professional training and supervision. Counselling psychology

has a contribution to offer to that debate. This present research explores the potential for this to happen.

### **2.2.2 Counselling in organisations: contemporary theory for professional practice**

Counselling in the church is inevitably counselling in an organisational setting. The contemporary theory of counselling in organisations has its roots in the concept of employee assistance programmes (EAPs), originally designed to deal with alcohol problems, but widening to a unified approach to offer therapeutic help in a wide range of human problems as found in the workplace (Presnall, 1985). Lewis and Lewis (1986) described the development of a widening “broad brush” type of programme characterised by a combination of supervisory referral, self-referral and referral by others. This offered a model of counselling for employees with work problems and also for either employees or their family members with problems unrelated to work.

The development of counselling provision at work up to the present time has been traced by Carroll (1996). In this seminal text on counselling in organisations, he reviewed the conceptual development of employee counselling from the periphery of organisational life to the heart of it (Reddy, 1994). Carroll then developed theoretical models of methodologies for counselling in organisations and for the use of counselling psychology as a means to organisational change. Counselling in organisations per se had never before been addressed. This is compelling theory; it is strong in the comprehensive and logical structure of the emergent theory of methodology. In the central chapter of this book, Carroll summarised ways in which organisations can impact upon and influence counselling in an organisation. He posited the need for counsellors to understand how the organisational culture in which they are working creates its own dynamics (some conscious and some unconscious) which impact on individuals in many ways. Theoretical models and frameworks for setting up, evaluating, training for and supervision of counselling in organisations are presented. These models and frameworks place the practicalities for practitioners in a context of a theoretical stance in counselling psychology



that goes radically beyond the traditional model of one-to-one counselling. Carroll powerfully related the processes of counselling in organisations to organisational culture. He used psychodynamic and systemic models as examples of methods of discerning the pathology in the culture of an organisation as well as in the problems of the employees. Relevantly to this research of the bishops' perceptions of the usefulness of counselling psychology to the church, Carroll introduced the new concept of the usefulness of counselling as a change agent towards a healthier organisational culture. This makes possible the derivation of a theoretical model for change in the church.

The theme of counselling as a form of organisational change was taken up by Walton (1997) in an article considering the implications of introducing counselling into an organisation. Walton argued that as well as being a potentially supportive service for employees, counselling has the potential to be threatening by highlighting issues which may be critical of the organisation. These issues may be insights that the organisation may prefer to discount, avoid or deny, rather than consider and act upon. Walton affirmed and developed Carroll's concept, concluding that counselling can be a force for review and change within an organisation, particularly with respect to the politics, the dynamics and the impact of the material brought into debate by counsellors in an organisation. Walton saw counsellors in an organisation as having a unique contribution to make to organisational change. He supported Hinde et al (1995) who suggest that, for both individuals and organisations to be resilient, the psychological contract will need to be renegotiated in times of change. This concept is relevant to this present research, embodied as it is in a challenging era of change in the Church of England, where there is little actual previous research in this area and where more needs to be done.

### **2.2.3 Psychologists working in organisations: theories of attitudes and behaviour**

The issues of counselling in organisations, and the associated theoretical models and procedures in the above literature for implementation of therapeutic help and organisational change, bring a new theoretical standpoint. It is freely admitted, however,



that they describe ideals, and that “reality falls far short of this” (Carroll, 1996: xiii). This section will therefore focus on the literature concerned with research on this reality. By this is meant the research on attitudes and related behaviour of psychologists who entered different organisations to implement change in setting up new psychologically-based systems. This present research, of which this literature review is a part, in itself involves an entry of a psychologist into the organisation of the church. Any subsequent action on the part of the bishops would involve further interventions by counselling psychologists to implement that action. It is therefore useful here to review the research literature about such interventions.

A theory of working change by consultation on a basis of counselling psychology philosophy has been posited by Bor and Miller (1990) in the context of the National Health Service. Underpinning their theory was the seminal research work of Selvini Palazzoli et al (1986), on psychologists entering and working in large organisations. Their research showed that different organisations will, in certain circumstances, produce identical processes. The study showed that interaction between psychologists and such organisational processes was responsible for many situations in which the psychologists’ hands were tied. The research led to devising concrete strategies and tactics to help psychologists working in large organisations to create good working conditions. A repeated observation was that the rules of some games in large systems might suddenly change if the main players are threatened. Additionally, essential characteristics of failure to reorganise an organisation were found to be: the management department was not part of the top management but was relegated to a subsidiary role; there was no mechanism for evaluation of progress; and it was impossible to call joint meetings with the partners [directors] and heads of departments (Selvini Palazzoli, 1986). Another factor of prime importance was the need for a psychologist to find out what experiences the organisation had had with other psychologists previously. Perceived previous negative experiences could result in passive aggressive reactions to later initiatives. Further, it is posited that the only behaviour a psychologist can change directly is his own. His theoretical and professional expertise enables him to assess the situation rapidly, but he can only change it

with the professional instrument of his own behaviour. The psychologist arrives at a point where he must adjust his own ways of relating to those of others. If he fails to do so, he runs the risk of committing repetitive errors that will compromise or paralyse his activity (Annoli, 1986). Particularly relevant to the Church of England with its traditional embedded hierarchy is the finding that the psychologist's operational strategy must be adapted in advance to his position in the hierarchic structure of an organisation (Ugazio, 1986). A one-up position may be incompatible with a psychologist's hierarchic dependency. Ugazio also posited that if a psychologist is to fit effectively into an organisation, not only must he keep a neutral position in the games of the various factions that divide the institution, but he must also submit a precise working proposal. Otherwise his work is out of control. Di Blasio (1986) summarised preventive actions open to the psychologist as respecting hierarchic channels in defining relationships, circulating information and actively searching for alliances.

These findings are all relevant to psychologists going into the Church of England to provide counselling. In this sense the research and Bor's derived theory are valuable. A limitation of the research is that it was carried out in Italy and transcultural issues are not considered; also variables of management shapes other than the hierarchical are not accounted for. This is a limitation in the cases of flatter management structures, which a change of culture in the Church of England may effect to some extent in the future.

Bor and Miller's (1990: 78) derived theory of consultation posited the attitude and behaviour that should guide the psychologist-consultant. Referrals should be preceded by a discussion about what is expected from the consultant, what feedback is required and what are the criteria for closing the case. In this, the consultant places the responsibility for problem-solving with those who define the problem, as opposed to taking that responsibility upon himself. Further, Bor and Miller recommended that the consultant should secure the permission of those higher up in the hierarchy in order to facilitate effective consultation. In this, a "one down" position and a "curious" stance in relation to



problems is less threatening to colleagues. Bor and Miller are in effect positing an attitude of serving rather than directing.

#### **2.2.4 Bishops' concerns: a context for this study**

There is no psychological research published on the roles and responsibilities of the bishops of the Church of England or on their concerns on any subject. This thesis therefore breaks new ground in this area.

In a search for an understanding of the bishops' concerns it was decided to turn to non-technical literature. In an attempt to analyse the topics of the reports from the House of Bishops to the Church of England General Synod in the last ten years, it was found that there was no General Synod Index in existence for the years 1996 onwards. The Index for the years 1990-1995 (General Synod, 1996) contained 446 items. Of these, only two motions, i.e. 0.45%, were items related to the psychological dimension of the care of the clergy. These were both in 1993, and concerned, first, clergy assessment and development, and second, breakdown in clergy marriages. From the second motion, a Church of England General Synod debate on clergy marriage took place in July 1993. The introduction to the Index states that it can be assumed that a subject not listed was not dealt with at any length during the five years.

In an attempt to study the bishops' concerns between 1996 and 2000, a scrutiny was made of the (abridged) version of the minutes of the House of Bishops (House of Bishops, 2000). These covered 13 meetings between January 1996 and January 2000 inclusive.

Liturgy and doctrine were discussed at every meeting. The other topics of highest frequency discussed were: bishops' issues of collegiality, their role in the House of Lords, their continuing ministerial education and working costs ( $f = 14$ ), theological colleges inspection and training ( $f = 15$ ), relations with other churches ( $f = 6$ ), implications for the



church of marriage, divorce and family law in society ( $f = 6$ ), sexuality, particularly homosexuality, and age of consent ( $f = 6$ ), cathedrals ( $f = 5$ ) and the urban church ( $f = 5$ ).

Issues relating directly to clergy were: administration and cost effectiveness of clergy appointments ( $f = 9$ ), clergy discipline ( $f = 6$ ), clergy pensions ( $f = 2$ ), care of candidates after assessment for ordination ( $f = 2$ ), clergy stipends ( $f = 1$ ) and clergy recruitment ( $f = 1$ ). There seems to have been no discussion of the clergy problems, clergy support and church culture change that are the foci of this research.

Other non-technical literature from before and after the period 1990-95 highlights the two issues that have dominated episcopal concern for at least twelve years as issues of homosexuality and the increasing incidence of clergy marriage breakdown.

First, in 1988, the Lambeth Conference called on all bishops of the Anglican Communion to undertake a "deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality". The first contextual research in this area was a systematic investigation of the size of the stress problem among Church of England homosexual clergy (Fletcher, 1990a). Previous recent church studies had focused on Roman Catholic priests in the USA, predominantly on confusion about sexual orientation (Keddy, Erdburgh and Sammon, 1990). Fletcher's study analysed the responses of 172 homosexual clergy to a questionnaire of 96 questions in six different sections: background details; general work demands; sexuality and work demands; job supports; medical and sexual information; and psychological health and well-being. This questionnaire had only partial reliability and validity. The first five sections comprised a questionnaire which had been drawn up by MacPherson and Fletcher (MacPherson, 1989) which had some construct validity from a pilot study but no predictive validity. The sixth section consisted of twenty-four questions from the Crown-Crisp Experiential Index (Crown and Crisp, 1979) and twelve items from Fletcher's Occupational Stress Audit/Cultural Audit (Fletcher, 1990b). The research was a valuable initiative in that, first, it obviated attempts to extrapolate from the different cultures of American society and religion, and from the culture of the Catholic Church and its

priesthood, to that of the Church of England. Second, it was seminal in beginning to clarify, by using questions from the Crown-Crisp Experiential Index, a clinically validated instrument for which established norms exist, the nature and degree of stress suffered by homosexual Anglican clergy. A limitation was that some items of the Crown-Crisp Experiential index were omitted. Third, it provided by extrapolation an estimate of the percentage of male homosexual clergy in the Church of England in 1989, and suggested that 15%, i.e. about 1400 clergy, was not an overestimate. This compared with a number of slightly less than 10% found by Blackmon (1984) in his survey of 300 American clergy from Assembly of God, Episcopal, Presbyterian and United Methodist churches. Fourth, it estimated the percentage of homosexual clergy with definite psychopathology and suggested that 34% in some parish locations were significantly depressed (Fletcher, 1990a: 85). Recommendations from the research were: promotion of widespread debate; an initiation by the church of a study of sexuality; a redefinition of the Church of England structure with respect to care, control and counsel; development of an ethic for those in committed same-sex relationships; and the formation of an independent and confidential advisory and counselling service for homosexual clergy.

An important outcome of Fletcher's (1990a) study was the magnitude and immediacy of the pastoral problem it suggested existed within the Church of England. A limitation was the difficulty of confirming this. In particular, a major limitation had been to obtain a representative sample of homosexual clergy. Those in the study had "come out" to the extent of joining homosexual clergy groups for mutual identity and support. It seems that respondents in the survey were likely to be over-representative of homosexual clergy who experienced less stress and under-representative of those who did not belong to support groups or who had not "come out". A second limitation was that the questionnaire did not distinguish between orientation and practice. This distinction is vital because the Church of England has come to accept homosexual orientation but not homosexual practice in its clergy. Additionally, since Fletcher's study was made before the ordination of women in the Church of England in 1994, the sample is not representative of contemporary clergy. There was only one woman lesbian deacon in the sample. A similar study is needed to take



account of the gender issues of the women clergy who in 1999 formed 11% of the Church of England diocesan clergy (General Synod of the C. of E. 2000). A third limitation was that a random sample of “heterosexual” clergy used for comparison of the results was acknowledged by the author as inevitably inclusive of some homosexual clergy.

A statement by the Church of England bishops subsequently published on homosexuality (General Synod, 1991) has perpetuated in the Anglican Communion a debate that to this day is divisive, acrimonious and psychologically ill-informed. There remains a gap as yet unbridged between psychological research and debate in the church in this area. Additionally, no research studies have yet been made about the psychological issues of women lesbian clergy. There has been no discussion of the psychological needs of depressed homosexual clergy. This present study meets these gaps in exploring a way forward for the church in research, theory and practice in these areas through the discipline of counselling psychology.

The bishops’ second concern expressed in the non-technical literature was the increasing incidence of clergy marriage breakdown. An informal working party was set up in 1994 and a Consultation in 1995 as an outcome of the General Synod Motion in 1993 which invited the bishops to “foster in the Church an open and non-judgmental concern for everyone whose marriage is under stress, especially the clergy” (Winchester, 1997). Constraints on the discussions were that there were no reliable statistics about the number of clergy who were married, and there have been no nationally compiled records to indicate the number of clergy marriages that break down.

The Winchester Report recommended the appointment in all dioceses of an Adviser in Pastoral Care and Counselling who should be accredited by the appropriate professional body and may be lay or ordained. Diocesan policy for the support of clergy and their marriages should be stated clearly in any job description (Winchester, 1997: 43). There was no definition of such a role, nor reference to the problems inherent in priests



counselling priests (see 2.2.1 above). There were no explicit suggestions of how support might be given, and no expression of intent to set up a professional counselling service.

In the USA, pioneering research on clergy marriage problems had begun in 1976 with two linked investigations (Mace and Mace, 1980). The first was by means of a postal survey. The sample was not random; it comprised 87 pastors and 113 pastors' wives who had chosen to register for conferences for clergy couples organised by the authors over the four years of 1976-1979. The sample was thus biased in that it was restricted to couples whose relationship was sufficiently close to one another and to the church for them to elect to go to a church conference together. The age span was wide, but with a majority of younger couples. The questionnaires had one section in common and one section different for men and women, and sought to establish the areas of need for help in the marriage relationship. The authors concede that the questionnaires were limited by the imposition of their own ideas, and the respondents had no opportunity to include their own items. No evidence is given regarding the establishment of reliability and validity of the questionnaires. The claims of the first survey were that 50% of the husbands and 67% of the wives had difficulty in handling negative emotions and couple communications. Problems concerning aged parents and in-laws had the lowest incidence i.e. between 5% and 19%. The second study was an elicitation of the advantages and disadvantages of clergy marriage from groups of pastors and their wives attending three different conferences. The sample included 47 participants from the previous survey and a further 79 pastors and 42 wives. The method did not have any theoretical basis. It was described as "experimental...we had never heard of such a method being used before". Participants were asked to write down a list of the advantages and disadvantages of clergy marriage. The analysis was performed by the authors defining items from "what they [the respondents] were trying to say", then finding the totals for each item. There is no record of any method of any coding or categorisation or any validity checks. The issues arising were found to be more closely related to the context of ministry in the church: expectation that the marriage would be a model of perfection; time pressures due to the husband's heavy schedule, lack of family privacy; and financial stress driving the wife to seek a job.

The authors claim to have gained a fairly representative picture of how pastors and their wives view the advantages and disadvantages of clergy marriage. However, this latter claim for representativeness cannot be accepted as admissible in view of the participant bias and ecclesiological limitations of the sample. The churches involved were the Methodist, Moravian and Southern Baptist churches in the eastern half of the USA, where all the churches had only one male minister serving only one church. In the absence of any evidence of concern about representativeness, reliability and validity, the authors report their findings in a somewhat grandiose manner, e.g. "what these hundreds of clergy couples were trying to tell us" and "we are entirely satisfied that we were able to find out what the big issues are". Nevertheless, the suggestions of pressures of congregational expectations, time pressures and financial stringency align with some issues elicited in subsequent research in the USA (Morris and Blanton, 1994) and in the UK (Fletcher, 1990a; Kirk and Leary, 1994; Francis and Roger, 1994, Walrond-Skinner, 1998).

A study to assess the quality of life for pastors and pastors' wives in the USA with respect to loneliness, marital adjustment and burnout claimed to provide some empirical support to the hypothesis that they experience a diminished quality of life compared with other males and females in the church (Warner and Carter 1984). The sample comprised thirty three pastors and twenty eight pastors' wives in one division of a small American Presbyterian denomination, with a control group of lay members of the same theological and doctrinal beliefs in the same denomination. The assessment instruments were the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), the revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau and Cutrona, 1980) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach and Jackson, 1980). Both pastors and pastors' wives reported experiences of significantly more loneliness, lower levels of marital adjustment and higher degrees of burnout than non-pastoral couples. Conclusions were either that the pastor and his wife might begin psychologically to withdraw from one another, he being over-involved in ministry and she being emotionally exhausted, or that the pastoral couples had personality dynamics leading to vocational choices of over-involvement and idealised positions which in turn result in



isolation. Generalisation may be difficult because of the common strict doctrinal beliefs and religious practices of the sample taken exclusively from this denomination.

There is a dearth of reliable and valid research on the marriage problems of clergy in the Church of England. An attempt to pursue a doctoral thesis in this area was unfinished, reliability and validity were not established and a popular, i.e. non-technical, book describing the interviews was the final outcome (Kirk and Leary, 1994) This study was initially undertaken as a qualitative study of 37 clergy couples. The emerging themes that the authors described were: a problem within a clergy marriage would be highlighted by the couple's lifestyle and by the way the minister's work was incorporated into the family; clergy wives carry a great deal of the stress on behalf of their husbands; sexuality and gender issues were not addressed satisfactorily in the marriage relationship; some marriages coped with stress better than others; many couples were almost predestined to clergy marriage; and the way clergy made their marital choices may create difficulties later. The authors observed parallels in the clergymen's choice of ordination and choice of a wife; needing to find security from both the wife and the church; being influenced by parents on both vocation and marriage; and choosing a wife more for the qualities which will enable and facilitate their ministry rather than for her own personality. There was no comparison in the research with secular couples. The researcher based his conclusions on his subjective experience of counselling non-clerical couples. No account of the methodology is available nor is any primary data available for inspection or replication, and it seems that reliability and validity were not established before the thesis was abandoned. The author himself concedes that the research is now out of date (Leary, 2001) because of the subsequent ordination of women to the priesthood in 1994.

In summary, the three studies on the problems of clergy marriage during the last two decades all had limitations due to unrepresentative samples and two had no apparent established reliability and validity.



In addition to the limited amount of academic psychological research on homosexuality and clergy marriage problems in the Church of England discussed above, there is a body of non-technical literature on both these areas produced by the C of E itself. In the case of homosexuality, this literature consistently demonstrates paucity of psychological understanding and an associated drain on corporate energy. The poorly informed and protracted discussions have not moved to outcomes of activating organised church-based resources of professional therapeutic help for depression among homosexual clergy. Church-based support for clergy marriage as recommended by the Winchester Report has not materialised. The findings of the present research study into the potential use of counselling psychology in the church will reveal the extent of bishops' perceptions of a need to develop those resources via the use of counselling psychology.

### **2.2.5 Psychological issues of clergy: landmark studies**

In addition to the research about clergy homosexuality and marriage breakdown reviewed above, other diverse psychological issues of clergy have been researched. A review of articles and research reports from journals between 1982 and 1994 has suggested a wide range of psychological perspectives on Christian ministry in both the USA and the UK (Francis and Jones, 1996). Research explicitly focused on ministry in the Church of England included: the effect on clergy of liturgical change (Aldridge, 1986); clergy role preferences (Bryman, 1989); ageing and retirement (Francis and Lankshear, 1994); and the contribution of individual personality differences to role prioritisation (Francis and Roger, 1994). The American research included a strong focus on gender issues: psychological factors of success and failure of women in ministry (Cardwell, 1982); sex role preferences related to personality factors of men and women pastoral candidates (Goldsmith and Ekhardt, 1984); moral thinking in Canadian Anglican women in ministry (Stevens, 1989); gender and ministry style (Lehman, 1993).

The American research into gender characteristics of clergy is pertinent because of the ordination of women into the Church of England in 1994, which has opened the debate in

the UK about sex differences in ministry. Goldsmith and Ekhardt (1984) had found no significant differences between American men and women seminarians on measures of either masculinity or femininity.

The sole, but nevertheless substantial, set of studies which included gender differences in the Church of England was initiated by Francis et al (1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997) in a decade of research on the personality characteristics of clergy in the Church of England. The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975) was used with large samples of male Anglican clergy and women deacons before the ordination of women to the priesthood, and with ordained clergy of both sexes subsequently. A limitation is that the EPQ is not a measure explicitly of sex-role type; however Francis claims that the measures represent sex-related dimensions of personality. This claim is open to some argument. The first studies of 40 male Anglican clergy aged 36 to 59 years found neuroticism and psychoticism scores elevated beyond those for men in general (Francis and Pearson, 1990) and beyond religious people in general (Francis and Pearson, 1991). This sample exhibited a good spread across the age range of incumbent clergy, i.e. those who had completed their curacies and who carried responsibility for one or more parishes. Its weakness was the impossibility of obtaining a comparable sample of women clergy, as there were no women incumbent priests at the time. In a study which brought in a gender variable by means of a sample of 155 male and 97 female Anglican candidates for ministry, it was claimed that sex differences from the EPQ scales in these candidates were reversed from those in the general population (Francis, 1991). In a further study (Francis, 1992a), the findings from a sample of 92 male clergy and 20 female deacons aged between the late twenties and the late sixties supported the view that neuroticism scores are implicated in predicting the intensity of religious attitudes among the religiously committed. Francis (1992b) also concluded that the correlations between sex and the three personality variables of extroversion, introversion and neuroticism are totally consistent with the theory that male and female clergy do not reflect the clear sex differences on the EPQ scales found in general UK personality samples. Women deacons exhibited more tough-minded and extrovert personality characteristics more commonly associated with



what is stereotypically male. Male clergy appeared to exhibit more introverted personality characteristics associated with what is stereotypically female. In a further study (Francis and Rodger, 1994), the short form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire and indices of role prioritisation, role influences, role conflict and dissatisfaction with the ministry were completed by 170 male full-time stipendiary parochial clergy in one predominantly rural Anglican diocese. Clergy who scored high on neuroticism and high on psychoticism showed most signs of dissatisfaction with ministry and were most likely to entertain thoughts of seeking alternative forms of employment. This study was necessarily limited by the lack of a gender variable. However, in the 1997 study, a large sample of women priests and deacons was included. Again using the short form Revised Eysenck Personality Inventory, completed by 373 male and 560 female Anglican stipendiary parochial clergy, the findings were consistently contrary to the usual sex differences in the personality profiles of men and women in the general population samples. The male clergy recorded a mean score on the psychoticism scale closer to the population norm for women than for men. The female clergy recorded a mean score on the neuroticism scale closer to the population norm for men than for women (Robbins, Francis and Rutledge, 1997).

The findings of Francis et al are interesting in so far as they arise from contemporary use of reliable and valid personality research instrumentation with large samples of clergy in the UK and address gender issues of the personality of Anglican clergy in a way never done previously. The findings, should however, more suitably be viewed as hypotheses for further testing. Conclusions may have been drawn prematurely. There needs to be a comparison of male clergy scores with males from other caring professions and of female scores with other female populations working in traditionally male occupations. Francis does not discuss whether there is a difference between innate sex differences and socialised gender differences. However, it is expected that this argument is particularly relevant to clergy, where male clergy are adopting a caring role and female clergy are working in a male dominated hierarchical world where there has been strong resistance to their entrance. A further important limitation in Francis's research is the lack of



differentiation of variables of age, biographical background, ministry background and values in ministry.

The findings of Lehman's (1993) single more detailed study which took these variables into account did not align with the findings of Francis et al described above. Lehman examined potential differences between masculine and feminine approaches to ministry in interviews with 517 roughly equal numbers of ordained men and woman in four American Protestant denominations: Baptist, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ and United Methodist. The investigation focused on the respondents' approach to their work by the presentation of 48 statements describing specific actions, values, orientations or attitudes about their approach to parish ministry. The results were measured by frequency distributions of scores. The results showed some gender-specific approaches to pastoral ministry, but the central study of whether men manifested the more masculine approaches to ministry and women manifested the more feminine styles produced inconclusive results. Only 16% of the questions put to the sample showed a statistically significant difference between male and female clergy's views of ministry. A strength of Lehman's research, compared with that of Francis et al., was the dependence the results showed on identifiable cultural, structural and biographical conditions, and the implication that the debate on masculine and feminine approaches to ministry is still open. Although they come to different conclusions, Francis's and Lehman's researches have implications for both ministry and clergy marriage.

Other studies on clergy psychological issues and contingent life stresses in American ministry have been reviewed by Maloney and Hunt (1991): demands on the minister's time; balancing pastoral activities with personal responsibilities and relationships; friction among colleagues; the clergyperson's love life; the dynamics of clergy spouse involvement in the parish; staff relationships; and issues of clergy couples' dual careers. The review is descriptive and inductive rather than critical of the research quoted, intra-cultural rather than cross-cultural, and dated to the 1980's and before, and therefore may have limited transferability to the contemporary Church of England. In particular, Maloney and Hunt's

conclusion that clergy marriage stress and breakdown is not a problem has clearly been superseded (see 2.2.4).

In a review of models of stress applied to ministry, Irvine (1997) used his own research (Irvine, 1989) and the models of stress of Sutherland and Cooper (1990) to deduce internal stress factors on clergy: identity based on role; authority dynamics; success issues; sexuality; guilt; perfectionism and theological issues. Irvine's own unpublished doctoral research (1989) had previously investigated isolation among the clergy of the Church of Scotland by means of a specially designed questionnaire, supplementary standardised testing and a survey form sent to spouses. The results had shown that, in a random sample of 200 clergy, the highest single group, 28%, had taken no days off in the previous month and an additional 28% had taken only one or two days off in the same period. The value of this research lay in a high 85% response rate, of which 79% were considered adequately completed to constitute a reliable database. This response rate indicates a high level of interest in the subject. No information was given, however, about the establishment of reliability and validity of the special questionnaire. The value of Irvine's sample from the Church of Scotland Clergy was that it was closer culturally, sociologically and ecclesiologically to the Church of England than was the USA research discussed above. The stress factors of role and intrapersonal pressures deduced in Irvine's review were compatible with those deduced earlier by Dewe (1987: 352), quoted in Irvine's review (1997: 27), who had found six broad categories of occupational stress in New Zealand clergy: work overload; role conflict; role ambiguity; dealing with grief and people in need; relationships with parishioners and parish; self pressure.

In the Church of England, an analysis of the extent of stress problems central to the work of its clergy concluded that 77% of the clergy in the sample felt the job was very pressurised, and 5% found the pressure so great it was a constant source of stress to them. Work demands were found to be statistically correlated with psychopathological measures of depression, free-floating anxiety and somaticism (Fletcher, 1990a). This study was limited by being a cross-sectional study with a large number of variables, the correlations



between which were difficult to interpret because of the inter-relation between them. The sample is much less representative of contemporary clergy in the year 2001 than it was in 1988, the year of the original data collected and analysed by MacPherson (1989). The majority of respondents, 81%, were over 40 years old, so in the year 2000 this cohort represents elderly clergy who have retired or are shortly due to do so. Only 12% were clergy whose workload had been restructured by pastoral reorganisation, whereas in the year 2001 it is rare for a priest to have only one church except in places of highly concentrated population. The research is based on a model of occupational stress from Fletcher's Occupational Stress Audit (Fletcher, 1990b) which examines the lack of balance between job demands, job supports and job constraints. It includes job factors such as clarity about the task in hand and having a measure of autonomy over how the work is ordered and executed. The questionnaire had the same form and limitations as that used by MacPherson described above in 2.2.4. The model had not been tested on clergy before, and neglects the dimensions of the spiritual nature of ministry and the support clergy may derive from their personal faith. This reflects Fletcher's acknowledged limitation in that, although he had researched occupational stress in secular contexts, he had little previous knowledge of the context of the Church of England.

A study on performance indicators and ageing Anglican clergy (Francis and Lankshear, 1994) suggested that new patterns of rural ministry through the creation of multi-parish benefices may now be overstressing more elderly clergy. The strength of this research was a design aimed to take into account variables of parish population, electoral role and multi parish benefice sizes by means of multiple regression and path analysis. There is, however, a tenuous link in the argument which relates questionnaire response rates with burnout. There is a need to test the conclusion that older clergy working in rural parishes perform less well than younger clergy with further variables of parishioner expectations and effective pastoral ministries.



## **2.2.6 Psychological contract between bishops and clergy: a study of clergy perceptions**

In a research study to identify the factors contributing to the psychological contract (see 2.2.2 above) between clergy and bishops in the Church of England, Jackson (1995) identified ten clergy expectations of their bishops. Six of these ten expectations are particularly relevant to this research on counselling psychology in the church. They are, in order of priority, for the bishops to:

- provide leadership and vision for the strategy of the diocese
- provide pastoral support for clergy and their families
- exercise discipline in a caring and pastorally sensitive way
- exhibit wisdom and skill in managing change
- commit to clergy continuous training and professional development
- recognise the stress of “living over the shop” for clergy and their families.

Elements of the psychological contract relevant to this present research which it was concluded were not being met were:

- providing [work] contracts for those without freehold
- sensitivity in handling change
- meeting regularly for review of their ministry
- providing sufficient resources to do the job
- applying equal opportunities policies to all jobs
- providing opportunities to influence policy/ decision making
- recognising and using clergy skills and experiences

Jackson concluded that these are areas where further work needs to be done by bishops if their relationship with their clergy is to improve. This first consideration of the psychological contract between bishops and clergy is valuable because it views the clergy

and bishops in relational and personal development dimensions rather than in the legal dimension.

The research has considerable limitations, however, in that, first, it was essentially a quantitative survey using a questionnaire written by Jackson based on Manning (1993), which therefore was inevitably based on the researcher's agenda. Second, after it was designed, the research had to be reduced to clergy expectations of their bishops; the bishops' expectations of their clergy was not researched. Only one side of a "contract" was therefore reported on. Some initial qualitative investigation had been made, but it was not described so that it could be evaluated or replicated. The conclusions between the qualitative and quantitative findings were not in agreement. The description of the methodology was not sufficiently transparent to generate confidence in the research, particularly where any qualitative work had been done. The reliability and validity of the method were not seen to be established. The concept of researching a psychological contract has much potential for the purpose of re-negotiation at a time of structural and cultural change (see 2.2.2), but the value of the results quoted in this study are clearly very limited.

## **2.3 CONCLUSION**

The literature review in this chapter has provided a theoretical background to pertinent issues derived from the deconstruction of the research topic (see 1.2) of the bishops' perceptions of the potential of counselling psychology in the Church of England.

A review has been made of the history of communication, collaboration and ethical dilemmas of psychologists working with the church (see 2.2.1) and reveals a process which is still ongoing. Within this, a motivation for change from a rigid demarcation between the worlds of psychology and the church, to a movement towards dialogue and collaboration between the two has been traced. This research project makes a further contribution to that dialogue.

The theory of counselling in organisations has been critically evaluated (see 2.2.2). Its comprehensive and logical contemporary theory was inferred to have a particular relevance to the Church of England as an organisation in which a concept of pastoral care has always been intrinsic. This research into the bishops' perceptions of the potential of counselling psychology in the church will, ipso facto, confirm to what extent the episcopacy aligns with that view.

A theory of attitudes and behaviour for psychologists to facilitate change in organisations (see 2.2.3) has been derived from an integration of relevant conclusions from systemic research, a theory of consultation and a contemporary theory of facilitating dialogue between Christianity and psychology. No research has yet been effected into attitudes and behaviour of psychologists working in the church. This present study will indicate the bishops' perceptions of the style in which psychologists might work for them as they pursue their episcopal pastoral responsibilities.

Pertinent research relevant to bishops' expressed concerns about homosexual clergy and marriage breakdown has been reviewed (see 2.2.4) and found to predate the ordination of women and also to have some limitation in established reliability and validity. It is noted however, that the outcomes of the research in these two areas were actual or implied calls for professional church based counselling to be provided for the clergy concerned.

Research on diverse psychological issues of clergy from the last two decades has been critically reviewed (see 2.2.5). This has shown that the majority of such research has been pursued in the USA. In the UK, the predominant substantial research is that on the personality of Anglican clergy, which latterly has included large samples of ordained women, thereby allowing gender differences to be explored. The main strengths of the American research are results of established reliability and validity that focus on some variables common to Christian ministry whatever the sociological context, and on the usual inclusion of gender variables in the studies. Research in both the USA and the UK has suggested some commonality of clergy psychological needs common to different



denominations and different Western cultures. There are, however, limits to generalisability to the Church of England from other variables: from differences of American church culture of denominations which do not include the Anglican Communion; from societal differences; from significant differences of ecclesiological structure and religious practices; from differences in breadth of theological outlook; from differences between workloads of priests in single parishes in American Protestant churches and the multi-parish benefices of the Church of England; and from the male-only priesthood of the Church of England at the time of the research. The research on personality variables in Anglican clergy includes assumed gender variables of priests subsequent to the ordination of women, but the differences here identified between the American and English churches remain to be investigated.

An embryo concept of a psychological contract between the bishops and their clergy has been identified (see 2.2.6), which admits of further more rigorous research of bishops' and clergy perceptions of what this contract is, and what it may become.

In summary, since much of the research reviewed above was pursued, the ordination of women in 1994 and the increasingly stringent policies of pastoral reorganisation have radically changed the Church of England structure in the last decade, by introducing men/women relationships in ministry and by increasing workloads, changing roles and creating new psychological pressures. This review confirms that there is very little contemporary psychological theory and research literature extant which is directly relevant to this present research study of the bishops' perceptions of the potential of counselling psychology in the Church of England in 2001. In particular, no psychological theory or non-technical literature has been found which focuses explicitly upon bishops' concerns about the use of counselling psychology per se as a resource for clergy support or for managing change in the Church of England. The value of this present research to fill this gap is therefore affirmed. Chapter 3 will describe the methodology that has been chosen and used to pursue this investigation.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

#### **3.1 CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY**

The researcher's disposition from her previous career in mathematics and her research background was to explore the use of a quantitative methodology. Methods of quantitative research in social science have been summarised by Bryman (1988) as social survey, experiment, analysis of previously gathered statistics, structured observation and content analysis. All these five methods were considered.

The characteristics of a social survey are measured variables which test hypotheses in a representative random sample. A research experiment offers precise measurement from an experimental stimulus with a sample alongside a control group which is not exposed to the stimulus. Neither of these two methods was considered to be appropriate for a research of participants' perceptions where understanding of the meaning behind the words was crucial. Further, there was no previously gathered data to analyse since there was no previous knowledge of the views of the population concerned. Structured observation in quantitative research comprises observations on a predetermined schedule; content analysis is based on pre-determined categories. These latter two methods claim reliability of observations and measures but the feature of predetermination was not considered to be appropriate for researching participants' perceptions which were unknown.

In seeking an appropriate methodology the author therefore found it necessary to explore something more flexible than a traditional quantitative approach, yet without desiring to lose any research competence. In these explorations and reflections the appropriateness of a qualitative method became more evident. Qualitative research and the practice of



counselling psychology are closely related (Coyle, 1998). Bryman (1988) describes the characteristics of qualitative research as viewing the experience of those under study in an unprescriptive way. This exactly matched the process of researching bishops' perceptions which the researcher wished to do.

Silverman (2000) argues that the description of methodology in a qualitative research project in a "natural history format" is often right for presenting the developments of the researcher's thinking. This may be the most clear, appropriate, interesting and adequate way of explicating the personal context and the developments through trial and error which are characteristic of qualitative research. Further, it can be argued that this "natural history" description is best delivered in the first person. Certainly, I have found it easier to explain my reflections in these particular dimensions in this way, and therefore I have used that first person singular active voice in the rest of this chapter.

First, in exploring the perceptions of the bishops, I believed it to be important to avoid a methodology which would be biased towards either my own agenda or the agenda of others in the arena. This justifies the rejection of the method of a questionnaire for the bishops to complete. This would inevitably have been prescriptive of my own ideas. Additionally, a predesigned questionnaire would not show up issues of the place or context of the interview. These were further reasons which led to the conclusion that quantitative research methodology did not match with the aim of this research.

Second, I saw the use of qualitative methods to elicit the bishops' perceptions as a means of generating theory which would be a stimulus to move forward from individual views towards a consensus for action. Qualitative data help "to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks". (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 1). This fitted well with the research aim .

The advantages of qualitative methodology for this particular research are:

- data is collected in its natural setting



- respondents are facilitated to reflect on their local contexts
- respondents are facilitated to reflect on their own experiences
- respondents are able to reflect creatively on possible new systems
- there is facilitation freely to explore new areas
- hypotheses about developments can arise spontaneously

The challenges of this method which are particularly relevant to this research project were

- the need for self awareness of my standpoint with respect to the field of the research
- the difficulties of sampling
- the potential of data overload
- questions of generalisability of the findings
- establishing the validity of the results

These challenges will be discussed below in terms of this particular research project.

There are of course many manifestations and classifications of qualitative research. My interest was caught by an illustration originating from Aubrey Baillie of the Roehampton Institute Department of Psychology who posited a “warehouse” model and a “workshop” model of qualitative methodology. The “warehouse” model was a picture of a researcher who “reached down from the shelves” a selection of items for a quite structured interview. The “workshop” model was one in which the researcher used her counselling skills in an open-ended way to facilitate the interviewee to articulate his own perceptions uncontaminated in any way by the interviewer’s agenda. The interviewee’s perceptions would be allowed to emerge as they arose. This “workshop” model seemed to fit very well with my plan to research the bishops’ perceptions from their individual situational and reflexive positions.

Overall, therefore, this loosely structured, emergent, grounded style seemed better fitted than more structured approaches to the requirements of my research. Strauss and Corbin (1990) posit that formulating theoretical interpretations of data grounded in reality provides a powerful means both for understanding the field and for developing action

strategies which will allow for some measure of control over it. Two of the particular characteristics laid down by these grounded theorists are described as:

- (a) the need to get out into the field to discover what is really going on;
- (b) the relevance of theory, grounded in data, to the development of a discipline and as a basis for social action.

(Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 9).

These seemed to fit very well with the research aim of allowing the bishops' perceptions to arise in interviews, analysing this data, generating theory and feeding this back for the development of new strategies for action. It was important that the feedback to the bishops should be grounded in their own perceptions for it to have credibility for them.

Thus I chose the qualitative grounded theory method developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) as being the most appropriate methodology for this research. In making this choice, I recognised that both quantitative and qualitative methods have their advantages and also may properly be criticised or found insufficient, that it is sensible to make a choice of research methodology to fit the research question and that doing qualitative research should offer me no protection from the rigorous, critical standards which should mark all good research (Silverman, 2000:12).

### **3.2 OVERVIEW OF THE METHOD**

The grounded theory approach originated from Glaser and Strauss (1967) and was subsequently described as a qualitative research method "that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

In this method, therefore, the researcher does not start with a preconceived theory in mind. She begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge. Data is collected,



transcribed, and closely scrutinised in chunks of varying sizes, often, as in this project, in a line by line analysis. This is initially a descriptive and open-ended sifting of the data. The data is searched for similarities and differences, identifying distinct units of meaning. This analysis is known as open coding. In the coding process, from the empirically driven labels deriving from the line by line analysis, concepts are identified, developed and related in terms of their properties and dimensions. This is a process of development of single categories by using a coding paradigm of the conditions which give rise to it, the context in which it is embedded, the action/interactional strategies by which it is managed and the consequences of those strategies. These conceptual categories become the building blocks of the theory. Subsequently several major categories may be related to give overall theoretical formulations. Memos are used as a means of moving from working with data to conceptualising. They may be written or diagrammatic. A process of theoretical sampling is used to revisit data, using the main categories as concepts to identify key issues. Categories may be densified in terms of their properties and dimensions. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990,1998).

Having sought the emergence of categories based on participants' perceptions rather than predetermining them, it is then possible to use content analysis without loss of the benefits of the qualitative method. My view is that quantitative techniques are not inappropriate in this qualitative research when they are based on the bishops' own categories which have arisen in a grounded way. With this large sample, counting is able to give an overall view of the whole data set which is a necessary complement to the intensive line by line analysis of individual responses. This view seems to be endorsed by Kirk and Miller (1986: 10) in their claim that qualitative research does not imply a commitment to innumeracy.

Content analysis permits the analysis of rich verbal data in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner (Cowie, Salm et al, 1998). Frequency counts can be made of the items in the categories. One of the strengths of content analysis is the possibility of assessing the reliability and validity of the analysis. Reliability can be checked by using Cohen's kappa statistic (Howell, 1992) to estimate the degree of agreement between two judges on the



category classifications. This is particularly valuable when there are a number of different interviews because it can be seen whether there are common experiences for many interviewees or whether particular experiences are quite idiosyncratic (Cowie, Salm et al, 1998).

### **3.3 RESEARCHER STANDPOINT**

I needed to reflect critically on my standpoint in order to be as self-aware as possible of any potential influences as I began this research. In particular, this implied reflections on both my own relationship to the Church of England as the field of the research and the philosophical stance which I brought to the project.

Researcher standpoint is an issue in all qualitative research and not least when counselling research is being done in a specifically religious context. There is some evidence that a shared religious belief system between a counsellor and a client can act as a resistance in therapy (Kehoe and Gutheil, 1984) and this could be extrapolated to argue for a latent influence in research. For example, there may be the collusion of a shared loyalty to the church and this could result in a mutual avoidance of issues which are seen to be damaging to the image of the church in the interviews and the analysis of the data. Miller and Atkinson (1988) confirmed, from their research, that it is very difficult in the church to prevent the dual relationships which could impair a counsellor's professional judgment and contravene their code of ethics. The dual relationships of a researcher who is also a member of a church need to be examined for a good enough sensitivity in the research process.

In my case, I was not "brought up" to have any relationship with the church in my earliest years from parental precept or example. I do not therefore have the issues of loyalty and loyalty conflicts of the kind I frequently encounter in my clients. I have counselled many clergy and lay people who had been conditioned by their parents to a commitment without a personal choice of a particular religious belief and practice from the time of their birth.

In my case, my first encounter with the Church of England was during my primary school years, when the village church was a background element during a particularly happy period of my childhood. During my secondary school and University years in other places I had little contact with the Church of England. I experimented with either attending nonconformist churches or attending none, whilst working out my own beliefs and values. Eventually I made my own personal choice and commitment to Christian faith. In this process I have always differentiated clearly between my commitment to personal Christian beliefs and values, and a commitment to the institution of any church denomination per se. In this sense I have “sat lightly” to the organisation of the Church of England and to other religious institutions. The result of this is that I am not emotionally involved in protecting the image of the Church or in a co-dependent relationship with it.

In the last two decades, however, I have become more involved situationally with the institution of the Church of England because of my husband’s training for and ordination to the priesthood as a mature entrant. As described in Part I of this thesis, an outcome of that process was the invitation for me to begin to practise as a counsellor to clergy. This was, for me, an unplanned development, and it became the start of a growing interest which has never faded; in fact it has led into several research interests of which this thesis is one expression. This interest has been continually stimulated and perpetuated from my observation of the work of a parish priest from the close range of life in a Church of England Rectory.

There is a growing awareness of the necessity of understanding the organisational context of counselling with its cultural and systemic issues (Carroll and Holloway, 1999). This inevitably extrapolates to an importance of understanding the context in counselling research. The implication for this particular research project is the necessity of a good knowledge and understanding of the culture and structure of the Church of England. Part I of this thesis describes my experience of counselling in the context of the Church in general, and my knowledge of the Church of England in particular, which has emerged from my work as Bishop’s Adviser for Counselling in one diocese. In the course of



counselling priests for two decades and developing a Diocesan Professional Counselling Service from scratch described in Part II, I have gained an informed view of the contemporary structure and culture of the Church of England. This strengthens the validity of the present research in terms of the issue expressed by Campbell (1986) quoted in Miles and Huberman (1994: 146) of the need to ensure validity of findings “in a *particular* setting” (author’s emphasis) by achieving “thorough local acquaintance”.

On the one hand, it would have been impossible to understand the meaning of most of the data collected in this research project without this knowledge and understanding of the context. On the other hand, I believe that it is not possible for any researcher to be completely free of bias and it is important to be self-aware of the times when either the researcher’s or the respondent’s bias might affect the analysis.

Mitchell (1991) presents a typology of researcher roles as naïve-sympathetic, naïve-unsympathetic, informed-sympathetic and informed-unsympathetic. This typology gave me a framework for self-examination. I am reasonably well enough informed of the institutional context, but not greatly emotionally involved with it. To the extent of my self-awareness, I have aimed to bring a sufficient degree of informed and professional empathy to this field of research, balanced with sensitivity to the issues of the bishops and the organisation of the Church of England. I believe this empathy and sensitivity is enhanced and validated by my training and experience as a Chartered Counselling Psychologist (see Part I). In summary, it has been my aim to take a consistent stance of an informed-empathic-sensitive professional approach to minimise unconscious researcher influence.

### **3.4 SAMPLING**

The universe for the research sample is the population of the 44 diocesan bishops of the Church of England.



My plan was to do a multi-case study using a sample of maximum variation (Patton, 1990) from which there could be an identification of diverse perceptions and important common patterns from the data. The reason for a multi-case study was to provide useful feedback to the bishops. For this feedback to be accepted as credible by them, the data would need to be derived from a sample that had their consensual validity. Multi-case sampling adds confidence to findings; it strengthens the validity and stability of the results (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 29). This is an important issue for the bishops. To them, a single case study could be criticised as idiosyncratic. A small random sample could be criticised as having bias to individual “churchmanship” (i.e. theological-political stance). An attempt to stratify bishops would be meaningless at this stage. The optimum sample would be a larger rather than smaller sample that could be seen to be of maximum variation.

The advantages of a multi-case study in this field of research are

- it allows cross-case comparisons
- data analysis can enable comparison and contrast along a continuum
- the data is more representative than a single case study in giving breadth
- the data helps to provide parameters for further research studies
- common patterns across the cases confirm the viability of the findings
- it allows a replication strategy
- there is a stronger validity and stability of the findings

Access boundaries had to be set because of limits of time, distance and cost. These limitations excluded three of the 44 bishops, two of whom had dioceses outside the mainland of England, and the third was in the most remote northern region of the country. In each of these cases the distance was too great for practical purposes of travel to an interview. A further boundary limitation was the restriction of the interviewees to diocesan bishops in situ. Retired bishops were excluded because of my intention to focus upon contemporary issues at a time of considerable institutional change in the Church of England. Suffragan (i.e. assistant) bishops were excluded because their roles and responsibilities and therefore their experience were more limited than those of diocesan

bishops. Bishop's representatives in diocesan officer roles were excluded because of their lower position in the church hierarchy which might mean that their perceptions were not necessarily consistent with those of their diocesan bishop.

At the start of the research there were Vacancies in See, i.e. there was no bishop in six dioceses because a new appointment was awaited. Additionally, the dioceses of Canterbury and York were excluded because the role of the diocesan bishop there is subsumed into the Archbishopric of the diocese and in practice it is delegated to four suffragans, i.e. area bishops who have not yet had experience as diocesan bishops. Three bishops were excluded by geographical boundaries as described above. This limited the possible respondents to 33.

It was not known in advance how many bishops would be willing to take part in the research, though it was expected that some, and perhaps many, would decline to do so. In recent years there have been some instances of bishops giving recorded interviews to journalists who have used the interview material to draw and publish conclusions which the bishops concerned had found to be negative and distressing. As a result, the diocesan bishops have made a tacit agreement together not to give interviews which might be used in this way. My expectation was, therefore, that there might at best be a very cautious response to my request for an interview, and that it was only to be expected in the circumstances that the majority of bishops would refuse. It was not possible therefore to have a sample which was random or determined in advance; the sample had to emerge as part of the research procedure.

I decided to request an interview with the bishops who had not been excluded by my criteria. Some bishops declined. Some offered an interview with a diocesan officer which was not accepted for the reason above. Twenty-five bishops responded positively, i.e. 76% of those who met the criteria. This would be a large and comprehensive sample for a qualitative research project; however there is a precedent for samples of multiple case studies in the 20's and 30's (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 30). The disadvantages are a



risk of data overload and greater challenges in analysis. I opted to take these risks. The benefit was the best possible sample of maximum variation from the population which could be researched within the confines of this project.

The characteristics of the sample were as follows:

The age ranges of the bishops were:

Under 50	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-70	Over 80
1	2	7	12	2	1

The lengths of their experience as diocesan bishops were:

Under 5 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	15-20 years	over 20 years
10	7	6	0	2

The variation in “churchmanship” at bishops’ training for ordination was:

High / Anglo-Catholic	Central / liberal	Low / evangelical
7	9	9

The last table gives information limited to bishop’s churchmanships as indicated from their choice of theological college. Most bishops broaden their stance away from one political/theological party before or on taking up episcopal appointments.

The sample has enough similar and contrasting characteristics in these dimensions of episcopal characteristics, to strengthen the conceptual validity of the research, and it also helps to determine the conditions under which the results hold.



In summary, this sampling plan meets the conditions of Miles and Huberman (1994) for qualitative research, in the following ways:

- it is relevant to the conceptual framework and research question
- the perceptions I plan to research can appear
- believable perceptions will be produced which are true to life
- the plan enhances generalisability by representativeness
- the plan is feasible in terms of time, cost, access and my own work style
- the plan is ethical in terms of informed consent (see 3.5 and 3.7 below), potential benefits and risks and relationship with informants

### **3.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

A letter was sent out to an initial set of bishops asking for an interview to hear their views on the usefulness of counselling psychology in the care of their clergy (Appendix 1). When a bishop responded positively, the usual procedure was for him to ask me to arrange for a one hour appointment with his secretary. When I had made this arrangement, I sent a letter of confirmation with two copies of a confidentiality agreement for the bishop to sign for consent before my arrival (Appendices 2 and 3). I confirmed my intention to come at the arranged time, by phone, to the bishop's secretary on the day previous to the appointment.

I used the first two appointments as a pilot study for the practicalities of the arrangements before and after the interview. I discovered that bishops work on a tight schedule of hourly appointments and that they are conscientious in keeping these time boundaries. My practice of arriving fifteen minutes before the time of the appointment proved to be important as it was necessary to be completely ready to go into the bishop's study when called in. Since I had been allotted a time slot of exactly one hour, it was also important, if the bishop agreed to audio-taping, to set up the recording apparatus as quickly as possible.

I therefore took care to have the equipment completely ready and to set up the tape recorder and microphones as smoothly and inconspicuously as possible.

An important contribution to the quality of an interview was the convenience and sensitivity of the audio-tape recording apparatus. A Phillips cassette recorder, type AQ6350, with 90 minute audio-tapes was used. The recording was greatly enhanced by the use of lapel microphones for both researcher and respondent. These, and the tape recorder itself, were on very long leads so that the positions of the researcher and respondent relative to one another, and relative to the available electric sockets, could be quickly and easily connected. The researcher kept the tape recorder itself within close reach for switching on and off and for a smooth start and end to the interview. This also provided in advance for possible interruptions of phone calls and secretaries bringing in cups of coffee or emergency messages. The sensitivity of the lapel microphones picked up clearly any apparently small but often crucial signals, of pauses, sighs, overlaps, very soft responses and different but significant intonations of interjections such as “yes...” or “mmm....”. Some of these responses would have been inaudible to the researcher and therefore unrecorded without the use of the sensitive microphones, since the bishops’ studies tended to be very large rooms and the distance between interviewer and interviewee could be very much greater than that in a normal consulting room.

At the same time as setting up the recording apparatus I give my verbal introduction to the interview which comprised:

- [i] an enquiry about the bishop’s satisfaction with the terms of the confidentiality agreement and a reassurance of its legal protection for him
- [ii] an offer for the bishop to choose freely between recording by audio-tape recording or note-taking
- [iii] an undertaking that I would finish on time
- [iiv] a flexible facilitated start to the interview (see Appendix 4)

After the end of an interview, I signed both copies of the confidentiality agreement, returned one copy to the bishop, and retained the second copy for my own records.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION**

My aim for the research was to capture the perceptions of diocesan bishops by the use of person-centred counselling skills of attentiveness, empathy and understanding, and by suspension of my own personal preconceptions and agendas about the issues which the bishops raised. In the spirit of the qualitative research method chosen, my aim was to facilitate bishops to convey their perceptions in whatever way they wanted, to start at the point where they were in their relationship to the research topic, to reflect in their own style and speed and to stay with their own agendas.

Of the twenty-five bishops who responded positively to the invitation to participate in the research, twenty one (84%) opted to be recorded on audio-tape. Three opted for written notes to be taken on their reflections. One bishop who was highly motivated to participate but couldn't at the time make the interview, wrote his perceptions in a detailed personal communication. Four bishops gave me copies of notes or papers they had written on the area of the research.

Interviews normally took place in the bishops' studies. One interview was held in the Bishops' Room in the House of Lords.

As Kvale (1988) had posited, I found that as the bishops described their "life world" they would discover their own new relationships and patterns as they reflected. I would, at times, reflect back or summarise what they had said to facilitate this. There is a danger in going beyond this to co-authoring the data with the interviewee as opposed to collecting it, and I had to take care to avoid this.



After the interviews, I wrote memos to myself of reflections which would be relevant to the forthcoming analysis.

### **3.7 TRANSCRIPTION**

I typed up twenty-one (84%) of the transcripts or notes myself. The remainder were typed by a Church of England parish priest who signed a document making a commitment to professional confidentiality (Appendix 5).

Typing most of the transcripts myself proved to be a valuable experience of immersion in the data. A particular benefit was hearing on the audio-tape, and being able to record on the transcript, the very quiet but often very significant nonverbal or semi-verbal responses referred to above and the frequency of these. Thus the emotional ebb and flow of the interviews was preserved in addition to the bishops' characteristically reasoned cognitive responses. During the transcription process, I continued to write memos to myself or made notes within the transcript itself.

The close knowledge of the data gained from typing up the greater majority of the transcripts myself greatly speeded up the processes of moving to and fro among the data during the analysis process.

The data were typed by means of the word processing package WORD 7 and saved to hard and floppy disks. The transcripts were then printed out for analysis.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data was analysed by a combination of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998) and content analysis (Pauli and Bray, 1998). Each transcript was scrutinised line by line. Labels were tabulated keeping to the actual words of the respondent to preserve authenticity, and to retain good access to the words of the subjects (Glassner and

Loughlin, 1987: 27). Faithfulness to the subjects' words has been preserved in Chapters 5 to 9.

These lists of labels, from the line by line analysis, were collected into categories of perceptions for that respondent. Categories of perceptions which were common to other respondents were collected under category headings, which were then analysed into sub-categories under each main category heading:

Stages of data analysis
1. line by line analysis
2. categories of perceptions
3. common categories
4. sub-categories

In defining categories, a basic requirement of qualitative research is that the categories constituting the building blocks of emergent theory should fit the data well. (Henwood and Pigeon, 1992). In line with their suggestions, I have written definitions in the content analysis (Chapters 5-9) which give the reasons for giving particular labels. This is to make public the process that was initially a conceptual classification perceived by the researcher, and will allow the goodness of fit to be evaluated.

The process of collating the data was effected by grouping together like categories from the different respondents and setting up new files on the computer for each category. Sub-categories were filed in the same way. Frequency counts were made of individual respondent's perceptions and across cases. This was made possible by the multi-case nature of the sample and was advantageous in providing a survey of the whole corpus of the large amount of data collected in this research and, therefore, in giving a flavour of the data as a whole. Additionally, the frequency counts following my first impressions of the data enabled me to test and revise my generalisations (Silverman 2000). Further,

frequency counts enabled me to identify representative issues from which I could go on to identify the disconfirming instances. This helped me to specify the continuum for an issue. At the same time I looked for exceptional instances.

The data was displayed diagrammatically to show the relationships between the categories and sub-categories (see Chapters 5-9).

### **3.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

#### **3.9.1 Reliability**

Hammersley (1992: 67) defined reliability in qualitative analysis as “the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions”. There are different views of the relevance of a concern for reliability in qualitative research and I reflected on these. One view is that reliability is only relevant in quantitative research, where no difference is seen between natural and social worlds, and so it is appropriate to look for consistent measuring instruments. This assumes a consistency which allows of replication of an investigation. A very different view is that the social world is always changing and the concept of replication is problematic (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). The implication of this is that reliability has no meaning in qualitative research. My own standpoint is similar to that of the position of Kirk and Miller (1986: 72) who argued that qualitative researchers “can no longer afford to beg the issue of reliability...its results will (reasonably) go ignored minus attention to reliability. For reliability to be calculated, it is incumbent on the investigator to document his or her procedure”.

In the case of this project, reliability is attended to through:

- a detailed description of the culture and structure of the field (see Chapter 1)
- transparency and documentation of the methodology (Silverman 2000)
- the availability of interview tapes and their transcripts to examiners (Glassner and Loughlin, 1987)



- retention of good access to the words of the subjects in the coding process (Glassner and Loughlin, 1987)
- the transcription of non verbal and semi-verbal responses (Clavarino et al, 1995)
- the coding and data analysis being done blind without expectations or hypotheses (Glassner and Loughlin, 1987)
- computer assisted recording assuring the existence of reported patterns
- reliability of the content analysis being assessed in terms of agreement between raters using Cohen's kappa statistic (Howell, 1992).

The possibility of this last was one of the benefits of using a large sample in this project.

The raw data items from the line by line analysis were written on cards and given a numerical label. The pack of cards was shuffled and given to six raters with instructions for sorting (see Appendix 6). I then recorded which items had been placed in which category by each rater. Reliability was determined by calculating Cohen's kappa between each rater and me. The kappas are listed in 4.4.3.

### **3.9.2 Validity**

"By validity I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomenon to which it refers" (Hammersley, 1990:57)

In summary, the validity of this research is based upon criteria of

- a researcher well informed of the setting but not emotionally involved in it (see 3.3)
- a multiple case sample (see 3.4)
- the availability of the original tapes and transcripts from the researcher to examiners.
- the availability of coding sheets from the researcher.
- deviant case analysis (see Chapters 5-9)
- a replication strategy (see sections 3.5 to 3.8)
- a research supervisor who read and reread drafts of the work and transcripts

### 3.10 GENERALISABILITY

Generalisability is a normal aim in qualitative research, deduced from the representativeness of the sample. First, a criterion for generalising from qualitative data is combining qualitative research with quantitative measures of populations (Pauli and Bray, 1998). The large sample of twenty-five bishops allowed this. Second, a criterion is purposive sampling (Silverman 2000: 104). The sample which emerged admits of purposive sampling in the future. This can be done by choosing a sample on the basis of a critical reflection on the parameters of the population. A third criterion is theoretical sampling (Bryman, 1988: 90). Further research by selecting categories to study on the basis of criteria which help to develop and test theory and explanation (Mason, 1996: 93) is directly possible from this research. This admits of a further study of the deviant cases identified in the content analysis (see Chapters 5 and 7).

### 3.11 EVALUATION OF THE METHOD

The methodology met the criteria for quality laid down by Silverman (2000) in the following ways:

- it was not based on a set of freestanding techniques, but was based on an analytically defined model, namely Strauss and Corbin's Grounded Theory (see 3.2)
- it focused on practice *in situ* (author's emphasis), looking at how social interactions are routinely *enacted* (see 3.5 and 3.6)
- the choice of open-ended interviews was made after thinking through the alternatives (see 3.1)
- the research was not only "anecdotal"; the methods were applied to large data sets and standard issues of reliability for qualitative research were as listed in 3.9.1.

The method admits of further research in terms of widening the sample to diocesan bishops appointed to the fill the Vacancies in See which obtained when the data was collected. It also admits of replication with other samples of clergy in other churches, e.g.

Catholic and Non-conformist to research the conclusions in a wider universe. The flexibility of the method thus has potential to improve the generalisability of the conclusions by extension to other samples.

### **3.12 CONCLUSION**

A method of researching bishops' perceptions of the potential of counselling psychology in the Church of England was designed using a combination of grounded theory and content analysis. The results of the agreement of the rating of the categories for reliability will be discussed in Chapter 4.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the key processes perceived in the interviews, presents an appraisal of the interviewing experience and shows the major categories which emerged from the grounded theory analysis. The results of the reliability testing of these categories are presented.

In this and succeeding chapters, direct quotations from the bishops will be shown in italic script. Numbers in parenthesis indicate the bishops who are the sources of the quotations.

#### **4.2 INTERVIEW PROCESS**

Key issues of process were:

- confirmation of the confidentiality contract
- motivation to collaborate
- relationship with the psychologist
- review of provision in place
- degree of disclosure
- endings

##### **4.2.1 Confirmation of the confidentiality contract**

The bishops had all studied the contract of confidentiality carefully before the interview. They had noted its explicit commitments and formally confirmed their acceptance of an interview upon that basis. Without exception, they said they were satisfied with the contract. The contract seemed to be facilitative to speak openly and freely. Occasionally a

bishop would reiterate the contract. The researcher experienced a greater degree of transparency and trust in disclosure than she expected. This was the first major breakthrough in hearing the bishops speak about the counselling of the clergy beyond an occasional conversation between a bishop and a pastoral care adviser in an individual diocese. Some bishops had discussed a few of the issues with their peer bishops, but this was evidently the first time their perceptions had been systematically researched by a psychologist across a large sample of dioceses. The confidentiality contract (Appendix 2) was crucial in gaining this access.

#### **4.2.2 Motivation for collaboration**

In contrast to the previously reported problems of bishops' lack of motivation to discuss clergy counselling, they engaged in the interviews positively and enthusiastically. They had all given thought to the subject before the interview. There was a consistent pattern in the style of collaboration. After greeting the researcher warmly and arranging for appropriate seating and positioning of the audio equipment, a bishop would wait courteously for the researcher to open up the dialogue. When she had reiterated the area of research, the bishops were ready to respond. They did so in well-ordered logical discourses. The bishops were all graduates, many of them with higher degrees, and they presented as highly articulate, speaking with a confident delivery, making their points systematically and logically, and checking back from time to time whether they were still "*on track*" in the way the interviewer hoped for. This logical presentation of their perceptions and reflections greatly facilitated a clear, coherent and logical analysis of the interview data. The obverse was that their accompanying emotions were less overt.

#### **4.2.3 Relationship with the psychologist**

Beforehand, the interviewer was uncertain to what extent she would be accepted, both as a result of the traditional resistance in the church to the discipline of psychology, and the experiences of others who had reported that they were unable to access their bishops. She

also anticipated that as a non-clerical person she would be at a disadvantage in accessing the bishops' confidences. However, she experienced a consistently high degree of acceptance and respect both as a person and as a psychologist. The bishops' reflections were offered in a style unequivocally as from one professional to another. This acceptance and respect contrasted with the many descriptions which the interviewer had heard from diocesan pastoral care representatives of their bishops as unapproachable, uninterested and even uncaring in this field. It was a moving experience in the interviews to receive bishop's disclosures of their hopes for their clergy, their uncertainties in knowing how best to help them, their humility about their lack of psychological knowledge and their struggles to balance their different responsibilities. The researcher found that her counselling psychology training in the core conditions of respect, empathy, and genuineness was a valuable asset in facilitating the bishops' reflections and ongoing thinking.

#### **4.2.4 Review of provision in place**

All the bishops began by explaining the provision they already had in their diocese for helping their clergy. One bishop explained his desire to do this as a means for him to identify the gaps and needs. The range of what was already in place varied from no provision at all in one diocese to new, professionally based and developing systems in two dioceses. One of these has been described in detail in Part II of this thesis.

On this continuum of provision there was a variable of structure: *"the present inherited arrangement is quite haphazard"* (16), *"we have inadequate structure in this diocese which we are working to work out"* (24) *"we have three professional counsellors living just outside the diocese"* (2). In the one diocese where there was no provision, it was because a psychiatrist who had previously been called upon by the bishop had recently died. The best provision was a diocesan team of counsellors who were all professionally qualified. On the continuum between these two situations, dioceses were using resources of some local psychiatrists, honorary psychiatrists available through St Luke's Hospital for



the Clergy, people trained to varying extents in the use of counselling skills and a few professional counsellors. One bishop had referred clergy to the Richmond Fellowship for counselling. Another bishop used the county counselling service, which was an independent body not related to the church in any way. The dioceses in the North West of England had joined together in setting up an Inter Diocesan Counselling Service (IDCS), which was staffed by a mix of professionals and people trained in the use of counselling skills. Each diocese participating in the IDCS had two or three counsellors, one of whom was a leader.

Although the IDCS was spoken of with enthusiasm by the majority of the participating bishops, particularly because of the advantage that a priest could go outside his own diocese for counselling, it was also recorded that the service was falling apart because the counsellors wanted to be paid. There was no organised provision for payment of professional fees by dioceses. When the IDCS was first set up, counsellors gave their time free or on a fairly low fee basis. When professional counsellors began to join the service, they expected to be paid professional fees.

The bishops' assessments of the provision in place align with research results from descriptive and inferential statistics that a majority of churches have some awareness of the stresses and demands that their clergy and their families are facing. However, only a minority are providing support services that might help clergy effectively manage resultant stress (Morris and Blanton, 1994). The Church of England is beginning to make some initiatives, but these are largely tentative and unco-ordinated at the present time.

#### **4.2.5 Degree of disclosure**

After describing the resources or lack of them in his diocese, a bishop would typically continue with his analysis of his needs in supporting his clergy better and how he would like to have these needs met in better counselling provision. As the interview progressed, there was a consistent pattern of increasing freedom in disclosing feelings of uncertainty

and loneliness in the responsibilities of making their decisions, especially in the judicial area. Bishops were usually quite open about their lack of psychological language and understanding.

#### **4.2.6 Endings**

Towards the end of the time available, a bishop would sometimes ask whether there was anything else the researcher would like him to speak about. In this case, the researcher would raise a topic that had stemmed from other interviews which she wanted to pursue more. In many cases, the researcher was invited to make a return visit to pursue the questions which had arisen in the bishops' reflections. She would have liked to do so, as this would have been a methodological enhancement of her research process. However, the scope and time-scale of the research project precluded this, and so further interviews have to be referred to future research. At the end of the interviews, the researcher was usually assured of the bishop's continuing interest, encouraged to continue the research, to report the results back in a summary paper and to ensure dissemination to the House of Bishops and to the Advisory Board for Ministry as soon as possible.

### **4.3 EVALUATION OF THE INTERVIEWING EXPERIENCE**

Overall, the researcher was very pleased with the smooth arrangements, the warm, open relationships, and the relevance of the content of the interviews to the research question, all of which had been dependent on the bishops' motivation to co-operate in the research. None of the interviews offered any difficulty in this respect. Twenty-one bishops (84%) opted for audio-tape recording of the interview. This both freed up the interviewer to facilitate the relationship empathically and provided good records of the interviews for data analysis. In the remaining cases, written notes were used for the analysis. This had two disadvantages. It reduced the opportunity of eye contact and thereby the opportunity to relate as freely as was desired, and it was also more difficult to catch and record all the bishops' verbal expressions and the non-verbal and semi-verbal nuances in the interview.



This became particularly evident in the data analysis stage when the richness of the audio-tape recordings compared very favourably with that of written notes.

## **4.4 EMERGENT THEMES**

### **4.4.1 Findings from the data analysis**

Using the coding framework of Strauss and Corbin (1990), the labels from the line by line analysis (Charmaz, 1995) of the twenty-five bishops clustered together to form five major categories. These categories are defined in the following chapters. In the data analysis, the chronological order in which the bishops' perceptions arose has been superseded by the order of "the main analytic story line" of the research findings (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 230).

The major categories from the data analysis set in this logical progression are :

<p>Problems facing contemporary clergy</p> <p>Bishops' roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Criteria for clergy counselling services</p> <p>Psychological assessment of clergy</p> <p>Organisational change in the church</p>
--

The justification for this sequence comes from the theory of organisations. In the logic of organisational design for the future, any organisational work has to be arranged in a logical sequence. The nature of the task must be decided before it is actually embarked upon (Handy, 1993). The first part of the analytic story line in the context of the church's task is therefore the clarification of the problems facing contemporary clergy. The bishops' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities for addressing these problems has then to be known. After this, the perceived criteria for a professional counselling service can be considered in contributing to a tailor-made service to fit the perceived problems and the



responsibility for their resolution. When the service is set up, tools of psychological assessment can be integrated in the service to meet the assessment needs.. Finally, the potential contribution of the whole enterprise to organisational change in the Church of England in general and the diocese in particular can be appraised.

Table 4.1 shows the percentage of items allocated to each category:

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF ITEMS ALLOCATED	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ITEMS
1. Clergy Problems	90	33.1%
2. Bishops' roles & responsibilities	67	24.6%
3. Criteria for clergy counselling	53	19.5%
4. Psychological assessment	21	7.7%
5. Organisational change	40	14.7%
TOTAL	272	100%

Table 4.1: Number and percentage of items allocated to each category.

**4.4.2 Relationships between categories**

The relationships between these categories and their associated sub-categories are shown in Fig 4.1. These will be discussed in Chapters 5-9.

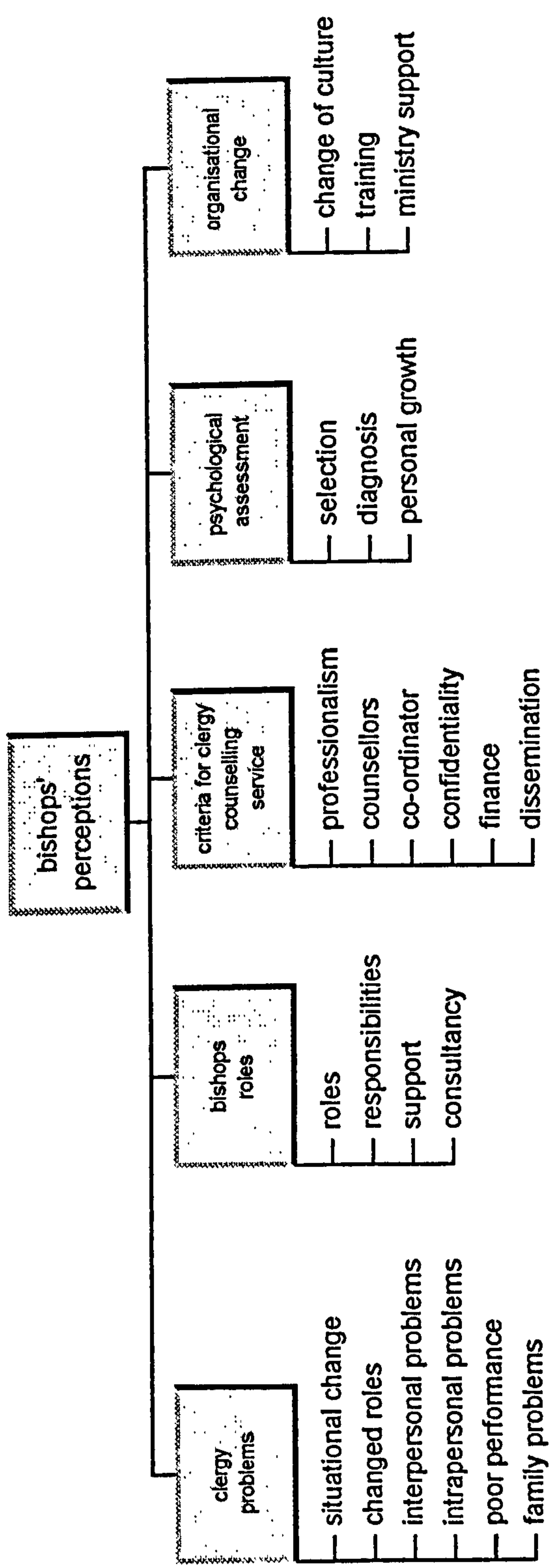


Fig 4.1 : Categories of Bishops' Perceptions

**4.4.3 Reliability of the categories**

In order to assess whether the categorisation could be reliably replicated, Cohen’s kappa, a statistic measuring inter-rater reliability, was calculated between the author and the six independent raters. These are presented in Table 4.2 below.

RATER	KAPPA
Rater 1	0.9
Rater 2	0.91
Rater 3	0.785
Rater 4	0.962
Rater 5	0.872
Rater 6	0.962

Table 4.2: Inter-rater reliability kappas between author and six independent raters

Table 4.2 indicates a good degree of agreement by six untrained raters allocating statements made by bishops to the five proposed categories. Kappas ranged from 0.785 to 0.962, all of which are acceptable. Four of the six kappas exceeded 0.9. The average kappa was 0.90. It was noted that one of the raters (Rater 3) made less reliable ratings than the other raters. When the data were investigated to explain this, it was observed that Rater 3 had allocated three statements to do with finance of the counselling service into the “don’t know” category, suggesting that this rater had not noticed the sub-category “finance” within this category. It was also observed that this rater had over-allocated to the “bishops’ roles and responsibilities” category, and under-allocated to the “clergy problems” category. It is expected that Rater 3’s reliability could have been increased had a short training session on the categories been provided.

**4.5 CONCLUSION**

The research method has been seen to be suited to the nature of the research question and has produced results whose reliability has been established.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PROBLEMS FACING CONTEMPORARY CLERGY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides the beginning of the analytic story (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 230) from the findings and discussion of the data analysis. By “contemporary clergy” is meant those clergy currently in active ministry who have experienced, and continue to experience, the ongoing reorganisation of the Church of England into a more economically structured institution. By “clergy problems” is meant those psychological and situational problems that cause sufficient distress negatively to affect work performance and relationships at home and in ministry. The incidence of such problems is demonstrated by the unsolicited 100% response from the bishops describing them. In the literature review in Chapter 2 it was seen that there was no extant broad overview of bishops’ concerns of clergy problems. This chapter addresses that gap in knowledge.

#### **5.2 PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY CLERGY**

In telling the analytic story of the research findings, this category of the problems facing contemporary clergy (see 4.4.1) is the logical starting point. The sub-categories that emerged (Fig 4.1) were:

- 5.2.1 Situational stress
- 5.2.2 Changed roles and responsibilities
- 5.2.3 Interpersonal problems
- 5.2.4 Intrapersonal problems
- 5.2.5 Poor performance
- 5.2.6 Family problems

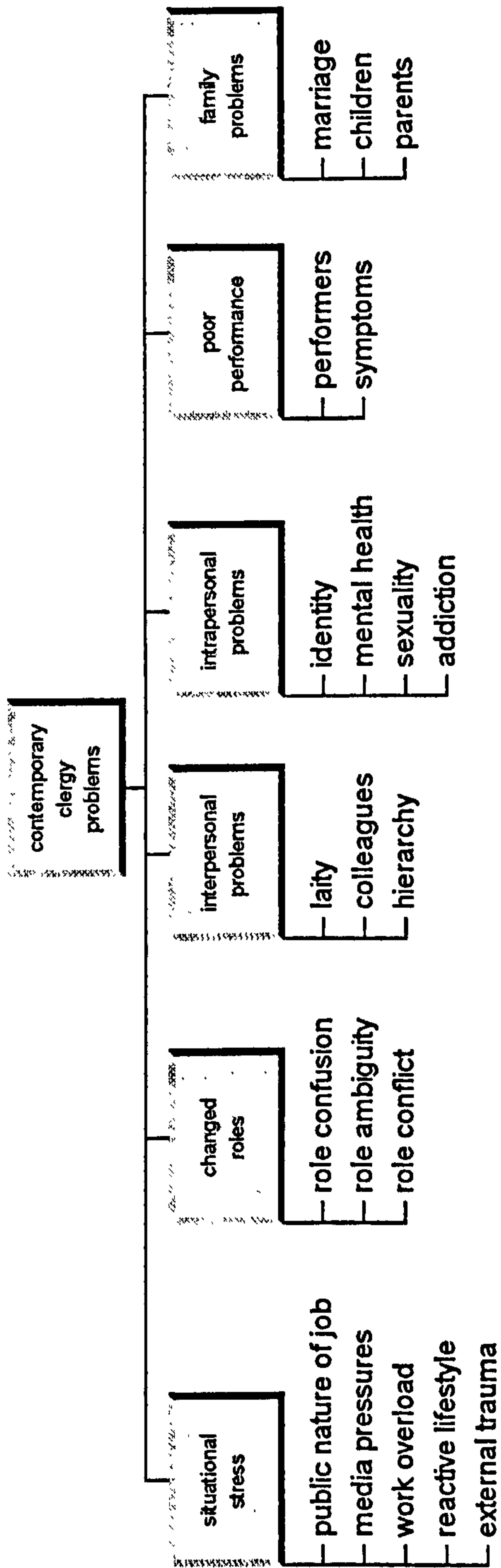


Fig 5.1 Bishops' perceptions of contemporary clergy problems

### **5.2.1 Situational stress**

By situational stress is meant bishops' perceptions of social and church organisational pressures that are associated with a psychological condition of inability to cope with those demands. *"There are a host of contemporary problems which are not due to any psychological condition"* (22).

The bishops perceived clergy situational stress as stress due to:

- the public nature of the job
- media pressures
- heavier workloads due to pastoral reorganisation
- an increasingly reactive lifestyle
- external trauma

#### **5.2.1.1 The public nature of the job**

Much of the work of clergy is traditionally seen as serving the parish and the community. The public nature of the work and the demands upon a priest were described by one experienced bishop as *"living over the shop"* with *"24 hour availability."* (10). Exposure and vulnerability to the demands of parishioners was identified by this experienced bishop as one of the greatest sources of situational stress in the clerical profession. The public place of the Church in the community results in a public interest in the personal lives of the clergy. The traditional expectations of parishioners are that the clergy are always on duty and always available for help and support. This stems historically from the time when the priest was the only literate person in the parish. There is a still current formal nomenclature of "Clerk in Holy Orders", because the priest was called upon to perform a wide range of helping tasks which were not necessarily directly connected with his spiritual responsibilities. Since the advent of universal education, the needs of parishioners have changed, but their expectations of the clergyperson's total availability have not. In a Gallup Poll Survey of 1986, quoted in Davey (1995), of specific stressors perceived to be



present in the clergy's occupational environment, 30% of clergy reported difficulty of getting away for days off and for longer breaks, 28% reported stress from the expectations of the congregation, and 20% reported exhaustion. "Being on call 24 hours per day" was cited by 52% of the clergy sample as the greatest or second greatest job demand, with only 2% recording it as "not relevant" (Fletcher, 1990a) (see 2.2.5). Since these surveys the increased workloads from further pastoral reorganisation (see 5.2.1.3) have exacerbated the situational stress even more.

#### **5.2.1.2 Media pressures**

Media pressures are taken to mean exposure in the public domain by the local and national press, television and radio. The public interest in the personal lives of the clergy now has an added dimension of media scrutiny. All the bishops who referred to the media perceived it as an antagonistic pressure on themselves, and by extrapolation on the clergy, giving them "*a strange media image*" (22), in "*a wider culture more antipathetic, and in an ethos not favourable to organised religion*" (13). Media publicity, "*a hostile ignorant press*" (24) can be destructive to the work of a priest. "*The opposition of the media is very undermining to a ministry*" (16). The bishops spoke with considerable annoyance and even anger from their own experiences. It seems that training in handling media intrusiveness could profitably be offered as part of preparation for parish ministry. Inherent in this would be training in the recognition and management of manipulation, which seems to be a skill which clergy commonly do not have (see 9.2.2)

Media scrutiny may be particularly stressful at vulnerable times, for example when moving into a new parish. "*The public nature of transition is a stress*" (18) in that every clergy appointment and relocation is published in the national and local press. This prohibits the privacy and space which a family need to settle into a new home, job and community. For a clergyperson it may be that the stress of relocation derives more from media focus rather than from the stress of the move per se. A study of relocation and well-being in United Methodist clergy and their spouses found no significant differences in well-being between

relocators and nonrelocators (Frame, 1998). However, that research seems to show a greater vulnerability on relocation in clergy spouses, who were found to exhibit significantly lower well being than did clergy. Qualitative analysis of participants' responses revealed that counsellors should address such issues as grief, powerlessness, loneliness and clergy family reluctance to seek counselling services. Transitions normally have associated pain and loss, even if the outcome of the transition overall is viewed as an improvement on the previous situation. Parkes (1988), in his psycho-social transition theory, posits that changes to people's social environment require them to revise their assumptive world where habits, thoughts and behaviour can no longer be taken for granted. There is a loss of confidence in the assumptive world as a safe place, and this is emotionally painful. It seems that in such transitions clergy spouses have less support than the clergy person, thus generating more emotional pain and stress which is exacerbated by an intrusive media. Frame's results are supported and further generalised by a study by Morris and Blanton (1998, see 2.2.4) on influences of social context and perceptions of work-related stress on couples selected from six denominations in which the husbands were clergy. Stressors were found to include family boundary intrusiveness, lack of social support and mobility stresses. In a clergy family, the frequency of relocation may be very much greater than in some other professions. In the case of curates particularly, the move may have been required by diocesan prescription rather than being a free choice. The situational stress may therefore be compounded beyond the norm of other professions for clergy and their spouses. There has not so far been any awareness in the church of the potential of counselling as a preparation for, and support in, job transitions.

#### **5.2.1.3 Heavier workloads due to pastoral reorganisation**

Clergy workload has been continually increasing during the last three decades as a result of a Church of England policy of pastoral reorganisation planned to reduce clergy numbers for economic reasons. Where previously it was the norm for priests to be unilaterally responsible for only one parish, it is now the norm for parishes to be grouped into multi-parish benefices or alternatively amalgamated into one large parish reorganised from



several smaller parishes put together. *"There are fewer clergy on the ground and the place of work has changed"* (13). In either case, it is now the policy of the Church of England that these larger units should be the responsibility of one incumbent, desirably but not yet inevitably with the help of a team of lay people with some training in ministry. In some places a clergy team has been set up. The new system has changed the role of a parish priest, by generating a multiplicity of meetings and new demands of communication, administration and management skills. A large majority of the bishops cited the pressures of this increased workload as a significant cause of clergy problems. A priest may now have his parish responsibilities doubled, trebled, or multiplied by any factor up to even fifteen in rural dioceses, compared with the single responsibility of a traditional parish. Under this greatly increased pressure of work, clergy often suffer from feeling *"disaffected with the church organisation"* (6); *"the church can eat you up"* (11). One bishop reflected there is a pre-disposition in the church both to set up and take on unreasonable amounts of work. Christians tend to be people who *"take on huge amounts of stuff"* (20) and the church exploits that in being *"an intensely greedy, devouring organisation"* (20) of its clergy and lay people. Fletcher's (1990a) analysis of MacPherson's (1989) results (see 2.2.5) had concluded that 77% of the clergy in the sample felt the job was very pressurised, and 5% found the pressure so great that it was a constant source of stress to them. In the analysis of work pressures and psychopathology, Fletcher found to a level of greater than 95% confidence that factors of work demands were statistically correlated with psychopathological measures of depression, free-floating anxiety and somaticism. The limitation of this was that the factors themselves were not specific in their effect in that they were associated with each kind of psychological dysfunction, not with any one selectively. In the Gallup Poll referred to in 5.2.1.1, 53% of clergy reported the amount of administration as a stress, 50% reported problems with church buildings, and 34% reported failure to find members of the congregation to share the work of the ministry. 50% of the clergy perceived lack of support or undervaluation. Davey (1995) sums up the Gallup Poll findings of the likely sources of occupational stress in ministry as "an occupational group who perceive themselves to be overworked, under-supported, under-appreciated and with a lack of confidence that their particular skills and aptitudes will be



recognised and utilised by those in authority". This is a condition of role overload that carries the risk of burnout.

In an American study on clergy burnout, it was found that leisure behaviour and leisure satisfaction had an inverse effect on all three components of burnout. Age and years in ministry had a direct, inverse relationship with the emotional and depersonalisation dimensions of burnout. Number of years employed within the present church was also negatively related to emotional exhaustion (Stanton-Rich and Iso-Ahola, 1998). From this it may be deduced that the risk of burnout is greatest in the early years of ministry and that preventive training should be directed to ordinands and curates. In contrast Rees and Francis (1991) from their research on English clergy completing work related questionnaires had claimed support for the hypothesis that rural clergy in multiple parish benefices experience premature burnout around age 60. The conclusion was based on the assumption that response rate to the research questionnaires was a function of burnout, which assumption seems to be a weak support for the claim (see 2.2.5). From a subsequent stronger study (Francis and Lankshear, 1994) called for careful monitoring of the strains placed on rural clergy during the years of ministry leading up to retirement (see 5.2.2).

Under the increasing *"sheer demand of parochial life and lay power"* (24), and the change in the intensity of expectations, *"higher expectations to be available to all and sundry, expectations from the diocese, from parishioners and from family"* (19), bishops perceived that a priest's life becomes increasingly more reactive. *"The more reactive life is, the more chance there is of suffering from stress"* (19). Creative ministry is increasingly impeded. *"There is less room than ever for the clergy to be pro-active and hence in control"* (19). These bishops' perceptions align with the quantitative evaluation of parochial clergy's job demands (Fletcher, 1990a). 57% of the respondents put "having to satisfy the expectations of others" as the highest job demand, with 48% rating "expectation that I will attend to others' needs immediately" and 42% rating "always having to please people" in the five highest job demands. The small number of "not

relevant” responses support the appropriateness of these items to the clergy respondents. At the time of that research in 1988, the statistics inevitably reflected a situation of predominantly single parish incumbents (see 2.2.5). After a further 12 years of pastoral reorganisation into multi-parish benefices, it is deduced that the expectations of the greater number of parishioners per clergyperson will have induced greater pressures still. The implication of this is that the current organisational ethos of the church is diminishing the autonomy of the clergy into re-active rather than pro-active modes. The ethos of counselling psychology is distinct from this, deriving as it does from established principles of respect for individual autonomy and valuing the individual over the collective (Shea and Bond, 1997). This discrepancy makes visible some issues of ethos which challenge contemporary church culture to provide a better environment for clergy employment in ministry.

#### **5.2.1.4 External trauma**

External trauma is psychological injury caused by some emotional assault. Bishops spoke with distress of trauma from the environment. Burglary is very common. One priest had had six break-ins to his Rectory in six months; another priest had been attacked in the vicarage twice. A bishop described how one of his finest clergy was mugged. He related this to *“the whole nature and mood of the way of life today”* (13), expressing his sense of change from previous eras when the clergy would have been inviolate from such attacks because of the respect given to their role. Although not named as such, there was a recognition of the post-traumatic stress disorder condition resulting from these happenings. *“Trauma can lead to loss of self-esteem and rehabilitation can take a long time”* (12). None of the bishops reported any access to professional post-traumatic stress disorder counselling in their diocesan systems. It seems that the common practice is to leave it to a traumatised cleryperson to find help for themselves through National Health Service provision. In the present pressures on the NHS, there may be a long waiting list for help. Added to this, clergy are typically reluctant to seek psychological help outside the church. The result is that help may never be received by default.



### 5.2.2 Changed roles and responsibilities

Seven bishops (28%) perceived that changed roles from pastoral reorganisation had resulted in clergy problems that may be described psychologically as:

- role confusion
- role ambiguity
- role conflict (see 5.2.1.3 above).

Not only has the clergy workload increased, but there are new problems of role confusion. The implementation of the new policies of amalgamated parishes and multi-parish benefices has plunged the clergy into a new era of management responsibilities. The five-hundred year old tradition of a single parish under the unilateral direction of one priest; *“the omni-competence of the old model of ministry”* (8), has been suddenly broken: *“we are at a point in time contextually of incredible, dramatic, accelerating changes”* (5), *“it is a time of declining posts in many dioceses”* (24). The new multi-parish rural benefices generate a multiplication of activities and expectations (21) for which clergy have not been prepared in these new appointments: *“the situation for clergy, lay people and churches is constantly changing, and this can be very frightening”*(5), *“there is a change from directive leadership from the front to more collaborative and shared ministry”* (21) *“clergy have not been trained for management and find it threatening”* (13). The word “manager” is *“terrifying to the clergy”* (5): *“Boundaries within the church are unclear”* (19), *“The clergy don’t feel in charge any longer”* (24). There is a perception of clergy being unable to relate with confidence and competence in their role; *“being confused about their role: social worker, counsellor, manager”* or any combination of these (5), *“questioning whether their role is pastoral reorganisation, money raising, relationships with the media”* (22). They suffer from *“role confusion”*; *“the role of clergy is under quite a lot of question”* (21). As workloads and role confusion increase, *“the stress factor on clergy is higher than it has ever been”* (19).

These descriptors also present pictures of role ambiguity and role conflict. Role ambiguity occurs when there is uncertainty in the minds of the clergyperson and the parishioners as



to precisely what the clergy role is at any time. Two of the most frequently cited instances of role ambiguity are uncertainty about others' expectations of one's performance and uncertainty about the scope of responsibility. Job descriptions reduce role ambiguity but clergy do not have job descriptions. Role conflict results from the necessity for a person to carry out more than one role in their situation. The expectations of each role may be quite clear, but the roles may be in conflict. Maloney and Hunt (1991) (see 2.2.5) concluded that role conflict is *the* major source of stress among ministers, and has been for more than a hundred years. The findings of this present research demonstrate that Maloney and Hunt's conclusion is an over-simplistic evaluation of clergy stress. Nevertheless, its importance cannot be denied. Fletcher (1990a) found that clergy experienced role conflict and role ambiguity to the following extent: other people's perception of the job different from their own, frequently or sometimes 99%; and peripheral areas of the job taking over from the primary role, frequently or sometimes 94%. Both role ambiguity and role conflict lead to role strain, which is characterised by tension, low morale and communication difficulties (Handy, 1993). This seems to match with the bishops' descriptions.

Bishops frequently expressed the need for clergy to become clear about their new roles in the current organisational change in the Church of England and to acquire the skills they need to execute their new responsibilities more effectively and less stressfully: *"The parish only works if the priest is confident enough to hold roles and responsibilities and to allow others to hold theirs"* (24), *"The higher than ever stress on clergy needs to be grasped, recognised and we need to be positive about it"* (19). Maloney and Hunt (1991) (see 2.2.5) argue for job/person assessment of a minister's stylistic variables of decision-making, leading and controlling, autonomy, desire to be in contact with people, number and variety of tasks which are comfortable, feedback on performance and involvement in service to others. A study on clergy role prioritisation, role influences, conflict and dissatisfaction with ministry showed that three major dimensions of personality accounted for significant individual differences in these key areas of ministry performance. Clergy who scored high on neuroticism and psychoticism showed most signs of dissatisfaction with ministry. Findings indicate that personality differences may predispose individual

clergy to allow different groups to influence their view of ministry and their role prioritisation (Francis and Rodger, 1994), but see 2.2.5 for lack of gender variable in this research. Implementation of these recommendations would call for training in the understanding of roles and relationships (see Chapter 9).

There may also be a need to take care in making clergy appointments to match the person with the social environment. Two research studies compared personality characteristics of male Anglican clergy in charge of rural (multi-parish) benefices and clergy in charge of urban benefices. In the first study, of 3,510 Church of England clergy of mean age 51.6 years, it was found that older clergy were more likely to be appointed to rural and multi-parish benefices in spite of a tendency for older clergy to be less effective in such ministry (Francis and Lankshear, 1994). This research is limited by being premature in its inability to include women incumbents. A recommendation from this research was that the Church of England may well be advised to monitor carefully the strains on rural clergy during the years of ministry leading up to retirement. A further study of 81 male Anglican clergy in charge of rural benefices using the short form Eysenck Personality Questionnaire suggested that rural multi-parish benefices demand the skills and social energy of an extrovert who is able to sustain a wide range of professional relationships across multiple communities (Francis and Lankshear, 1998). Further research is needed to test the generalisability of these conclusions, including to women clergy and also with a much wider range of variables of benefice size and expectations. However, there may be an implication that recently restructured rural benefices are no longer appropriate for introvert clergy who want a quiet retreat to pursue scholarship and rural hobbies.

A question which needs to be considered in matching the clergyperson with the role in an appointment is the amount of dissonance between the degree of change in the clergyperson's perception of his or her role and the degree of change in the role itself over a period of time. In a study in 1971 and a re-study in 1985, Bryman (1989) measured little change in the ways Anglican clergymen conceived of their role. This research took place in a period when there was a change in the construct of professionalism and its associated



indicators, which have developed even more radically in the subsequent period of 1985 to 2001. The dissonance between clergy role perception and contemporary indicators of professionalism may, by extrapolation, be much greater in the year 2001 and needs to be re-investigated.

The effect of the likelihood of more than one stressor in clergy role responsibilities must be acknowledged. In an exploratory study of South African Anglican priests, three stressor scales were found, namely Person-role Conflict, Quantitative Workload and Role Insufficiency (Struempfer and Bands, 1996). The implication is that clergy appointments should be preceded by an analysis of the role requirements and the spectrum of personal psychological qualities that the role requires. This argues for a psychological assessment of applicants. (see Chapter 8)

A deviant case was one bishop's perception that clergy viewed stress too negatively, that they perceived stress as a *"dirty word, instead of motivating and energising"* (10). The value of this perception is first, in promoting an ethos of using the stimulus of stressful situations positively to initiate change in the clergyperson's environment. Second, experiences of stress can be used for self-reflection which in turn becomes a change agent intrapsychically and interpersonally towards self awareness and personal growth. Counselling on a fulfilment model (Maddi, 1989) could facilitate such outcomes.

### **5.2.3 Interpersonal problems**

Interpersonal problems of clergy are defined to be difficulties in relationships with others in their work systems where there is a mutual and reciprocal interaction. These were perceived to be in three areas:

- 5.2.3.1 Relationships with laity
- 5.2.3.2 Relationships with colleagues
- 5.2.3.3 Relationships with superiors



### 5.2.3.1 Relationships with laity

The greatest incidence and concern expressed in the interviews was with respect to relationships with lay people. The lay people in a clergyperson's life are mostly the parishioners, who may include lay (i.e. unordained) ministers. Problems ranged from the clergy's lack of organisational skill in the management of their working environment i.e. their parishes and benefices, to their management of relationships with individuals. In the parish/benefice system, bishops spoke of clergy who were unable to take leadership, unable to manage the demands of lay power, and deficient in relationship skills: *"no tact"*(12), *"rough diamonds getting across people"*, *"a conservative priest who gets across half the church"* (9). The bishops recognised that working with lay people is a skilled business, and that clergy have not been trained for management and find it threatening. One bishop referred to the effect of the changing patterns of ministry on the social position of clergy (11). Clergy who traditionally were looked up to as the most educated persons in their parishes are often working in ministry with people more able than themselves at some levels. They cannot match the gifts and experience of lay people and can no longer hide behind their priesthood (5). *"In the parish, their input is of less value than others, even totally rejected. The priest's is one opinion among many, and this is very diminishing, especially for clergy who have been ordained some time"* (16). A priest is quoted as saying *"the price I pay is that I am not recognised"* (9). Priests find coping with Readers [licensed lay ministers] *"new and tough"* (13). The commitment to lay people sharing in ministry, which is accepted by the bishops now as the norm, is a challenge that clergy have widely still been unable to meet. The clergy are seen as *"being swamped, made worse by introducing of local (lay) ministry"* (11), and *"feeling overstretched with crises blowing up"* (9).

### 5.2.3.2 Relationships with colleagues

Bishops expressed a pessimistic view of the ability of the clergy to develop good working relationships with their peers in the new structures of ministry in the church. Clergy tend to perpetuate the authoritarian “one man band” model from the traditional single parish set-up and training model. They can only relate in a *“top down, boss way, and find it impossible to relate to colleagues”* (11). For example, there is the problem of *“a team vicar who is not a team person”* (14). This generates loneliness and isolation in ministry. As a result, clergy also find it more difficult than the average to share their human vulnerability: *“Clergy are the worst people for admitting to peers they’ve got problems”* (16), *“There is a personal psychological issue of not allowing themselves to disclose”* (24), There can be a downward spiral which perpetuates the problem. *“Loneliness and isolation lead to the wrong kind of eccentricity, unhealthy marriages and unhealthy parish relationships”* (22).

### 5.2.3.3 Relationships with superiors in the church hierarchy

In their ability to relate to their superiors in the church hierarchy, i.e. their bishops and archdeacons, clergy were described as lacking in trust: *“Clergy are suspicious about bishops wanting to know”* (10), *“They have fears of a black mark from bishops which will stick, ”* (3), *“Clergy only want help from someone of the same theological outlook”* (4), *“Clergy ‘know they have failed’ if sent by the bishop to someone for help”* (22). It is a problem to the bishops that clergy do not welcome or receive positive feedback on their relationship styles. This aligns with the findings of Fletcher (1990a) (see 2.2.5) that only 14% of clergy found their bishop supportive and 32 % found their bishop gave them low or no support. The bishops’ perceptions suggest that this situation has obtained without much change in the past twelve years.

The bishops saw all these relationship problems as symptomatic of an intimacy deficit that is destructive to personal friendship, resulting in loneliness and isolation in a priest’s

personal life . A priest can rationalise this as having no time to relate with friends. This may be perpetuated and intensified by a model of ministry of intense preoccupation with work, where *“the atmosphere is about work and legislation and not about relationships”* (9). It seems that clergy could be greatly helped by training in initiating, building and maintaining personal and work relationships (Duck, 1988)

#### 5.2.4 Intrapersonal problems

By far the largest category of perceived clergy problems were intrapersonal problems. These are defined as problems internal to a person as opposed to problems in their external relationships. When the coding paradigm was applied to these problems, four primary areas emerged.

These were:

- |                       |
|-----------------------|
| 5.2.4.1 Identity      |
| 5.2.4.2 Mental health |
| 5.2.4.3 Sexuality     |
| 5.2.4.4 Addiction     |

##### 5.2.4.1 Identity

Identity is a person’s internal, subjective concept of himself or herself as an individual. Identity problems were both personal and vocational. There was a variation along a continuum from grandiosity about ability to do the job and professional pride: *“A man can think he is great, but is not able to tackle the job”* (12), *“His ideas are too grandiose for himself”* (9), *“I can surely look after my own problems”* (16), to low self-esteem, loss of worth and self-image. Clergy go through crises of faith; they *“have lost their way; the light has gone out of their eyes”* (4). The overwhelming impression from the interviews was of a large number of introverted clergy, whose personalities did not readily match the demands of the job (18). This is supported by the research of Francis (1992a) (see 2.2.5 for the limitations of this research) who concluded that [male] clergy tend to be



introverted to an extent which does not reflect the male personality profiles found in the general population samples within the UK.

Personal identity issues included identity confusion, crises of faith, low morale, personality problems, feeling unrecognised, dependency on affirmation, bitterness, having a Protestant work ethic *"I am justified by what I do"*, not daring to move from having a clergy mask, or from being on a pedestal and having a role. Some clergy were described as having no sense of vocation, or being in the wrong vocation, *"simply turning the wheel"* (22). There is also an age-related identity problem in the forties and early fifties, when clergy ask themselves where they should be going (7).

None of the bishops referred to possible personality characteristics in clergy, though there is conceptually a direct relationship between personality traits and intrapsychic problems. Research studies in recent years on the personality characteristics of clergy in the UK have shown consistent results. Irvine (1989) (see 2.2.5) found that the Myers Briggs Type Indicator showed clergy in the Church of Scotland to be primarily introvert. The clergy in the USA were predominantly extrovert. A study of gender differences between a total of 933 male and female Church of England stipendiary clergy showed that, contrary to the usual sex differences in the personality profiles of men and women found in general population samples, the male clergy recorded a mean score on the psychoticism scale closer to the population norm for women than for men, while the female clergy recorded a mean score on the neuroticism scale closer to the population norm for men than for women, i.e. sex roles were reversed. Female clergy were not significantly different from the male clergy in terms of the extroversion, psychoticism and lie scales (Robbins, Francis and Rutledge, 1997) (see 2.2.5). These last results supported the findings of Goldsmith and Ekhardt (1984) on male and female differences, in American seminarians training for ordination, of greater androgyny and less stereotypic sex-role patterns. These conclusions were in turn supported by the results of a Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire completed over ten years by 441 male Anglican clergy. A number of factors showed significant differences between the personality of these clergy compared to men in general.

Clergymen were shown as more conscientious, tender-minded, imaginative, apprehensive and tense than the general male population (Musson, 1998).

One conclusion which may be drawn is that a high incidence of more feminine personality characteristics in clergy may correlate with lower assertiveness. This in turn might correlate with low self-esteem and the need to hide behind a clerical mask rather than be confident in finding and expressing an individual identity.

#### **5.2.4.2 Mental health**

Mental health problems ranged from suicide (one case was quoted of a 40 year old priest who took his life and another priest who attempted suicide twice) to energy deficiency: *“getting exhausted, frustrated, resentful, hating the work, the work becoming a monster”* (11), *“working obsessively and then blowing up”* (14). The bishops described clergy suffering from conditions of unease, stress, sleeplessness, childhood sexual abuse, addiction, burnout and depressive illnesses. Depression was linked to lack of job satisfaction (9) and in one diocese was seen to be the most frequent clergy problem (18). There were signs of work-related despair: *“55 year olds wondering how they were going to hack the last ten years”* (21); *“senior clergy who feel they are going nowhere, marking time to retirement”* (22). Fletcher (1990a) (see 2.2.5) concluded that 5% of clergy were suffering from disabling depression and 11% showed depressive tendencies under stress. Clergy who felt they were not performing a worthwhile job function, or that other people’s perceptions of the job were different to their own, were likely to have higher depression scores.

One factor which may be significant in clergy mental health is unresolved loss experience. Burton and Topham (1997) investigated early loss experiences of 100 Church of England clergy of both sexes compared with psychotherapists, NHS patients assessed for psychotherapy and scientists and engineers from a University faculty. Inter-rater reliability for the Inventory of Early Loss used in the clergy sample was greater than 90% for early



loss events but less, 73%, for unempathic parental responses. It was found that 46% of the clergy had very severe early loss scores, compared with 27% for psychotherapists, 47% for NHS psychotherapy patients and only 4% for scientists and engineers. This high incidence of unresolved emotional pain may be a factor which inhibits the enjoyment of good mental health. This is an argument for psychological assessment in clergy selection in order that such latent problems may be discovered and therapeutic help given earlier, rather than later, in a clergyperson's ministry.

This is particularly important in that it seems there may be a hardening against accepting help as time passes. A common symptom was resistance to seeking help until forced to do so by crises: *"Clergy only come to bishops when things get too bad to deal with"* (3), *"Clergy do not put support systems in place until forced to do so by some crisis"* (1). There were examples of denial of problems; *"Sometimes a priest is in complete denial of something which needs to be resolved"* (12), and vehement opposition to accepting feedback (2). *"There are people for whom the truth is unbearable"* (25).

#### **5.2.4.3 Sexuality**

Eight bishops (32%) perceived sex-related problems as the problems of the greatest incidence that came before them in their pastoral and judicial responsibilities. Bishops face demanding pastoral challenges when clergy take actions that are not illegal but which conflict with traditional expectations on the part of the church. The unresolved debate in the Church of England about homosexuality is one of the strongest of such challenges. Clergy with a homosexual orientation have often found they were not accepted in rural areas, and the bishop has to manage such situations and assist them to leave to work in towns. (4). Research on the effect on gay clergy of the church debates on homosexuality has only just begun, and the questions about the meaning of relationships between biological determination, identity, self understanding, character and behaviour (Tucker, 1998) have not yet been fully addressed by the church and the bishops, and still less by parishioners.



Examples cited were the “coming out” of gay and lesbian clergy, clergy undergoing sex changes, clergy who got engaged and broke it off in a repeating pattern, clergy having affairs which resulted in marriage breakdowns and media publicity, and clergy who disappeared overnight with a sexual partner. None of the bishops referred to a large-scale problem of depression among homosexual clergy as was suggested by Fletcher (1990a) (see 2.2.4).

The high incidence of other sex-related problems reported by the bishops aligns with previous empirical findings. Blackmon (1984) found that 37% of all ministers in a survey of clergypersons of four American denominations reported they had engaged in sexual behaviour inappropriate for a minister. This suggested that clergy are much more liable to be sexually indiscreet than clinical psychologists and physicians. The transferability of this comparison may be limited by its American source. The conclusion by Maloney and Hunt (1991) that ministers may be particularly liable to sexual unfaithfulness because of the dual role relationships in ministry may have greater generalisability because of the universality of the dual role in ministry in all contexts.

Bishops’ management strategies in such situations ranged on a continuum from no support (i.e. in demanding a resignation) to giving priority effort to locating the clergy concerned and spending considerable time with them with the aim of restoration of their ministries.

In this research, an important distinction is made between clergy who engage in sexual misconduct due to a personality disorder, and those who engage in inappropriate sexual behaviour as a response to spousal or congregational conflict. Further, in working therapeutically with women who have been sexually involved with the clergy, there needs to be a recognition both of the damage done to the woman and of the woman’s perception that some benefits may have resulted from the relationship. Congregations who have been through this experience will be reluctant to deal with it, and there is a risk that unresolved issues will be projected on the subsequent clergyperson thus severely jeopardising his or her chances of succeeding in the position (Brewster, 1996). Such a situation calls for

psychological help in counselling clergyperson, spouse and children, making proper provision for the victim and working therapeutically with the congregation as a group.

Bishops have to address sexual issues in their judicial role when these arise from complaints from parishioners. The bishops spoke of complaints about public gay relationships, including clergy attending gay bars and picking up young men for sex. One bishop quoted having to manage the parochial situation of a woman priest in his diocese coming out as a lesbian and divorcing her husband. There have been accusations of married male clergy getting too close to, or having affairs with, women parishioners. Bishops who have convicted clergy sex offenders living in their dioceses were concerned about the responsibility of monitoring. *"I have a retired priest from another diocese living in my diocese after being in prison for sexual abuse"* (1). Additionally, when allegations of sexual abuse against clergy were investigated by police, who then decided there was not enough evidence to proceed, bishops were left to contain an unresolved complaint and the associated continuing gossip.

What emerges from the list of bishops' examples is the wide range of sexuality problems that they address in their Senior Staff meetings. Issues of homosexuality are usually issues of church culture in a situation where a theology of homosexuality has not yet been clarified or disseminated. There seems to be an incidence of marriage breakdown so great that the bishops have felt the need formally to examine the problem but without yet finding resolutions. There was a belief expressed that sexual problems are indicative of other already established psychological problems: *"Sexual problems are symptoms, not roots of problems"* (18), *"two hurt and damaged people meeting"* (10). A link was made with both mental health and identity issues. *"In a depressive state which can lead to low self-image, an affair can be palliative"* (18). This insight is confirmed by a research study which suggests that the profile of a Protestant pastor who is at risk for extramarital activity seems to be that of a person who has low self-esteem coupled with an image consciousness (Thoburn and Balswick, 1994). They identified risk factors of personal adjustment: feelings of mistrust for others; feelings of rejection and shame; consumption of



pornography; family of origin issues; marital adjustment including level of spousal intimacy and satisfaction with marital sex; and factors embedded in the ministerial role, including attraction and arousal with church members, church staff and counsellees. A subsequent study showed that male Anglican clergy who engage in sexual misconduct tend either to be those who feel the stress of their position, may be naïve about the course of their actions and can be educated appropriately to fulfil their vocation, or those who have a world view that says they are entitled to have their needs met at the expense of others and may have to leave the clergy because of personality disorders (Francis and Turner, 1995).

The understanding of the links of sexual problems with other emotional problems is a valuable insight. Additionally, the researcher perceived an underlying hunger on the part of the bishops for a better understanding of sexuality per se. This seems to link with bishops' expressed need to have a professional adviser as a consultancy resource for particular sexuality problems when they arose. A counselling psychologist could meet this need and would be welcomed by some bishops. There are issues both of psychological assessment of healthy sexuality and prediction and assessment of sexual misconduct. These are discussed in Chapter 8.

Problems of sexual abuse by clergy are criminal matters that have to be managed in a bishop's juridical role. Bishops have legal advisers within their diocesan organisational structures, but generally not yet any specialist psychological consultant with whom to discuss individual problems. They often need to be able to assess a clergyperson's options for the future after sexual abuse has been committed. Research such as that of Irons and Laaser (1994) is relevant. This study of clergy who were referred for psychological assessment for reasons of sexual misconduct, primarily sexual exploitation of vulnerable adults, evaluated the need of short-term and long-term treatment and potential for return to practice. The researchers argued that, while rehabilitation and restoration are possible, in most cases considerable effort, a 2-3 year process and contractual provisions for ongoing monitoring would be required. A career change or transition might also be necessary. In another discussion of the problem of sexual addictions of clergy within the



Protestant Church, Earle (1994) suggested a combination of several techniques for the treatment of such clergy. These included individual and family therapy, 12-step groups, rational recovery groups and cognitive restructuring.

A study of cycles of abuse and psychopathology in clergy molesters of children showed that exposure to sexual abuse in childhood was associated with becoming a child molester in adulthood. Clergy offenders showed more sexual conflictedness and less mental disorder than non-clergy offenders, which suggested different psycho-etologies of offending between clergy and non-clergy (Haywood et al, 1996)

A historical and contemporary review of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church found that research on priest offenders was virtually non-existent (Isley, 1997). Demographic data on extra-marital sexual behaviour in the ministry have been collected by Thoburn and Balswick (1998). However, a review of all the research, in particular any which is relevant to the Church of England, has not yet been made, and is a task of immediacy to be addressed. Meanwhile, it would be useful for bishops to have psychological consultancy arrangement with a professional who was well informed in this area.

#### **5.2.4.4 Addiction**

Addiction is a psychological and/or physical state of overdependency. Debt and alcohol addiction were reported of clergy from most dioceses. The bishops referred to a high incidence of clergy in debt for substantial amounts of money. Debt is *"a big problem"*, *"a main problem area"*. Six bishops (24%) reported that their bishops' staff meetings always had some debt cases on the agenda. *"We've dealt with two cases of debt literally half an hour ago...when I say we've dealt with it, I don't think anything we can do will get rid of those"* (22). One bishop said that there are increasing numbers of clergy who are not managing on their stipends (25). Clergy in debt are in a *"financial mess"*. As with sex, debt was seen as a symptom and not the root of a problem. (18) *"Loss of self-esteem can lead to debt, in a 'What the hell' syndrome"*. The era of plastic cards was seen

to have facilitated this. Three bishops (12%) reported clergy currently with alcohol addiction but none reported any direct provision by dioceses or the church to give help. *“Sex, alcohol and money are the things clergy hide”* (19).

There is no research on alcoholism of Church of England clergy. However, in a study of problem drinking in the USA exhibited by clergymen compared to other helping professions, clergymen were seen as needing professional help more frequently than members of the other professions (Scott and Rosenberg, 1998). In the difficulties clergy with alcohol problems have in seeking and accepting help outside the church, there seems to be a case for easy access to an alcohol counsellor via a diocesan counselling service.

### **5.2.5 Poor performance**

*“They failed to deliver what they hoped to achieve”* (15)

Eleven bishops (44%) spoke of the nature and symptoms of “poor performance” explicitly, and all the bishops in the study addressed the condition implicitly.

Poor performance is a concept which bishops have already identified in their episcopal discussions. Poor performance was differentiated from problems of employability, which were due principally to mental illness or the inability of a curate to work with their training incumbent in the period immediately after ordination but before being given individual parochial responsibility. It may be a condition of clergy *“who feel uncomfortable or disaffected in the church organisation”* (6). It was seen as sometimes occurring in clergy who had not been recommended for ordination by the central Church of England selection process but whose bishops had ordained them anyway in the face of the selection board’s rejection. It was also defined as a condition of older clergy who had *“not reached their best or who were past their best”* (4). Poor performance has become a large concern, *“a more than ordinarily acute problem”* (4).

Poor performers ranged from those who were in denial, *“a man can think he is great but is not able to tackle the job”* (12) to those who could not function autonomously;



*“Certain people will always need affirmation” (12), clergy who “failed to deliver what the church or worshippers want” (15), who “had a pattern of recurring breakdown of some aspect of their work” (11), and clergy who “are functioning below the level of their own competence” (16). Characteristically, poor performers “are out of sorts with themselves, their relationships and ministerial tasks, are more than ordinarily an acute problem and keep their heads down” (4), are “unhappy, dissatisfied with themselves and unhappy with people. They know at one level they are not doing the business; they revel in bitterness, in wingeing, in cynicism” (22). Perpetuation of the problem of poor performers was described by one bishop thus: “I can think of one or two cases where the problems are very deep seated and irradicable. People have concealed them, or they’ve denied them, or there’s been collusion when someone’s moved jobs and there has been a reasonable reference. It just doesn’t mention the other things. This happens time after time. So you can appoint somebody on their third or fourth job; every time you see a pattern of recurring breakdown of some aspect of their work” (14).*

Bishops disclosed their feelings of sadness and frustration at the failure of their efforts to manage the problem of poor performers and to help them with their ministry. There were complaints that poor performers *“don’t do things even if they are encouraged” (24): “Those with the biggest problems are those who won’t come for help” (9). “There are people hard to help who are in the wrong vocation” (15), “Sometimes a priest is in complete denial of something which needs to be resolved” (12). If a priest’s ministry is deteriorating, it is very much harder to move or re-employ them (7). “If you place them in the old fashioned context you are colluding with what isn’t best. It may be the only way of keeping that person in ministry...it is a way of coping but it isn’t right for the parishioners” (14). There was concern about the unacceptable incidence and outcomes. “There are too many crises because people haven’t sought help early enough, when poor performance and stress move into some kind of breakdown” (11).*

Empirical research relevant to poor performance of clergy is limited. The bishops’ perceptions may, however, be seen reflected in the extant research. Aldridge (1986) on his



research on the significance of liturgical change, identified 9.6% of his sample who were resistant to changes in the church which were advocated by their brother clergy. Half of this group were aged 60 or over. None were aged below 30. All but one had been ordained for over ten years. Those who deplored the new liturgy were a small minority of disproportionately older men. Aldridge contrasts these with the majority who were forward-looking and confident in their ministry. It is possible, therefore, that poor performance may be linked with passive resistance of older clergy to radical change in the Church of England.

Poor performance may also be linked with personality problems undiagnosed at selection for ordination. Keddy, Erdberg and Sammon (1990) found that American Catholic priests who were diagnosed with occupational problems evidenced a cluster of assessees in their fifties who had long-standing personality problems linked with increasing isolation and low morale.

The symptoms of poor performance described by the bishops seem to match burnout symptoms of apathy, depression and listlessness (Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980) and emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslow and Jackson, 1986). In a historical review covering two centuries, Carroll (1981) suggested that clergy are no longer assessed on personal qualities but on how technically expert they are and how much authority they have. Maloney and Hunt (1991) (see 2.2.5) posit that the general disenchantment, disinterest (sic) and despair that characterises the functioning of many ministers is the direct result of not wanting to be pushed, but not knowing what to do about it. In contrast, effective clergy demonstrated intentional orientation, sometimes in a participative style (Nauss, 2005). This suggests some agenda for clergy training, particularly of older clergy in continuing ministerial education (see 9.2.2).

### 5.2.6 Family problems

*“There is a lot of help required for couples”* (16)

By family problems is meant that cluster of difficulties in clergy family relationships arising from situational stress and inter- and intra-personal problems.

The clergy problems which emerged were seen as having a negative impact on family relationships: *“Behind clergy marriage problems there are underlying problems”* (9), *“I am actually more interested in trying to address the problem one stage back”* (16). For example, it was recorded that the transition from lay to ordained state of the clergy person was often very stressful for spouses and families (4); clergy low job satisfaction puts pressure on marriages; the clergy are under different and competing expectations from family, parishioners and the diocese; the inadequate resources which the clergy feel locked into have a cyclical effect on the spouse; the clergy can’t protect their families because of their public position. Those bishops who addressed this area were agreed that marital issues are sensitive and important; they saw the pressure on clergy marriages as getting greater and greater and they currently perceived a sharp increase in the frequency of clergy marriage breakdown and divorce. Bishops who spoke of family problems were seriously concerned about this growing incidence of clergy marriage failure. *“There has been a distressing run over the past year of clergy marriage breakdowns. My fellow bishops on the team here would all say there is an acceleration”* (5). Crisis situations in the family are common; there may be pressures of debt upon the family (8).

The hard work in the parish ministry was perceived as having a destructive effect on marriage relationships. Under the pressures of parish work, a priest can feel guilty when he is with his wife, and guilty when he is not with his wife. 68% of a clergy sample reported a priest/husband role conflict frequently or sometimes (Fletcher, 1990a). This dilemma may contribute to the conclusion that a clergyman and his wife may become withdrawn from each other, he being over-involved in ministry and she being emotionally exhausted from



her professional employment (Warner and Carter, 1984). In one interview in this present research, a bishop held out his hands to show his marriage ring on his left hand and his episcopal ring on his right. He volunteered that the challenge for him was to balance these two commitments. Maloney and Hunt (1991) (see 2.2.5) similarly argue that two fundamental vows come into conflict when clergy marry. The marriage vow to “forsake all others” implies not only sexual exclusiveness but the exclusion of any other commitment which comes before the commitment to a spouse, including a commitment to a vocation. A construct of “boundary intrusiveness” applied to the problems of clergy families found that clergy often experience a high degree of ambiguity at the boundary between family/home and work. There is some empirical evidence to support the notion of the impact on clergy family life of congregational intrusiveness (Lee, 1995).

A study into theoretical factors that were relevant to, or predictive of, marital adjustment between clergy and their spouses was made by Benda and DiBlasio (1990). Statistically significant predictors were; first, perceived stress from work and family combined; second, number of children aged five years or under; third, perceived stress from family; and fourth, dual or single earner status. The results held for both men and women. A suggested further possibility, though not substantiable from the study, was the amount of congruence in beliefs between spouses about biblical injunctions concerning marital obligations. This study was limited in generalisability by its sample of American Presbyterian clergy, but seminal in providing a theoretical basis for more focused investigations on clergy marriage adjustment.

Additionally, a priest has to live with the tension between a certain mystique of his role as an icon of the divine and the reality of his humanity and sexuality in his marriage, “*the agenda of the person at the altar going to bed with this woman*” (9). This aligns with the suggestion of Mace and Mace (1980) (see 2.2.4) that some of the couples in their sample had sexual difficulties connected with this double relationship. The vocations to marriage and ministry were suggested as very intertwined (Kirk and Leary, 1994) (see 2.2.4). Further, the societal change of wives to working women was seen as putting marriage



relationships under much greater stress. A jaded priest sees his wife going back to work, blossoming and being better paid, and maybe promoted. The absence of satisfaction in his own job puts pressure on the marriage relationship (9) whether his wife is employed or not. Even if a wife is not working, she is at home, watching what is going on from the work centre, aware of, and critical of, the lack of rewards in parish work.

Not only the spouse, but the children are seen as affected by the pressures of parochial work. Mace and Mace (1980) had found that that 28% of pastors' wives had reported that they needed help in adjustment to their husband's ministry over co-operation in raising children (see 2.2.4 for limitations of this study). 59% of a clergy sample recorded priest/parent [father] role conflict frequently or sometimes (Fletcher, 1990a) (see 2.2.5). A first attempt to make some measurement of clergy children's problems was made in the development of the Stressors of Clergy Children Inventory (Ostrander, Henry and Hendrix, 1990). This comprised three scales of adolescent stressors, namely church items, family items and individual items. The reliability and validity were supported in a preliminary evaluation, but were limited by the sample of children of male clergy in evangelical Protestant denominations in the USA.

An investigation of the effect on children growing up in a minister's home indicated the children's perception that more was expected of them than of other children (Anderson, 1998). Conversely, the parents may not meet the children's expectations of parenthood. *"They fail to deliver what their children hope they will offer as parents"* (15). The stress for the clergyperson can be exacerbated when the children get promoted at work and the clergy parent does not. *"I have one priest who says to me, 'My son's being promoted, my wife's being promoted, and I'm not' "* (24). Under such stresses arising from the lack of a career structure in the church (14), it is common for male clergy particularly to close in on themselves, thus exacerbating the family relationship problems (16).

There are commonly problems also in relationships with previous generations in the family. One bishop cited *"the whole business of care for the elderly; the relationships*

*between clergy and their parents” (24), under the pressures of the traditional 24 hour availability of a priest to his parishioners. This problem was found by Mace and Mace (1980) who record that 13% of pastors and 19% of pastors’ wives reported that they needed help in their marriage relationships because of aged parents (see 2.2.4 for the limitations of this research).*

Family problems of clergy were summarised by one bishop as: *“The worst bit is the interface between the private life of the incumbent, wife and family with the public. He can’t protect the family because of his public position” (20).*

In an American study to identify predictors of family functioning among clergy and spouses, it was found that no single stressor seemed influential for all 12 dimensions of family functioning. However, for both husbands and wives, family boundary intrusiveness, lack of social support and mobility stresses influenced their competence in numerous areas of family functioning (Morris and Blanton, 1998).

An American research study investigated the availability of support systems as perceived by clergy husbands and their wives. Results showed that a majority of clergy and their wives perceived that the support services they considered as important to enhance the quality of life for the entire clergy family were not being made available (Morris and Blanton, 1995). No such study has been done on clergy and spouses in the Church of England, but the incidence and severity of the family problems reported by the bishops seems to validate Morris and Blanton’s conclusion. The bishops’ concern about and focus on clergy marriage problems in recent years (see 2.2.4) seem to confirm the importance of this issue.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

The analysis of the problems of contemporary clergy demonstrated a very wide range of psychological problems. Some of these had been partially uncovered in earlier research in



previous decades and there is thus some support from this earlier research for the bishops' perceptions. This present research presents a structured analysis of twenty clergy problem areas in six principal categories which have not been formulated systematically in terms of their relationship to one another in any way before, and in particular since the recent changes in the Church of England and in terms of the provision of tailor-made psychological support systems. The dearth of contemporary psychological research into clergy problems in the UK calls for the initiation of a research programme both to evaluate the generalisability of American research to the UK and also specifically to address the problems which the bishops perceived as extant in the Church of England. This analysis has offered a start to that process.

The sub-categories of the clergy problems found in the analysis were in most instances intersecting sets with some one-one causal relationships between the elements, for example in the case of the impact of situational stress upon the family. In other cases there were one-many causal relationships. For example, intrapersonal problems in some cases generated interpersonal problems in work and family relationships, and resulted in poor performance.

The practitioner implications for a counselling service for Church of England clergy would be to help clergy to address the following problems in therapy and in training:

- boundary intrusion
- manipulation by the media
- management of heavier workloads
- role change, role confusion, role stress and role overload
- post traumatic stress conditions
- relationship problems with bishops and clergy colleagues
- relationship problems with spouses
- managing pressures from the care of elderly parents
- clergy children problems
- poor performance



- identity confusion
- mental health problems
- inappropriate sexual relationships
- alcohol addiction
- debt
- the realisation of individual potential and improving work performance.

The deviant argument against seeing clergy as having problems generalises to a philosophy of viewing problems as a stimulus both to personal growth in the clergyperson and to promoting cultural change in the church. This is a valuable counter-argument which calls for an integration of a theoretical orientation of fulfilment (Maddi, 1989) into counselling psychology practice in the church.

This analysis offers a wide view of clergy psychological problems which goes much beyond the limited analyses of clergy stress in the literature referred to in Chapter 2. As well as calling for further research, the conclusions of this discussion argue for a response to the bishops' concerns by the availability of psychological consultancy on :

- intrapsychic problems in decision-making about a clergyperson's future
- the psychological factors inherent matching a clergyperson to a role
- the etiology and prognosis of sexual problems
- the underlying pressures leading to addiction
- ways to hold a balance between clergy-centred care and the needs of the church
- ways of addressing and disseminating change in the culture and structure of the church.

Psychological consultancy will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 6

### BISHOPS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Nineteen bishops (76%) reflected on their concepts of their episcopal roles and responsibilities. There is no psychological research on bishops per se with which to compare their perceptions. This chapter describes their view of their roles and responsibilities, a description as given of the bishops' support systems that are in place, and the support they reported they would like to have in psychological consultancy.

Historically, a bishop's role was defined as one of superiority and power over other clergy:

Inequality, even such inequality as unto Bishops being ministers of the Word and Sacraments granteth a superiority permanent above ministers, yea, a permanent superiority of power mandatory, judicial and coercive over them, is maintained a thing allowable, lawful and good...(Hooker, 1662)

Hooker's work on the Church of England is still considered as authoritative.

Currently, the role of diocesan bishops is defined by Church of England Canon Law (Canons of the Church of England, 1993):

Every bishop is the chief pastor of all that are within his diocese, as well laity as clergy, and their father in God; it appertains to his office to teach and uphold sound and wholesome doctrine, and to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange opinions...

Every bishop has within his diocese jurisdiction as Ordinary [an ecclesiastic in the exercise of the jurisdiction permanently and irremovably annexed to his office] except in places and over persons exempt by law or custom

Every bishop shall correct and punish all such as be unquiet, disobedient, or criminous, within his diocese, according to such authority as he has by God's Word and is committed to him by the laws and ordinances of this realm (Canon C 18).

The establishment of the Church of England results in the power and authority of bishops being underpinned by the law of the land.

**6.2 BISHOPS’ ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This category was about how bishops saw their own situation, in terms of what they had to do, what support they had, and what their needs were for help. The sub-categories emerging from this category were:

- 6.2.1 Bishops’ roles

6.2.2 Bishops’ responsibilities

6.2.3 Bishops’ support

6.2.4 Psychological consultancy needs

**6.2.1 Bishops’ roles**

All the bishops were clear in owning the ultimate authority they hold in the spiritual leadership, organisation and management of their dioceses. This was observed clearly in their attitudes to their work and also in what was verbally expressed about it: *“The bishop is a depository of authority. It doesn’t help to avoid that; it avoids reality”* (9), *“I can use my authority to act”* (12). *“There is something about the power belonging to a bishop”* (17), *“I can make a decision and need not do anything more* (12). *“The bishop’s role is leadership primarily, and management is part of leadership”* (20). *“In the end, the bishop has to make the decisions”* (18).

The interviewer observed how hard the bishops work in the episcopal role. The research interviews were fitted into a bishop’s schedule of hourly sessions with clergy, diocesan officers and diverse lay people throughout the day, often starting at 8a.m. or earlier, and continuing without break except for an hour for lunch, until 6 p.m., and then usually followed by an evening speaking engagement. It was evident that their workload was



heavy. *"A bishop in the past has worked hard and still does work hard"* (9) in a wide multiplicity of roles and tasks; *"The bishop's role has changed hugely"* (5), and under constant pressure and tension. *"There is tremendous pressure all the time making decisions which change people's lives"* (18). Bishops spoke of the wide range and pressures of their lifestyle: *"the very broad things a bishop has to do, even just the public things, the national church, the House of Lords"* (18), *"Modern communications mean we are much more accessible and the culture requires pretty instant answers"* (20), *"However much bishops do, it is never seen as being enough"* (18).

There was an unequivocal acceptance that the traditional paternalistic role of bishops had been superseded by a more complex role where managerial, pastoral and judicial responsibilities had to be carried simultaneously. Opinions ranged between these responsibilities being wholly compatible to being wholly incompatible in practice.

The struggles with the incompatibility of roles were described openly and graphically in the interviews: *"the difficulty of dual role, the role conflict between father in God and holding clergy futures in their hands"* (17), *"The judicial and pastoral roles are incompatible"* (11), *"The bishop cannot act as a pastor because he is the judge"* (2), *"I find pastor, managing and judicial roles can be in conflict and stressful"* (5). The results of this incompatibility are misunderstanding and loneliness: *"You can't please everybody"* (12), *"I am very threatening to some people"* (14), *"A bishop is on the receiving end of irate lay people. It happens every day here that someone is complaining about someone else"* (18), *"the demanding things people will never know about, because of their nature"* (18), *"You have to absorb a whole lot you can't share"* (5), *"the downside is that you can feel the expectation that you carry all the responsibility"* (24).

The other pole of the compatibility continuum was also represented, i.e. a view of bishops' roles as not in conflict. Some bishops saw their episcopal roles as fundamentally integrated with one another and with their calling: *"I don't see a great conflict as bishop in my roles"* (1), *"The integration of pastoral roles is theologically correct"* (3), *"I am less*

*fussed than some about a clash between pastor and manager and discipline and employer; it is right that there can be an integration of these roles. There is something very significant that you stimulate me to express. I see a seamless robe of myself and my calling” (24).*

Between these poles of the role compatibility continuum, there were positions of juggling both sets of responsibilities by means of a mix of practical strategies: *“I tread a line between neglect and being a thundering nuisance forever asking questions (2), “A bishop’s role is, do what we can in our own personal relationships” (4), “It gets easier if you know, and others know, you’ve consulted and taken advice”(18), “You have to get the roles right, the boundaries” (5), “I extract myself from handing out jobs” (25), “I like to keep out of formal involvement” (11). “I have worked out strategies of living with tension” (12). Delegation was the commonest strategy: “I am completely happy to delegate the pastoral” (1), a carefully worked out sharing of disciplinary cases through formal delegation of episcopal responsibilities to area bishops” (13), “I can deal with the judicial side, and the suffragan or the archdeacon can deal with the pastoral” (7).*

Although it was evident to the researcher that the bishops worked very hard, it was also evident that they found their work satisfying and rewarding. Their descriptors of themselves consistently showed that, although they were inevitably under pressure of work in their episcopal roles, they were not suffering markedly from unhealthy role strain. One reason may be that bishops are screened for a high tolerance to stress before appointment, in a way which does not generally occur prior to clergy appointments.

Additionally, the variety of the bishops’ role is energising. Without exception, they spoke with evident enthusiasm of the variety of demands of their work, in the diocese, in the House of Lords, in the local secular community and in the encounters with clergy of all theological views. *“I am excited by the mix of diverse churchmanships” (2).* Where there were role conflicts, they resolved these either by rationalisation in deciding on strategies to



live with it, or by reducing the salience of one role (usually the pastoral) by delegation, and thus avoiding role strain.

### 6.2.2 Bishops' responsibilities

The bishop's pastoral role was perceived as both dealing specifically with clergy problems and, more widely, caring and supporting the clergy in their personal and vocational growth: *"the time taken up, hours and hours, with clergy problems"* (18), *"as bishop you have to look at the strengths and gifts of the clergy and draw them out and support them in the growth points"* (12).

The bishops who spoke of their own work felt clear about their own episcopal roles. However, the interviewer perceived a marked contrast in every interview between the bishops' confidence in their understanding of their own roles, and the role confusion they described in their clergy. In this dichotomy, the bishops consistently indicated their emotional involvement and sense of responsibility for finding ways to help their clergy with their role problems and personal growth issues. *"I get very saddened and I wish they hadn't got into the mess. I don't resent it in terms of my time"* (20). One of the most experienced bishops said that he puts clergy first on the agenda of every Bishop's staff meeting (14). Another bishop emphasised how important it is for the bishop to know his clergy (12).

The pastoral role was the role that was delegated in practice if delegation was a chosen option.

Seventeen bishops (68%) spoke of their judicial role and defined some of its responsibilities: *"in the disciplinary situation, the bishop is the commissioning agent"*(6) *"the bishop eventually has to decide whether to deprive a person of their living [terminate their employment], whether to recommend disqualification to the Archbishop and whether to depose from holy orders. Those are the three steps"* (2), *"you have to*



*make a distinction between discipline and employability” (6), “it is a question of who to believe” (7), “I had to decide whether to bring in the police or not” (7), “you have to deal with what is unhealthy or risky or damaging” (24), They were open about the emotionally demanding nature of the tasks they had to undertake: “the issue of deposition is very, very, hard. I found it stressful to defrock a man” (13), “you can lose an awful lot of sleep over irrevocable decisions about offending priests” (2), “I had to come to terms with litigation”(12), “sometimes there is enormous pressure to solve a problem too quickly” (8), “the greatest fear is of not perceiving what more needs to be done” (8), “you have to suffer in public taking stories which are not true, and the injustice of this is frustrating and hard to cope with” (3), “you are blocked from explaining to the press or anybody” (12), “it is upsetting to call on a priest and find a Union rep there” (14), “it is perceived widely that the bishop doesn’t care” (2).*

In this last situation, the bishop had had time to reflect on the issue of support of a priest charged with *“an offence of indecent assault or something similar”*. He believed it was possible to offer support as long as it was independent of the bishop, his suffragan bishop and his archdeacons. *“You can do that. Whether it is accepted is another matter, but you can at least offer it, but it needs to be somebody, I think, capable and responsible, who doesn’t report back to you, but in whom you have complete trust”* (2). No suggestions were made about who might give this support. If a bishop had access to a psychologist experienced in handling sexual problems, it could be such a person.

### **6.2.3 Bishops’ support systems**

Bishops spoke enthusiastically and appreciatively about their support systems. *“Bishops are richly placed in a network of supportive encouraging relationships”* (24). Every bishop attends House of Bishops residentials for three to four days each year. The *“barney”* is supportive (7). Each bishop also belongs to a regional group that meets for a meal and an evening together several times a year. *“The regional groups share at quite a deep level”* (16). The members are friends rather than colleagues and *“speaking it out*

*gets it into perspective*” (3). Bishops have been facilitated to share (16). Some bishops have organised themselves into cell groups of chosen peers who spend 24 hours together, with their wives, once a year for mutual support, and where *“anyone can say anything to each other. It is very safe”* (20). At the same time they were open about the tensions and emotional stress involved in their work. *“It is creative, affirming, also rigorous”* (5) The predominant difficult feeling which the bishops experienced in their work was loneliness. This was spoken of by 12 bishops (48%) of those interviewed. *“There is an inevitable loneliness about parts of the job, and you have to accept it”* (5). The loneliness that they described was not so much on the personal level but in the professional decision-making processes inherent in their responsibilities. *“There are problems of confidentiality which affect other people and ecclesiastical discipline which you can’t speak about”* (3).

It emerged therefore that an important feature of the bishops’ lifestyle was the strong support systems they enjoy with their episcopal peers. At the same time, they suffer loneliness in their judicial responsibilities because there are no appropriate persons in the organisational structure with whom to consult. Their perceptions of their consultancy needs are described in the next section.

#### **6.2.4 Psychological consultancy needs**

The bishops readily and openly admitted that they did not have all the professional training and expertise that they would like to see employed in the situations for which they are responsible: *“You can’t train people to be bishops, because it’s not the done thing to want to be a bishop. You have to wait until it happens”* (9), *“I am not competent in that [counselling psychology] field”* (2), *“New bishops don’t understand the counselling set-up”* (4), *“It’s knowing what kind of help clergy need and who to turn to”* (8), *“It is difficult to discern whether someone is much more ill than they are presenting”* (8), *“There are some things I can’t handle myself, or shouldn’t”* (8), *“I can’t find the equivalent psychological category to express this”* (20), *“There are times when I should go and say, I need, I need to talk this one through”* (8), *“ You have to make the decisions*



*alone, but there are people like you to assist” (18), “If there were national availability [of professional psychological consultancy] one might go outside the diocese to do it...it would be a very good discipline to put us to, because we are, as I say, making decisions about disciplinary matters which we could easily be misguided by, or there are many things that condition and control us” (8).*

There was thus evidence in the interviews of strong desires to have professionals to turn to when there were difficult problems to assess and difficult decisions to be made: *“Bishops find it difficult to sort out the difference between the essential and the desirable (15), “I need to be able to talk with someone who has expertise... I am not competent in that field, and I would not take any action in that field unless and until I had the really good advice as to what was the best thing to do” (2), “Most bishops don’t know anything about the subject [counselling] (15), “I and the other bishops need clear guidance for precisely the right professional” (8), “Having an adviser would make it easier for me; bishops need someone to help them reflect on their work, why and how (15). One bishop summed up the potential role of psychologists in the church as “psychologists can help bishops, not just about problems, but in the general care and support of clergy” (19).*

There seems to be a desire, therefore, for co-operation between the bishops and professionals in the psychological world. One research study indicates that the linkage between mental health professionals and religious leaders is too often lacking. It would be a new development. There are barriers but opportunities for collaboration (Weaver et al, 1997). Strategies for promoting clergy-psychologist collaboration include challenging unidirectional referral assumptions, building trust through proximity and familiarity and considering the importance of shared values and beliefs (McMinn et al., 1998).

### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

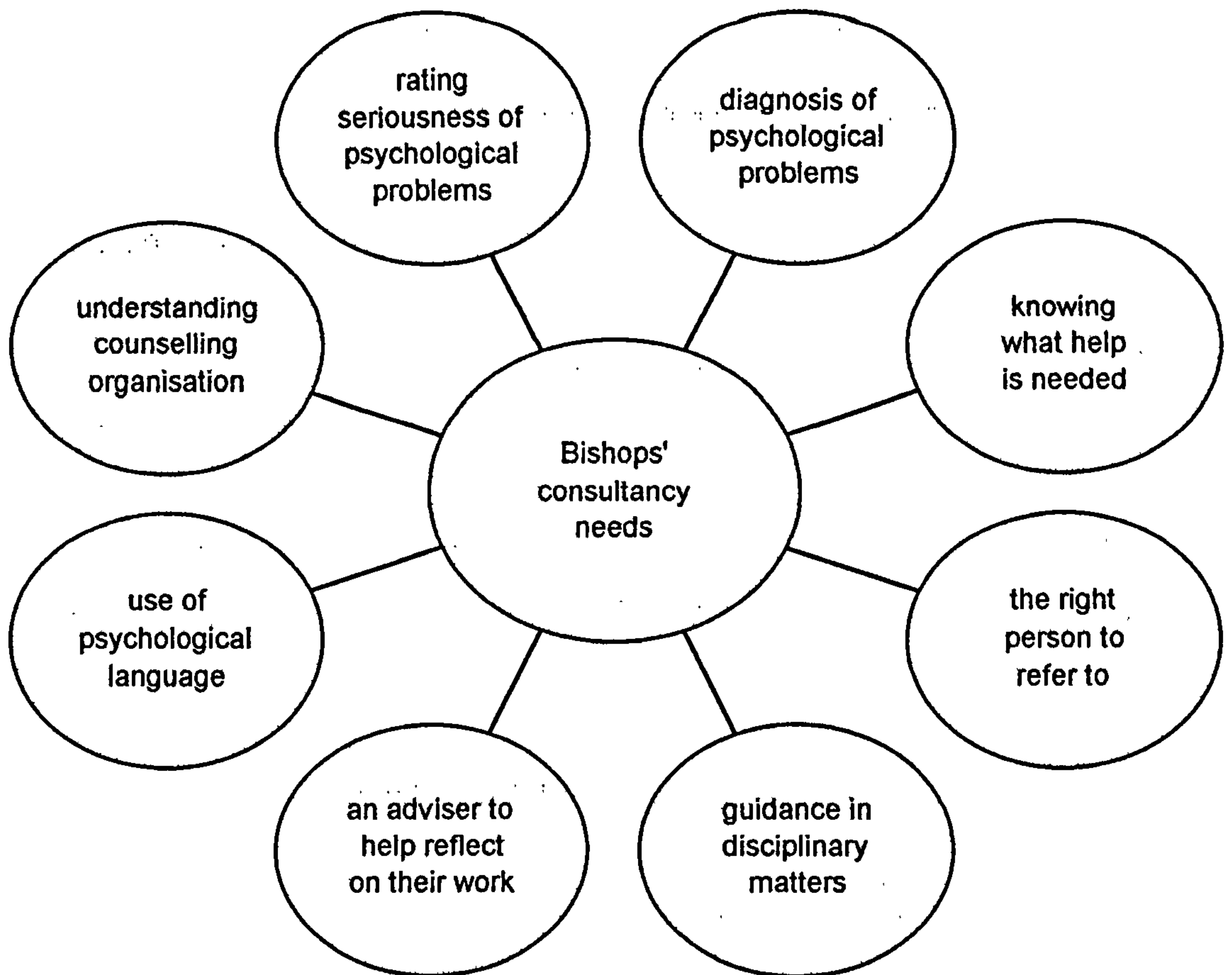
There was a marked contrast between the bishops’ clear view of their roles, responsibilities, motivation and satisfaction in their work, and the picture they drew of



clergy role confusion, many problems and poor performance. The interviewer perceived the bishops' as having quite strong negative feelings about clergy inadequacies, although resentment was denied and frustration and sadness was their preferred description of their emotions.

An important feature of the bishops' lifestyle which emerged was their strong support systems which are resourced by the church. The clergy have no support systems comparable to these. The difference in the resourcing of support systems, the historical and current assertion of a bishop's power and the bishops' feelings of frustration about the performance of the clergy may all contribute to a "them and us" differentiation. This is a historical carry-over that has not yet been completely eliminated and was observed to underlie some of the bishops' pronouncements. This issue will be addressed in Chapter 9, where culture change will be discussed.

This chapter has shown bishops' perceptions of themselves in their episcopal roles and provided descriptors of their pastoral and judicial responsibilities. The bishops' perceptions of their psychological consultancy needs form a consultation process which is illustrated by Fig 6.1.



**Fig 6.1: Bishops' perceptions of their psychological consultancy needs**

The practitioner implication of these needs is that counselling psychologists working with bishops need to be appropriately qualified and experienced, and in this case have consultancy as well as therapeutic skills.

One element of the bishops' expressed needs, that of understanding counselling organisation, will be discussed in Chapter 7.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CRITERIA FOR A CLERGY COUNSELLING SERVICE**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

Every bishop interviewed (100%) spoke about a clergy counselling service. They all began by reviewing the provision for clergy care that they already had in their dioceses (4.2.4). They then went on to extrapolate from there to the provision they would like to have available if they had the resources to make it possible. These views of the practicalities of setting up a clergy counselling service on a professional basis are analysed and discussed in this chapter.

#### **7.2 COUNSELLING SERVICE CRITERIA**

The features which emerged from bishops' perceptions of the criteria for a counselling service were:

- 7.2.1 Professional counselling
- 7.2.2 Clients
- 7.2.3 Counsellors
- 7.2.4 Co-ordinator
- 7.2.5 Confidentiality
- 7.2.6 Finance
- 7.2.7 Dissemination



### 7.2.1 Professional counselling

This section describes the bishops' thinking about desirable developments of professionalism in counselling in their diocesan systems in the future. The motivation for development of professional counselling services varied from the substantial commitment of 24 bishops (96%) to one bishop with no commitment (4%). The bishop with the longest-standing counselling service for clergy reported that he was happy with what he had got, though he was open to change and development. A professional diocesan counselling service was seen in some cases as a development of some provision a bishop already had in place and in other cases as a completely new initiative.

A relevant concern was whether the counsellors who were currently seeing clergy clients were sufficiently skilled in covering the different contextual areas which arise, for example marital issues, clergy going through crises of faith, clergy disaffected with the church organisation. *"People who feel at odds with the organisation, for whatever reason, ought to be, as far as possible, given a forum where they can explore their situation and what can be done about it. Now I'm not persuaded that that side of the counselling set-up deals with it"* (6).

A disconfirming case was a bishop who had reservations about a counselling service that he described as follows:

*"When I was ordained, there was no such service. I never remember feeling that I needed it. I don't think with hindsight it would have been helpful. I have really wondered why this sort of thing is necessary, if it was not so thirty or forty years ago, when people survived without it... The more you provide, the more people think they need it. The more people think they need it may be because the provision is there. I approach it with a slight degree of scepticism"* (11).

This bishop reflected on the most difficult time in his ministry which was during his first incumbency when he had a curate whom he found very difficult. The bishop said of that time *“I was perfectly able to talk to the Archdeacon about it, and the bishop about it, and I didn’t really need to talk to anyone else about it”*. (11) When the researcher facilitated a reflection about the curate concerned, the bishop said *“The other man certainly needed something. He was confused and sad and quite damaged...but I think that if help had been available, in the diocese, as a matter of course, he might have taken advantage of it. Psychological assessment before ordination would have prevented it”* (11). It seems that this bishop had not felt the need of counselling in his own experience, but he did acknowledge that his curate could have been helped by someone with psychological expertise.

The interviews revealed a varied amount of understanding of the nature of professional counselling. Traditionally, helping systems in the church were conceptualised as pastoral care. Pastoral care is seen as an umbrella that covers a diversity of responsibilities including spiritual direction and broadly based support of a non-professional nature. More recently some helping systems under the pastoral care umbrella have begun to employ counselling skills.

In addition, bishops referred to certain specific professional roles that have been created in diocesan organisational structures in response to specific needs identified in secular society. These included the Child Protection Officer, who is professionally concerned with issues of child sexual abuse, and the Bishop’s Visitor, whose role is to provide practical help to spouses from broken clergy marriages.

Bishops showed awareness of the need to differentiate between these functions and that of professional counselling, but, as has been shown earlier in 4.2, many of them acknowledged being uninformed in detail about the actual nature of professional counselling and counselling psychology.



### 7.2.2 Clients

The range of clients perceived as eligible for counselling from diocesan resources ranged from clergy clients, agreed by 25 bishops (100%) to parishioners, suggested by 2 bishops (8%). Eligible lay clients were most commonly perceived to be clergy spouses. It seems that the recent episcopal concern about the increasing incidence of clergy marriage breakdown has generated a sense of responsibility for counselling clergy spouses, but as yet no clear way forward is seen about how to provide this. One bishop gave the example of marriage problems that he saw as not stemming directly from the priest, but from deeply rooted problems in the early years of the spouse. *"How one gets access to the spouse in these circumstances is very difficult"* (4). This was the only recognition by a bishop that marriage problems may arise from intrapsychic problems that need a psychological assessment that explores early-years experiences to understand and resolve. Only one bishop (4%) expressed a desire for availability of counselling for clergy children. *"The real weakness is, we have had no use to counsellors turning by young people. Clergy children are often quite miserable and screwed up people, actually"* (11). Again, this recognition of the effects of home life on child development points to a potential for the church significantly to support clergy children. The practitioner implications for this provision are counsellors with some psychodynamic or object relations insight and experience, along with an informed systemic understanding for family therapy, and knowledge of the special issues of counselling children.

One diocese has a counselling service intended for parishioners who are referred by clergy (6). This service picks up some clergy as well, but the IDCS was considered to be more professional and more specifically designed for the clergy of this diocese. Only one of the bishops (4%) has a counselling service which explicitly provides for other licensed ministers (effectively Readers), diocesan employees, and victims of pastoral abuse (see Part II of this thesis).



Categories of clergy clients spoken of in particular in the interviews included: “ *people referred because the bishop or the archdeacon has pressed them to do so*” (22), “*priests who are undergoing a disciplinary procedure*” (8). A collation of the bishops’ perceptions of potential clients for a diocesan counselling service is shown in Fig 7.1.

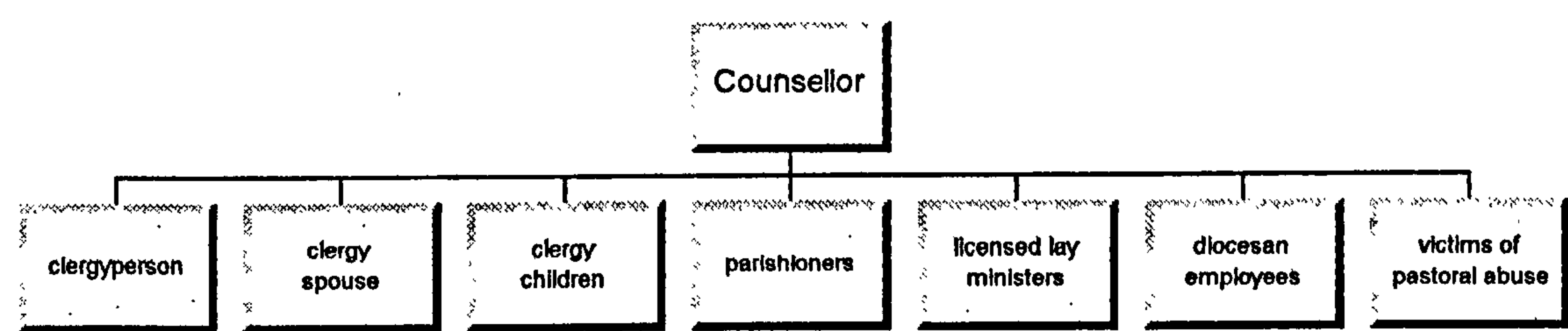


Fig 7.1 : Bishops' perceptions of counselling service clients

7.2.3 Counsellors

Counsellors already used by bishops ranged from some who are professionally qualified to some with training in counselling skills (4). Some bishops made professional supervision a requirement (4).

The interviews showed up confusion in the church about the nature of counselling and the work and ethics of a professional counsellor. There is often a concept of pastoral counselling in the church that has to be distinguished from the professional concept. “*A number of clergy think they are counselling when they are not. There is no sense of boundaries between ‘counsellor’ and client and there is a blurring of the edges between the pastoral and counselling relationship. It often encourages dependency, the wrong sort of dependency. There is no sense of appropriate boundaries with their parishioners*” (22).

In the interviews, the bishops found that they needed to clarify for themselves the differences between the different roles of people who have been loosely thought of as

'counsellors'. *"There is a need to distinguish between counsellor, pastoral counsellor, counselling psychologist"* (15).

There was an issue about counselling in context: *"The contextual thing is absolutely critical to understand"* (5), *"Counsellors must have an understanding of the particular circumstances of the clergy"* (6), *"Understanding the culture of the church is not common amongst counsellors"* (22), *"Understanding church culture must be raised and pursued"* (6), *"There are questions about whether counsellors are skilled in specific clergy issues"* (6). One bishop said that he thought it could be a good idea for clergy to counsel clergy because only clergy understood clergy. The risks of transference and countertransference from the literature are seen in 2.2.1. A counselling psychologist practitioner would have an ethical responsibility to advise a bishop of these risks where they pertained. In the interviews there was some dissonance expressed between the bishop's hopes and the non-directiveness of a trained counsellor. *"Counsellors do not make every effort which could be made to save the marriage. In effect the counsellor is helping people to split up. It is too idealistic to hope that a counsellor would spell out the implications of a marriage breakup. A counsellor is non-directive, but I think some direction is desirable. A bishop does not want to be party to a marital split"* (6). There was concern about a dissonance *"between the counsellor's personal value systems giving messages to a priest about the value of theirs"* (24). *"There is a tension between the curate-counsellor relationship and the bishop-curate relationship...if a counsellor seemed to give foolish advice..."* (6). We see here signs of a resistance towards a psychological understanding that seems to a bishop to conflict with his theological stance. The underlying issues might be a mis-use of theology or a desire to protect the public image of the church. A practitioner in this situation would have to have the language and ecclesiological understanding to be able to dialogue constructively at the church-psychology interface where there was tension.

A deviant case was one bishop's description of his perception of counsellors in another diocese manipulating their bishop. That bishop was seen as *"being taken for a ride by its*



*counselling people. They were empire-building in their own right; they were very self important. It is a growth industry and lots of people are jumping on the bandwagon*" (11). He was suspicious of what he saw as counsellors' arrogant and self-centred stance. This was perhaps an example of the blockage to communication that was a reason for this research (see Section 12 of Part II of this thesis).

The three bishops who were married to professional counsellors had confidence in professionalism. They wanted *"properly trained and reputable and properly supervised counsellors"* (24). Bishops were motivated to work collaboratively with counselling psychologists: *"Networking among bishops and meeting with counsellors offers a good structure* (6), *"It would be an enormous benefit to bishops to develop a group of psychologists and psychotherapists who understood the culture of the church"* (22).

The importance of the counsellor understanding the church context has been discussed in Mann (1999). Questions not raised by bishops were those of matching counsellors to clergy clients. Professional practice has shown that the age and gender of the counsellor can be variables in therapy but there is no research about this in a church context, except that recent research has flagged up the issue of the dynamics of women counsellors working with gay priests (Tucker, 1998). Wahking (1997) describes some of the problems usually experienced in a church-based counselling practice. He describes some Christian insights into the practice of psychotherapy and concludes that Christian therapists have much to offer both clients and the sponsoring church.

#### **7.2.4 Co-ordinator**

The concept of a co-ordinator in counselling in organisations is one of a person who will be responsible for managing the service. This role implies expertise beyond that required in one-to-one counselling. At present, the role of a Co-ordinator is usually seen to be subsumed within the role of Bishop's Adviser. The responsibility of managing a



professional counselling service was recognised. *“How do we make sure we have the right people? Who are the right people?”* (5).

Bishops showed a range of views from the designation of a Co-ordinator as a highly qualified professional counselling psychologist (2,10) to a designation as an administrator/referrer with no professional counselling background at all: *“In this diocese, the best use of a counselling psychologist here would be to build up an easily available counselling system. I need somebody to whom I can refer cases and the task of the professional would be to make a diagnosis and have people on hand who could deal with the problem”* (23), *“I would like an adviser in pastoral care and counselling who had a counselling psychologist on the team”* (15), *“I see an adviser as an administrator who sees people and decides to whom to refer people on. There’s a manager and a person who makes initial assessments”* (25).

Opinions varied as to whether the Co-ordinator should be a priest or a lay person. Underlying these differences was a range of opinion about whether a bishop should continue to maintain the traditional pastoral role of a priest in the context of an Adviser in pastoral care and counselling, or change completely to an autonomous professional lay person.

The bishop with the longest established diocesan counselling service said that it hadn’t been a problem to him having a priest as Adviser, but he would be equally happy to have a lay Adviser (1). His Adviser was a priest and a registered psychotherapist. In this case, the role would not change in the future but the nature of the person fulfilling it might do so, since the number of priests who are registered psychotherapists, qualified professional counsellors or counselling psychologists is extremely small and availability could be limited. The variation in opinion implies a need to define the role more coherently. *“In terms of co-ordinating it and taking it on, we’ve got to look at that again...trying to discern what we are looking for in a co-ordinator”* (5).

Perceptions of the role of a diocesan counselling co-ordinator included the following:

*“I would look for someone with great counselling skills for specialist focused advice” (2)*

*“I see the adviser as a referral point to see the direction to point people in” (3)*

*“Co-ordinators can pass people on to a professional” (14)*

*“I don’t want an adviser who is a channel, a post box or telephone directory access point” (24)*

*“I want somebody behind the scenes who is maintaining the network of counsellors” (24)*

*“Somebody to advise the bishop about the innumerable people who write to him offering help” (7)*

*“Feeding back general conclusions from the counselling to the bishop” (10)*

*“Somebody who could find out whether clergy are well supported and discover ways of facilitating that support (23)*

*“We know the need for coherence, the need to glue it together...ensuring we have the right people (5)*

*“I would like an adviser in pastoral care and counselling who had a consultant psychologist on the team” (15).*

An Adviser’s role would include looking for *“common threads emerging from the clergy counselling, identifying a system which isn’t working very well, meeting a need which hasn’t been identified before, making links with high incidence problems from the counselling service, passing on negative feedback for action” (10)*. Recognition was expressed that a Co-ordinator’s role, although vitally important, had not been clarified enough. *“I am conscious that with all the hard work that’s been put into the support systems, we haven’t got all the pieces of the jigsaw together, and particularly how it’s held together” (5).*

A collation of the bishops’ perceptions of the role of a counselling co-ordinator is found in Fig 7.2.





Fig 7.2 : Bishops' perceptions of a role of counselling co-ordinator

### 7.2.5 Confidentiality

*"Confidence in confidentiality is hard to get, very easy to lose, and very difficult to get back" (6). "There are fears about who people can trust" (24)*

Of the eighteen bishops (72%) who spoke about confidentiality, there was a strong recognition expressed by 16 of them (64%), of the importance of a professional level of confidentiality. *"It would be impossible for a counselling service to have any credibility if it were not completely confidential in principle most of the time"* (11). At the same time,



there was a claim that in times of crisis bishops needed to know *“not the content, but what is happening”*(8).

Different confidentiality models described by the bishops were

- the client refers self to counsellor, counsellor does not report back (4,5,6,8,9,11) : *“There is no suggestion of any formal feedback unless agreed by the person and the counsellor”* (4). *“One certainly wants a system of counselling which those who refer to it feel confident is going to be independent and totally confidential, and therefore one wants something which is seen to be and actually therefore is, at proper arm’s length from someone like myself”* (6). *“Confidentiality must be absolute”* (9).
- the client seeks counselling via the bishop’s Adviser/Co-ordinator: *“I trust my Adviser to arrange everything. I am happy not to know, and believe it is better if it doesn’t come to me”* (4). *“The bishop mustn’t know what the Counselling Co-ordinator is doing”* (25).
- the bishop refers a client, and obtains a three-way agreement between client, counsellor and bishop for the counselling and, if required, a report to be written and shared (1,2,8).
- the bishop does not want to know the content of the counselling, but wants to know what is happening in a particular case (8). *“I might say, I think you need some help, but it must be on the basis that I hear back from the counsellor”* (11). Sometimes this can be negotiated well enough. *“The two most recent clergy made no difficulty about the psychologists talking to me”* (7). However, there was some sadness seen as bishops shared that their felt need to know was not being met. *“Sometimes I feel the need, but I think it would destroy the whole benefit of the counselling”* (8). *“Clergy are suspicious about bishops wanting to know”* (10). *“It is a problem that bishops never get real feedback”* (15).

- the bishop does not want to know the content of the counselling, but does want to know the trends. *“I know that I don't need to know what they talk about, but I do need to know if there are emergent patterns of things everybody's talking about”* (25).

There were eight expressions (32%) of the view that clergy find it hard to trust the system (3,5,7,9,11,24). There needs to be a change from the current ethos of suspicion (10,19,24). One bishop said that there is constant feedback from the counsellors of anxiety about this. *“The terrible difficulty at the moment is to persuade people that the service really is confidential. People don't believe it, and they also think that if I were to find out, I would automatically disapprove of them going. This is very difficult”* (11).

A practicality of maintaining confidentiality is how the client is identified on invoices that are sent from the counsellor to the bishop. Some bishops told of embarrassments and angry clergy due to naming on invoices. There must be anonymity to protect the client. *“Bills do not name the priest”* (2). The practitioner implications for this are for ethical competence in matters of confidentiality. This in turn implies membership of a professional society, either BAC or BPS or UKCP and the necessary commitment to that ethical code.

## 7.2.6 Finance

Sixteen bishops (64%) spoke about the financial implications of counselling the clergy. The sub-categories that emerged were:

- |  |
|--|
| <p>7.2.6.1 economic background</p> <p>7.2.6.2 cost</p> <p>7.2.6.3 sources of finance</p> <p>7.2.6.4 fees</p> |
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### **7.2.6.1 Economic background.**

It was clear in the interviews that the cost of providing professional counselling for the clergy and associated others was immediately and urgently present in bishops' reflections. 64% of them referred directly to this. It was evident that some dioceses were financially comfortable. *"No problem, it is a worthwhile investment"* (1). Other bishops explained that the cost of a clergy counselling service would be a significant problem. *"My experience is that funding is a constant hassle. There are fears about costs. I can't afford someone on the payroll as a diocesan counsellor. I want to buy in, whittling the systems"* (24). Some dioceses are supported by substantial charities (2,3,7).

### **7.2.6.2 Cost**

The cost of counselling the clergy varied on a continuum from £10 000 a year to zero. The cost of £10 000 quoted by one bishop about another diocese includes the cost of a part-time bishop's adviser who is a professional counsellor (3). The bishop of one of the largest dioceses said he paid about £8 000 a year. The bishop of a big city diocese has a budget of £2 000. *"My adviser says it is not enough"* (3). The bishop of a large very rural diocese has a small budget, not well resourced. *"It is an area for improvement"*(4).

### **7.2.6.3 Sources of finance**

There were two potential sources of funding for counselling for the clergy. 56% quoted the use of the bishops' Discretionary Fund, which varies greatly in size from one diocese to another according to the beneficiaries and the level of parishioners' giving. The other, less well-developed system, quoted by 3 bishops (12%), is a provision in the Diocesan annual budget. One bishop, whose counselling service is funded out of his discretionary fund, said that it could be part of the diocesan budget and he didn't mind which it was. He saw the benefit of using his discretionary fund as *"keeping it [the clergy counselling] further away from the diocese"* (6).



#### **7.2.6.4 Fees**

The practicalities of fees were raised. One issue is fees paid to counsellors, which varied from a full professional fee to zero: *“some of the people offer their counselling without charging for it, others who are professional counsellors say they must charge, and that is fair enough”* (11) *“ the counsellor will simply say, I’ve seen two clients and my charges are these* (11). The other issue is the payment of fees by the client. Clients paid on a continuum from full cost to no fee at all: *“some clergy seem quite able to pay for themselves or get money for themselves”* (7), *“the basic principle is that people pay 20% of the cost; one experience of paying all seemed to be a mistake. I try to encourage all who go to counselling to pay something”* (8), *“nobody pays any fees”* (15), *“we will subsidise twelve sessions”* (25).

In the interviews, the researcher observed the considerable anxiety felt by some bishops about the cost of counselling. Associated with this was an unexplained motivation to keep the cost out of sight by means of using discretionary or charitable funds, which are limited in availability. Underlying this there seems to be an ambivalence about counselling costs being known in the public domain, or, sometimes more strongly, a desire to keep the costs and therefore the counselling provision out of sight. There seems to be a dissonance between the open pride of some business, commercial and public service organisations in providing counselling for their employees, and a tendency for secrecy on the part of the church. It is not clear whether this is due to shortage of funds or embarrassment about clergy having problems. There is an issue here to be addressed in further research.

#### **7.2.7 Dissemination**

Dissemination is that process whereby all those concerned are properly informed. Where information was circulated about the availability of counselling, it was normally done in the bishop’s clergy mailing (4) with in some cases a separate copy to the spouse (4). There was strong motivation for improved, effective dissemination: *“I would want every priest*

*and spouse to know they had straightforward access to counselling*” (24). *“Publicising the service is a different issue from confidentiality, the more the better”* (11). *“We need to find ways for people to ask for help in good time”* (4). The message needs to be positive and encouraging to all: *“It is important to get the notion across that it is normal, natural, not seen as a crisis or shameful”* (24). This last view contrasts with the underlying secrecy that seems to be associated with the process described in 7.2.6.4 above.

The practicalities of dissemination were raised. The most common idea was the use of a directory sent out with the bishop’s clergy newsletter. *“We write round all these things in Ad Clerum [the bishop’s regular circular to his clergy] and send copies to wives and archdeacons, and say it and rural deans are reminded of it at Chapter meetings”* (4). There was some commitment to a dedicated phone line but doubt about it being on hand to clients: *“There is a phone number exclusive to the scheme”* (16). *“Even if it [the phone number] has been sent to the priest, and has been sent to the spouse, there is no guarantee that they won’t have lost it. When the crisis comes, they won’t know where the telephone numbers are. So we’ve only just started putting it in our diocesan directory”* (11).

A summary of bishops’ suggested dissemination procedures for a clergy counselling service is shown in Fig 7.3.

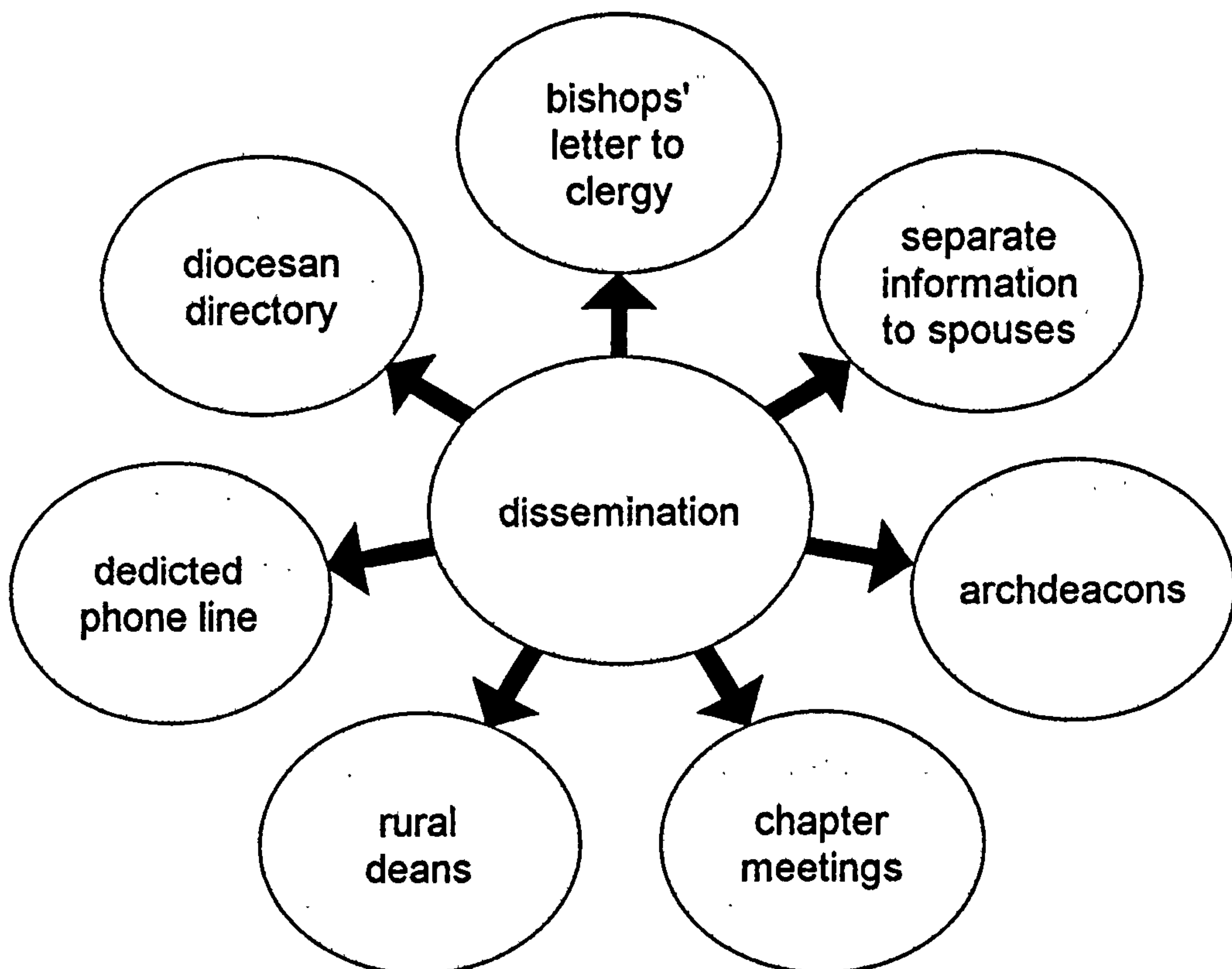


Fig 7.3: Bishops' perceptions of potential dissemination routes for a clergy counselling service

### 7.3 CONCLUSION

*"It's a question of establishing systems which give me a role, a very key role, helping the clergy" (25). "We must somehow ensure we have got better supportive systems in place, supportive not just for crises but to help clergy to grow" (5).*

The bishops' perceptions of principles for the organisation of a professional counselling service included:

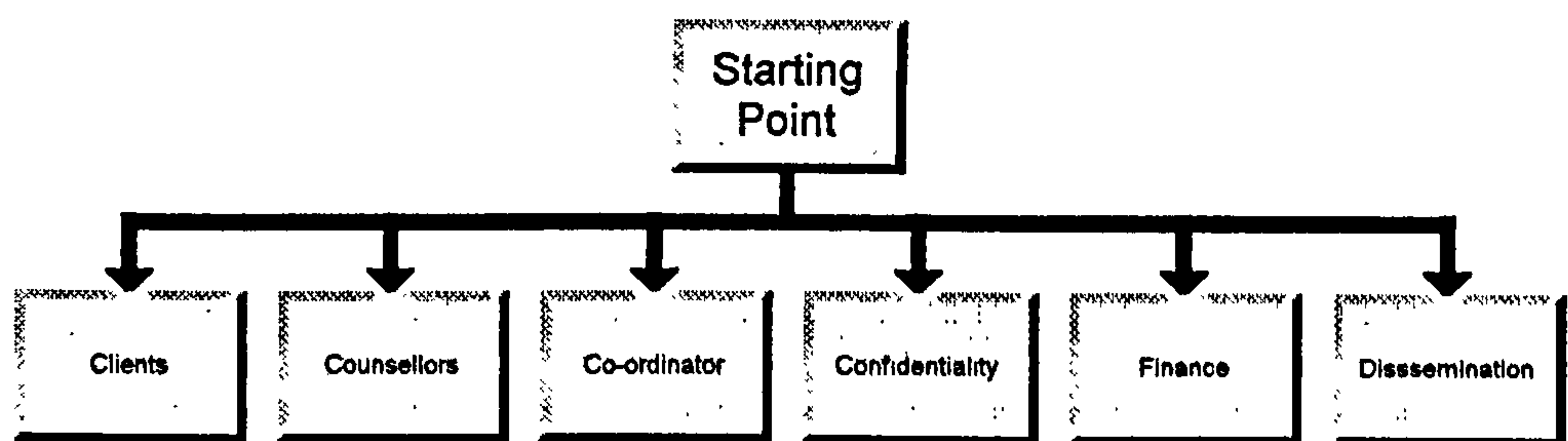
- the service should be independent of other diocesan practical help systems (1,6, 16)
- the service should offer professional confidentiality (6,7, 16)
- it should be modelled on employee counselling services (25)



- it should have properly trained, reputable and supervised counsellors (4, 24)
- there needs to be competent professional psychological assessment (4, 8, 15, 19)
- there should be easy direct self-referral access (2, 4, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25)
- there should be potential for the bishop and his senior staff to refer (3,8,16, 23, 24)
- the provision should be for brief rather than extended counselling (16, 25)
- the service should provide well for one-to one counselling (4)
- initiation of a service should be followed by development (5)
- the service should be available for both personal and ministry issues (5,7,14, 15, 22)
- the boundaries must be clear and understood by everybody (16, 17, 25, )
- counselling must be in context of church culture, structure and clergy issues (5,6,22 )
- there should be a range of expertise to pick up different clergy issues arising (6)
- there should be a structure which the bishop makes clear he regards as something normal (16, 24)
- there should be support not just for crises but to help people grow (5, 16, 19)
- it should provide a forum for people who are at odds with the organisation (6)
- there should be meetings between the counsellors and the bishop (6, 14, 15)
- there should be feedback to the bishop of high incidence problems (10, 15)
- there needs to be a facility for referral to a professional debt counsellor (8,14)
- bishops should meet regularly with counsellors to check clergy workloads and trends (1,15)
- everybody must know the system (15, 16, 25)
- the service should provide for clergy children (11)
- the service needs to facilitate a culture change in the church (5,16, 20, 21,22,)
- the service should generate autonomy, not dependence, in clergy (22)
- there should be a forum to address systemic questions of the church organisation
- there should be a facility for clergy to go outside the diocese for counselling (3, 6,8)
- there should be separate dissemination to clergy and spouses (4,11,14)
- there needs to be clarity about who is the client or commissioning agent (6,)
- counsellors should support the deliverance officer [exorcist] (15)

Although individually, no bishop showed a knowledge of how to set up a professional counselling service, these principles extracted and collated from all the interviews formed a quite comprehensive set of criteria. There was a general good ethical stance on confidentiality. Bishops' reflections on the economic dimension of counselling provision revealed common policies of keeping the costs of clergy counselling unknown except by the bishop. This seeming reluctance to budget publicly for a developing professional care of the clergy is an issue that needs to be researched. A positive characteristic of the criteria was the clear desire for episcopal ownership of a potential counselling system and the wish for evaluation and feedback from it.

The practicalities which the bishops' perceived as needing to be managed in setting up a clergy counselling service are shown in Fig 7.4.



#### 7.4 Bishops' perceptions of the practicalities of setting up a diocesan counselling service

The combination of the above principles and practicalities answers some of the questions posed by Summerfield and Oudtshorn (1995: 16) to help organisations decide about the right kind of counselling for them, namely:

What do senior management want from the provision?

What are the economic constraints?

What level of quality assurance is required?

How will the programme be marketed?

How will the programme fit in with the organisation's culture?

There has been relatively little evaluation of counselling in organisations, and that mostly in the USA. The issues of evaluation and audit have been discussed by Reddy (1993) and Bull (1994). Highley-Marchington and Cooper (1997a) developed criteria measures for both individual and organisational outcomes (1997b). Carroll (1996) in his theory of counselling in organisations (see 2.2.2) suggests seven dimensions of evaluation: statistical audit, client outcomes, and counsellor, organisational, supervisor, process and outcome evaluation. Carroll also suggests an integrative model of counselling in organisations. Client evaluation questionnaires have been developed for use in a commercial firm, a hospital staff counselling service and the Prison Service (Carroll, Broadbent and Mann, 1996). The combined bishops' perceptions of a model of counselling for clergy is adequate to admit of evaluation in these dimensions.

It is relevant to note which issues did not arise in the interviews when the bishops were reflecting about desirable characteristics of a diocesan counselling service for clergy. Some of these not arising were specialised kinds of counselling, such as counselling for the stress suffered by homosexual clergy (Fletcher, 1990a) for post traumatic stress disorder, and stress management and using stress creatively. Some were professional issues, which might be expected to be outside bishops' knowledge and experience. These include the provision of professional consultative supervision, the responsibilities of the diocesan organisation to the service co-ordinator and counsellors and vice versa, and all the ethical issues of contracting which are necessary when counselling is provided in an organisation.

None of the bishops raised a need for a diocesan counselling service to make provision for counselling victims of clergy abuse. There was no reference to a need to understand the effects on victims of abuse and for the church as represented by the diocese to accept responsibility appropriately. Francis and Turner (1995) showed that women who have been sexually victimised by clergy suffer the trauma of all sexual victims, but in addition often feel betrayed and shamed, and may be ostracised by the church. Many other churches have policies to provide psychological care to victims. There was no evidence



from the bishops' interviews that the dioceses of the Church of England have any such policies.

A decade previously, Fletcher (1990a: 116) had argued that the church needs to redefine its structure with respect to care, control and counsel. He criticised the structure of the church for creating severe problems for the clergy and for the church itself because it seemed to vest care, counsel and control overwhelmingly at the sole level of the bishop. He argued for the formation of an independent and confidential advisory and counselling service for homosexual clergy that should be independent of the Church of England and of church sponsored clergy support groups for homosexual clergy. Instead such services should be modelled on what have subsequently become known as Employment Assistance Programmes in commerce and industry. The guiding principle should be independence, availability, wide scope and being voluntary and free (see 2.2.4).

Practicalities of the administration of a potential counselling service were not considered in any of the interviews, except for the statement that a bishop's Adviser should not be just a communication line between the clergyperson and a counsellor. A counselling psychologist practitioner would have to be sufficiently informed in the administration issues of counselling in organisations to be able to guide bishops in these arrangements

There were no reflections about counselling theory and counsellor orientation in counselling the clergy. These were out of bishop's knowledge. However, there was a need expressed for psychological assessment. This will be analysed and discussed in Chapter 8.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF CLERGY**

#### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

Fourteen bishops (56%) spoke about professional psychological assessment. The term is used here in a wide sense to include psychological assessment interviews and psychometric testing by psychologists who are qualified, competent and licensed for this purpose. The use of this kind of assessment with clergy has been explored a little in the USA but scarcely at all in this country. Psychometric instruments are sometimes used in a limited way in clergy training, but only in a non-professional context. These instruments are usually the Enneagram (Wagner and Walker, 1983) and the Myers Briggs Personality Test (Briggs and Briggs, 1977). Their purpose is to give trainees a non-threatening initial understanding of the concept of personality differences and a sense of their individual uniqueness. A cognitive psychometric test is administered to candidates for ordination by the Advisory Board for Ministry (ABM) in the central assessment process of the Church of England but this is necessarily limited in assessing only one dimension of a person.

#### **8.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF CLERGY**

Psychological assessment is here taken to mean an assessment in different modes that include psychological interviews about past history and present psychological state and the use of psychometric tests. The bishops' reflections on the potential use of such multi-dimensional psychological assessment, and this discussion of them in the light of psychological research, are new developments for the Church of England. This chapter therefore begins a process of filling a gap in the theory and practice of clergy assessment.

Bishops reflected about the use of psychological assessment at all stages of clergy career, i.e. in initial assessment before the formal selection procedure, in the selection procedure

itself, during theological training, and in the diocese during ordained ministry. At any age and stage, therefore, psychological assessment would have a role *“for initial assessments in a professional counselling service for clergy”* (25).

Three sub-categories of psychological assessment emerged from the analysis:

8.2.1 Assessment in selection processes

8.2.2 Assessment for diagnosis

8.2.3 Assessment for personal growth

### 8.2.1 Assessment in selection processes

The interviews showed up some problems arising when theological colleges have recommended against ordination. Bishops have at times ordained people against these recommendations. *“Bishops have ducked the issue at that point. They have gone ahead and ordained, and within a year have been saying to the theological college, ‘Why didn’t you warn us?’... There is an inbuilt expectation that people will be ordained once they start training, and therefore if it comes to a decision to say ‘no’, that is abnormal”* (3), *“You just hope that the whole selection and training system will be spotting these difficulties sooner”* (11).

There is some use of psychometric assessment in the initial central selection processes for ordination, but this assessment was recognised by bishops as comparatively limited in scope. Theological colleges often use non-specialist tests *“personality types, Myers Briggs and Enneagram”* (16), but *“I am not convinced that we have actually got our act together on this yet”* (3), *“Professional assessment is something I suspect I shall have to get into more”* (6). There was recognition that other churches accept psychological assessment as a normal process in ministry. *“The American episcopal church insists on psychological profiles”* (3).



The desire for professional psychological assessment was strongly evident in the interviews: *“Counselling psychology expertise is important for our selection procedures”* (3), *“in discerning vocations”* (8), *“in colleges and courses”* (10), *“to pick up problems before ordination”* (21). A bishop who was a past chairman of ABM called for *“a multi-dimensional psychological assessment for selection for ordination”* (10).

There has been no psychological research published on processes of assessment in Church of England selection of clergy. In the USA, a Theological School Inventory (TSI, 1972) was developed to assess the various components of students' motivation for becoming clergy. Its particular contribution was to measure the sense of self-evaluation of talents as well as a sense of divine call. Banks et al (1984) examined a number of psychological variables in order to discriminate between applicants who were accepted and those who were rejected by the Franciscan Order. Findings revealed that those who were accepted scored higher on indices of affiliation, aggression, exhibitionism, harm avoidance, play and the MMPI Sc (Schizophrenia) scale, and lower on the MMPI Si (Social Introversion) scale than did applicants who were rejected. Banks et al (1984) pointed out that the purpose of predictive research is to identify these variables and to “modify the intuition of evaluators in a clergy selection system” (Banks 1984: 89).

Keddy, Erdberg and Sammon (1990) found that many Catholic clergy referred for therapeutic treatment had long-standing personality problems. They reported that thorough evaluations at the application, seminary [theological college] or novitiate [initial training] levels could have identified the need for help in these clergy members at a much earlier stage.

In the past, selection has been most commonly conceived as a process for selection for training for ordination. Appointment of parish priests was done directly by the bishop. More latterly, however, and increasingly, jobs in parishes have begun to be advertised and several applicants have been invited for interviews in a more open procedure. In this

situation, bishops expressed a felt need for some help in assessing applicants *“when people are interviewed for jobs”* (21).

Banks et al (1984) found that clergy who persisted in their vocation tended to score lower on measures of dominance, nurturance, harm avoidance and MMPI Sc and Pt (Psychasthenia) scales, and higher on measures of affiliation and the MMPI Si scale, than those who terminated their vocation. It is noticeable that some traits favourable to acceptance in initial selection were not favourable to persistence, e.g. harm avoidance and schizophrenia.

### 8.2.2 Assessment for diagnosis

The use of psychological assessment by bishops in their dioceses varied from none at all to some use of psychometric assessment as described in 8.1. Five bishops (20%) openly admitted that they had no knowledge of the field: *“I’ve never done this, and nobody has told me how to do it... I wouldn’t know who to go to, I wouldn’t have known where to start”* (6), *“I’m lost to know how to make fair, proper assessment a matter of course”* (11), *“In reviewing advice from the Advisory Board for Ministry about candidates for ordination, I have never asked a professional counsellor to corroborate what the selectors are recommending”* (8). There was, however, some motivation expressed to invest in psychological assessment more: *“It would be protective for a bishop. I would be interested in knowing what people could offer advice”*(6), *“There is a potential weakness which I see in myself...of knowing what kind of help they need and who to turn to”* (8).

In their pastoral roles, the bishops’ need was for assessment to help to understand clergy when problem situations arose, and when it was difficult to discern underlying causes: *“for the bishop to be able to look through the psychologist’s spectacles”* (15), *“for clergypersons who do not allow themselves to disclose”* (24), *“to understand what has happened to a priest”* (5), *“to identify some of the roots of things which may be wrong”* (4), *“to alert the bishop to potential difficulties or something not addressed”* (11),



*“There will be a significant number of clergy who need professional help; there will be a handful who will need very detailed and specialist help” (16), “in discerning whether someone is much more ill than they are presenting” (8), “for poor performers” (4), “when the bishop is questioning whether a person is not physically well” (21).*

In a bishop’s judicial role, psychological assessment would assist in making and implementing legal decisions: *“for professional advice in disciplinary cases” (21), “for people who don’t have the freehold, it’s a real weapon” (6).*

### **8.2.3 Assessment for personal growth**

Five bishops (20%) saw psychological assessment as being useful for a foundation for personal growth through self-awareness: *“to help in recognising growth points” (3), “for personal development” (4), “the assessment of development people are looking for when they are in post” (21), “to release somebody for more effective satisfying ministry” (4).*

The multi-modal psychological assessment profile developed by this researcher meets all the above bishops’ criteria. This profile is described in Part II of this thesis. One element in the battery of psychometric tests used in this assessment is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2). An investigation of the reliability of this test with normal male clergy was made by Putman, Kurtz and Houts (1996). They found that the four-month test-retest reliability of the MMPI-2 appears to be acceptable and compares favourably with the original MMPI. A strong advantage of the MMPI-2 Personality Inventory is that it shows up psychopathology as well as personality characteristics. A further advantage is the potential for the use of an MMPI-2 assessment to be used therapeutically for the clients’ psychological growth (Newman and Greenway, 1997)

The psychological literature records only one psychological assessment procedure for clergy, and that has been designed for applicants to religious life in the Catholic Church (Plante and Boccaccini, 1998). This assessment consists of:



- [i] an autobiographical statement
- [ii] the MMPI-2 Personality Inventory (Butcher et al, 1989)
- [iii] the 16 Personality Factors Questionnaire (Cattell & Cattell, 1993)
- [iv] the Forer Structured Sentence Completion Test
- [v] a semi-structured clinical interview, focusing first on the client's psycho-social history and then on their vocational history.

Plante and Boccaccini (1998) claim that their assessment protocol has been used successfully with applicants to a major Catholic religious order. They found that applicants who were accepted showed elevations on the MMPI-2 K (defensiveness or possibly psychological well-being), Hy (histrionic) and Mf (masculinity) scales and low scores on sub-scales measuring anxiety, depression, anger, Type A personality and obsessiveness. The 16PF results indicated that successful clergy applicants were bright, imaginative, sensitive, emotionally stable, trusting, forthright and self-assured.

The authors offer the useful suggestion that the utilisation of a standard clergy assessment profile creates the opportunity for the establishment of a national database for conducting research on clergy applicants. The use of their assessment protocol, or its equivalent as described on Part II of this thesis, could be a means to establish generalisability of these findings among Church of England candidates for ordination.

The assessment instruments and procedures discussed above are all used with a wide variety of populations in psychological practice. The question arises whether instruments based on scales of religious variables would be more beneficial for use with clergy. Some research has been done in this field. For example, research studies in the USA have investigated the use of the Religious Problem-Solving Scale for showing clergy coping styles, whether collaborative (partnership with God), self directing (taking total responsibility, or deferring (leaving it up to God). The most recent research substantiated these three distinct scales and argue support for a fuller consideration of the religiosity variable in problem solving and coping for clergy (Fox, Blanton and Morris, 1998).

The value of a multi-modal psychological assessment is supported in a journal article by Lester (1996). A balanced approach to a psychological assessment battery is recommended which addresses personal need, pathology, treatment, institutional accountability and care planning.

There will always be particular assessment needs occurring from time to time which will necessitate additions to a standard profile format. The research offers some models that have specific applications. For example, an ethical decision-making model to assist clerical professionals in clarifying ethical issues and deciding on an appropriate course of action has been developed. Five ethical principles applied to ethical dilemmas for impaired clergy are discussed, and include autonomy, non-maleficence, fidelity, beneficence and justice (Von Stroh, Mines and Anderson, 1995).

Assessment of sexual abusers is not at present an issue for the Church of England, since allegations of sexual abuse are referred to the police. However, in view of the paucity of good treatment in this challenging area, it is possible that Church-based assessment and treatment schemes could be developed as a provision to help offending clergy towards a better future than they have at present. The research extant on Catholic sexual offenders could be of use in this. For example, a set of variables useful for screening for past sexual experience as a victim and other traits identified as leading toward paedophilia was summarised by Ruzicka (1997). She found men who were well educated, of average to above average intelligence, with limited admission of substance abuse. 80% of her subjects in her research reported prior psychiatric history. All denied having been abused as boys by other clergy. A fuller discussion of this is included in Chapter 10.

### **8.3 CONCLUSION**

Bishops perceived psychological assessment as helpful to them in their decision-making processes in their pastoral and judicial roles. *"The psychometric testing side is a very*



*helpful tool”* (10). The uses of psychometric assessment which emerged are summed up in Fig 8.1.

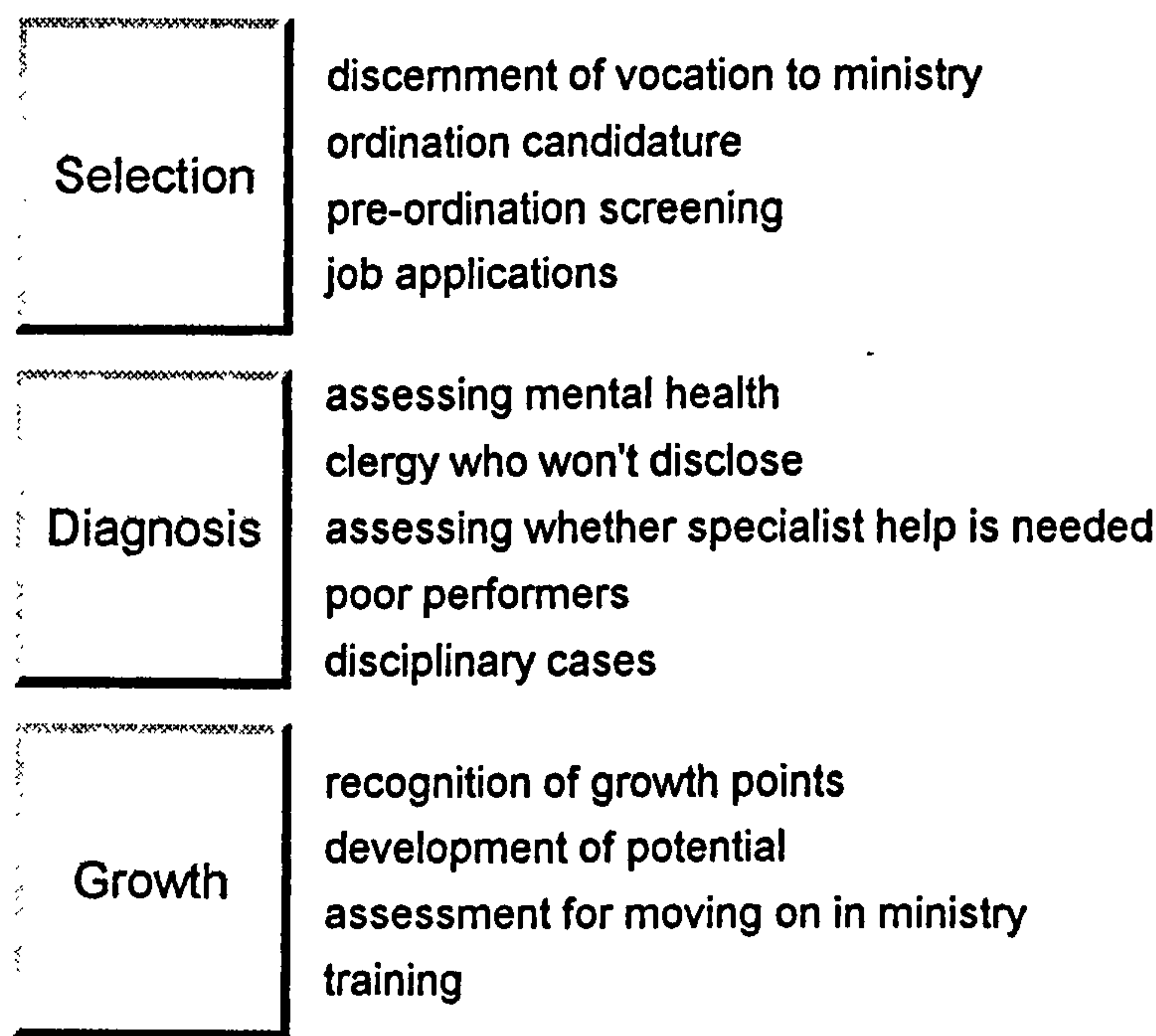


Fig 8.1 Bishops’ perceptions of the potential of psychological assessment

The bishops’ criteria for clergy assessment call for a multi-modal assessment protocol which combines psychological interviewing with psychometric testing. The different elements of such a protocol fit together to give a psychological understanding of the clergy vis a vis their persons and vocations. This has applications in selection, in diagnosis and in counselling for personal growth. A model showing the principal elements which have been successful both in England and in the USA is shown below:



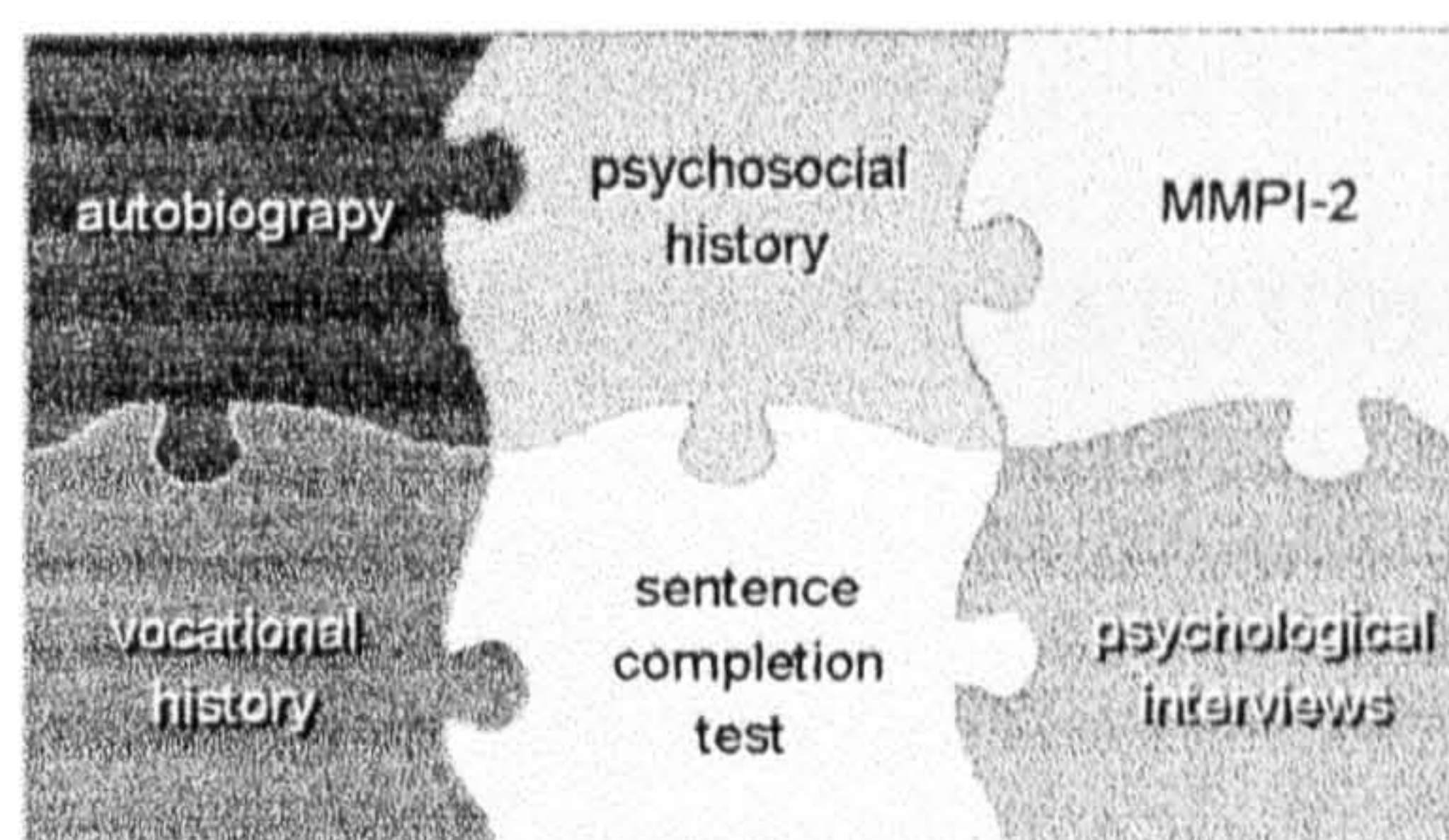


Fig 8.2 Model for psychological assessment to meet bishops' criteria.

The new questions which arise from the analysis and discussion in this chapter are twofold: how psychological assessment may best be accessed by bishops and how there may be further appropriate developments made in research and practice to underpin this. The practitioner implications are that some diocesan counsellors should be licensed to administer tests such as the MMPI-2, and experienced in multi-modal assessment in a therapeutic style.

# **CHAPTER 9**

## **CHANGING CHURCH CULTURE**

### **9.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter analyses and discusses bishops’ perceptions of the need to organise a change in the church culture and structure to adapt to contemporary society and to church economic pressures. It then derives an agenda for training from the bishops’ discourses that would facilitate the process of such change. There follows analyses and discussion of the bishops’ views of the nature of ministry support that they would like to see provided for their clergy in the new culture.

### **9.2 ORGANISING CHANGE**

The bishops’ perceptions are described and discussed under the following headings:

- |  |
|--|
| <p>9.2.1 Changing church culture</p> <p>9.2.2 Training</p> <p>9.2.3 Ministry support</p> |
|--|

#### **9.2.1 Changing the culture of the church**

An organisation’s culture can be described as the pattern of norms and attitudes held within that organisation (Hayward, 1996). Organisational culture is about the ethos, the personality and the atmosphere of an institution which significantly determine the behaviour of its employees. It is reflected in “the way we do things round here” (Carroll 1996: 72). Organisational culture is becoming an increasingly important concept. It is irretrievably bound up with fundamental strategies of current functioning, including



selection and training within the organisation. Any programmes directed at change must take the organisation's culture into account or be doomed to failure (Schein, 1990).

Church culture was spoken of at least sixteen times in the interviews with deep concern, sometimes to the point of anxiety. Bishops felt that it was imperative to change the culture of the church: *"It's changing the culture..."* (16), *"Fundamentally, we are looking for a change in culture"* (21), *"Understanding church culture needs to be raised and pursued"* (6), *"The culture in some places is no praise, no thanks, plenty of complaints"* (19). The transcripts of the interviews revealed questioning on more than twenty occasions about how changes might be brought about; the researcher perceived a strong underlying uncertainty of how to manage the change. Bishops spoke of being under pressure to respond quickly to changes in society: *"There is a cultural change behind all this"* (18), *"The cultural reality is a searching test for bishops"* (13). Their concern is justified by the finding that 62% of people had stopped attending church because it was irrelevant to their daily lives (Fanstone, 1993). Brierly (1995) had found that only 11% of the population in England were attending church regularly. There is a pressure at the same time upon the bishops to resist change to fundamental values. There is a conflict to be resolved between these two pressures: *"We are at a point in time contextually of incredible, dramatic, accelerating changes; the church has to respond with speed and also hold on to the eternal verities. In the context of change, how do you relate the two?"* (5).

The dilemma for the bishops is to find a model of change which will match the adaptations which have to be made, but which do not conflict with the fundamental values of the church as located in the Christian gospel. Models of organisational change used in commerce and business do not fit with the aims and goals of the church, which are not to produce a product or make a financial profit. In pursuing the differences between the organisational issues of a commercial company and the church, one bishop said: *"We can say where we are going and what the characteristics and aims are in heading in a particular direction, but it is not quite like a company producing a product"* (21). In his



interview, this bishop was searching for an appropriate model for change. He considered and rejected a model taken from the commercial world. He did not know where to go next. He was aware of the existence of research into organisations in the context of business structures and also of systemic thinking in terms of family structures. He regretted the void of expertise in understanding and managing the organisational issues in the church. He envisaged that a psychological consultant observer could be useful to him. *“In terms of the level of skill and understanding of somebody being able to observe what is happening, that could be very helpful to the process. There is something, something churning around; you think, well I wonder what this is about. It is a massive area, yeah, analysis of that kind of area... The church structure is such a peculiar one; it has elements of all sorts of different things tucked into it, it adds new bits or remodels bits, but doesn't get rid of the old bits”* (21).

It is a new idea in the church that a psychologist consultant might be able to help. The traditional insularity of the church from the world of psychology (see 2.2.1), and lack of knowledge of the special expertise of counselling psychology (see Chapter 1) have precluded an understanding that bishops might use insights from counselling psychology to help them to make changes in the church.

Questions and thoughts emerged about improving poor performance and the pressure of managing change with inadequate resources: *“How do you get a system analogous to that in a company where performance is measured?”* (4), *“In theological college, I would set up targets for the year ahead; it is harder to do that in a diocesan context”* (16), *“In any other organisation these would have people assigned to them. We are trying to manage all the processes ourselves; this is because of the lack of resources”* (14).

Change was a constantly recurring theme in the bishops' reflections about the church. The most fundamental and inescapable change that emerged in the interviews was a change in the fundamental leadership style in the church. Such changes will have to be radical but it

is not known how they will work out: *"We are looking for a change in culture, a change from directive leadership from the front to shared collaborative leadership. There has to be an exploration of long term goals, rather than goals very clearly stated"* (21). The clergy themselves will have to change: *"We are into the business of professionalising the clerical profession. The English system has been developed on the so-called gifted amateur. How do we professionalise it to meet the expectations generated in the theological colleges? We are light years away from that still"* (4). *"We are quite specifically going through a period of managed change, in that there are a lot of practical things that have got to change...things which are determined by outside criteria. But it is more fundamental, we are looking for a change in culture. Part of it is changing from a leadership from the front, and fairly directive, to something which is more collaborative and shared..."*(21).

Although the concept of professionalising the clergy was frequently implicit in the bishops' perceptions, and explicit as in (4) above, none of the bishops defined what professionalism might mean in practice in ministry, nor did they argue for the concept per se. In sociological analyses of clergy uniqueness there have been arguments posited against conceptualising ministry as a profession. Gannon (1971) suggested that ministry is more a calling than a profession, because clergy lack a clearly defined technical body of knowledge that can be applied as independent practitioners to the solution of technical problems, unlike for example, doctors and lawyers. Maloney and Hunt (1991) argued from Carroll's (1981) four models of clergy types that none of these meet all the criteria for a profession, in particular the offering of knowledge to the public independently. They must work in an organisational role, endorsed by and responsible to, their church body. A better conceptualisation for clergy would be "servant bureaucrats" (Maloney and Hunt, 1991: 9). This debate is still open. It needs to be researched in the context of a contemporary understanding of both professionalism and ministry in the church.

None of the bishops reflected how they themselves might have to change as the culture changed. Nevertheless, there would be significant systemic implications in such a change



of culture for their power and authority base, and a need further to dissolve the “them and us” relationship referred to in 6.3.

This last bishop quoted went on to speak of the underlying dynamics of the church hierarchy, their fears and conflicts and the difficulty of interpreting what was going on. *“It is certainly triggering quite a bit of anxiety ...and that would be very closely associated with the understanding of authority, the bishop’s authority, the church’s authority, the authority of the Bible, and it’s quite difficult in those really quite intense discussions or confrontations, to know what is happening, and if that gets tangled up with structural change, reorganisation and so on, it’s quite difficult to know what you’re actually dealing with, whether you are actually addressing the agenda on the paper, or whether there is something quite different churning around”* (21). There is a perception of powerful activity at the psychological level that is difficult for a bishop to interpret. To resolve this, psychologists, bishops and clergy need to work together: *“There is a need to bring the culture of a dialogue with psychologists to the House of Bishops”* (9). *“The culture of the future is linked to fellow priest, counsellor, work consultant or psychologist. Could anything be done to build up a culture where outside advice isn’t judged...as being to do with career progression?”* (22). This bishop suggested that it would be of enormous benefit to bishops if psychologists could develop a group who understood the culture of the church well.

Carroll’s theory (Carroll, 1996: 37) of how counselling psychology can change organisational culture offers some answers to these bishops’ questions. Carroll lists eleven ways in which counselling can be used as a form of organisational change. However, this would not arise simply out of setting up a clergy counselling service per se. Highley-Marchington and Cooper (1997a) concluded that while the introduction of a counselling service may well be of benefit to individuals, psychologically, there is unlikely to be any impact at the organisational level unless an intervention targeted at changing the organisation is also in place. This supports Carroll’s (1996) application of counselling to the culture of the church in terms of counselling psychology theory, research and practice.



These theories align with the needs perceived by the bishops in the organisation of the church. An application of these theories posits that change of culture in the church may be facilitated by:

[i] providing a forum where people are listened to, trusted, respected and helped to make life-growing decisions. See 7.2.1.on the need for those who feel at odds with the organisation to have a forum where they can explore their situation and what can be done about it.

[ii] setting up training See 9.2.2

[iii] consulting with managers about ways of working with individuals and groups within the organisation. This could include consultancy, in the style of Bor and Miller (1990), based on counselling psychology theory and practice (see 2.2.3), of counselling psychologists:

- with bishops and their senior staff in serious pastoral and judicial responsibilities
- with training incumbents responsible for curates who have problems
- with rural deans who are responsible for clergy in their deanery who have problems.

[iv] managing individual and organisational change and transitions. Carroll reiterates that counsellors are adept at managing change. They understand the dynamics of transition, they epitomise the flexibility which is necessary for an organisation to thrive in the modern world, and they are able to deal with ambiguity. They can help to clarify roles and relationships when these are confused and conflicted (see 5.2.2).

[v] helping with bad news. Rejection or delay in the face of expectations of ordination are experienced as traumatic by those who have believed themselves to have received a divine call to ministry. Also, pastoral reorganisation can be bad news for those who lose a small and valued parish scenario in a change to a larger and seemingly more impersonal set-up.

[vi] looking after those made redundant. The church rarely has to deal with redundancy as such, though occasionally issues of prior termination of ministry arise. Very common and psychologically analogous however, is the situation of a priest's retirement. There is a massive loss of status in the community, combined with possible severe financial stringency, and isolation from a system that has been their total lifestyle environment rather than a nine to five job. Counsellors understand the emotions associated with these losses and can help.

[vii] modelling professional relationships for the organisation. In the church, counsellors can be models of boundary keeping, exemplars of ethical and professional consistency and can teach the organisation about professional relationships in ministry (see "*professionalising the clergy*" above). They can be a conscience that reminds the church organisation about human responsibilities in the face of financial pressures and lack of work contracts, and at the same time be able to recognise unused potential. They can model and teach personal ethical responsibility in terms of monitoring emotional fitness for working with people.

[viii] empowering individuals and groups within the organisation. A bishop is recorded above as speaking about a change from directive leadership from the front to shared collaborative leadership (21). Counselling psychology philosophy and practice focuses fundamentally on helping individuals to access and use his or her own power to solve their problems (see Part 1 of this thesis). Counselling has much to offer bishops on how to help clergy activate their unused power and potential in leadership. This is particularly apposite to the problems the bishops raised about poor performance (see 5.2.5).

[ix] creating an awareness of individual differences. Counselling psychology theory and practice emphasises that people are the same in some ways and unique in others. Differences of gender, age, race, culture, religion and sexual orientation are seen as the richness of human life. In counselling practice, people are not treated the same. Their uniqueness is recognised and respected. This is a good model for ministry, especially with



respect to the identity problems of clergy that are commonly found in counselling practice (see 5.2.4.1).

[x] helping organisations grow by teaching them the value of contexts. Counselling psychology through systemic theory gives insights into how change in one part of an organisation can affect individuals and groups in another. This means that when there are patterns of problems in the church, it is important to ask the systemic question of what in the church organisation, rather than in the separate individuals, might be causing the problem. The etiology might lie with the diocese rather than with the clergyperson. Intrapsychic remedies may be inappropriate; resolutions may depend upon some kind of organisational change.

[xi] using counselling modes and methods to assess and understand individual, group and organisational dynamics can be a further help to organisational change. A specially trained qualified counselling psychologist can use reliable and valid assessment instruments and multi-modal assessment profiles to diagnose clergy problems (see Chapter 8). Different counselling theories can be useful for understanding organisations, including the church. Psychodynamic concepts can facilitate organisational change (Obholzer and Roberts, 1994), Gestalt theory can illuminate the reasons for organisational blocks (Critchley and Casey, 1989) and Stein and Hollwitz (1992) have applied Jungian concepts to the workplace.

A further aspect of changing the culture is the concept of perceiving therapeutic work as empowering in personal growth. One bishop had set up a therapeutic group of himself and two other bishops and all three wives which met monthly for three years with a psychologist. *"I sought to bring that culture to the House of Bishops"* (9). This bishop was advocating change of culture by example from the top. Carroll (1996: 203) identifies this kind of process as a sort of parallel process in a downward rather than an upward direction. It is a common process in counselling psychology practice to view one relationship reflecting upwards in another at a higher level, e.g. a counselling relationship



being reflected in the associated supervision relationship. Hampton-Turner (1994:113) illustrates how work relationships may also reflect downwards. Management treating their staff well sets up a corporate culture resulting in the staff treating their customers in the same way. Similarly, it may be argued that a culture in the church of a psychological contract whereby bishops care for their clergy well will result in a culture where clergy relate better with their parishioners, thus resolving some of the kinds of clergy problems identified in Chapter 5.

One bishop explicitly affirmed counselling as a means of personal growth: *"I know a number of people who have gone into therapy in times of strength"* (19). Another recognised attitude changes about counselling as important: *"You need to change attitudes among the clergy, to get it into their minds that it isn't a sign of weakness to talk to someone"* (16). Another bishop described his frustration when his visits to clergy were interpreted as judgments about their clerical future (see above). Change of culture in all these cases may be assisted by the use of counselling psychology as an effective model and change agent.

### 9.2.2 Training

Eight bishops (32%) spoke of ways in which counselling psychologists could give specialised training to clergy. Training could be quite substantial. *"I would actually want somebody who was full time concerned with training"* (11). There is a need for it to address pressures from society as well as church issues. Handling manipulation e.g. from the media is one instance of this (see 5.2.1.2).

Carroll (1996: 38) explicitly identifies training as a means to solve some of the problems that are caused by undeveloped management or ineffective systems. The data analysis of the interviews with the bishops begins to set an agenda for this. Useful training was perceived to be with:

*"curates as preventative measures"* [preventing problems later in ministry] (10)

*“ training incumbents” [in their training role with their curates] (10)*

*“short diocesan courses for clergy where needs have been identified” (10)*

*“the Counselling Co-ordinator working in co-operation with the Diocesan Officer for Ministry” (10)*

The content of the training needs to include:

*“training clergy to work collaboratively” (14)*

*“sexuality and identity” (15)*

*“listening skills” (16)*

*“interview situations and skills” (24)*

*“bereavement and loss” (16)*

*“personal and professional boundaries, appropriate professional boundaries” (24)*

*“men and women working together, implications for partnership” (24,5)*

*“an awareness of what happens in relationships in organisations” (24)*

Carroll (1996: 38) also adds issues of training in health and health-related issues: stress management, relaxation, time management. In the church, clergy problems are often exacerbated by poor time management and inadequate care for oneself. Carroll posits here that educating the organisation to eliminate poor practice that causes human distress can bring about change within the organisation itself. By this precept, training for a healthier clerical profession would bring about change in the health of the church overall.

Bishops have raised their problems of poor resources with which to change the culture of the church. Research suggests that one means of help is that of sharing resources with other professions. Weaver et al (1997) examined the need for greater collaboration between clergy and marriage and family therapists in the training arena. Marriage and family therapists acknowledge that they have the highest rate of religious involvement of any mental health profession, placing them in a unique position to be involved in the continuing education of clergy. They stress the need for therapists and clergy to use each other's resources for training purposes.



### 9.2.3 Ministry support

Ministry support is a new concept in the Church of England. Those bishops who had their own work consultancy arrangements had an understanding of a concept of consultancy like that of supervision in the counselling psychology profession. This goes beyond personal affirmation and identity issues to a dialogue about ministry issues, and might properly be called ministry support. It is a process where every clergyperson has their own work consultant with whom they can regularly discuss their ministry on a non-judgmental basis with a professionally experienced person. Ministry support is recognised as differentiated from ministry appraisal and ministry review, but may complement these processes.

Sixteen bishops (64%) spoke of ministry support: *"It is clear there is a need for ministry support for clergy"* (3). *"We must somehow ensure that we've got better supportive systems in place"* (5).

It emerged that bishops have better ministry support systems than clergy (see 6.2.3) There is a full time adviser in bishops' ministry and there is a first induction of an episcopal husband and wife together (9). Some bishops have personal work consultants whom they see regularly (20), others said they would like to have one (21). There is a growing practice of professional facilitation of bishops' senior staff teams (13). There was very little suggestion in the interviews of the same processes envisaged for clergy. However, there was an emerging sense of the need for development in this area. *"Our bishops' staff meeting agree that we must rethink our pattern of support for the clergy"* (5) and that there was need for consistency of systems in all levels of the hierarchy. *"Unless the same model is working all the way through, there are questions of the integrity of it"* (21).

Ministry support was generally seen as a future development growing out of recently established appraisal or ministry review systems which have been set up in all the dioceses of the Church of England (2,10, 12, 19) These set aims and objectives for the next twelve



months (19) Clergy are asked *“Is there anything personal you would like to deal with?”* (12). Ministry review has brought a focus on the individual in ministry that aligns with the application of Carroll’s point [viii] in 9.2.1. *“The outcome of ministerial review should be about the person, relationships, identity, what the job has done for you, what gifts are released, also weight, physical tiredness, sexuality and personal finance”* (15). *“There’s been this shift... to look at yourself, to look at your own progress or lack of it, and needs as a human being, has become legitimised”* (19). This opens up a new concept of ministry support.

The implications for counselling psychologist practitioners emerging from the bishops’ interviews are:

*“using the outcomes of ministry review as opportunities to offer help and support”* (10)

*“some kind of supportive system to enable both themselves and the kind of work issues they are involved in”* (5)

*“a line to talk of relationship of life, view of self and ministry”* (22)

*“ongoing development here to enabling our clergy to find a sense of identity that gives them security to exercise a ministry that is relevant for today”* (5)

*“being specific about what is bad practice”* (24)

*“working out how to use the results of the clergy review”* (18)

*“using the third fallow year of the appraisal system”* (2)

*“freeing people up from inappropriate guilt”* (19)

*“work consultancy”* (15)

*“supervision”* (9)

*“discernment of what future ministry is about”* (5)

*“making people responsible for their own support”* (2)

*“showing clergy that the resources are there that they need, but not in the same mode as 25 years ago”* (3)

*“learning to be more professional in terms of the needs of people in our care, monitoring, work consultancy”* (19)

*“linking the culture to fellow priest, counsellor, work consultant or psychologist” (22)*

*“finding a sense of secure identity” (5)*

*“support not just for crises, but for helping people to grow” (25).*

Counselling psychologists could facilitate clergy to greater professionalism in the pastoral situations they encounter in their ministry, and thus meet the bishops' forward plan to *“professionalise the clerical profession”* (4). The chapter on “Supervision in Religious Contexts” (Mann, 1999) addresses the kind of issues which would be involved. Ministry consultancy is differentiated from episcopal appraisal which is hierarchical, and from peer appraisal, each of which would normally happen once in every three years. Ministry appraisal would be a more frequent regular commitment when the clergyperson brought work problems which could be discussed non-judgmentally by a mentor who was outside the hierarchy but had psychological expertise to share. The bishops who understood this concept showed enthusiasm about its usefulness.

### 9.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on bishops' perceptions that there is a pressing need to change the culture of the church to align with and assist with new patterns of collaborative ministry. It has highlighted their desire to find a model of change which is compatible with the fundamental values of the Christian faith which underpin the *raison d'être* of the church. The analysis and discussion of these needs has shown how the theory and practice of counselling psychology in the church could be useful in generating insights which could help to make the desired changes to the church culture. A training agenda has been derived from the data to this end. Ministry support systems for clergy have been elucidated for more effective ministerial practice by professionalising the clergy and for maintenance of church culture changes.

Underlying issues which bishops did not raise were the ways in which they themselves would have to change if the culture of the church changed. There are systemic questions

here about the effect on clergy and bishops of church culture changes that call for further research.

Practitioner issues in this situation would be concerned with

- being competent trainers
- being competent supervisors in their own profession
- knowing the ministry context well enough to use their professional skills to offer ministry support in the style of consultative supervision
- being able to dialogue at the interface of the worlds of church and psychology in both languages in order to facilitate the culture changes desired.

The theme of organisational cultural and structural change in the church will be taken up and integrated into the wider conclusions from this research project in Chapter 10.



## **CHAPTER 10**

# **THE BISHOPS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE POTENTIAL OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

## **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH**

### **10.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter shows how knowledge is advanced by the grounded theory that emerged from this research in response to the research question in 1.2.

The research findings are compared in 10.2 with previous theory and research in the initial conceptual areas derived from a deconstruction of the research question (see 2.2), that are reviewed in 2.2.1 - 2.2.6, and in conceptual areas emerging from the data analysis and discussed in Chapters 5-9.

A critical analysis of the use of contemporary qualitative methodology to elicit the perceptions of the bishops is made in 10.3.

The new grounded theory from the bishops' perceptions of the potential of the use of counselling psychology in the Church of England is presented in 10.4 and the potential of its application is derived in 10.5.

The relationship of the findings of this research to other contemporary research and development is summarised in 10.6.

The limitations of this present study, the implications of the results for policy and practice and for further research in the future are evaluated in 10.7, 10.8 and 10.9 respectively.

## **10.2 RELATIONSHIP OF RESEARCH FINDINGS TO PREVIOUS THEORY**

This section describes the relationship between the research findings and the relevant psychological literature as follows:

10.2.1 Findings compared with literature on initial conceptual areas reviewed in Chapter 2.

10.2.2 Findings compared with literature on emergent conceptual areas reviewed in Chapters 5-9.

### **10.2.1.1 Psychology and the church**

The resistance to psychologists working in the church (Arbuckle, 1988; Yates, 1985), the problems described by Krebs (1980), and the markedly slow change towards co-operation across the professional psychology and church boundaries (Wallace, 1985; Grant, 1986; Daborn, 1997; and McMinn et al., 1998), reviewed in 2.2.1, have been shown by this present research to have been substantially superseded in the contemporary attitudes of the Church of England bishops. Against negative expectations and predictions (see 1.1, see also the discussion in Part 1 of this thesis), 24 bishops out of 25 of those interviewed (96%) addressed the question of the potential of counselling psychology in the church with unqualified enthusiasm, reflexivity, openness and humility. These bishops showed an unexpected depth of commitment to finding new ways of helping and professionalising their clergy and changing the culture of the church to respond to contemporary society. This was in contrast with some popular conceptions in the Church of England of bishops' views (Part I of this thesis). To articulate such goals, as 96% of the sample did, is an important first step in effecting the changes they desire. That they have raised the needs of the church from their own reflections and asked for help from a psychologist in the research interviews, indicates the possibility of a working alliance between the Church of England and counselling psychology, which has not been attempted before. The publication work of the Psychology and Christianity Project (Nye, 2000) seems to fit well in contributing to such an alliance in a manner which is compatible with the bishops'



perceptions of the needs of the church. The unfinished debate on the ethics of priests counselling priests calls for further research.

#### **10.2.1.2 Counselling in organisations (see also 10.2.2.3)**

The research confirmed a good fit between the bishops' perceptions of the organisational needs of a system of professional counselling in the Church of England and the contemporary theory of counselling in organisations (Carroll, 1996). In particular, the theoretical frameworks of Reddy (1994), Hinde (1995), Carroll (1996) and Walton (1997) (see 2.2.2) were found to be well fitted to the bishops' perceptions of systems necessary for adequately professionally meeting clergy needs (see 7.2). The application of these theoretical frameworks under the church pastoral care umbrella would provide a professionally approved way forward for addressing the clergy psychological problems initially reviewed in 2.2.5 and further found emergent in 5.2. The theory of counselling in organisations is also seen to offer a theoretical method for changing the culture of the Church of England in those areas which the bishops perceived as of primary importance (see 9.2.1).

#### **10.2.1.3 Psychologists working in organisations**

Selvini Palazzoli's research (Selvini Palazzoli et al, 1986) had shown the importance of psychologists adjusting their own ways of relating to those of others and adapting themselves in advance to their position in the hierarchic structure of the organisation. Bor's consultancy model (Bor and Miller, 1990) had advocated offering psychological expertise from a negotiated "one down" and "curious" stance, where the responsibility for problem-solving was placed with those who define the problem rather than taken away from them. The Psychology and Christianity Project (1998) had proposed a "servanting approach, offering a relevant and helpful resource to the church rather than competing with, or undermining its work" (1998: p 8). Bishops' criteria for a personal psychological consultant (see 6.2.4) matched well with the criteria of each of these theoretical models.



#### **10.2.1.4 Bishops' concerns**

##### **10.2.1.4.1 Homosexual clergy**

The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed that the only relevant research in this area in the Church of England context was that of Fletcher (1990a). That research did not have complete reliability and validity. However, the conclusion that there was a large-scale untreated problem of depression and anxiety in homosexual clergy is one which may not be lightly dismissed (see 2.2.4).

This present research shows that the bishops' perceptions about problems of homosexual clergy were focused on the organisational rather than the emotional aspect; i.e the need to move homosexual clergy to urban parishes because of intolerance of them in rural parishes. Solutions of this nature do not resolve the intrapsychic problems of the clergy. None of the bishops expressed awareness or concern about depression in homosexual clergy. Either the incidence is not as alarming as Fletcher suggests, (and it is difficult to replicate his study, see 2.2.4), or bishops do not perceive depression suffered by their homosexual clergy, or they perceive it but leave the resolution to the clergyperson concerned. None of the bishops referred to a need to provide independent professional counselling for homosexual clergy per se such as that called for by Fletcher. Twelve years after Fletcher's study it is thus concluded here that research in this area needs to be regenerated. Because of the ordination of women since the time of Fletcher's study, it would be necessary this time to include the gender variable. If the findings confirm a serious incidence of depressive symptoms, bishops then need to be ready to take action to make professional counselling help available for homosexual clergy as called for by Fletcher. The model of professional counselling for clergy emergent from the data analysis of Chapter 7 would be able to provide for this as part of the service.

#### **10.2.1.4.2 Clergy marriage problems**

The extant research in this area has been shown to be limited by chronological and cultural differences, and lack of established reliability and validity (see 2.2.4). The researches of Mace and Mace (1980) and Kirk and Leary (1994) were not supported by reliable and valid results (see 5.2.6). Morris and Blanton (1994) in the USA and Walrond-Skinner (1998) in the Church of England, in better validated studies, both found stress factors in clergy marriage through expectations of perfection, time pressures, lack of family privacy and financial stress driving the wife to work. These issues all arose in the bishops' interviews. This present research, however, suggests further stress factors: lower professional status of the clergyman compared to other family members; pressures on clergy children; and pressures due to responsibilities for elderly parents (see 5.2.6). Additionally, the issue of low status of clergy compared to their wives and adult children had not arisen in previous research. Emotional pressures on clergy children had been found by Anderson (1998); and stress arising from responsibilities for elderly parents was found by Mace and Mace (1980), but see above and 5.2.6 for details of limitations of the Mace and Mace studies. There are still some gaps that call for further research. None of the bishops reflected on the effect of the ordination of women to the priesthood as a stressor in clergy marriage, either in clergy marriage where the wife was a priest; or where both partners were clergy, although this was raised as a source of stress by Walrond-Skinner (1998) and is confirmed in professional practice.

#### **10.2.1.5 Psychological issues of clergy**

Reviews of research on psychological issues of clergy (see 2.2.5) showed some mutual agreement between findings from UK research results and the data of this study. In particular, the findings of Brymon (1989), MacPherson (1989) and Fletcher (1990a) on clergy role pressures, and the contribution of individual differences to clergy role prioritisation (Francis and Roger, 1994) supported the bishops' perceptions of some major clergy role-related psychological problems. Problems of the effect on clergy of liturgical



change (Aldridge, 1986) and ageing and retirement (Francis and Lankshear, 1993) did not arise explicitly as bishop's concerns in the research interviews.

The set of issues of the American research on women's clergy issues (Cardwell, 1982; Goldsmith and Eckhardt, 1984; Stevens, 1989; and Lehman, 1993) did not intersect with the perceptions of the bishops in this present study; neither did the issue of posited reversed masculine and feminine personality differences (Francis et al., 1990, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1998) nor gender and ministry style (Lehman, 1993). No comparisons can therefore be made between the above results and the findings of this present research.

#### **10.2.1.6 The psychological contract between bishops and clergy**

All six clergy expectations of bishops identified from Jackson's (1995) study reviewed in 2.2.6 were confirmed by the bishops in this study as inherent in their roles and responsibilities: in leadership, in providing pastoral support and in exercising discipline (see 2.2.6), in managing change (see 9.2.1), in a commitment to clergy training (see 9.2.2) and in recognising the stress of "living over the shop" (see 5.2.1.2). Of those relevant elements of the psychological contract that Jackson concluded were not being met by the bishops, two arose in the bishops' perceptions as issues of concern in this study. These were sensitivity in handling change, and the necessity of clergy ministry review. Five issues from Jackson's findings did not arise in the bishops' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities: providing [work] contracts for those without freehold, providing sufficient resources to do the job, applying equal opportunities policies to all jobs, providing opportunities to influence policy/decision making and recognising and using clergy skills and experience. Thus Jackson's set of clergy expectations of bishops of the latter's role was confirmed by the bishops as perceptions of their role, but the set of clergy expectations of managerial practice did not intersect at all with the set of bishops' perceptions of their responsibilities.



### **10.2.2.1 Clergy problems**

The outcomes of this present research go much beyond the suggestions in earlier researches of aetiology of clergy psychological problems reviewed in 2.2.5. The data analysis of the bishops' perceptions found emergent concepts of twenty psychological clergy problem areas in six categories: situational stress; changed roles and responsibilities; interpersonal problems; intrapersonal problems; poor performance; and family problems (see Fig 5.1). The problems of role confusion, role ambiguity and role conflict had support from previous research as explained above. Bishops' perceptions did not, however confirm the over-riding dominance of role problems as claimed by Maloney and Hunt (1991). Some predominant episcopal concerns were of clergy poor performance in their work and poor interpersonal relationships, with colleagues and the hierarchy, but also particularly with the laity. Neither of these clergy problems had arisen in previous research in the Church of England context.

The grounded theory model of the twenty clergy problem areas emerging from this research is a framework useful for counselling psychology practitioners for diagnosis and therapy. The model also offers a starting point for further bishops' discussions on the changes to the structure and culture of the Church of England which are necessary for remediation.

### **10.2.2.2 Bishops' roles and responsibilities**

There were no previous studies on bishops' roles and responsibilities with which to compare their perceptions from this research, except for the initial limited unpublished research into the psychological contract between bishops and clergy (Jackson, 1995) discussed above in 10.2.1.6. The interviews with the bishops revealed common and quite strong negative feelings about clergy inadequacies.

There was a marked contrast observed in this present research between the availability of comprehensive support systems for bishops resourced by the church and the absence of similar church-resourced support systems for clergy, resulting in a strong “them and us” differentiation. This dichotomy calls for further research into psychological contracting between bishops and clergy.

#### **10.2.2.3 Clergy counselling services**

Provision of professional counselling for clergy in the Church of England has been called for by Fletcher (1990a) for depressed homosexual clergy, and by Kirk and Leary (1994) for clergy with marriage problems, although the research of the latter was apparently without any established reliability and validity (see 2.2.4). The data analysis of this present research supports these calls but also goes far beyond them in clarifying a much broader spectrum of twenty clergy psychological problems (see fig 5.1) for which professional counselling is appropriate and needed. The data analysis also reveals bishops’ perceptions of a structured professional counselling service that would be helpful to them. The grounded theory model of a diocesan professional counselling service derived from this research (see 7.3) has a structure which is compatible with the theoretical criteria for counselling in organisations (Reddy, 1993, Bull, 1994; Carroll, 1996, Walton 1997) and which admits of evaluation according to the theoretical criteria of Highley-Marchington and Cooper (1997a and 1997b).

The disconfirming case (see 7.2.1) of one bishop’s (4%) perception of no need for counselling of clergy seemed to provide a counter-argument against the development of counselling in the church. This bishop’s perception of counsellors seeing stress as a problem opposed his own view of stress as a positive motivator and energiser. This is more than an admissible argument; it injects a valuable dimension to the balance of the overall discussion. In fact, a view of stress as a positive challenge may usefully align in counselling practice with fulfilment goals in personality development (Maddy, 1989). In



this sense, provision of person-centred counselling for personal development could be an important element in a counselling system for clergy.

#### **10.2.2.4 Psychological assessment**

The grounded theory model which emerged from this research has elements in common with the model developed in the sequence of work in the USA. That research literature on the psychological assessment of clergy of Banks et al, (1984); Keddy, Erdberg and Sammon, (1990); Putman, Kutz and Houts, (1996); Fox, Blanton and Morris (1998); and Plant and Boccaccini, 1998) collectively shows a combination of psychological interviews and psychometric testing (see 8.3). Differences from the emergent concepts of this study are the inclusion in the American assessment structure of the 16PF Questionnaire (Cattell and Cattell, 1993) and the Religious Problem-Solving Scale (Fox, Blanton and Morris, 1998). The bishops' perceptions of psychological assessment for ministry in this study did not focus on personality traits per se, nor on psychological instruments concerned with religiosity. Their principal concern was with the prediction of latent psychopathology (see 8.2.1), for which the MMPI-2 Personality Inventory has been affirmed by its validity, reliability and results from particular research with clergy as the most appropriate to provide for this need (Putman, 1996; Plante and Boccaccini, 1998).

#### **10.2.2.5 Changing the culture of the church**

The theory most relevant to changing the culture of the Church of England derives from the psychological research on organisational culture (Schein, 1990; Hayward, 1996) and particularly the theory of counselling in organisations (Carroll, 1996). This latter applies counselling psychological theory to the way the ethos of an organisation affects the behaviour of its employees (see 9.2.1). None of this research and theory had been applied to the Church of England before the analysis of the present research data. A conclusion of this present research is that the theory of counselling psychology in organisations (Carroll, 1996, Carroll and Walton, 1997) allows the derivation of a theoretical model for changing



the culture and structure of the church. This model includes training and ministry support (see 9.3) in a manner which accords with the bishops' perceptions of those needs of the present time.

### **10.2.3 Summary**

Previous research seems to be generally confirmatory of the conclusions of the present study where common areas were investigated. The emergent concepts of this present study, however, enlarge and supersede the theory which was set in the earlier chronological contexts, i.e. before the ordination of women to the priesthood in 1994 and prior to the major structural changes in the Church of England from the pastoral reorganisation which has escalated in the past decade.

In particular, the present research findings have superseded earlier theory (see 2.1) with emergent concepts in the clarification of clergy psychological problems and the bishops' concerns for providing professional counselling services and changing the culture and structure of the Church of England. Further emergent concepts are focused on psychological assessment of clergy and psychological consultancy for bishops. The findings and the derived grounded theory extend current knowledge of clergy problems and bishops' aspirations. The findings have practitioner implications for the use of counselling psychology in the Church of England today. Previous research had by comparison been limited in extent, and in confidence in reliability and validity.

## **10.3 EVALUATION OF THE USE OF QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

In addition to the benefits of an unconstrained agenda (10.1), the adoption of the "workshop approach" (3.1) in the research interviews in the qualitative research method used in this study (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990,1998) proved to be particularly appropriate and effective in allowing the bishops to explore their needs and wants freely. The bishops' responses in the interviews contrasted strongly with previous

reports of difficulties in starting dialogue in this area with individual bishops (see Part 1: 16). This methodology, facilitated by the use of the researcher's counselling skills, opened up a way through a communication barrier that had previously seemed to be impenetrable. The researcher drew the conclusion from this combined resource of research, theory, reflection and practice that previous difficulties in communication may have arisen from an ineffective directive approach to the bishops from therapists which was (perhaps unconsciously) didactic and "one-up". The researcher's experience of interviewing the bishops in this "workshop approach" way, and receiving their trust and confidence, suggested that the potential for an effective helping relationship with them lies in an empathic, respectful and congruent approach. These are core conditions in counselling psychology practice. They align with the values emerging from the research, theory and reflections above, and with the author's experiences in the interviews.

In the analysis of the data, the methodology enabled the generation of conceptual frameworks (Miles and Huberman, 1994) which are illustrated in figures 4.12, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 8.1 and 8.2.

Differences from a positivist research position are acknowledged. However, a responsibility in qualitative research for consistency, reliability, validity and representativeness (Silverman, 2000: 10) has been accepted. Consistency has been addressed by availability of the transcripts; reliability and validity have been established to protect against anecdotalism by use of the accepted criteria for qualitative research (see 3.4 and 3.9) and by examination of the contrary case. Representativeness has been addressed in the sample and in the frequency counts in the data analysis.

In summary, the research findings of this study demonstrate how the new theory owes a particular richness to the use of grounded theory methodology. The bishops' multiple perceptions have facilitated an identification and categorisation of clergy problems and counselling issues relevant to their needs much beyond those set by the agendas of earlier quantitative research.



## **10.4 GROUNDED THEORY FROM THE RESEARCH**

From this research, a grounded theory has been developed for the potential use of counselling in the Church of England, which meets the needs of the bishops' perceptions of the problems they have to manage (see Fig 4.1). The principal characteristics of this theory are:

[i] A categorisation of a wide range of clergy problems which have never before been formally themed, structured and inter-related, and which admit of potential resolution in counselling psychology practice (see Fig 5.1).

[ii] A theoretical model for psychological consultancy for the bishops which applies the theory of counselling psychology consultancy to the Church of England (See 6.3 and 7.2.4).

[iii] A theoretical model for a diocesan counselling service which meets the bishops' requirements and which also satisfies the current theoretical criteria for counselling in organisations (see 7.3).

[iv] A theoretical model for multi-modal psychological assessment in selection for ordination, in diagnosis of clergy problems and in facilitating personal and ministerial growth, based on counselling psychology practice in therapeutic assessment (see 8.3).

[v] A theory for a resource for changing the culture of the church based on methods of facilitating change from counselling psychology theory (see 9.2).

This grounded theory has confirmed that counselling psychology has the potential to offer a tailor-made contemporary resource with the power to help the church achieve the bishops' goals from its theory, research and practice. It offers ways forward in the



problems described by the bishops from a psychological discipline that is recognised by Royal Charter. It has a particular asset as a methodology for making changes in organisational culture.

## **10.5 POTENTIAL OF THE APPLICATION OF THE THEORY**

Long-term benefits which would accrue from the implementation of the grounded theory would be:

- a psychologically healthier and more professional clerical profession
- availability of psychological consultancy to assist the bishops in meeting their pastoral and judicial responsibilities
- easily accessible, confidential, professional counselling available to clergy, their families, lay ministers, diocesan employees and victims of pastoral abuse
- a candidate assessment procedure at selection for ordination which offers an individual personal growth programme at the selection stage and which would help to prevent serious problems emerging just prior to, or after, ordination.
- a service tailor-made to the church to advise and assist in organisational change towards a church culture more fitted to ministry in the society of the future.

## **10.6 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CONTEMPORARY WORK**

This present study has contributions to make to those projects listed below through collaboration which could be mutually enhancing.

1. Under the broader pastoral care umbrella of the recently formed Association of Anglican Advisers in Pastoral Care, counselling the clergy has a place, and continued communication and collaboration from this research with that Association is potentially useful.

2. There is common ground between this research and some of the aims of the Psychology and Christianity Project at the University of Cambridge. In particular, themes from that project which align with the implications of this project are

- the involvement in the church of individual psychologists to act as servant consultants on the psychological dimension of church issues
- the potential of psychology in theological ordination training and in continuing ministerial education
- the production of written material which develops the themes and spirit of consultation.

It would be valuable for counselling psychologists concerned with helping the church to inform themselves of the work of this Project.

3. On the wider church front, there has been some common ground with the ecumenical Joint Queens Foundation-Sarum College Project that has been concerned with authority, sexuality, and relationships in the context of governance in the Catholic Church. The author has been the only counselling psychologist in this research group, which was set up to have a mainly theological standpoint but sought a psychological input in its discussions and publications. The identity, sexuality and intimacy problems of priests in the Catholic Church have been seen to be fundamentally common to both churches in practitioner experience, though the manifestations and resolutions may vary. The implications for church governance are similar owing to the comparable hierarchical structures of both churches. Continued collaboration by sharing these research results will provide a stimulus to further ecumenical discussion between the Church of England and the Catholic Church.

### **10.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

[i] The study was limited to twenty-five (69%) of the diocesan bishops in the Church of England during a period in 1998-99. Eleven diocesan bishops had been excluded because of the limitations of the project by size or distance, or else by the bishops declining to take part in person.

[ii] Most of the Vacancies in See of the period of the data collection have subsequently been filled with new appointees, who fall into a younger cohort of bishops, whose views are not represented here. Two of the bishops who participated are now retired, and others will do so in the next few years.

[iii] An exhaustive analysis of the data was precluded by the time and size constraints of the research project in the face of the large amount of data. Only the five categories of highest frequency have been discussed.

[iv] The limitations on the length of the thesis precluded an in-depth critical analysis of all the research and journal articles quoted in the discussion.

[v] This project is limited exclusively to the perceptions of diocesan bishops. It does not research the perceptions of clergy or lay people about the potential of counselling psychology in the church.

[vi] The research does not investigate the relationships between bishops and clergy nor the psychological contract between them.

## **10.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE**

1. An implication of 10.5 is that counselling psychologists can facilitate dialogue at the church/psychology interface by means of their practitioner skills.

2. Some developments which the bishops' perceptions imply are:

[i] setting up professional counselling services for clergy and associated others in all the dioceses of the Church of England on the criteria deduced from this research.



[ii] setting up consultancy services by individual counselling psychologists which are available to bishops.

[iii] integrating multi-modal psychological assessments into ordination selection processes

[iv] using multi-modal psychological assessments for diagnosis in pastoral or judicial cases in which the bishop has to make difficult decisions, or where personal or ministerial development is sought.

[v] involving counselling psychologists in curriculum development in theological colleges.

[vi] using counselling psychologists as trainers in continuing ministerial education after ordination.

[vii] using counselling psychologists as facilitators in regular ministry support.

[viii] inviting counselling psychologists to Bishops' Senior Staff Meetings to develop understanding of each other's languages and facilitate dialogue between their two worlds.

[ix] co-operating with lay counselling psychologists where at present clergy are being counselled unilaterally by clergy in diocesan pastoral care schemes, in order to develop lay and clergy counselling teams.

[x] networking with clinical, organisational, developmental, educational and other psychologists who are interested in dialogue about the potential of psychology in the church.

[xi] composing a resource directory of counselling psychologists willing to serve the church in its ministry.

[xii] collaborating with the Catholic and Nonconformist churches in the potential use of counselling psychology in ministry.

## **10.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

1. The data admits of further analysis in:

(a) a more intensive qualitative analysis of a small number of interviews selected on a stratified sample basis from the participants in this project.

(b) categories not included in this research report which are relevant to other issues of psychology and the church.

2. Further research on the bishops' perceptions of the value of counselling psychology to the Church of England may now be pursued quantitatively with a sample of contemporary bishops responding to the theoretical concepts that have arisen in this research.

3. This research on the potential of counselling psychology in the church needs to be replicated qualitatively and quantitatively with samples of clergy, lay people and counselling psychologists inside and outside the church.

4. In considering the process of collaboration between psychologists and the church, there needs to be research on how trust may be built, whether common values need to be supplemented by the same creed and doctrine, and whether spiritual interventions should be part of religiously informed therapy (see 2.2.1).

5. Transference and countertransference between priests and priest clients needs to be investigated with respect to contemporary ethical standards in counselling psychology (see 2.2.1).

6. Research is needed to evaluate the findings of Fletcher (1990a) on depression in contemporary homosexual clergy, establishing reliability and validity and including a gender variable (see 2.2.4).
7. A demographic investigation is needed on the incidence of marriage breakdown among the clergy in the Church of England (see 2.2.4).
8. Variables of age, biography and theological stance need to be included to confirm the personality results of Francis et al (1990,1991,1992,1993,1994,1998) vis a vis Lehman(1993). Gender variables need to be included in research on stress in ministry in the Church of England (see 2.2.5).
9. The findings of Francis et al (1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1993, 1994, 1998) of the personality characteristics of male and female Anglican clergy need to be compared with male and female personality characteristics of those working in the caring professions (see 2.2.5).
10. Further research is also needed explicitly on clergy issues arising from this present research: gender issues in clergy stress; clergy identity problems; clergy job pressures; role ambiguity and conflict; relationships with parishioners and colleagues; stress in clergy marriage when the wife is a priest or when both partners are priests; resourcing clergy support, the use of multi-model psychological assessment in selection for ordination, in clergy problem situations and for clergy personal growth; and the psychological contract between bishops and clergy; and changing the structure and culture of the church to meet contemporary social pressures (see 2.2.5).
11. A further study of whether older clergy working in rural parishes perform less well than younger clergy needs to be made against variables of parishioner expectations and effectiveness of pastoral ministry (see 2.2.5).



12. Further research is needed on the wider topic of change in the church, with the systemic question of the implications for the power and authority of bishops in the context of changes to collaborative leadership and ministry (see 9.2.1). This will include a further consideration of the psychological contract between bishops and clergy (see 2.2.6).

13. The bishops' concept of professionalising of the clergy needs to be researched as to what this concept is today and how it may affect clergy conditions of service at the present time (see 5.2.2 and 9.2.1).

## **10.10 CONCLUSION**

This research breaks new ground in being the first qualitative research study of the perceptions of a clear majority of the diocesan bishops on the research topic. It offers grounded theory for the use of counselling psychology in the Church of England: a contemporary analysis of the psychological problems of clergy; a professionally acceptable theoretical framework for a clergy counselling service, a theoretical model for consultancy which is not competitive or undermining to theology or ecclesiology, and a theoretical model for facilitating change in the culture and structure of the church.

The grounded theory matches the concerns of the bishops with the psychological resource of the particular values of counselling psychology: a helping relationship, core person-centred qualities of empathy, acceptance and congruence, and a scientist-practitioner-based framework for human resource development in organisations. Counselling psychology has thus been shown to have a potential to offer this kind of service explicitly to match the needs and aspirations of the contemporary church as seen by those who have the responsibility for its management.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **INITIAL LETTER TO BISHOPS INVITING PARTICIPATION**

Dear Bishop

**re : Professional help for clergy**

I am Adviser and Co-ordinator for professional counselling to the Bishop of Gloucester, and he and I have worked together to set up the Gloucester Diocesan Professional Counselling Service for clergy, their families, and diocesan employees. I am a Chartered Counselling Psychologist who has specialised in psychological assessment and therapeutic help for clergy for over ten years. I also work as a Lecturer at Masters' degree level in the Psychology Department of the City University, London

Although from time to time there have been some initiatives for counselling clergy, I have become concerned that there has been no research on what the Bishops actually want and would find most helpful in their current complex managerial roles and responsibilities, and associated pastoral expectations.

I have therefore chosen to undertake research at doctoral level with the desire to discern the perceptions of the Bishops themselves about how professional counselling psychologists could serve them most effectively in their episcopal responsibilities.

I am writing to ask whether you would be kind enough to assist me in this research by granting me an interview for about an hour some time this autumn to share with me your own thoughts and ideas on these issues. Confidentiality would be protected by means of a written contract with me, that none of the content of the interview would be attributable to you personally or to your diocese, unless you explicitly desired this. I shall be happy to send you a copy of the results of the research if you would like that.

I should be happy for you to make reference to my Bishops, the Right Revd David Bentley and the Right Revd John Went, to my research supervisor, Dr Michael Carroll, 73 Upper Church Road, Weston super Mare, BS23 2HX, tel 01934 643 762, or to my employers Professor Mary Watts or Dr Don Rawson, Department of Psychology, The City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V OHB tel 0171 477 8535.

I would be grateful to hear from you whether you would be able to help me in this research.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Mann  
Chartered Counselling Psychologist

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **RESPONSE TO A BISHOP'S ACCEPTANCE**

**The Right Revd A.B.**

Dear Bishop

**re : Professional help for the clergy**

I am looking forward very much to meeting you on Friday February 5th at 11.30 a.m. at Church House. It is very generous of you to be interested and to give your time to help in this research.

Enclosed please find two copies of the contract which I use for the research interview. This is for your protection. If there are any further clauses you would like to incorporate, I will be very happy to make the additions when I come.

Please tell your secretary how much I have appreciated her kind help in the practicalities of this arrangement.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Mann  
Chartered Psychologist



**APPENDIX 3**

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN BISHOP AND RESEARCHER**

**RESEARCH PROJECT  
ON  
THE ORGANISATION OF PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR THE CLERGY**

**INTERVIEW CONTRACT**

**This project is part of a study at doctoral level which aims to find out how counselling psychologists can serve the Bishops most effectively in their current complex managerial roles and responsibilities and associated pastoral expectations.**

**Further information about this research and my academic and professional background is found in the letter initiating the interview.**

**Thank you for your help by taking part in this project.**

**I would like to clarify that**

- your participation is voluntary**
- you are free to refuse to answer any questions**
- you are free to withdraw at any time**
- neither you nor your diocesan organisation is being evaluated**

**As a Chartered Counselling Psychologist, I am committed to abide by the Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines of the British Psychological Society. Within this, I give the assurance that any records of the interview, whether written notes or tapes, will be held in strict confidentiality by me, any essential secretarial support and my doctoral research supervisor. Any excerpts from the interview which form part of the final research report will not be attributed to you or to your Diocese, nor will any identifying characteristics be included in the report, unless you so request.**

**I would be grateful if you would be kind enough to sign this form as a contract between us of these interview conditions.**

**Signed.....**

**Date.....**

**Name (block capitals).....**

**Countersigned(interviewer).....**

**Date.....**

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH INTERVIEW**

#### **ORIENTATION**

I am a counselling psychologist. That means that I am a well-trained counsellor but also that I have an academic psychology background underpinning that. Please ask any questions you like about that...[Where necessary, the nature of counselling psychology was explained according to the definition in Part 1 of this thesis]

I wonder what you would like to say about the way counselling psychologists could help bishops...

It seems it might be valuable that a bishop who cares about clergy in distress could have the professional help they need available... and also that bishops could have any professional help they would like if they have questions about discipline, or employability, or even just concern...

I'm distinguishing between the professional help that someone like myself, a counselling psychologist, might give, and general pastoral care. I see pastoral care as a very big umbrella with many different things under it. Today I'd like to focus on professional counselling specifically, and what you think counselling psychology may have to offer you in your work as a bishop.

I know you have thought about this already, and I'd like to hear what you would like to have, in terms of systems, if you had the resources, and you had somebody who could work on setting them up...

I'd like to listen to you about what you would like to see developed...

The research I am doing is qualitative research. That means that what I really want to do is just to hear how it is for you. I'm not bringing my own agenda into this at all.

Please start off anywhere you like, with wherever you are in your thinking, and please feel free to allow yourself to explore where it might lead to...

**APPENDIX 5**

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT WITH THE RESEARCHER  
FOR SECRETARIAL WORK**

This agreement refers specifically to secretarial work arranged by Elizabeth Mann which has been undertaken for the purpose of transcribing interviews with bishops of the Church of England in her DPsych research project (Part III)

I give my assurance that all written or audio-taped material which I encounter in this work will permanently be held in strict confidentiality by me.

Signed (Secretary)..... Date.....

Name (block capitals).....

Countersigned (Researcher).....Date.....

Name (block capitals) .....



## **APPENDIX 6**

### **PROCESS FOR RATERS FOR CHECKING THE CATEGORIES**

- 1. Lay out the gold category name sheets in a large flat space**
- 2. Study the category names and their definitions. An overview of all the categories is attached on the yellow sheet. Further category definitions will be found behind the gold sheet in each plastic envelope.**
- 3. Think of the gold category name sheets as boxes into which you are sorting the items.**
- 4. Divide the task into several short sessions in order to maintain concentration and avoid boredom and inaccuracy.**
- 5. In each session, sort some item slips into heaps in front of the gold name sheets.**
- 6. Use the “don’t know” sheet as a dump for those item slips you find impossible to put into a category.**
- 7. At the end of each sorting session, put the heap for that category into the appropriate plastic envelope behind the gold sheet.**
- 8. Continue with short sorting sessions until all the item slips are in one of the plastic envelopes.**
- 9. Return everything to me in the brown envelope provided.**

**Thank you for your help, which is greatly appreciated.**

**Elizabeth Mann.**

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**COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY**

**IN THE CHURCH**

**PART IV**

**COUNSELLING PRIESTS**

**ISSUES OF IDENTITY, SEXUALITY AND INTIMACY**

**A REVIEW**

# **IDENTITY ISSUES**

## **IN COUNSELLING PRIESTS, MINISTERS AND RELIGIOUS**

### **A REVIEW**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This paper reviews theory and research on issues of identity relevant to counselling psychology practice with clients who are priests, Religious and ministers in the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Non-conformist churches.

The context of this review is limited to mainstream Christian churches in western culture, largely in the UK and the USA. The review will focus upon counselling in these particular settings. In assessing the research, the differences in church structure and nomenclature in different countries have to be taken into account. In particular, there is no Nonconformism recognised in the USA. The equivalents in the USA to the UK Nonconformist churches are those designated in the research papers as “evangelical Protestant”. Also it has to be borne in mind that the Anglican Church in the USA has a governance and culture independent of the Church of England.

#### **2. CLIENTS**

Subsets of clients relevant to this review are:

[i] the Religious, who left their families and "entered" their religious communities maybe at a pre-adolescent age if they are now in middle age or older, or during their teenage years if they are currently in their twenties or thirties. All of them are necessarily committed by their vows to a long academic and spiritual formation (i.e. training for ordination or final vows) in the context of a separated, celibate, community lifestyle.



[ii] Catholic secular priests, Anglican clergy and Non-conformist ministers, whose training and lifestyle are less sequestered from society. These comprise:

(a) Catholic secular priests, who, like their religious confreres, are under a vow of celibacy

(b) A minority of Anglican priests who make a commitment to celibacy by personal choice

(c) The majority of Anglican priests, and all Non-conformist ministers who are free to marry.

### **3. PRESENTING ISSUES IN COUNSELLING**

Wallace (1985) investigated issues that Roman Catholic priests and religiously committed clients bring to psychotherapy. His findings indicated that these issues are no different from those of psychotherapy patients in general; however, because of the unique lifestyle of the priest and the religious client, the manifestations and resolutions of the issues may differ. This seems to argue for professional counsellors who understand the organisational and contextual issues of religious life and priesthood in terms of the structure and culture of the church, but who are also able to process the presenting issues in terms of the psychology of human identity.

More recent research seems to indicate that both the specifically religious and the more generalised human issues present equally. In a study of priests who actively sought support as a means of coping with the daily stress of their caregiving roles, the issues of role-related stress were seen to be:

[i] restrictions resulting from vows of celibacy

[ii] conflicts associated with the socially prescribed role of priesthood

[iii] discord accompanying midlife transition (Bricker and Fleischer, 1993).

In a study on counselling depressed female religious professionals, Rayburn (1991) elicited issues of

[i] traditionalism in women's roles in the church

[ii] nuns becoming activist and leaving orders

[iii] the struggle of nuns for the survival of the female religious professionals.

These two studies give an indication of presenting issues in the current ethos of the Catholic Church. However, there is no research to date that clearly identifies patterns of presenting problems and their underlying identity issues in relation to the nature of priesthood and religious life per se.

#### **4. IDENTITY FROM EARLY EXPERIENCES**

Traditional Catholic family life has exhibited a pattern of large numbers of children with strong parental expectations that one or more should enter the priesthood or religious life. There does not seem yet to be any formal research on the effects of this early expectational programming. There is some limited research into the effects of the social background on the children of such families, where, through economic pressures to work long hours to provide for the family, the father was absent from the home during the children's waking hours. The mother, typically of little educational background and tied to the home caring for a large family, was not normally in paid employment. She provided both the structure and the care in the family system. Slawson (1973) describes the treatment of a Roman Catholic priest with debilitating anxiety whose decision to enter religious life was related to an unconscious desire to put a heavenly Father in the place of a distant and inadequate real father. This area seems to be important for future research in view of the identity issues rooted in early childhood experiences, the prevalence of the Catholic family culture worldwide, and the high incidence of identity confusion found in counselling practice with priests and Religious.

Rickner and Tan (1994) researched psychopathology, guilt, perfectionism and family of origin affecting male evangelical protestant clergy. Their findings revealed that the pastors

came from homes that were less healthy than those of non-pastors. However, they deduced that, in spite of what appeared to be a difficult start, the pastors seemed to be functioning in a manner not significantly different from that of non-pastors. If family of origin deficits were carried into adult life, they did not seem to be expressed in terms of perfectionism or general psychopathology. In fact, the researchers concluded that it might have been the difficulties of childhood that shaped the person for success in ministry. A limitation of this study was that the sample was recruited from delegates to a conference that addressed the personal growth issues of pastors, so their responses may not have been representative of those who did not, or would not, attend such a conference. Further research would be needed before definitive conclusions could be made about clergy in general.

A study of early loss experiences of Church of England clergy (Burton and Topham, 1997) showed that 29% of clergy reported childhood experiences of sexual abuse or assault by others compared with only 7% reported by scientists. Other significant contrasts in the same direction were: rejection by the mother at birth, maternal abandonment threats, only child, mother over-controlling or smothering, father physically violent, father preferring other siblings. Clergy consistently reported more unempathic responses from their parents than did scientists. The future clergyman was ten times as likely as the future scientist to have felt unwanted, and twice as likely to have had an absent father or traumatic house moves. This research provides a foundation for further work to clarify the relationship between early loss and motivation to enter the priesthood. It also flags up for further investigation the researchers' impression that depression and personality disorders were common among the clergy sample, but that few had found it possible to secure help for themselves.

Kehoe (1998) raises the issue of the effects of educational differences among Catholics who grew up before the Second Vatican Council in 1965 and those who received their religious instruction and formation after that. She argues that a person born after 1965 may have been raised by parents influenced by the pre-Vatican II Church, which can lead



to identity confusion. The paper gives attention both to the clinical implications of a person's upbringing and also countertransference issues for counsellors.

## **5. IDENTITY FROM POST-CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

Counselling practice suggests that the most significant post-childhood variables for priests, ministers and Religious are training and expectations. Either or both of these may have led the client to adopt a professional mask, under which their own personal identity may become hidden or eroded. The long training for ordination in the Catholic church (seven years to perpetual profession), and the three or more years for those belonging to other churches, together with parishioners' expectations of the priestly role, and the cultural pressures of the organised church, seem to produce a high incidence of clients with presenting problems of confused identity. In an examination of identity as a priest, Ventimiglia (1978) found it to be a function of time in training, having one's counsel sought, and relating to role partners providing differential role support. A suggestion of the fragility of a priestly professional identity may be deduced from the work of Vecchio (1983), who presented the case of a priest who became doubtful of his identity as a priest following a car accident. This was associated with panic, sleeplessness and suicidal ideation. The public expectation of the priestly role was somewhat confirmed by Coursey (1973), who found that men in priestly uniform were perceived as more moral, socially isolated and unscientific. Because of the high incidence found in counselling practice of identity and role confusion among priests, ministers and Religious, it seems highly desirable that this area should be researched in a more focused way.

## **6. VOCATIONAL IDENTITY**

One study advances a different hypothesis by suggesting that those in religious communities may in time become more accepting of themselves as Religious. Stones (1980) found that, as a function of integration into religious communities, individuals' lives take on greater purpose and that the motivation to seek meaning decreases. Also,

members' personal religious orientations become more intrinsic. Watts and Engels (1995), in their review of Adlerian research literature, found confirmation of the Adlerian belief of a positive relationship in the case of priests between lifestyle and occupational preference.

A further study suggests that sexual identity may be a variable for priests in maintaining religious identity. Verdieck, Shields and Hoge (1988) investigated possible change factors in influencing the decision to continue in the priesthood. The cost of celibacy as measured by desire to marry was the principal consideration in determining whether a priest continued in active ministerial priesthood.

## **7. IDENTITY FORECLOSED, CONFUSED OR CONFLICTED**

First, there may be issues of foreclosed identity for those who have been trained for a religious or priestly vocation from an early age. The incidence of foreclosed identity among priest clients is sufficiently high to call for some priority of analysis in research to fill a gap of immediate concern.

A research study was initiated by Sammon, Reznikoff and Geisinger (1985) to explore the relationship between ego-identity, commitment age and recent life-change stress. Contrary to expectation, the correlation between commitment age and percentage of recent life-change characterised as negative was non-significant, and commitment age bore no relationship to ego-identity level. This study, however, had a major limitation in that the sample of 474 subjects were all between the ages of 27 and 34. The intention of this study was to focus upon the Age Thirty Transition. However, counselling psychology practice seems to suggest that loss of confidence in their identity is more likely to be experienced by religious professionals between the ages of 40 to 50+. The study needs to be for this later age group. A further limitation of the Sammon, Reznikoff and Geisinger study was their elimination of 57 of their sample who reported emotional/nervous difficulties. A future study would more usefully look for correlations between emotional stress and loss of ego-identity at this later stage.



Problems of tensions and conflicts between vocational, marital and parental identities may be encountered by married priests and ministers. Clergy often experience a high degree of ambiguity at the boundary between family/home and work spheres (Lee, 1995).

## **8. PERSONALITY**

There have been some purposeful attempts led by Francis at the Department of Theology in the University of Wales to research the personality characteristics of clergy. There is only one instance found of such research before this. Kennedy et al (1977) devised four types of classification to describe and distinguish Roman Catholic priests along a continuum of socio-psychological development. His results within these categories showed: maldeveloped 8%, underdeveloped 57%, developing 29% and developed 6%.

Francis and Pearson (1990) found that mid-career Anglican clergy displayed elevated neuroticism scores and had psychoticism scores that were no lower than men in general. Following this, in a study of mid-career Anglican clergy, Francis and Pearson (1991) found elevated neuroticism and psychoticism scores that were higher than those of religious people in general. In a larger study of clergy in England, Francis (1992) found support for the view that neuroticism is implicated in the prediction of intensity of religious attitudes among the religiously committed. Further, a study of male Methodist ministers confirmed that male clergy in England tend to be more introverted than men in general (Jones and Francis, 1992). Dissatisfaction with professional identity was researched in a study of male full-time stipendiary parochial Anglican clergy in a predominantly rural diocese. Clergy who scored high on neuroticism and high on psychoticism were most likely to entertain thoughts of seeking alternative forms of employment (Francis and Rodger, 1994). A further study on neurotic and psychotic traits was made in a study of 259 male and 105 female Pentecostal ministry candidates, that showed that subjects scored significantly lower than the population norms on neuroticism. The male candidates also scored significantly lower than the norms on psychoticism and significantly higher on the lie scale (Francis and Kay, 1995). Research on the personality



traits of 441 male Anglican clergy in England over ten years (Musson, 1998) showed significant differences between the personality of the clergy compared with men in general. Clergymen were shown as more conscientious, tender minded, imaginative, apprehensive and tense than the general male population. The researchers argue that these findings are possible pointers to gender reversal. In a further study on this gender issue (Robbins, Francis and Rutledge, 1997), it was found that male clergy recorded a mean score on the psychoticism scale closer to the population norm for women than for men, while female clergy recorded a mean score on the neuroticism scale closer to the population norm for men than for women. A limitation of all these studies is that there was no comparison with male and female personality characteristics of members of other caring professions. Also, since it was not possible at the time to include women priests, the findings are out of date subsequent to the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Church of England.

Investigations into hypotheses about prevalence of affective versus cognitive traits in comparison with general population norms have been made in two studies. In a Canadian study, "feeling" types were found to be more frequent among Anglicans compared with evangelical Protestants and the general population (Ross, 1993). Comparisons of Anglican priests with Catholics showed a marked similarity between their type frequencies and those of Catholic women and a marked divergence between those of Anglican priests and Catholic men (Ross, 1995)

There is no research as yet in England on the personality traits of women priests and ministers. This is an important area for development of research, and also for the implications in the Anglican Church of men and women working together in ministry with equal status. A study in the USA (Rogers, 1991) of married and unmarried clergywomen found that leadership roles of clergywomen, and the acceptance of females as equals and leaders by clergymen, counter the cultural expectation. Dangers for clergywomen that emanate from their congregations and their peers are hostility, rejection and isolation.

## **9. SELF ESTEEM**

The incidence of low self-esteem found in priest and religious clients referred for counselling seems to be very high. Aspects of the self-image of the Religious were discussed by Sullivan (1987). He concluded that their self-images were typically distorted, because they tended to see themselves as inferior and less adequate than they were seen by others. They compared their self-image against the ideal they had developed for themselves in their religious life, and felt badly about themselves. Sullivan described self-esteem as being positively related to contentment in life, getting along with people, success in ministry, and ability to show genuine affection and love. Low self-esteem in this context was the experience of lack of recognition, failure in ministry, and being valued for what they did rather than who they were. This correlated with relational problems and lack of satisfaction with community life.

A seminal study in this area has been made by Moulds and McCabe (1991), who used a concept of self-acceptance which is useful because it is more readily acceptable than the concept of self-esteem for self-exploration by priest and religious clients. In this study of self-acceptance in a Catholic male religious congregation it was found that self-acceptance was closely related to perceived self-image, perceived evaluation by others, community satisfaction, and commitment to religious life. Degree of self-acceptance was also related to :

- [i] education
- [ii] number of priests in the community
- [iii] whether the respondent was in a position of responsibility
- [iv] parents' latest marital situation.

The influence of social desirability was highly significant.

Moulds and McCabe concluded that the need for approval remains a fundamental construct among Religious. Specific groups for which intervention appears appropriate are those in the largest communities, those never in a position of authority, and those with unmet disclosure needs. Further research is needed to consider the relative effectiveness of



various types of intervention with individuals in these groups. The researchers posit a role for community therapy by trained professionals familiar with the history and charism of the religious order.

## **10. INTIMACY AND LONELINESS**

Professional counselling practice seems to show a high incidence of loneliness in priests due to difficulties with intimacy (Mann, 1997).

A study of the psychological maturity of American priests claimed that a large proportion had not worked through the problems of intimacy, and that their level of maturity was lower than their chronological age. They did not relate deeply or closely to other people (Sipe, 1973). Parsons and Wicks (1986) posited that although loneliness presents an obvious serious potential risk for emotional and physical disorders in the general population, for the religious client it may be particularly painful and destructive. Religious clients bring with them elements of their unique cultural conditioning which make them uniquely vulnerable to the negative effects of loneliness and perhaps uniquely resistant to traditional modes of intervention. Parsons and Wicks presented a theoretical framework of cognitive-behavioural therapy but with a uniquely integrated pastoral dimension, which they claim is especially helpful to lonely priest clients.

Kenel (1986) believed that since Vatican II there has been a demonstrated need and desire for intimacy in religious life. She defined two aspects of intimacy. First the Religious must acquire self-intimacy, which is the awareness, recognition and appreciation of the authentic real self. She posited that self-intimacy then naturally progressed to intimate relationships with others through self-disclosure. Hickson, Gudz and Hornbuckle (1995) in a study of group work with Catholic priests who had left the clerical world, suggested that the self-image of the priest is formed by church doctrine and the expectations of others. They describe this identity issue as “a training in isolation”, which results in intimacy causing feelings of confusion.



## **11. PSYCHOPATHOLOGY**

In early studies, Koberle (1974) described ecclesiogenic neuroses as usually a result of the legal aspects of the faith- and taboo-related anxieties with regard to questions of sexuality, and saw those in clerical vocations as vulnerable to illness. Observations of clergy in a psychiatric hospital indicated the presence of common characteristics among institutionalised priests and suggested that religious life has a pathogenic influence on the priest by reducing his capacity for loving, interpersonal relationships (La Borgia, 1975)

More recently, it was found that the psychiatric problems which cause priests, monks and nuns to seek therapy include mental illness, alcoholism, homosexuality and interpersonal problems (Porot and Pascalis, 1988). In a gender study, it was found that in the Catholic church, male clergy had greater psychological dysfunction than female aspirants to the priesthood (Celmer and Winer, 1990).

A research study by Keddy, Erdberg and Sammon (1990), with the particular value of being grounded in a context of professional practice, was made of psychological problems of male and female Catholic clergy and Religious referred for residential treatment. The clients exhibited an intellectualized orientation, naive defensiveness and difficulty in handling emotions. Eight out of twenty-nine were confused or distressed about their sexual orientation. The longstanding nature of the problems suggested the need for thorough psychological assessment and psychotherapy at the seminary or novitiate level. In the last decade, there seems to have been a dearth of formal research in this area, which calls for a further development in order to inform the counselling process. The exception is a study which showed that clergy had significantly higher guilt scores than public high school teachers (Rickner and Tan, 1994)

A study which investigated personality and cognitive variables among hospitalised Roman Catholic priests suggested that overcontrolled hostility was the most reliable predictor of membership of this group (Plante, Manuel and Bryant, 1996). These researchers also

investigated personality characteristics of successful applicants to a major Catholic religious order. Results suggested that these clergy applicants were generally well-adjusted, socially responsible and interpersonally sensitive. Results also suggested a tendency for defensiveness. Coping with perceived anger and hostility may be an issue for many (Plante, Manuel and Tandez, 1996).

## **12. PSYCHOSEXUAL IDENTITY**

The research on the psychosexual identity issues of priests is fragmentary and has mostly arisen from problems for the church of sexual orientation, celibacy, the traditional taboo on the practice of masturbation, sexual misconduct or sexual abuse.

### **12.1 Anxiety about sexual orientation**

There are identity issues for those whose sexual orientation or practice is in conflict with the traditional taboos of the church. In an examination of the problems of Catholic clergy referred for residential treatment, 28% were confused or distressed about their sexual orientation (Keddy, Erdberg and Sammon, 1990). In an article by Tucker (1998), some issues of gay priests and counselling are explored. Specifically, the author attempts to bring together

- (1) a concern for the effect on gay priests of the church debates on homosexuality
- (2) an interest in the development of psychotherapeutic studies of homosexuality and best practices in counselling
- (3) a reflection on the issues gay priests might present in counselling.

A recent article by Westerfelhaus (1998) argues that there has been a significant shift in the rhetorical stance of the Catholic Church towards homosexuality since the Second Vatican Council. This shift is from the pre-council rhetoric that condemned both the act (i.e. homosexual behaviour) and the actor (i.e. the homosexual) to two distinctly different rhetorics. A moral rhetoric continues to condemn homosexual acts as sins and a pastoral

rhetoric argues that homosexuals should be ministered to and welcomed. In counselling practice, however, it seems that there remains a problem of high incidence of priests living with confusion about their sexual orientation accompanied by a debilitating anxiety about this being known. There needs to be research which will inform the church better of the psychological issues for priest-clients in their sexual dilemmas, and help to show the church organisation how a change to a more supportive stance may be managed.

## **12.2 Celibacy**

There may be particular issues of sexuality for priests who have taken a final vow of celibacy. Croagan (1974), as a psychologist and ex-priest, pleaded for a reconsideration of the dogma of celibacy. He viewed it as a denial of human rights and freedom of choice.

A journal article by Runkel (1998) focuses on guilt feelings which arise from what he describes as "the violation of norms in the area of sexuality". He claims that in Catholicism, celibacy institutionalises the enmity with sexuality and causes a permanent depreciation of real sexuality in favour of one projected on to the mother church and the Virgin Mary.

There seems to be no research that gives evidence about positive experiences of celibacy and how such experiences might be part of a satisfying vocation to ministry. It seems that such a study would be of great value in providing criteria for psychological assessment before ordination and awareness of how a celibate lifestyle might be fulfilling for those who were exploring a commitment to it.

## **12.3 Anxiety about masturbation**

The problems experienced by priests as a result of the traditional embargo on masturbation have not yet been sufficiently researched. Campione (1973) presented a case study of a 15 year old Catholic male, who, upon "confessing" his masturbation to a priest and being



informed that this activity "is always a mortal sin", masturbated more frequently. The author begs for a better understanding of the "overbearing power of sexual instinct in the adolescent" in those who educate in moral theology. There has subsequently been a dearth of research and other literature on priests' masturbation problems.

A high incidence of the problem has recently been suggested by Fones, Levine, Althof and Risen (1999). They posit that "the typical clergyman, whether heterosexual or homosexual, was struggling with loneliness, masturbation conflicts and the wish to be known beyond their role by others"

#### **12.4 Sexual misconduct**

Laaser (1991) defines a concept of an identity of sexually addicted clergy, in which the addiction is denied and its consequences to themselves minimised. This concept of addiction, however is now considered to be too simplistic. Thoburn and Balswick (1993) argue that sexual impropriety should be viewed as symptomatic, as a way the pastor is trying, albeit dysfunctionally, to deal with his life. Muse and Chase (1993) suggest that inappropriate sexual involvement of clergy may have been used as a means of coping with stresses. Intrapsychic factors may include a sense of omnipotence, splitting, anxiety and/or ambivalence around sexuality and the body in general, and codependency. Circumstantial factors may involve personal crisis, grief, depression, and isolation in ministry. Muse and Chase posit that counsellors need to be intentional in exploring for sexual temptations when presenting problems involve the above factors. The profile of a pastor at risk for extramarital sexual activity seems to be that of a person who has low self-esteem coupled with image consciousness (Thoburn and Balswick, 1994).

Francis and Turner (1995) found that clergy who engage in sexual misconduct tend either to be those who feel the stress of their position, may be naive about the course of their actions, and can be educated appropriately to fulfil their vocation, or those who have a world view that they are entitled to have their needs met at the expense of others and may

have to resign because of personality disorders. Steinke (1989) found that four dynamics which contribute to male clergy extramarital affairs are projective identification, sex for non-sex purposes, need for love and unhealthy narcissism.

Demographic data on extra-marital sexual behaviour in the ministry in the USA have been gathered by Thoburn and Balswick (1998). This article recounts the results of research with male Protestant ministers in the areas of sexual contact and sexual intercourse outside marriage, as well as consumption of pornography and duration of affairs. Information is presented about the kind of liaisons ministers are likely to have, i.e. church members, church staff, counselling clients, friends, prostitutes or strangers.

### **12.5 Sexual abuse**

There are acknowledgements by major researchers that to date there is insufficient theory or research about sexual abuse by priests and ministers (Plante, 1996), (Isley, 1997).

However, a book which has made a powerful impact upon the Catholic Church is an account by Sipe (1995) of his collection over three decades of 473 histories of American priests who had sexually abused minors. Sipe uses this evidence as a basis for an analysis of unresolved problems in the church's current teachings on celibacy and sexuality. He calls for an honest, open discussion on these issues in the Catholic Church, including an examination of the effect of the power structure of the Church in maintaining and distorting religion in these areas. Sipe's statistical conclusions from the case histories he collected are estimates only, but there is a claim that they are conservative (Sipe, 1995: ix). He suggests that only 2% of priests vowed to celibacy achieve it, that at any one time 20% of priests in good standing are involved in sexual relationships with women. He claims from his evidence that at any one time, 6% of Catholic priests in the USA are having sex with minors, and that this statistic is validated by public exposure.

Whipple (1987) found that fundamentalist clergy have legalistic attitudes about marriage and sex roles that may help to perpetuate violent relationships. Blanchard (1991) developed a conceptual framework comparing clergy sexual abuse to father/daughter incest. These two studies make only a small contribution to an area of immediate concern to the church organisations, and more research needs to be done. However, an exploratory study by Colton and Vanstone (1998) gives an interesting lead for further research. As a first step towards filling the major gap in the research literature, they carried out in-depth interviews with men serving prison sentences for sexually abusing children in their trust. Some of these men had had employment in the church. The research concludes that sexual abuse in organisational settings is less likely to be challenged if masculinity is not focused on as an issue of power. The limitation of this research is that it was a small study and not all the participants were priests. However, it seems to raise an issue very relevant for the Catholic Church, where sexual abuse is a major problem at the present time, where there has often been secrecy to cover up the abuse, where power is strongly invested in male priests, but where the masculinity of the base of power is not overtly acknowledged.

It is usual for sex offenders to minimise their offences, but there seems to be some evidence that this happens more with priests and Religious than the norm. Minimalisation of sexual offending on the part of priests and Religious compared to lay married people was investigated by D'Cruz and Kanekar (1992). They found that priests and nuns recommended shorter imprisonment for a rapist and attributed greater fault to the victim for her own rape than did married men or women. Capps (1992) found that there was a great deal of clergy complicity in denial of lust. Characteristics of male clergy sex offenders who committed offences with age-inappropriate individuals, included being 49+ years, having at least fifteen years of priestly or religious ministry experience, and working in an urban setting. Offenders reported no personal or family histories of alcoholism, drug dependency, or mental instability, and they were less neurotic, anxious, introverted and obsessive than non-clergy offenders (Loftus and Camargo, 1993). These results were found to be consistent. (Camargo, 1997). This lack of anxiety seems to align with experience in professional counselling practice of priest-client justification of their



offending behaviour as an expression of love and a lack of concern about the damage to the child victim. A study comparing clergy and non-clergy child molesters indicated that clergy offenders showed more sexual conflictedness than non-clergy offenders which suggested different psychoetiologies of offending between these two groups (Haywood, Kravitz, Wasyliv, Goldberg et al, 1996). Further research by this group indicated that priest offenders were more likely to report fewer victims, older victims and victims of male gender than non-cleric alleged child molesters (Haywood, Kravitz, Grossman, Wasyliv and Hardy, 1996).

There is some claim that narcissism is not an issue with sex-offending clergy. A study by Francis and Baldo (1998) indicated that clergy who self-reported having committed sexual misconduct and had high levels of narcissism were not significantly different from clergy who self-reported not having committed sexual misconduct.

There are several models of classification and treatment of priest sex offenders that have been developed in the last decade. Fortune (1989) describes offenders on a continuum from “wanderers” to “predators”. Rediger (1990) classifies clergy sexual misbehaviour under headings of sexual addiction, affairs, incest, paedophilia, rape and sexual harassment. What seems to be generally agreed is that the earlier models of classification did not recognise the complexities of the issues. Schoener’s (1998) critique of early sexual addiction programmes for priests is that while they sought to identify addictive or compulsive aspects of sexual behaviour, they classified a wide range of individuals into this single category, which is too simplistic. A more complex theoretical base was developed by Irons and Roberts (1995) which presented six “archetypal categories” of offenders. Schoener himself offers an assessment typology which does not focus on classifying offenders, but has six categories for assessment. These are psychotic and severe borderlines, narcissistic disorders, sexual impulse control disorders, chronic neurosis and isolation, situational single offences, and naivete due to deficit in social judgement. Hands (1998) published a study of clergy-specific cognitive distortions (i.e. excuses and justifications for abuse) which he particularly identified from sex abusers against boys in

the Catholic Church. The most common were used by priests who had abused pubescent boys. These invoked a minimising and self-justifying diagnostic label for themselves which lacked any element of sexual assault or abuse of power and role over a vulnerable person who cannot give consent. Another distortion is a dilution of the vow of celibacy to include only a prohibition against marriage. A third distortion is an invocation of a religious law which is higher than the civil law and criminal procedures. A fourth distortion is to frame sexual activity more as a personal fault than as a violation of another's rights. Hands' contemporary study is one of the most valuable available to counselling psychologists because of the insights it gives to the cognitive distortions of the shadow side of the Church, which may be encountered in psychological assessment and therapeutic work with priests.

It is relevant to review the contemporary research and associated treatment programmes for referral purposes. The research seems to demonstrate that a cognitive behavioural group-work treatment programme is the most effective treatment for sexual abusers (Hall, 1995). In England there are some treatment programmes which continue to research as well as treat priests. One of these is the Sex Offender Treatment Programme in H.M. Prisons (Mann and Thornton, 1998). Other such development work is found in the Probation Service programmes (Beckett, 1998) and in the Wolvercote Clinic run by the Faithfull Foundation (Eldridge and Wyre, 1998).

There is however, a great need for further research on the particular psychological issues of priest sexual abusers. An historical and contemporary review of child sexual abuse and the Catholic Church (Isley, 1997) deduced that research on priest offenders is virtually nonexistent. Isley posits that claims of unprecedented treatment success with clergy offenders has not been supported by published data. He asserts that, given the high recidivism rates of sex offenders, the Catholic Church should reconsider its policy of placing known sex offenders back into active ministry.

An important dimension is the systemic question that arises. Smith (1994) explored how the way the hierarchy of the Catholic Church deals with priests accused of paedophilia explains the systemic factors within the Church institution that contribute to the silencing of many of these complaints. Smith asserts that researching these systemic factors is a vitally important analysis which must be made for the psychological health of the Catholic Church and the prevention of further abuse to vulnerable people as victims. No exploration of these systemic factors since 1994 has been found.

### **13. FURTHER RESEARCH**

In this review, the following needs of priest clients have been highlighted for research :

- identity issues of priests from traditional Catholic family backgrounds
- the relationship between foreclosed identity in priests and the midlife transition
- confusion about sexual orientation experienced by those in religious life
- difficulties in experiencing intimacy in religious communities
- anxiety about sexual orientation
- positive experiences of celibacy
- priests' masturbation problems

The review has revealed the need for research on church organisational systems:

- methods of therapeutic intervention for priests with psychosexual problems which also addresses systemic aetiology
- the development of accessible counselling systems in the church for priests
- specialised treatment programmes for priest perpetrators of sexual abuse which take account of the cognitive distortions of priest offenders
- the formation needs of the Catholic Church on the nature of sexual orientation
- the training needs of Formators and Superiors in sexuality issues, including their own
- the training needs of the Church about sexuality in continuing ministerial development
- the systemic factors within the Church that contribute to silencing



An important area in which there is as yet no published research at all, is the use of theology in a psychopathological way. There seem to be two key issues in particular. First, a client may see his priesthood as an icon of Christ, leading to a psychopathology of perfectionism which cannot be maintained and causes stress and maybe breakdown. Second, a priest or minister may see his role as that of an exemplar of Christ as servant, but be unable to set boundaries to his service, leading to neglect of family and marriage breakdown and lack of insight into a condition of exhaustion. It seems to be necessary, not only for clinical treatment but also for preventive education, that these pathologies should be studied.

#### **14. CONCLUSION**

This paper has reviewed the existing psychological research pertaining to identity issues of priests where relevant to the practice of counselling psychology. It has been found that to date there has been almost no systematic research on these identity issues which is grounded in professional practice.

Research on the identity issues of priests is very fragmentary. It is most prolific where it had been driven by problems of high incidence in the church, that is, in the area of sexual abuse by clergy. Even here, the outcomes have been embryonic, and the increasing number of clergy abuse cases coming to light calls for a much more substantial research programme as a matter of immediacy. Additionally, there is a need to research issues of sexual and identity confusion, and the intimacy needs of priests and Religious, which may engender wider problems.

The greater part of all the literature reviewed refers to Catholic priests. The lack of research into the identity needs of clergy in Anglican and other Protestant churches needs to be remedied.

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