

TOPIC 12

Education and Religion

ALONG WITH THE FAMILY, TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT institutions in society are education and religion. For many, formal education in schools is a focal point of early life, and the formal and informal aspects of education continue for many years into adulthood. Often we are educated and trained on the job. Clearly, much of our life is encompassed by the educational institution. Religion is a central part of American life, and often a significant part of individual and family life. America is a very religious country as measured by the proportion of believers and attendees. Who can doubt the impact of religion in the unfolding of American history—from the Puritans to the followers of Sun Myung Moon or Krishna Consciousness? Even the politics of American life is laced with religious reference, often to the point that sociologists talk of a “civil religion.” Education and religion reach into everyone’s life, sometimes personally and sometimes in more distant ways. As social institutions, education and religion house much of our lives and create focal points that may last a lifetime.

The educational institution in society is seen as being coercive. Just like prisons, schools often control and indoctrinate and they do so in bell-ringing, punctual ways. As young persons, we are often forced to be there by law until the age of 16, and too many absences may result in referral to juvenile court. Some sociologists question whether schools are the optimal way to educate the populace, but schools are a critical

part of learning, credentialing, and success in society. Who among us will forget the social cultures in middle and high schools? Remember the intense feelings associated with belonging, or not belonging? Remember how important relationships could become? Remember how a single day or a single hour might hold the greatest joy and greatest pain of our young lives? Understanding schools, and the behavior of children in them, has become a national priority, as has improving achievement at all levels.

Religion is a social institution with the responsibility for creating connections between people, a sense of community and social integration, and responsibility for answering sacred questions about life, death, faith, and catastrophes. As a part of social life, believing in something that transcends everyday experiences, religion is able to create understanding and acceptance where science, or other explanations, might fail. How would parents explain the death of their child, or how would a victim explain a rape or the onset of a terminal disease? The history of religion, and indeed the history of the world, is dominated by secularization or the increasing importance of everyday (profane) life and the decreasing importance of religion (sacred). Even religious organizations have secularized their activities and might spend more time and money on new buildings than on the spiritual life of members. In the Western world, particularly, we have seen the separation of church and state. Even early in the twenty-first century, this debate rages daily in the press and courts as it is decided when and where we pray, about the placement of the Ten Commandments in public buildings, and whether it is a good idea for political leaders to invoke support from gods and prophets.

The three selections for Topic 12: Education and Religion examine some of the more questionable aspects of social institutions. This representation reminds us that even social institutions are “dysfunctional” at times, and that the personal and structural effects of these social patterns are not always positive. Don E. Merten examines the “meanness” of a group of high-status, popular girls. Violence in our schools has brought sociology and the entire nation to focus on more in-depth understanding of the dynamics that are precursors to such violence. Girls are not strangers to this type of “violence” in junior high schools. Mary Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes autobiographically recount the historical practice of taking Native American children from their families and raising them in boarding schools on the reservation as a way to “civilize” them. This separation from the family and culture,

and the mistreatment in the schools, would have a lasting impact on the lives of the children. Theresa Krebs uses a structural analysis to bring understanding to scandals within the Catholic Church. This research teaches us a valuable lesson about how the culture of religious organizations can go awry, just as they can in businesses and governments.

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READING

DON E. MERTEN

The Meaning of Meanness

Popularity, Competition, and Conflict among Junior High School Girls

The sociocultural construction of meanness among a clique of popular girls in junior high school is the focal point of this article. The term *sociocultural* is used here to designate the interplay of social and cultural phenomena in the construction of meanness (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Geertz 1973; Searle 1995). In the context of the research presented here, the construction was explored primarily by examining how the social relationships, and their meanings, of junior high school girls were shaped by the broader contours of mainstream American culture. Therefore, it considered how meanness acquired meaning through (1) its relationship to other related concepts, such as “niceness”; (2) the meaning of competition and conflict for girls; and (3) the tension between hierarchy and equality. Thus, the construction of meanness involved both social interaction and cultural meaning—the latter often tacit.

For the clique of popular girls whose actions are the focus of this article, meanness became an essential feature of their competition for, and conflict over, popularity. The relationship among competition, conflict, and meanness was far from simple. Sometimes, meanness was a byproduct of competition and conflict, but at other times, girls used meanness instrumentally to gain a competitive advantage in pursuit or protection of popularity. Yet it was not obvious why being mean

seemed reasonable to these girls—much less why they took meanness to the point of being considered the meanest girls in school. . . .

Method and Context

The data for this article are from a three-year longitudinal study of junior high school students. The first year was spent observing and interviewing students in the junior high school. Data from the initial observations and interviews (precohort) were used to orient research for the study of the student cohort that entered junior high school the following year. All students who wanted to participate and who had signed informed-consent letters (270 students, 127 boys and 143 girls, 80 percent of the eligible students) formed the study cohort. During the seventh and eighth grades, two school ethnographers observed and interviewed the cohort students at school. A third ethnographer interviewed the parents and adults in the community. . . .

The community in which the junior high school was located was a middle- to upper-middle-class suburb that was overwhelmingly White but was ethnically relatively diverse. It was a community with a heavy emphasis on mobility, both geographic and economic. The adults in the community were also aware that it was not getting any easier to succeed and that children would have to work hard to do as well as their parents—much less surpass them. Community and family resources were expended to create an educational and activity environment that provided students with opportunities that prepared them for future success. The local high school sent many graduates to college, and both the adults and students perceived the two years in junior high school as an important stop in this educational journey. . . .

The Clique: Popular and Mean

Our first encounter with members of the clique came when the community ethnographer spent a day with each of the sixth-grade classes that sent cohort students to the junior high school. Because the elementary school from which the clique came had four sixth-grade classrooms, the ethnographer spent four days there and recorded the following in her notes:

A clique of 8 to 10 girls dominate the 6th grade, as opposed to Edison [another elementary school] where the dominant group was boys. These

girls are considered “cool,” “popular,” and “mean.” They are a combination of cute, talented, affluent, conceited, and powerful. Their presence as a group is much more obvious during noon hour than when they are separated in classrooms.

The core membership of the clique (Megan, Gretchen, Sara, Brenda, Melissa, Sherry, Beth, Gloria, and Alice) came together in sixth grade. In addition, a number of other girls were, from time to time, included and excluded; the clique usually had 10 to 12 members.

Brenda characterized the clique in terms similar to those noted by the ethnographer: “Well, everybody liked us. Everybody thought highly of everyone in the group. A lot of kids were scared of us. Scared that we were going to beat them up or that we wouldn’t be friends with them.” Even though the clique’s members did not physically attack other girls, they intimidated peers with threats to do so. The clique’s reputation as being mean and powerful meant that they were able to get their way without resorting to physical violence. Yet as Brenda noted, the clique was highly regarded and popular. Many girls tried desperately to become members and to share the other girls’ popularity.

Popularity and Its Management

In junior high school, popularity had two different but interrelated referents. When a girl said someone was popular, she meant first, that the student was widely *known or recognized* by classmates and second, that he or she was *sought after* as a friend. In the best of all worlds, a student enjoyed widespread recognition *and* was sought out by many peers. Two well-traveled routes to popularity were to attract the interest of high-status boys (those who were especially athletic or handsome) by being physically attractive and/or participating in high-prestige activities. For example, cheerleading placed girls in front of their peers by performing at school sports events, and cheerleaders were able to wear their uniforms in class on days they performed, which further enhanced their recognition. Even though attractiveness to boys is important in elementary school (Adler et al. 1992), it became an especially prominent source of popularity during this transition from childhood to adolescence, since dating is a quintessential feature of adolescence. Because cheerleading positions and high-status boys were scarce, acquiring popularity via these routes was a highly competitive undertaking. Whereas being

widely recognized enhanced a girl's chances to be sought after as a friend, it also helped if she was friendly or nice. . . .

The clique's popularity made it attractive, and many girls sought to associate with the members, but the members only allowed certain girls to do so. Girls with the potential to be popular or those who were especially nice were sometimes allowed in. However, inclusion in the clique, as Melissa pointed out, sometimes transformed nice girls:

Once she got into the group she started getting real stuck-up and like she was the big one and the hot shot and everything. And she started going out with boys that they [the members] liked, and they started getting jealous. They would tell her that she was acting real hot and they didn't like the way she was acting. Then she would get upset.

The exhilaration of popularity was not easy for some girls to contain as they tried to take advantage of their high status. However, the established members of the clique were not looking for competitors. They were willing to accept girls who were grateful for the opportunity to associate with them, but did not hesitate to be aggressive in putting them in their place if they overreached their acceptance.

An often unrealized ideal was that popular girls would also be nice. Being nice, however, carried more weight in interpersonal interaction than with regard to schoolwide recognition. Nevertheless, niceness remained an important interpersonal ideal and was part of female gender construction that emphasizes nurturance and giving (Beauvoir, 1957). Junior high school girls used the terms *nice* and *mean* as general evaluative characterizations for peers and their actions. Sherry described what it meant to be nice: "Someone who cares about people's feelings and is real nice to them. Nice to everybody and treats everybody equal and stuff like that. Talk to them, comfort them, ask them to be your partner and stuff like that." Treating peers as equals and caring about their feelings reduced the social distance between individuals and made interaction more comfortable.

Sara also emphasized "caring" for people as an aspect of niceness when she talked about her nonclique friend Missy. She described what made Missy "nicer" than her friends in the clique:

'Cause she is better than even they [the clique members] are. She treats me better. Not that they treat me bad, but she is always there when I need her. She is always understanding. She always knows what to say. She is never off with someone else when you need to talk to her. That is why she is nicer.

Junior High School

The transition to junior high school brought about two, somewhat countervailing, changes. On the one hand, as seventh graders, the clique was at the bottom of the school hierarchy; eighth graders were on top. On the other hand, the junior high school had many more organized activities than did the elementary school from which they came (Merten 1996). In keeping with Eder, Evans and Parker's (1995) observation that extracurricular activities may contribute to the preoccupation with popularity found in American schools, these activities were resources of variable prestige value (Adler and Adler 1994). For girls, the two most valuable activities were cheerleading and pom-pom (the performance of choreographed routines set to music while shaking pom-poms). Compared to these activities, any other was a distant third in popularity. All eight of the seventh-grade cheerleaders were members of the clique, and two other members were on the pom-pom squad. Thus, the activity structure of junior high school enhanced and, more important, publicly validated, the clique's popularity. In other words, the clique's success in *monopolizing* the most prestigious activity in junior high school allowed the members to consolidate and enact their popularity publicly in ways that had not been possible in elementary school.

With their entry into junior high school, the clique's members acknowledged their previous meanness, but saw themselves now as less mean. As Megan observed: "We thought we were really hot. I have cooled down a little this year because of the eighth graders. We just thought that we were the greatest." Megan associated the clique's decreased meanness with their diminished social status now that they were *below* the eighth graders. However, the clique did not "cool" down as much as Megan suggested, nor did their meanness subside much; it simply turned inward. The reality was that the clique had "cornered" most of the popularity available in the seventh grade. This fact, along with the constraining effect that the eighth graders' dominance had on the clique, contributed to the clique's members becoming mean toward each other.

Self-Promotion and Paybacks

As the members directed their meanness toward each other, Sherry became the target of intense meanness. Because her account is not always easy to follow, it is helpful to start with an excerpt from the notes

of a fieldworker whom Sherry and her (nonclique) friend Wellsley stopped in the hall:

Sherry was absolutely in tears. It was like she was starting to hyperventilate; she could not talk through her tears. I asked what was the matter, and Sherry looked at Wellsley and [said] "You tell her; I can't talk." Wellsley, in her real quiet little voice, started to tell me that Rick Castleton has broken up with Missy and that everybody in that group [clique] is blaming Sherry for the breakup.

The fieldworker interviewed Sherry several days later. Sherry began by talking about how she was invited into the clique, "a really mean group," as she described them, in the sixth grade. Then she described the foregoing incident:

Gretchen was starting to get really mad at me. I talked to her about it and I asked her what was wrong. She just said, "Oh, I heard something that you said about me." But I didn't say anything about her. Sara was mad at me, I don't know why. She started being mad at me and then she started making up things that [she said] I said. Sara told Brenda and Gretchen so that they would get mad at me, too. So now I guess Gretchen has made up something and told Wellsley. They are all mad at me and laughing and everything.

... Because most of the meanness occurred outside the classroom (in the hall, the library, and the lunchroom), teachers seldom observed it. The social organization of junior high school—moving from classroom to classroom and teacher to teacher—provided opportunities for surreptitious meanness. Furthermore, some teachers found it difficult to believe that girls who were good students and otherwise popular could be so mean to a friend. Other teachers thought this situation was the sort of peer conflict that students had to learn to handle themselves; for example, one teacher walked away from Sherry and refused to listen as she tried to explain her plight. Sherry's father told of how the principal said he would do whatever he could to make the situation better, *but* if Sherry retaliated, she, too, would be punished. Even more frustrating to Sherry's father were his conversations with the parents of the other girls in the clique. Regarding one mother, he had the following to say:

One mother's attitude that we talked to is "girls are going to be girls." She said that this type of behavior in preadolescent girls is typical, and it is nothing to be worried about. It is a phase that girls go through,

and it will pass. "You are making a mountain out of a molehill. What are you getting so upset about?"

Parents' and teachers' responses were shaped by their interpretation of girls' conflicts as developmental and therefore "natural." First, by considering meanness developmentally "normal," they minimized its seriousness. Second, the school philosophy, which emphasized the need for students to be more independent and self-reliant, dictated that these girls should take care of such conflicts without adult intervention. Thus, a junior high school with a social organization that diffused adult responsibility and with an ideology that demanded students to be self-reliant facilitated meanness. . . .

Contested Status Change

At the beginning of junior high school, popularity was dynamic, and the increased popularity of some of the clique's middle-level members threatened to surpass the popularity of those at the top. Moreover, popularity, and the status it helped determine, was often experienced as schismogenic (Bateson 1958); that is, as the popularity of one girl increased, the popularity of another decreased. Since those at the top of the clique had the most to lose, they were concerned with the other members' successes. Megan, the least physically attractive of the top clique members, was especially vulnerable as attractiveness to boys became an increasingly important source of popularity. Melissa, a seventh-grade cheerleader, found herself more and more attractive to high-status boys; yet her popularity threatened to be short-lived. She described her situation as follows:

At the beginning of the year when I got into cheerleading, everything was fun. But after Christmas vacation, people started thinking that I was stuck-up. . . . They started writing on the walls, "Melissa Martin is stuck-up." That got me pretty upset.

Melissa never learned who had written these messages, but her friendships in the clique were not going well:

I thought that my friends were the people in my class like Sara and Megan. After Christmas vacation, they started not to like me. They thought I was stuck-up, too. . . . After Christmas, Megan had a party, and I couldn't go to it because Brenda and I already had skiing arrangements. So I guess that is the time they all got mad at me.

Melissa viewed her situation as one in which her increased popularity was followed by being characterized as stuck-up, and then her closest friends stopped liking her. . . .

Melissa's concern with her friends' meanness toward her extended to such things as family vacations because absence from interaction with the clique often resulted in meanness toward the absent member. Melissa described her predicament as follows:

I was so afraid that when I came back to school that all of them wouldn't like me. I didn't want to go at first. We were going to go on spring vacation [but] I was afraid my friends wouldn't like me. That is like when they were getting mad at me all of the time. That was after Christmas vacation when they thought they had a whole lot of power over me. And they were just getting mad at me all of the time for all dumb reasons. They were trying to make me look real bad. Like I would come home from the games and be really upset.

Melissa was so desirous of remaining in the clique that even though she knew the reasons offered for being mad at her, what she called "dumb reasons," were not the real ones, she was in no position to complain. Making her look bad in cheerleading was another way to undermine her popularity. . . .

Because most of the clique's meanness was directed toward its own members, most outsiders continued to think of the members as individuals with whom it would be nice to have a relationship. Thus, the internal focus of meanness generally had the effect of protecting the clique's popularity within the wider social system. . . .

Discussion

Competition-conflict to gain or preserve popularity was an ever-present undercurrent in the interpersonal relationships of the clique and thereby constituted an important condition for meanness. Yet to understand the meaning of meanness, it is necessary to go beyond the competition-conflict with which meanness was often associated. Because competition-conflict between females is frequently mediated in other contexts, one has to ask why competition-conflict around popularity vitiated the norm of mediation. In other words, was there an advantage to being mean when one was trying to be or to remain popular? . . .

Hierarchy and Meanness

... To gain a greater understanding of the relationship between hierarchy and meanness, it is necessary to consider how hierarchy was viewed in this community. Hierarchy was perceived as being significantly *truncated*; that is, rather than perceiving many gradations of status, students thought of their own status as essentially dichotomous—either high or low, winners or losers (Merten, 1994). Thus, minor losses in relative popularity were frequently experienced as significant losses in status. . . .

One's position in the clique was important, because it both symbolized one's popularity and was salient in protecting it. That is, hierarchical position was an essential factor for the successful use of meanness in the sense that a girl's effectiveness in being mean depended on her status in the clique. Melissa observed that those members who had more status than she could be mean to her, but she could not effectively be mean to them because they simply became angry and mobilized *her* friends against her. The other side of the hierarchical meaning of meanness was that high status protected girls from the meanness of members with less social status and thus demonstrated their superiority. . . .

The Cultural Logic of Meanness

The larger question, What led these girls to express their concerns with popularity and hierarchy in terms of meanness? requires an examination of the cultural logic by which doing so made sense. To understand how meanness was constructed and what it meant in the context of this junior high school, it is necessary to consider what other possibilities existed. Perhaps the one thing that popular girls dreaded most was losing their popularity by being labeled stuck-up. Loss of popularity in this manner was especially disconcerting in that being labeled stuck-up used the "force" (to use a judo metaphor) of a girl's popularity against her to invert her status. Therefore, it was precisely when a girl enjoyed popularity (as a cheerleader, for example) that she was most vulnerable to being labeled stuck-up. The problem was how to express and enjoy popularity and still manage to keep it. Expressing one's sense of one's own popularity could be as little as projecting a self-confident demeanor or as much as refusing to acknowledge or to associate with anyone who was less popular. Any action that suggested that a girl considered herself popular, however, *could* be taken as an indication that

she thought she was superior and hence was stuck-up. Yet to be popular and be unable to express it, and thereby not enjoy it, was less than satisfying. Thus, these girls faced a cultural dilemma that is common for women: They were being implicitly asked to encompass both aspects of a cultural dichotomy—to seek popularity, but when they were successful, to pretend they were not popular. This dilemma is similar to girls being called on, in another context, to be “seductive virgins” (Schwartz and Merten 1980). . . .

To put this rather complex relationship between popularity and meanness another way: Both meanness and popularity had hierarchical aspects and implications. Popularity was an expression and a source of hierarchical position. Furthermore, popularity could be transformed into power, which was also hierarchical. Like popularity, meanness could also be transformed into power. Hence, power was a common denominator between popularity and meanness. In this respect, meanness could be expressed in terms of popularity, and popularity could be expressed in terms of meanness, with power mediating the transition from one to the other. Just as “the language of social inequality is one of vertical imagery” (Schwartz 1981:125), so was the language of meanness. Thus, meanness was, in a fundamental sense, discourse about hierarchical position, popularity, and invulnerability (Gergen 1984).

Conclusion

Why a clique of girls that was popular and socially sophisticated was also renowned for its meanness was the question with which this article began. Yet in this junior high school, where acting like everyone else was important and acting superior to peers was discouraged, popularity was as problematic as it was desired. When something highly valued cannot be openly expressed, alternative forms of expression are often invoked. At this level, it can be said that meanness resulted from the failure of the culture to allow hierarchy to be explicitly celebrated (Merten 1996). That is, the cultural logic that allowed meanness to make sense to these junior high school girls was grounded in broader cultural tensions between hierarchy and equality. As Shweder (1991:108) noted about American society, “We do not know how to justify status obligations and hierarchical relationships, but we live them.” Thus, meanness, in a context in which equality was a paramount value and myth, was an action that awkwardly attempted to express and preserve popularity, despite its hierarchical implications.

For women in mainstream American culture, the tension between hierarchy and equality is further exacerbated by the taboo on *open* competition—especially among friends (Tracy 1991). If well-educated, successful women find it difficult to mediate the opposition between solidarity with friends and competition for individual success (Keller and Moglen 1987), then it is little wonder that junior high school girls found it difficult to do so.

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STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Very popular girls are "mean" to one another. What social value comes from being mean?
2. Popularity is a very tricky issue among these girls. How would you explain this issue and "being popular" to one of your friends?

MARY CROW DOG AND RICHARD ERDOES

Civilize Them with a Stick

*. . . Gathered from the cabin, the wickiup, and the tepee,
partly by cajolery and partly by threats;
partly by bribery and partly by force,
they are induced to leave their kindred
to enter these schools and take upon themselves
the outward appearance of civilized life.*

—Annual report of the Department of Interior, 1901

It is almost impossible to explain to a sympathetic white person what a typical old Indian boarding school was like; how it affected the Indian child suddenly dumped into it like a small creature from another world, helpless, defenseless, bewildered, trying desperately and instinctively to survive and sometimes not surviving at all. I think such children were like the victims of Nazi concentration camps trying to tell average, middle-class Americans what their experience had been like. Even now, when these schools are much improved, when the buildings are new, all gleaming steel and glass, the food tolerable, the teachers well trained and well-intentioned, even trained in child psychology—unfortunately the psychology of white children, which is different from ours—the shock to the child upon arrival is still tremendous. Some just seem to shrivel up, don't speak for days on end, and have an empty look in their eyes. I know of an eleven-year-old on another reservation who hanged herself, and in our school, while I was there, a girl jumped out of the window, trying to kill herself to escape an unbearable situation. That first shock is always there.

Although the old tiyospaye has been destroyed, in the traditional Sioux families, especially in those where there is no drinking, the child

is never left alone. It is always surrounded by relatives, carried around, enveloped in warmth. It is treated with the respect due to any human being, even a small one. It is seldom forced to do anything against its will, seldom screamed at, and never beaten. That much, at least, is left of the old family group among full-bloods. And then suddenly a bus or car arrives, full of strangers, usually white strangers, who yank the child out of the arms of those who love it, taking it screaming to the boarding school. The only word I can think of for what is done to these children is kidnapping.

Even now, in a good school, there is impersonality instead of close human contact; a sterile, cold atmosphere, an unfamiliar routine, language problems, and above all the *maza-skan-skan*, that damn clock—white man's time as opposed to Indian time, which is natural time. Like eating when you are hungry and sleeping when you are tired, not when that damn clock says you must. But I was not taken to one of the better, modern schools. I was taken to the old-fashioned mission school at St. Francis, run by the nuns and Catholic fathers, built sometime around the turn of the century and not improved a bit when I arrived, not improved as far as the buildings, the food, the teachers, or their methods were concerned.

In the old days, nature was our people's only school and they needed no other. Girls had their toy tipis and dolls, boys their toy bows and arrows. Both rode and swam and played the rough Indian games together. Kids watched their peers and elders and naturally grew from children into adults. Life in the tipi circle was harmonious—until the whiskey peddlers arrived with their wagons and barrels of "Injun whiskey." I often wished I could have grown up in the old, before-whiskey days.

Oddly enough, we owed our unspeakable boarding schools to the do-gooders, the white Indian-lovers. The schools were intended as an alternative to the outright extermination seriously advocated by generals Sherman and Sheridan, as well as by most settlers and prospectors overrunning our land. "You don't have to kill those poor benighted heathen," the do-gooders said, "in order to solve the Indian Problem. Just give us a chance to turn them into useful farmhands, laborers, and chambermaids who will break their backs for you at low wages." In that way the boarding schools were born. The kids were taken away from their villages and pueblos, in their blankets and moccasins, kept completely isolated from their families—sometimes for as long as ten years—suddenly coming back, their short hair slick with pomade, their necks raw from stiff, high collars, their thick jackets always short in the sleeves and pinching under

the arms, their tight patent leather shoes giving them corns, the girls in starched white blouses and clumsy, high-buttoned boots—caricatures of white people. When they found out—and they found out quickly—that they were neither wanted by whites nor by Indians, they got good and drunk, many of them staying drunk for the rest of their lives. I still have a poster I found among my grandfather’s stuff, given to him by the missionaries to tack up on his wall. It reads:

1. Let Jesus save you.
2. Come out of your blanket, cut your hair, and dress like a white man.
3. Have a Christian family with one wife for life only.
4. Live in a house like your white brother. Work hard and wash often.
5. Learn the value of a hard-earned dollar. Do not waste your money on giveaways. Be punctual.
6. Believe that property and wealth are signs of divine approval.
7. Keep away from saloons and strong spirits.
8. Speak the language of your white brother. Send your children to school to do likewise.
9. Go to church often and regularly.
10. Do not go to Indian dances or to the medicine men.

The people who were stuck upon “solving the Indian Problem” by making us into whites retreated from this position only step by step in the wake of Indian protests.

The mission school at St. Francis was a curse for our family for generations. My grandmother went there, then my mother, then my sisters and I. At one time or other every one of us tried to run away. Grandma told me once about the bad times she had experienced at St. Francis. In those days they let students go home only for one week every year. Two days were used up for transportation, which meant spending just five days out of three hundred and sixty-five with her family. And that was an improvement. Before grandma’s time, on many reservations they did not let the students go home at all until they had finished school. Anybody who disobeyed the nuns was severely punished. The building in which my grandmother stayed had three floors, for girls only. Way up in the attic were little cells, about five by five by ten feet. One time she was in church and instead of praying she was playing jacks. As punishment they took her to one of those little cubicles where she stayed in darkness because the windows had been boarded up. They left her there for a whole week with only bread and water for nourishment. After she came out she promptly ran away, together with three other girls. They were found and brought back. The nuns stripped them

naked and whipped them. They used a horse buggy whip on my grandmother. Then she was put back into the attic—for two weeks.

My mother had much the same experiences but never wanted to talk about them, and then there I was, in the same place. The school is now run by the BIA—the Bureau of Indian Affairs—but only since about fifteen years ago. When I was there, during the 1960s, it was still run by the Church. The Jesuit fathers ran the boys' wing and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart ran us—with the help of the strap. Nothing had changed since my grandmother's days. I have been told recently that even in the '70s they were still beating children at that school. All I got out of school was being taught how to pray. I learned quickly that I would be beaten if I failed in my devotions or, God forbid, prayed the wrong way, especially prayed in Indian to Wakan Tanka, the Indian Creator.

The girls' wing was built like an F and was run like a penal institution. Every morning at five o'clock the sisters would come into our large dormitory to wake us up, and immediately we had to kneel down at the sides of our beds and recite the prayers. At six o'clock we were herded into the church for more of the same. I did not take kindly to the discipline and to marching by the clock, left-right, left-right. I was never one to like being forced to do something. I do something because I feel like doing it. I felt this way always, as far as I can remember, and my sister Barbara felt the same way. An old medicine man once told me: "Us Lakotas are not like dogs who can be trained, who can be beaten and keep on wagging their tails, licking the hand that whipped them. We are like cats, little cats, big cats, wildcats, bobcats, mountain lions. It doesn't matter what kind, but cats who can't be tamed, who scratch if you step on their tails." But I was only a kitten and my claws were still small.

Barbara was still in the school when I arrived and during my first year or two she could still protect me a little bit. When Barb was a seventh-grader she ran away together with five other girls, early in the morning before sunrise. They brought them back in the evening. The girls had to wait for two hours in front of the mother superior's office. They were hungry and cold, frozen through. It was wintertime and they had been running the whole day without food, trying to make good their escape. The mother superior asked each girl, "Would you do this again?" She told them that as punishment they would not be allowed to visit home for a month and that she'd keep them busy on work details until the skin on their knees and elbows had worn off. At the end of her speech she told each girl, "Get up from this chair and lean over it." She then

lifted the girls' skirts and pulled down their underpants. Not little girls either, but teenagers. She had a leather strap about a foot long and four inches wide fastened to a stick, and beat the girls, one after another, until they cried. Barb did not give her that satisfaction but just clenched her teeth. There was one girl, Barb told me, the nun kept on beating and beating until her arm got tired.

I did not escape my share of the strap. Once, when I was thirteen years old, I refused to go to Mass. I did not want to go to church because I did not feel well. A nun grabbed me by the hair, dragged me upstairs, made me stoop over, pulled my dress up (we were not allowed at the time to wear jeans), pulled my panties down, and gave me what they called "swats"—twenty-five swats with a board around which Scotch tape had been wound. She hurt me badly.

My classroom was right next to the principal's office and almost every day I could hear him swatting the boys. Beating was the common punishment for not doing one's homework, or for being late to school. It had such a bad effect upon me that I hated and mistrusted every white person on sight, because I met only one kind. It was not until much later that I met sincere white people I could relate to and be friends with. Racism breeds racism in reverse.

The routine at St. Francis was dreary. Six A.M., kneeling in church for an hour or so; seven o'clock, breakfast; eight o'clock, scrub the floor, peel spuds, make classes. We had to mop the dining room twice every day and scrub the tables. If you were caught taking a rest, doodling on the bench with a fingernail or knife, or just rapping, the nun would come up with a dish towel and just slap it across your face, saying, "You're not supposed to be talking, you're supposed to be working!" Monday mornings we had cornmeal mush, Tuesday oatmeal, Wednesday rice and raisins, Thursday cornflakes, and Friday all the leftovers mixed together or sometimes fish. Frequently the food had bugs or rocks in it. We were eating hot dogs that were weeks old, while the nuns were dining on ham, whipped potatoes, sweet peas, and cranberry sauce. In winter our dorm was icy cold while the nuns' rooms were always warm.

I have seen little girls arrive at the school, first-graders, just fresh from home and totally unprepared for what awaited them, little girls with pretty braids, and the first thing the nuns did was chop their hair off and tie up what was left behind their ears. Next they would dump the children into tubs of alcohol, a sort of rubbing alcohol, "to get the germs off." Many of the nuns were German immigrants, some from Bavaria, so that we sometimes speculated whether Bavaria was some

sort of Dracula country inhabited by monsters. For the sake of objectivity I ought to mention that two of the German fathers were great linguists and that the only Lakota-English dictionaries and grammars which are worth anything were put together by them.

At night some of the girls would huddle in bed together for comfort and reassurance. Then the nun in charge of the dorm would come in and say, "What are the two of you doing in bed together? I smell evil in this room. You girls are evil incarnate. You are sinning. You are going to hell and burn forever. You can act that way in the devil's frying pan." She would get them out of bed in the middle of the night, making them kneel and pray until morning. We had not the slightest idea what it was all about. At home we slept two and three in a bed for animal warmth and a feeling of security.

The nuns and the girls in the two top grades were constantly battling it out physically with fists, nails, and hair-pulling. I myself was growing from a kitten into an undersized cat. My claws were getting bigger and were itching for action. About 1969 or 1970 a strange young white girl appeared on the reservation. She looked about eighteen or twenty years old. She was pretty and had long, blond hair down to her waist, patched jeans, boots, and a backpack. She was different from any other white person we had met before. I think her name was Wise. I do not know how she managed to overcome our reluctance and distrust, getting us into a corner, making us listen to her, asking us how we were treated. She told us that she was from New York. She was the first real hippie or Yippie we had come across. She told us of people called the Black Panthers, Young Lords, and Weathermen. She said, "Black people are getting it on. Indians are getting it on in St. Paul and California. How about you?" She also said, "Why don't you put out an underground paper, mimeograph it. It's easy. Tell it like it is. Let it all hang out." She spoke a strange lingo but we caught on fast.

Charlene Left Hand Bull and Gina One Star were two full-blood girls I used to hang out with. We did everything together. They were willing to join me in a Sioux uprising. We put together a newspaper which we called the *Red Panther*. In it we wrote how bad the school was, what kind of slop we had to eat—slimy, rotten, blackened potatoes for two weeks—the way we were beaten. I think I was the one who wrote the worst article about our principal of the moment, Father Keeler. I put all my anger and venom into it. I called him a goddam wasičun son of a bitch. I wrote that he knew nothing about Indians and should go back to where he came from, teaching white children whom he could relate to.

I wrote that we knew which priests slept with which nuns and that all they ever could think about was filling their bellies and buying a new car. It was the kind of writing which foamed at the mouth, but which also lifted a great deal of weight from one's soul.

On Saint Patrick's Day, when everybody was at the big powwow, we distributed our newspapers. We put them on windshields and bulletin boards, in desks and pews, in dorms and toilets. But someone saw us and snitched on us. The shit hit the fan. The three of us were taken before a board meeting. Our parents, in my case my mother, had to come. They were told that ours was a most serious matter, the worst thing that had ever happened in the school's long history. One of the nuns told my mother, "Your daughter really needs to be talked to." "What's wrong with my daughter?" my mother asked. She was given one of our *Red Panther* newspapers. The nun pointed out its name to her and then my piece, waiting for mom's reaction. After a while she asked, "Well, what have you got to say to this? What do you think?"

My mother said, "Well, when I went to school here, some years back, I was treated a lot worse than these kids are. I really can't see how they can have any complaints, because we was treated a lot stricter. We could not even wear skirts halfway up our knees. These girls have it made. But you should forgive them because they are young. And it's supposed to be a free country, free speech and all that. I don't believe what they done is wrong." So all I got out of it was scrubbing six flights of stairs on my hands and knees, every day. And no boy-side privileges.

The boys and girls were still pretty much separated. The only time one could meet a member of the opposite sex was during free time, between four and five-thirty, in the study hall or on benches or the volleyball court outside, and that was strictly supervised. One day Charlene and I went over to the boys' side. We were on the ball team and they had to let us practice. We played three extra minutes, only three minutes more than we were supposed to. Here was the nuns' opportunity for revenge. We got twenty-five swats. I told Charlene, "We are getting too old to have our bare asses whipped that way. We are old enough to have babies. Enough of this shit. Next time we fight back." Charlene only said, "Hoka-hay!"

We had to take showers every evening. One little girl did not want to take her panties off and one of the nuns told her, "You take those underpants off—or else!" But the child was ashamed to do it. The nun was getting her swat to threaten the girl. I went up to the sister, pushed her veil off, and knocked her down. I told her that if she wanted to hit a

little girl she should pick on me, pick one her own size. She got herself transferred out of the dorm a week later.

In a school like this there is always a lot of favoritism. At St. Francis it was strongly tinged with racism. Girls who were near-white, who came from what the nuns called “nice families,” got preferential treatment. They waited on the faculty and got to eat ham or eggs and bacon in the morning. They got the easy jobs while the skins, who did not have the right kind of background—myself among them—always wound up in the laundry room sorting out ten bushel baskets of dirty boys’ socks every day. Or we wound up scrubbing the floors and doing all the dishes. The school therefore fostered fights and antagonism between whites and breeds, and between breeds and skins. At one time Charlene and I had to iron all the robes and vestments the priests wore when saying Mass. We had to fold them up and put them into a chest in the back of the church. In a corner, looking over our shoulders, was a statue of the crucified Savior, all bloody and beaten up. Charlene looked up and said, “Look at that poor Indian. The pigs sure worked him over.” That was the closest I ever came to seeing Jesus.

I was held up as a bad example and didn’t mind. I was old enough to have a boyfriend and promptly got one. At the school we had an hour and a half for ourselves. Between the boys’ and the girls’ wings were some benches where one could sit. My boyfriend and I used to go there just to hold hands and talk. The nuns were very uptight about any boy-girl stuff. They had an exaggerated fear of anything having even the faintest connection with sex. One day in religion class, an all-girl class, Sister Bernard singled me out for some remarks, pointing me out as a bad example, an example that should be shown. She said that I was too free with my body. That I was holding hands which meant that I was not a good example to follow. She also said that I wore unchaste dresses, skirts which were too short, too suggestive, shorter than regulations permitted, and for that I would be punished. She dressed me down before the whole class, carrying on and on about my unchastity.

I stood up and told her, “You shouldn’t say any of those things, miss. You people are a lot worse than us Indians. I know all about you, because my grandmother and my aunt told me about you. Maybe twelve, thirteen years ago you had a water stoppage here in St. Francis. No water could get through the pipes. There are water lines right under the mission, underground tunnels and passages where in my grandmother’s time only the nuns and priests could go, which were off-limits to everybody else. When the water backed up they had to go through all

the water lines and clean them out. And in those huge pipes they found the bodies of newborn babies. And they were white babies. They weren't Indian babies. At least when our girls have babies, they don't do away with them that way, like flushing them down the toilet, almost.

"And that priest they sent here from Holy Rosary in Pine Ridge because he molested a little girl. You couldn't think of anything better than dump him on us. All he does is watch young women and girls with that funny smile on his face. Why don't you point him out for an example?"

Charlene and I worked on the school newspaper. After all we had some practice. Every day we went down to Publications. One of the priests acted as the photographer, doing the enlarging and developing. He smelled of chemicals which had stained his hands yellow. One day he invited Charlene into the darkroom. He was going to teach her developing. She was developed already. She was a big girl compared to him, taller too. Charlene was nicely built, not fat, just rounded. No sharp edges anywhere. All of a sudden she rushed out of the darkroom, yelling to me, "Let's get out of here! He's trying to feel me up. That priest is nasty." So there was this too to contend with—sexual harassment. We complained to the student body. The nuns said we just had a dirty mind.

We got a new priest in English. During one of his first classes he asked one of the boys a certain question. The boy was shy. He spoke poor English, but he had the right answer. The priest told him, "You did not say it right. Correct yourself. Say it over again." The boy got flustered and stammered. He could hardly get out a word. But the priest kept after him: "Didn't you hear? I told you to do the whole thing over. Get it right this time." He kept on and on.

I stood up and said, "Father, don't be doing that. If you go into an Indian's home and try to talk Indian, they might laugh at you and say, 'Do it over correctly. Get it right this time!'"

He shouted at me, "Mary, you stay after class. Sit down right now!"

I stayed after class, until after the bell. He told me, "Get over here!" He grabbed me by the arm, pushing me against the blackboard, shouting, "Why are you always mocking us? You have no reason to do this."

I said, "Sure I do. You were making fun of him. You embarrassed him. He needs strengthening, not weakening. You hurt him. I did not hurt you."

He twisted my arm and pushed real hard. I turned around and hit him in the face, giving him a bloody nose. After that I ran out of the

room, slamming the door behind me. He and I went to Sister Bernard's office. I told her, "Today I quit school. I'm not taking any more of this, none of this shit anymore. None of this treatment. Better give me my diploma. I can't waste any more time on you people."

Sister Bernard looked at me for a long, long time. She said, "All right, Mary Ellen, go home today. Come back in a few days and get your diploma." And that was that. Oddly enough, that priest turned out okay. He taught a class in grammar, orthography, composition, things like that. I think he wanted more respect in class. He was still young and unsure of himself. But I was in there too long. I didn't feel like hearing it. Later he became a good friend of the Indians, a personal friend of myself and my husband. He stood up for us during Wounded Knee and after. He stood up to his superiors, stuck his neck way out, became a real people's priest. He even learned our language. He died prematurely of cancer. It is not only the good Indians who die young, but the good whites, too. It is the timid ones who know how to take care of themselves who grow old. I am still grateful to that priest for what he did for us later and for the quarrel he picked with me—or did I pick it with him?—because it ended a situation which had become unendurable for me. The day of my fight with him was my last day in school.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Mary Crow Dog was mistreated, along with many other generations of Native American children, in reservation schools. What was the theory or explanation that allowed this to happen, and what social effects did it have?
2. What did Mary have to do to be released from the school? Is there a lesson in this for us regarding conformity and rebellion?

TERESA KREBS

When the Clergy Goes Astray Pedophilia in the Catholic Church

In 1993 the highest governing official in the Roman Catholic Church revealed his position regarding the sexual abuse of children by clergy and religious in the North American Catholic Church. As reported in the *Edmonton Journal* on June 24, under the headline “Permissive Society to Blame for Abusive Priests—Vatican,” the chief Vatican spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, identified pedophilic clergy in the Roman Catholic Church as a uniquely North American phenomenon: “One would have to ask if the real culprit is not a society that is irresponsibly permissive, hyperinflated with sexuality [that is] capable of creating circumstances that induce even people who have received a solid moral formation to commit grave moral acts.”¹

Navarro-Valls extended the blame to the media for sensationalizing cases of pedophilia when the number of priests implicated in North America amounts to about four hundred, little more than 1 percent. In a further move that denied institutional responsibility for priestly pedophilia, Navarro-Valls pointed out that the percentage of priests involved in pedophilic acts may be less than in other sectors of the general population (see, e.g., Bishop’s Administrative Committee 1989, 394). The Vatican’s statement demonstrates the Church’s protective stance toward pedophilic clergy in its ranks. By continuing to look beyond itself for possible causes, the Church avoids examining how its structure may facilitate pedophilia among some of its personnel.

I argue that pedophilia among Catholic clergy is possible because both longstanding and newly erected structures within the institutional

Church facilitate it. The Church's international nature, its organizational hierarchy, and its internal polity allow pedophiles to remain anonymous to all but a few within the Church hierarchy and secular society. It maintains this anonymity through a complex network of archdioceses, dioceses, provinces, and parishes that absorb and protect perpetrators across geographically disparate regions. By acknowledging instances of such behavior and not removing priests from the priesthood (or reporting them to secular officials), the Church hierarchy accords pedophilia a place within its organization.² . . .

The Overall Picture

To analyze pedophilia in longstanding structures in the institutional Catholic Church, I build on Anson Shupe's structural conflict model of clergy malfeasance in North American religious organizations. Shupe argues that new structures adopted by the Catholic Church, such as official policies, are positive responses toward effecting change. I, however, offer an alternative interpretation of the Church's remedial response: While no longer denying pedophilia among its ranks, the Church nevertheless continues to deflect institutional responsibility for it. I come to this conclusion with international examples interpreted through Jean-Guy Vaillancourt's study of Vatican control over lay Catholic elites.

Shupe defines clergy malfeasance as "the exploitation and abuse of a religious group's believers by the elites of that religion in whom the former trust" (Shupe 1995, 15). Pedophilia is a subgroup of sexual malfeasance, and it takes place in what he calls hierarchical denominations. A crucial point in understanding a structural relationship between pedophilia and its occurrence in a hierarchical religious group (such as the Catholic Church) is that the local authority of individual clergy is an extension of a bureaucratic authority that legitimizes it (Shupe 1993, 19).

Hierarchical religious organizations exhibit five characteristics of power inequalities that conceptually facilitate pedophilia. First, institutional religion is based on systems of power inequalities termed "hierarchies of unequal power" (Shupe 1993, 10; 1994, 4; 1995, 27–28). The unequal power is spread across several dimensions, such as elites' claims to possess disproportionate spiritual wisdom, experience, or charisma of office as well as their organizational knowledge and insights.

Second, persons occupying elite positions retain a significant capacity for moral persuasion, and in some instances the “theological authority to deny access to privileges of membership, including ultimate spiritual statuses such as salvation,” through excommunication or shunning and other forms of ostracization.

Third, unlike their secular counterparts, religious organizations such as the Catholic Church represent what Shupe calls “trusted hierarchies.” Individuals in positions of authority explicitly encourage and admonish individuals in lower statuses to trust in their honorable intentions and unselfish motives. More specifically, leaders encourage parents or guardians to socialize children into honoring the intentions and motives of priests by advocating respect and obedience without question.

Fourth, because of their special status as trusted hierarchies, churches provide unique “opportunity structures” or “protected places” that allow leaders to engage in deviance. At a power disadvantage, organization members who do not hold positions of authority are more susceptible to exploitation, abuse, and manipulation.

Finally, in a social structural sense, clergy malfeasance (the elite exploitation of lay members) occurs in trusted hierarchies because they systematically provide opportunities for such behaviors and allow them to continue. Shupe argues that deviance/malfeasance, when occasional, is “normal” to religious hierarchies rather than “the result of psychological pathologies or moral lapses” (Shupe 1995, 31).

An essential dimension of Shupe’s typology, and crucial for understanding how established Roman Catholic Church structures facilitate pedophilia, is lay members’ ability to gain access to officials in a hierarchically structured religious organization when making claims against pedophilic clergy. He characterizes the locus of control of religious polities by their degree of *permeability*. How receptive is the official hierarchy to complainants’ allegations against its administration or its personnel? Traditional authority in hierarchical religious polities is least responsive to complaints against personnel and slowest to implement resolution and remedies.

One reason for this unresponsiveness is that hierarchical religious organizations consciously employ strategies of “neutralization” to protect their personnel or the Church community (Shupe 1995, 80). Moreover, engaging in these neutralization strategies perpetuates the good reputation of the organization and diffuses public perception and awareness of malfeasance. The institutional Catholic Church’s neutralizing allegations

of pedophilia against its personnel gives perpetrators tacit approval from their superiors to continue engaging in such behavior.

Although Shupe (1995, 81) proposes that hierarchical religious groups “are more likely to develop policies addressing clergy malfeasance” than are local autonomous congregational groups, new structures such as official policies and parish study groups often appear to be responses to public pressure or legal proceedings—in fact, the Church sometimes ignores them. Documented evidence shows that even with sensitive, well-formulated policies in place, as well as uniform plans of action for responding to allegations of pedophilia, some members of the Catholic Church hierarchy continue to neutralize complainants by offering monetary settlements on condition of secrecy.

Yet, the dynamics of secrecy within Catholicism reveal how the Church continues to deflect institutional responsibility for the pedophilic crimes of some of its personnel. In his study of Vatican control over Catholic elites, Vaillancourt (1980, 286) indicates that one of the most ironic aspects of secrecy is that officials “often hide themselves behind an ideology of dialogue, communication, and participation. The leadership remains bureaucratic and secretive, while it veils its manipulation behind a screen of words.” Interestingly, the majority of members do not leave the Church when knowledge about pedophilic clergy becomes public. In some respects, membership is even strengthened, because the hierarchy actively solicits lay involvement under the guise of implementing organizational reform while retaining the right to make final decisions.

According to Vaillancourt, therefore, clerical appeals for official policies and open discussion further neutralize critics. Engaging public awareness of policy and encouraging parishioner participation in study groups and workshops are evidence of further neutralization strategies on the Church’s part. Combining the observations of both Shupe and Vaillancourt, I argue that newly erected structures further facilitate opportunities for pedophilia for some Catholic priests and religious.

Longstanding Structures That Facilitate Pedophilia

Within the Roman Catholic Church, three longstanding structures facilitate pedophilia among some clergy: the international institution itself, its hierarchical organization, and its government or polity.

The International Roman Catholic Church

The North American Roman Catholic Church engaged in an institutional cover-up of clerical pedophilia for decades. Indeed, the magnitude of the scandal facing the Church today demonstrates its international dimensions. At the same time that Church officials denied that clergy or lay religious leaders engaged in sexual activities with children, they privately assured complainants that the “problem” would be investigated and resolved immediately. In actuality, the Church began to transfer perpetrators either to active ministry in other parishes or to church-affiliated treatment centers. The international scope of the Catholic Church allowed the official hierarchy to relocate offending individuals to distant geographical locations (Isely and Isely 1990, 92–93). For Church officials, such moves solved the problem.

For example, the diocese of Northampton, England, transferred British priest Anton Mowat to Atlanta, Georgia, without informing the Archdiocese of Atlanta about Mowat’s “known predilection for young boys.” When Georgia police investigated allegations against Mowat of child sexual abuse in 1990, he fled the United States for a monastery in Turin, Italy. Although U.S. authorities repeatedly appealed to his home diocese in Northampton for information regarding Mowat’s whereabouts, Church officials denied having any knowledge (Burkett and Bruni 1993, 33). Indeed, if Mowat’s home diocese knew where he was, by denying that knowledge it tacitly approved his actions. Moreover, the Church in three separate countries (England, the United States, and Italy) played host to Mowat. By refusing to disclose his hiding place to authorities and by transferring him to another country, the international Church facilitated Mowat’s inclination to pedophilic activity.

Earlier, during the 1960s, dozens of priests accused of pedophilia were on assignment in the United States from England, Mexico, Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Italy (Burkett and Bruni 1993, 41). These assignments had already concerned John Salazar, a consulting psychologist for the Servants of the Paraclete treatment facility in New Mexico. In February 1967, Salazar met with the archbishop of Santa Fe, Robert Sanchez, to explain the dangers in allowing pedophilic priests and lay religious “brought from all over the world” to return to working with children at their former, or any, parishes (Burkett and Bruni 1993, 168). Archbishop Sanchez, however, was less than proactive on the issue, perhaps because (as it became known) he himself maintained sexual relationships with young women—as many as five during the 1980s and

others before then (Shupe 1995, 3). Sanchez eventually resigned the priesthood in disgrace.³

An alternative to transferring alleged pedophilic clergy to distant parishes is transferring them to treatment centers in other countries. Father Canice Connor, former executive director of Southdown Treatment Centre for clergy and religious near Toronto, Ontario, is president and chief executive officer of St. Luke's Institute in Suitland, Maryland. (In 1990, priest and psychiatrist Michael Peterson founded St. Luke's to treat the psychiatric problems of clergy, which include the suffering caused by depression, alcoholism, and other addictions.) In 1983, St. Luke's broadened its treatment to include priests who sexually abuse children. Connor told the *Washington Post* that St. Luke's patient lists include Roman Catholic priests from South Africa and Australia (Miller 1993). On July 16, 1994, Mary Jane Boland reported in the *New Zealand Herald* under the headline "Church Unveils Its Shame" that before that year, the New Zealand Catholic Church responded to allegations of priestly pedophilia by sending priests to treatment centers "overseas"—facilities probably in the United States. (Before it closed, House of Affirmation in Missouri described itself on its letterhead as the "International Therapeutic Center for Clergy and Religious.")⁴ . . .

Hierarchical Organization of the Church

The bishop holds the highest authority in an archdiocese or diocese, and is answerable only to the Supreme Pontiff. His hierarchical roles include teacher of doctrine, priest of worship, and minister of government. As the highest governing official in a diocese, a bishop has executive power to apply the universal laws of the Church, to exercise legislative and judicial power, and to enforce civil law in a diocese. The bishop himself is subject to canon law and, as a citizen, to the civil and criminal laws of the country in which he serves. According to Church and civil laws, the bishop's power, therefore, is limited and not arbitrary. Answerable within the Church only to the pope, bishops nevertheless also possess the potential for considerable power in their dioceses (Archdiocesan Commission of Enquiry [ACE] 1990, 1:69–70).

Former Archbishop Alphonsus Penney's management of pedophilic clergy in Newfoundland is a particularly telling example of the Church hierarchy's ability to manipulate public perception while denying claimants' allegations. Evidence from as early as 1979 suggests that when Penney assumed the bishopric in the archdiocese in St. John's, he knew

that priests and Christian Brothers in Newfoundland were committing pedophilic acts with young members of the Church and wards of the Mount Cashel Orphanage. As the representative official of the Archdiocese of St. John's, Newfoundland, and according to Church law, he was responsible for all juridic affairs, including allegations of pedophilic crimes against Church personnel (Paulson 1988, 103). Therefore, by both canon and civil law, Penney ought to have acted on his knowledge and reported the crimes to Church and civil authorities.

A sex scandal of enormous proportions swirled around Penney's mitre while he followed a tragic course of denial, covering his inaction by transferring or counseling perpetrators rather than indicting them under canon and civil criminal law. Moreover, secular authorities investigating suspected and named abusers met with little cooperation from Church and affiliated institutional officials.

As the highest governing official in a diocese, a bishop is responsible for the physical and spiritual well-being of all Church personnel. Alphonsus Penney reportedly advised priests struggling with their sexual predilections to avail themselves of professional counseling services that he retained for their use. One year after he assumed the office of bishop in the Archdiocese of St. John's, Alphonsus Penney established the Ministry to Priests Program (MPP) to address problems of morale associated with restrictions and requirements of the priesthood, another indication that he knew some clergy were engaged in sexual activities proscribed by their vows of celibacy.

The program, however, served another purpose than that intended. Former members testified that its greatest value lay in the opportunity for socializing with peers. Most clergy, however, avoided associating with the group within the MPP known to have a homosexual orientation. The majority of allegations against and convictions of pedophilic priests were of members belonging to that segment of the MPP (ACE 1990, 1:96–99).

The MPP represents one example of the way the Church hierarchy facilitates pedophilia by following a course of denial and diffusion rather than by reporting offenses to appropriate secular authorities. As pastor to the priests in his archdiocese, Penney did take steps to address the problem of pedophilia among them. He ignored his obligations to civil law, however, by providing a forum that facilitated rather than eliminated their illegal sexual practices. . . .

Jason Berry, author of *Lead Us Not into Temptation*, followed the pedophilic priest scandal in the U.S. Catholic Church from Louisiana to

Washington, seat of the U.S. papal nunciature, investigating Father Gilbert Gauthé, from the Diocese of Lafayette in Louisiana, who managed to commit pedophilic crimes for many years, apparently undetected. Berry blames the complicity between Church personnel and the official Church hierarchy for perpetuating the problem. “The crisis in the Catholic Church lies not with the fraction of priests who molest youngsters but in an ecclesiastical power structure that harbors pedophiles, conceals other sexual behavior patterns among its clerics, and uses strategies of duplicity and counterattack against the victims” (Berry 1992, xx). . . .

Internal Polity

Shupe characterizes the internal polities of religious organizations by the extent of their permeability and of their neutralization. He measures permeability by the extent to which administrators and leaders in the hierarchy, first, are authentically open to receiving complaints against the organization by lay members and, second, act to eliminate a problem from recurring (Shupe 1995, 118–119). Shupe assesses organizational neutralization by the degree to which administrators and leaders in the hierarchy blame victims, dismiss grievances, or intimidate, bribe, or threaten to ensure the silence and secrecy of complainants. Taking any neutralizing action means that the problem can recur.

The internal polity of the Catholic Church employs numerous methods to neutralize attempts to require accountability or restitution from the Church. Unfortunately, the relationship between parishioners and the Church hierarchy does not encourage, or even allow, demands for institutional accountability. The hierarchy camouflages abuse and abusers against public perception. Relying on their perceived authority, Church officials intimidate claimants, downplay the effects of the acts, or ensure silence from victims by stating that what occurred is an isolated incident. The hierarchy treats each set of allegations in confidence, rather than collaborating and compiling records on named abusers in order to explore behavior patterns. Bishops speak to victims privately, victimizing them further by planting doubts in their minds about possibly having encouraged the attention of the sexual deviant, having enjoyed the attention, and so forth. Bishops also neglect to inform law enforcement officials of sexual abuse. By insulating perpetrators from outside authorities, internal polities of the Catholic Church also promote aspects of pedophilia. . . .

Almost invariably, the Church's internal polity insists that officials maintain secrecy regarding claimants' allegations of sexual abuse against priests or other religious leaders. Often secrecy can be negotiated. In Gauthe's case, mentioned earlier, the Church paid an average of \$450,000 to each of nine families. Those settlements, however, came with conditions: Accepting payment required signing an agreement of no liability on the part of the Church. Furthermore, the Gauthe case remains sealed, which decreases the Church's risk of media and public exposure (Berry 1992, 6–25).

In the Gauthe case, as in others researched, the hierarchy sought to protect itself and its priests from public exposure by neutralizing claims. Neutralizing claims, however, ultimately deferred scandals only for a short time (Burkett and Bruni, 1993: 60–62). Documented accounts demonstrate that the pedophiles continued to accumulate victims.

NOTES

1. Former Benedictine monk A. W. Richard Sipe estimates that approximately 2 percent of North American priests are sexually fixated on young children and that an additional 4 percent find older youths sexually appealing. Church officials challenge these figures, but Fr. Thomas Doyle, canon lawyer and former advisor to North American bishops regarding sexual abuse by clergy, estimates that three thousand American priests “may be so inclined” (which supports Sipe's estimates). Jason Berry calls disputes over percentage estimates further examples of “concealment strategies” by which Church officials attempt to deny or diffuse the problem of pedophilia among their personnel. The logic runs, “If there are no numbers, [then] it cannot be true” (cited in Berry 1992: xx–xxi).
2. Part of the reason the Church continues to harbor perpetrators rather than dismiss them may be the aging and declining clerical population in North America caused, in part, by resignations and fewer ordinations. The complex canonical process involved in laicizing clergy also may help to explain why the Church excuses pedophilic clergy within its ranks. See, for example, Gilmour 1992, B6; Schoenherr and Young 1990, 463–481; Schoenherr, Young, and Vilarino 1988, 499–523.
3. Perhaps not so ironically, Archbishop Robert Sanchez's March 19, 1993, letter to the Pope requested permission to resign from his position. CBS-TV's *60 Minutes* segment “The Archbishop,” aired March 21, 1993, investigated the New Mexico archdiocese where Sanchez faced accusations of “sexual improprieties.” The program suggested that as a result of his own sexual proclivities Sanchez was lenient toward other priests who engaged in sexual activity with children. See Sanchez 1993, 722–724.
4. Private correspondence from House of Affirmation, in possession of the author.

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STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the organizational structures that permitted the protection of priests when they victimized the children?
2. What similarities does the Catholic Church, as an organization, have with big businesses like Enron and Wall Street brokerage firms?