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# Institutional Betrayal, Psychoanalytic Insights on the Anglican Church's Response to Abuse

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**Abstract:** Psychoanalysis can advance our understanding of responses from the hierarchy of mainstream religious denominations to disclosures of abuse by clergy. This paper takes analytic insights to discuss how and why the Anglican institutional church has responded so callously to disclosures of child sexual abuse within the church. Inhumane responses have led to feelings of institutional betrayal in survivor groups. The subject is explored firstly in the context of organizational and group dynamics, and, secondly, by analysing defences that underly the interaction between the person who has been abused and the member of the church hierarchy who is hearing the disclosure. Defences and deceptions have been consciously and unconsciously used within the organization that have obstructed contact with reality, and so hindered it both in fulfilling its task in responding appropriately to what has taken place, and in adapting to changing circumstances. Churches have been active agents in re-traumatizing individuals. Examples to illustrate are taken from hearings on the Anglican Church by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England, UK. The idea of organizational redemption is presented.

**Keywords:** institutional church; organizations; abuse; disclosure; dynamics; betrayal



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## 1. Introduction

Since the advent of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy, we now have access to a much deeper understanding both of the aetiology of aggressive acts and of their treatment.

(Kahr 2004, p. xii)

It has been argued that it is the practice of psychoanalysis, and, a psychoanalytic state of mind, that enables understanding of other states of mind and distinguishes psychoanalysis from other social sciences, even though it shares with them theories and methods for the recovery of hidden meanings (Long 2001). A psychoanalytic state of mind, alongside psychoanalytic practice, has, over the last fifty years, greatly aided understanding of organizations and groups. This paper takes analytic insights to discuss how and why the institutional church has responded so callously to disclosures of child sexual abuse by clergy. Such inhumane responses have led to feelings of institutional betrayal in survivor groups.

The use of the term institutional church refers to the national and the regional or diocesan organization of the mainstream churches. It is not about the local community-based church though national projects, regulations and indeed aspects of the culture trickle down and are moulded to fit the setting. The institutional church, in this context, is the hierarchy of senior clerics, and the structures and rules that surround them.

Examples are used in the paper to illustrate how analytic thought can help with an understanding of institutional betrayal. These are predominantly taken from the recent and on-going Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), from hearings that took place in 2019 into Anglican Church organization. IICSA is a statutory and public inquiry for England and Wales established in 2015 under the Inquiries Act 2005, and set up because of

serious concerns that some organizations had failed, and were continuing to fail, to protect children from sexual abuse. Independence here means that the inquiry is not part of any government department. The public hearings are to date fifteen investigations of which seven are on the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches; all the data is available online.<sup>1</sup>

The paper is structured into three main sections and concluding thoughts. The first section introduces the reader to the psychodynamics of deception that have characterized the response of the Anglican church to disclosures of abuse by clergy. Analytic thinking on groups and organizations is used to explicate the intra-psychic workings of the organizational life of the church. The second section looks at the contribution of analytic ideas to help understand the way that organizations handle anxiety-provoking dilemmas and specifically how the church defends itself. The third central section focuses on institutional betrayal and the dynamics involved in disclosure, through the concept of parallel process. In the concluding section ideas on organizational redemption are discussed.

## 2. Failing Dependency and Dysfunction in the Institutional Church

On 20 May 2022, a letter was published in *The Church Times* by “Graham”, a survivor, about the Church of England’s continued and chronic lack of response to the serious abuse carried out by the late John Smyth QC, a barrister who used his eminent role in the church to abuse more than a hundred men and boys in three countries. The account of the abuse and the lengthy suppression of information and accountability is complex (Graystone 2021). The abuse was known about since 1982, the perpetrator protected, and victims unheard and denied justice:

Many individuals were part of the story, not just as bystanders, but sometimes as active colluders . . . There were many high up in the network who knew what was going on. The failure of a single one to come forward, suggests that the word conspiracy is an accurate one to describe this corporate behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

In 20 May 2021, nine years after being told of the abuse, Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury met with some of the victims, and promised investigations would take place into those who colluded with the cover-up. In his letter “Graham” writes:

As a victim, I regard the archbishop’s words as appearing to be just hot air: promises unfulfilled. Has he “kept in touch” with these investigations, as he claimed he did in 2013? Or has he just assumed that someone else is dealing with it, which he described at IICSA as “not an acceptable human response, let alone a leadership response”.<sup>3</sup>

The Archbishop responded on the 9 June 2022 stating, that delays to both the Church-led and independent investigations were unintentional and being followed up.<sup>4</sup>

This one example, from many, is used to illustrate the dynamics of deception that appear to have underpinned the way that the institutional church has responded to abuse. As with “Graham”, many of the abused remain victims (in his case ten years after he publicly disclosed), not only of the original crime, but also victims of emotional and spiritual abuse of the church’s inadequate response, victims of institutional betrayal.

This section analyses why such dynamics of deception underpin an organization whose conscious mission is to portray gospel truth. The insights from analysts in the 1950s and 1960s provide the foundation, whilst more recent contributions seem especially relevant in this context. In an organization, the well-known intra-psychic defences such as splitting, projection, and projective identification are employed in order to tolerate tensions and anxiety of group life; the group partially acts as a container for projections (Bion 1961; Jaques 1955). The intra-psychic tension is between a group’s relatively sophisticated capacity to work at its primary task (‘the mental activity in which they are engaged’ Symington and Symington 1996, p. 126), and the powerful regressive pull of the unconscious or covert forces which Bion termed basic assumptions. These strong underlying expectations act to evade the powerful reality of psychological conflict within or between members of the organization, and become dangerous when attempts are made to translate them into action.

Bion conceptualized three basic assumptions associated with specific kinds of anxieties, processes and roles: dependency; fight and flight, and, pairing. Bion saw the church as a specialized work group with the basic assumption of dependency. This is because it is characterized by a culture of subordination and unquestioning obedience to authority, where the formal leader(s) is seen as having all the answers and is expected to take care of the group and make them feel good.

The clearest distinction of dependency (and thereby power) is between priests/clergy and laity, where explicitly the leaders are those called by God and consecrated to divine ministry, and so set apart and elevated from the laity. The status implies that clergy know more about God and the divine mysteries as they are allowed to minister the sacraments, and so channel the love and gifts of God. In this context the organization as a piece of social reality constructed in the mind (Hutton et al. 1997), in other words the 'idea' of church, is generally seen as a sacred one headed by holy people—and so characterised as a safe and compassionate place. Within the Anglican church there are further categories where senior clergy are implicitly even holier and more powerful, and in the case of bishops closest to apostolic succession and increasingly powerful. Archbishops, then, implicitly are the closest to God, and the most powerful in the structure and have the greatest authority.

In contrast, the laity are those *not* chosen, explicitly furthest away from the apostolic succession, ministered to, and absolved of sins. The implicit meaning (which would be denied) is of dependency and passivity. At the bottom of this pyramid are women, children and young people (Gardner 2007, 2012). There are some amongst the laity who become powerful and influential because of their position within the structure, such as readers, music directors or choir leaders, and, in the example beginning this section John Smyth: influential lay preacher, trustee of the Iwerne summer camps and the Scripture Union, and serial abuser. When abuse is perpetrated by a person in a position of authority the basic assumption of dependency, the church-in-the-mind as a holy and safe place, and the very social fabric is seriously threatened (Bleandonu 1994, p. 76).

The numbers of allegations and convictions of child abuse in religious organizations constitute a trauma of failed dependency. Furthermore, traumatogenic processes that followed on from the actual abuse have included management failures and betrayals in how the hierarchy has responded to disclosures; the resulting loss of reputation and trust, and financial claims made against the institution for their failure to protect. Hopper (2012), highlights how trauma and traumatogenic processes in organizations leads to failed dependency resulting in what he terms 'incohesion' (meaning a lack of social cohesion) where 'the very survival of the group is in question'.

I had come to think about these organizations as "traumatized organizations" . . . I was uncertain whether to regard them as "broken", "wounded", "disintegrated", "non-functional", etc. because each word had its own theoretical implications.

(Hopper 2012, p. xviii)

The model of failed dependency and incohesion is a helpful concept for this discussion, and Hopper describes how such failure in an organization leads to a turning away from the recognition of truth and from the honouring of commitments, which, in turn, lead to the collapse of trust and the ability and willingness to meet more informal agreements in which organizational activities are based. Long terms these 'perverse processes in organizations' which are 'destructive and stultifying, and even banal' (Hopper 2012, referring to Long 2012, p. xxii).

The account that opened this section is one of failed dependency and incohesion, where the very functioning of responding appropriately and humanely to survivors has become unsustainable at the very top of the Anglican Church. This next section looks in further detail at the defensive manoeuvres and deceptive dynamics.

### 3. How the Church Hierarchy Defends against Anxieties

Institutional dilemmas like personal ones, are anxiety-provoking, and regularly give rise to . . . defensive projective processes.

(Obholzer and Roberts 1994, p. 133)

The institutional dilemma for the church is, 'The fact is that tens of thousands of children throughout the world have been sexually abused by priests' (Robinson 2010, p. vii). A further dilemma has been the way this was often dealt with: secretly, or through ecclesiastical law that gave the abusers ample opportunity to re-offend. In the current climate, where organizational life is 'profoundly shaped by methodologies and responsibilities associated with risk prevention' (Cooper and Dartington 2004, p. 131), the disclosure about the extent of sexual abuse and the uncovering of the way that the institutional church has responded has revealed great anxiety and associated defensive processes operating at a collective level. Obholzer (1999) discusses how anxiety can lead to the functioning of the institution becoming defence-related rather than work-related. Defensive dynamics in the church hierarchy have provided what might be called institutional glue. Whilst there have been many calls for change, many reviews undertaken and 'lessons learned' commentaries, change has mostly been resisted 'for unconscious as well as conscious and more obvious reasons' (Long 2006, p. 283). Hinshelwood and Skogstad (2000) have proposed in their anxiety-culture-defense model that when there are anxieties originating in responses to the work task—in this context the work task is responding to disclosures—primitive anxieties are stimulated and can lead to a collective defense that becomes part of the institutional culture. Perhaps, as Long (2002) suggests, there has been a further move towards elements of a perverse culture that includes turning a blind eye.

This collective defensive response has similarities with the psychodynamics of child sexual abuse. For example, the dynamics of secrecy and deception in the institutional church result from a similar desire for power and control as those that characterise the perpetrator of child abuse (Gardner 1996; Poling 1991; Kennedy 2003). Secrecy, obfuscation and discreet management lead to wilful blindness and a denial of awareness towards the victim, where there is disregard and an abdication of responsibility. It is further suggested the church has demonstrated an institutional narcissism not dissimilar to the narcissism and solipsism that characterises the self-justification of most perpetrators (Gardner 2021). Abusers in the church have undue influence as do those in the church hierarchy who may hear the disclosure, and both may use coercive persuasion to control the victim's responses and actions either explicitly or implicitly. This may lead to a fear in the victim of displeasing the authority figure whom he or she may be dependent on (Shaw 2022, pp. 16, 19). Defences have obstructed contact with reality, and hindered the organization both in fulfilling its task in responding appropriately to what has taken place, and, in adapting to changing circumstances (Menzies-Lyth 1988).

Here again are perverse processes of the basic assumptions of failed dependency and incohesion of the organization discussed in the earlier section. Resistance, denial and projective processes have contributed to experiences of institutional betrayal for survivors (cf. Freud 1961). Institutional narcissism means that limits and accountability are anathema as there is a fantasy of omnipotence. The collective hierarchical defense includes the following aspects:

- If you are part of a powerful hierarchy your vulnerabilities have to be disowned.
- It is essential that you maintain control of decision making, you do not appear to be told how to respond by others—especially those that are deemed inferior.
- You choose to exercise this right by seeing things differently from others, even from experts.
- You maintain a deliberate, perverse, blindness to what most reasonable people can appreciate, namely, that the church does not hold clerical offenders or those who cover for them to account.

- A delusion of omnipotence helps suppress any possibility of impotency. This may have personal origins, bolstered by being in the church hierarchy.
- The presentation of shamelessness is constantly in tension with the need to prevent any possibility of seeming powerless.
- The role of bishop and archbishop inevitably encourages self-inflation.

A useful illustration of some of these defences is provided in evidence given by Bishop Dr Peter Forster, then Bishop of Chester, at the IICSA inquiry in July 2019.<sup>5</sup> He was asked about three situations following disclosures of child abuse by clergy that he had mishandled or misjudged. In this example the delusion of superior perfection is attempted by subjugating others. During the questioning the bishop refuses to recognise limits to his entitlement, no boundary he is not entitled to violate. Forster is asked about his interpretation of safeguarding guidelines in the case of the Reverend Ian Hughes. Hughes in prison for a child sexual offence, is prohibited for life from further ministry. The examination by Ms. McNeill (Questioner) followed Forster's reason for departing from the guidelines which in summary was that he, Forster, felt that he knew best.

Questioner: But in the case of the Reverend Ian Hughes, you wanted to depart from those guidelines; is that right?

Forster: I wanted to discuss with the President of Tribunals the possibility of departing in a small degree. [Forster wanted a 20-year rather than a lifetime ban.] They're guidelines, and so they have to be interpreted, and I felt that in his [Hughes'] case, given his relative youth, the fact that he was entirely penitent from the outset as to what had happened, and his previous record of ministry was excellent, that it was worth raising with the President of Tribunals . . .

Questioner: How can we know that that penitence is really genuine? It's somebody who has just been convicted of a sexual offence and imprisoned . . . how can you make any real assessment as to whether this is genuine penitence?

Forster: The penitence arose at the moment of his arrest, before he was, you know, put in prison or anything . . .

Questioner: You say that he had an exemplary record in ministry to date. I would ask you to question, really, what the relevance of that . . . in deciding what the appropriate penalty is following that conviction?

Forster: Well, I mean, I take that point. It is a game changer if somebody is arrested—and he admitted his guilt, and so forth. Twenty years living out penitently . . . It simply kept open a possibility which otherwise would have been ruled out altogether by the lifetime ban . . .

Questioner: But my question was . . . Once they have been convicted of a child sexual offence, is that really relevant?

Forster: Well, it's part of the background picture. One makes a judgement against all sorts of things in the background. There's also—again, I don't want to make too much of this, but his own self-confessed sexual orientation probably—I think he was somebody who had been wrestling a great deal with that, and maybe that . . . you have to form an overall judgement . . .

. . . (The inquiry looks again at the guidelines.) . . .

Questioner: Essentially, the guidance is saying, is it not, that the child pornography offences should not be considered any less serious than child sexual abuse of itself, because the individual must be considered complicit within the original offending?

Forster: I accept that that's how things are viewed, and this is 'guidance' and 'normally'. 'Guidance' and 'normally' are words which leave open the possibility of looking at the particular circumstances . . . I suppose I would also, in my own mind, regard the fact that pornography is so ubiquitously available and viewed . . . could it be the case that some people would be easily misled into viewing child pornography, who themselves would not dream of abusing a child? . . .

Questioner: . . . there must be, mustn't there, a very clear distinction between pornography and child pornography, indecent images of children?



Forster: In my mind, completely, absolutely, yes. But I think in the case of people who do get drawn into this sick desire to download, maybe the two are not . . . I have heard that in direct testimony from people, you know, working late at night on their computer, and whatever . . .

Questioner [quoting from a news report on the details of Ian Hughes conviction]: What it says is: ‘An Anglican vicar was caught with more than 8000 images of child sexual abuse, including 800 of the worst kind. He admitted 17 offences.’ That would sound like, wouldn’t it, very different to somebody who is, as you have said, working late at night and has been inadvertently, or sort of, drawn into downloading these images. It was 8000 of the most serious kind. What I’m trying to explore is why, knowing that, you chose to write . . . to the President of the Tribunals?

Forster: Because of the overall circumstances of Mr. Hughes, who [*sic*] I knew well. I think he had got drawn into a very sick and unsatisfactory situation. The question was whether . . . penitently coming to terms with what had happened, whether at least the door could be left open.

Here is a bishop in the unusual position of having his authority publicly questioned, outside the church culture of deference and, significantly, by a young woman. He demonstrates his discomfort and underlying anxiety from this threat to his position, to maintaining control and to his episcopal authority. One defence is to rationalise, and then justify his action of seeking the advice of another member of the establishment. There is in this an implicit and perhaps even unconscious sense of superiority over the junior barrister who cuts through this to the heart of the matter, which is Forster’s belief that his own personal judgement of the perpetrator is the default position rather than following the guidelines. This self-inflation is strengthened by the delusion of omnipotence. There is a shamelessness in maintaining his authority, and a denial of any wrong-doing. There may also be an underlying theme of implicit denigration of women and children, and anxieties about homosexuality. In his concern to defend a fellow clergyman, Forster veers towards the perverse in his explanation of the ease of finding child abuse images online, as belief in his elevated episcopal role and the collegial relationship with a fellow clergy obscures the reality of the seriousness of the crime.

#### 4. Institutional Betrayal and Disclosure Dynamics

This section explores what institutional betrayal means, and looks in more detail at the psychodynamics of the disclosure event including parallel process. Institutional betrayal is the term used when an institution causes harm to an individual who trusts and has been encouraged to depend upon that institution; violations of trust and dependency perpetrated by the institution. Trust is based on explicit expectations that the church provides a safe place of worship and community, and implicit expectations of support from the clergy.

In the context of the survivor of clergy abuse there could be seen to be a double betrayal by the institution: the first is the original criminal abusive act from someone in a position of trust; the second is the inadequate and re-traumatising response by the member of the church hierarchy who has heard the disclosure. This is secondary victimization, “When victims reach out for help, they place a great deal of trust in the . . . systems as they risk disbelief, blame, and refusals of help” (Campbell 2006, p. 703). Issues of trust and dependency in the institution are central, where to report the abuse brings the conflict of potentially losing the sense of belonging within church community, but to not report risks the abuse continuing and a denial of the traumatic reality.

The concept of institutional betrayal arises from betrayal trauma theory (Bach 2018; Smith and Freyd 2014; Ahern 2018), that traumas perpetrated within a previously trusted and dependent relationship are remembered and processed differently to other traumas. Empirical evidence of the impact of institutional betrayal includes psychological distress, anxiety, dissociation, and suicide attempts (Gomez et al. 2016). Institutional betrayal can happen through acts of commission in which the institution takes action that harms its members, for example by actively protecting an abuser. It can also betray through acts of

omission, in which the organization fails to take actions that could protect members, for example taking no appropriate action and ignoring guidelines. In the church institutional betrayal appears to be systemic, but made to appear as isolated incidents from which lessons are learnt.<sup>6</sup> Betrayal partly occurs because reputation is valued over the well-being of the members, and issues of power and control dominate.

If re-traumatisation occurs through institutional betrayal the original trauma is compounded, again the victim's mind is flooded with a kind and degree of stimulation that is far more than it can make sense of and manage. The organization that encouraged trust and dependency is revealed to be careless, unconcerned or more actively destructive. Whilst it may appear that an experience of institutional betrayal is less visible, it is not less injurious than the original abuse; for the exacerbative effects of institutional betrayal on psychological well-being are clear and consistent with betrayal trauma theory. This refers to a social dimension of trauma, independent of the individual's reaction to the event, proposing that the way events are processed and remembered will be related to the degree to which the traumatic event represents a betrayal by a trusted, needed other, whether individual or institution (Freyd 1996). In trauma:

Something very violent feels as though it has happened internally, and this mirrors the violence that is felt to have happened, or indeed has actually happened, in the external world. There is a massive disruption in functioning, amounting to a kind of breakdown . . . of an established way of going about one's life, of established beliefs about the predictability of the world, of established mental structures, of an established defensive organization.

(Garland 1998, pp. 10–11)

Betrayal blindness may sometimes be displayed by victims, perpetrators, and witnesses in order to preserve relationships, institutions, and social systems upon which they depend. (Freyd et al. 2007). In other words, institutional betrayal may be minimised not only by the church hierarchy (that was then and now it is different), but also by the victim who defends against the reality by remaining hopeful that their needs may still be recognised and met.

A lack of validation when a disclosure is made mirrors the deep lack of validation by the perpetrator and clearly deepens the damage. Young provides analytic insight into the effects of such a double betrayal. The case she describes is of an assault on an adult probation officer while working in a prison. Despite the different circumstances, her work is helpful in appreciating the overwhelming and incapacitating internal experience of a traumatic event.

Mr. A had certainly not felt helped by those he thought he could depend on for help . . . because those he had thought of as good and trustworthy, had twice betrayed him—not only during the assault itself, but also during the aftermath, when his seniors had tried to have him found to blame. In his internal world, good objects were left in pieces, bad objects had taken over and were felt, through processes of projection, to populate the external world too. Because of this, feelings of anger and mistrust continued to dominate . . .

(Young 1998, pp. 69–70)

Central to the psychoanalytic view is that any trauma inevitably stirs up other unresolved pains and conflicts of childhood (Garland 1998, p. 4). When the victim discloses to the church official the latter is potentially defending against primitive anxieties reactivated by hearing about the abuse. Here, the concept of parallel processes is helpful:

The study of parallel processes, projective and introjective identifications, and equivalence is essential, especially when the material includes narratives of trauma that provoke anxieties that cannot be processed and are, therefore, enacted.

Hopper (2012, p. xxii)

The first reference to parallel process was made by Searles in 1955. Searles' defined the parallel process in the supervisory relationship between supervisor and supervisee as containing certain vestiges of the relationship between the supervisee and his or her patient. In other words, what was taking place in the consulting room between patient and therapist was often reflected in what happened in the relationship between the therapist and their supervisor. The idea originates in the concept of the transference, and Searles speculated that unconscious identification was involved suggesting that 'processes at work currently in the relationship between patient and therapist are often reflected in the relationship between therapist and supervisor' (Searles 1955, p. 135). Doehrman (1976) further explicated the dynamics of the supervisory relationship, noting the issues of power, authority, and evaluation that are typical of the master-apprentice approach to training. Thus, she contends that a student reacts to a supervisor in a way similar to how a client might react to a therapist; that is, responses laden with transference reactions and implications.

The suggestion is then that as the victim discloses to the powerful member of the church hierarchy the abusive dynamics between victim and perpetrator are restimulated, and vestiges through projective identification unconsciously re-enacted by both. For example, shame, often felt by victims will be experienced, but defended against by the representative of the church hierarchy, and that defence creates a significant obstacle to really listening to what is happening and being said. Arrogance is a defence against shame, so that those who wish to defend themselves from the shamed, become more arrogant. 'The arrogant need others to be shamed . . . Arrogance is an aggressive posture, giving rise to aggressive acts'. (Long 2008, p. 61).

In the following example taken from the IICSA hearings of 10 July 2019, the victim Matt Ineson describes the abuse that took place when he was younger, and how it was met with arrogance. Ineson firstly disclosed in 2012 that he had been raped in 1984 by the Revd. Trevor Devamanikkam, a Church of England vicar.<sup>7</sup> When he disclosed to the church hierarchy Ineson was himself a vicar, and between 2012 and 2013 he disclosed to four bishops (one three times), and one archbishop. Ineson said, 'None of them took appropriate action on my disclosure. The re-abuse I have suffered as a result of the negligence of some of these bishops since my disclosures can only be described as wicked'. He continues:

The only person who did respond was the Archbishop of York, who wrote back and said, "Thank you for copying me into the letter, which I have read. Please be assured of my prayers and best wishes during this testing time", and he did nothing.

In 2017 Ineson wrote to Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury, for the 13th time, saying:

The Church of England has made me fight at every step to try to achieve both justice and the further prevention of abuse by my abuser. By doing this, you have added to my abuse. The bishops have actively colluded together to attempt to ignore, discredit and get rid of me.

Due to this inaction, and before the trial against his alleged abuser, (abandoned because of Devamanikkam's suicide in 2017), Ineson made a number of complaints under the Church of England Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM) against the bishops to whom he had disclosed, and who had taken no action. These were dismissed for being filed outside a time limit and each bishop objected to any time extension. One incident, amongst many, was the admission by the Bishop of Doncaster who was heard in a café discussing and laughing about Ineson's abuse; the bishop then blamed Ineson for this 'lapse of judgement'. This became a separate CDM complaint under a breach of the Data Protection Act, but no action was taken.

These inactions are a form of dehumanisation, where the victim is ostracised in the mind of the person hearing about the abuse. This re-enacts the attitude of the abuser towards the victim (Schinaia 2018), where there is moral disengagement. Discomfited by the encounter and power of the projections, plus primitive anxieties linked to thoughts of sexual assault leads to disengagement. This was demonstrated by all those to whom



Ineson disclosed. For example, Bishop Peter Burrows ('all the time he's clock watching') said, "Well, thank you for telling me", and left'. With Bishop Steven Croft, on the first occasion Ineson said,

"Did Bishop Peter tell you about . . . my own disclosure to him of my own abuse?", and he used what I call the stock Anglican answer: "I can't remember". Because they can never remember anything when it chooses. And I told him everything . . . and he said, "I'm sorry, I've got a meeting to go to, I've got a meeting to go to", and couldn't get off the phone quick enough.

The second time Ineson repeated the disclosure to Croft, the bishop claimed not to remember the first occasion, stating: "I can't quite remember". So I told him everything again, and he did nothing'.

The lack of response when disclosed to, and the later inability of John Sentamu (then Archbishop of York) to apologise when invited to do so during the IICSA hearings, illustrates a process of cognitive re-framing to turn the destructive non-responding into somehow being morally acceptable by employing a number of defensive manoeuvres (Freud 1961), once again similar to the justifications and rationalizations displayed by an abuser. One dynamic was for Sentamu to obscure his personal responsibility by displacing and projecting the responsibility onto someone else: 'and the responsibility actually did lie with the Bishop of Sheffield . . . I assumed that the bishop [of Sheffield, Steven Croft] was going to be doing it'. Other disclosure dynamics, similar to the behaviour of some perpetrators included obfuscation, rationalisation and denial. These are shown in the extract below, where Ineson recounts meeting Sentamu.

I was approached by John Sentamu [Archbishop Sentamu], who grabbed me by the shoulder and spoke right in my face. He said that one day we should talk. I responded by saying I was happy to talk and, as I lived only half an hour away, I would be happy to come to him. He then said we should pray together. I told him this would never happen, but I would be happy to talk to him. He then asked me what I wanted and I told him an apology. He said apologies mean different things to different people and that I had put a boulder between him and I. I told him that the only thing in front of him was the hope that he would one day answer for his actions. He shrugged, let go of me and walked away.

Questioned about this encounter at the IICSA hearing Sentamu answered:

If that's how I behaved, it's totally inappropriate. It would be totally inappropriate. But I—the room was a very small room and there were about probably 40 people there, a room which should be occupied by around 15 people. I was on my way out, but, as you know, with people so close to one another, he said to me—I said hello, and then he said to me, "All you need to do is apologise. Apologise. Apologise". And I said, "Well, I hope one day we will be able to sit down and say a prayer together", in a sort of a—maybe I think I shouldn't probably have done it. I took him to be an honourable man, and so I put my hand on his shoulder and said, "I hope one day we will be able to meet and say a prayer together" and I left, and there were witnesses there that day.

Sentamu employs what is called 'euphemistic labelling' by using language to reshape Ineson's experience and associated emotions, and disguising any harm done by giving his—Sentamu's actions—a respectable status, ("I took him to be an honourable man"). A panel member at the IICSA hearing asks Sentamu: 'is there any impediment in the collective church mind that prevents an apology to Mr. Ineson for that original abuse?' Sentamu, uses the classic mechanism of projection by attributing blame and so dehumanizing the victim: '[T]he review hasn't happened . . . It's still, I think, waiting on Mr. Ineson agreeing the terms of reference for this particular review'.

As well as highlighting defences this extract reveals an element of sadism; vestiges of the configuration of sadomasochistic perversion within the paedophile's personality (cf. Freud 1928; Schinaia 2018). This is a form of mastery where 'the aim is to reduce the

other [in this case the victim] to the function and status of a totally assimilable other' (Dorey 1986, p. 323). What happens between abuser and the person abused is mastery in the perverse configuration; the suggestion here is that the mastery between the person abused and the church hierarchy is mastery based on obsessionality in the realm of power and duty. Dorey describes the aim of this,

to oppose and thwart other people's projects . . . and to obstruct . . . His aim is undeniably to halt the course of events, to fix or even to freeze or petrify what is alive, to favour inertia . . .

(Dorey 1986, p. 327)

The excess of formalism in for example the role of a bishop, almost inevitably means that a meeting with the victim is based on a power and control dynamic of the dominator-dominated type, which can take a Manichaeic character. This is a destructive process where it becomes 'absolutely essential to rub out, to negate and to obliterate' the wishes of the person disclosing (Dorey 1986, p.327). As Graystone (2022) notes there are three dimensions to such a disjuncture: the denigration of the personhood of the victim; the idolatry of the listener who adopts a super-human or god-like status within the relationship; thirdly the wounds inflicted on the church community.

Using analytic understanding to explore such painful incidents suggests that the institutional Anglican church appears stuck in a self-destructive and self-defeating pattern. However, ideas of reparation and system restoration through organizational redemption are briefly presented in the concluding section.

## 5. Conclusions: Betrayal to Redemption

The centripetal power of orthodoxy has meant that whatever is done to address issues of abuse in the church has been done without changing anything substantive in its culture, practice, or theology. Consequently, much is done, but little changes (Graystone 2022). This is because change emerges only when the current situation is honestly faced. Despite apparently well-meaning attempts to respond more appropriately: instituting lessons learnt reviews; increased training, and updated guidelines, the way the church responds to disclosures occurs against a background of less than conscious cultural assumptions and collusion, where pride and arrogance means that incompetence in the powerful and influential is ignored, as is information or checks and balances that run counter to what is desired. There is a fallacious belief in being right, even righteous.

Abusive cycles are hard to break, and to do so requires motivation and energy. To not do so is to embrace apathy as an avoidance of acknowledging self-deception and the reality. 'Group laziness is that state of perverse "not-knowing"; a collusive refusal to know or to pursue and examine the truth' (Long 2008, p. 129). Change means accepting that we all act unconsciously and collectively; and accepting that as well as traditional structures there is also the church-in-the-mind with associated assumptions and expectations. If these dimensions can be accepted, then the church hierarchy will realise that certain destructive traits may have dominated actions. From this position follows the search for a way of resolving the dilemma of how to handle the real relation between the needs of survivors and the response of the church hierarchy. Rather than thinking, defensively about how things ought to be, there could be creative engagement with the way organizational life in the institutional church actually is. As in psychoanalytic practice the work is in bringing into consciousness the shadow, the behaviours and experiences that have been repressed.

The focus is then on reparation for damage done through inept and inhumane responses: damage to the survivor, to the church hierarchy and to the church community and wider society. The IICSA hearings noted that the Anglican church has already accepted in the course of the investigations that it has failed victims, and has stated that it is acutely aware of its historic failings in this area. Attempts to repair can be about restoring reputation concerned with safety and compassion, this may be fuelled from acknowledged remorse and guilt (Long 2021). Inept and inhumane responses damage, and those who are damaged have seriously suffered, but the damage has also been to the system.

Ultimately, the hope then lies in organizational redemption which demands authenticity, humility to take on constructive criticism, and astute integrity with soul-searching at the very top of the church hierarchy. Organizational redemption corrects the past wrongs of institutional betrayal, a debt is repaid, and hope restored. This essentially involves a cultural change in attitude and approach within the institutional structure. This might begin to be facilitated by group work and the development of reflective practice. One possibility is that organizational redemption could include an arrangement equivalent to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and tasked to bring out into the open the past wrong doings by the organization towards victims and survivors. This would make an absolute priority of the true narrative of events to its proper position in the mainstream accounts of what actually happened. In analytic terms this would be about the gradual integration of what has been denied, suppressed, and at times, repressed. The dynamics of deception are then brought into consciousness and acknowledged.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
- <sup>2</sup> <http://survivingchurch.org/2020/03/16/the-john-smyth-saga-further-observations/> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/20-may/comment/letters-to-the-editor/letters-to-the-editor> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/10-June/news/uk/Smyth-investigation-delays-are-being-followed-up-says-Weilby> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/12423/view/public-hearing-transcript-3-july2019.pdf> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
- <sup>6</sup> <https://houseofsurvivors.org/> (accessed on 1 July 2022).
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/12767/view/public-hearing-transcript-10-july2019.pdf> (accessed on 1 July 2022).

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