

Valli Boobal Batchelor, ed. *When Pastors Prey: Overcoming Clergy Sexual Abuse of Women* (Geneva: World Student Christian Federation and World Council of Churches, 2013). xxvii + 191 pp.

The title of this book certainly catches one's attention. Sexual abuse needs urgent attention, and all the more if it happens in the context of church life where trust and power often produce psychologically precarious situations. This issue prompted former U.S. President Jimmy Carter to contribute with a four-page prologue to the book.

*When Pastors Prey* is divided into four sections. The first deals with identifying the problem. Authors from different Christian traditions introduce the gravity of the situation by pointing to religious, institutional, and systemic elements that contribute to why some people find excuses for sexual exploitation. One reason for recommending this book is because it addresses the issues involved without 'beating around the bush,' but neither does it point fingers at particular churches or religious institutions. The problem of sexual abuse can be found everywhere.

Another thing that makes this volume worthy is that gives victims a voice. In the second section, women speak about the circumstances, the excuses, and the hurts and how they managed to 'move on' in life. Most of us are all too familiar with spousal abuse or children being at the mercy of relatives—or at least tales of such. How much more should we be upset when clergy use their position of authority and trust to take advantage of others. These victims' stories will challenge the reader to want to do something about this problem. But testimonies of suffering, while illuminating the problem, do not provide answers. In the book's third section, nine authors tell how their churches have attempted to address the problem. We read of the initiatives that denominations in different regions of the world have taken to combat (clergy) abuse of (mostly) women. Breaking the silence, creating a response team, and establishing a circle of hope are among the many initiative discussed here.

The fourth section issues a call to be proactive and stop the abuse for good. In some areas of the world, fundamental reform is necessary. Misconduct needs to be criminalized, sexual predators have to be identified, the vulnerable must be protected, and the victim helped to move beyond shame. These are just some of the suggestions made.

(Note. I was recently teaching at a theological seminary, and this issue seemed so important to its dean that he made *When Pastors Prey* required reading for all my D.Min. students.)

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