

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; all the more if it happens in the context of church life where trust and power often produce psychologically precarious situations. The issue prompted former US President Jimmy Carter to contribute a four page prologue to this book.

*When Pastors Prey* is divided into four parts. The first part identifies the problem. Authors from different Christian traditions introduce the gravity of the situation by pointing to religious, institutional and systemic elements that contribute to the fact that some people find excuses for sexual exploitation. The first reason why this book is to be recommended is because it addresses the issues directly without beating around the bush. It does not point fingers at particular churches or religious institutions. The problem of sexual abuse can be found everywhere.

Another reason for praising this volume is that it gives victims a voice. In the second part, women speak about the circumstances, the excuses, the hurt and how they managed to move on in life. People who have been engaged in counselling know about spousal abuse, or children having been at the mercy of relatives. How much more should we be upset if clergy use their position of authority and trust to take advantage of others? These narratives challenge to us to do something about this problem.

But testimonies of suffering do not yet provide answers. In part three nine authors tell how their churches have addressed the problem. We read how denominations in different regions of the world have taken initiatives to combat (clergy) abuse of (mostly) women. Breaking the silence, creating a response team and establishing a circle of hope are only some of the aspects discussed.

The last section focuses on being proactive and stopping the abuse for good. In some areas of the world a fundamental reform is necessary. One has to move beyond shame. Misconduct needs to be criminalized and sexual predators have to be identified. Last but not least, the vulnerable have to be protected. These are just some of the suggestions made.

I was recently teaching in a theological seminary and the issue seemed so important to the Dean that he made *When Pastors Prey* required reading for all my D.Min. students.

*Reviewed by Jean-Daniel Plüss*