

Torture and ritual abuse-torture: Perpetrators who are “religious” men and/or women

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Torture is generally defined as any deliberate, systematic or wanton infliction of physical or mental suffering or any other cruel, inhuman or degrading procedure by one or more persons for any reason¹ ... as any treatment which denies to any person the respect which is his/her due as a human being² ... is one of the vilest acts to be perpetrated by human beings upon each other³ ... is the use of methods upon a person intended to obliterate the personality of the victim or to diminish physical or mental capacities⁴.

The United States Code relating to crimes and criminal procedures defines severe mental pain or suffering to mean prolonged mental harm caused by or resulting from:

- (A) The intentional infliction or threatened infliction of severe physical pain or suffering;
- (B) The administration or application, or threat thereof, of mind-altering substances or other procedures calculated to disrupt profoundly the senses or the personality;
- (C) The threat of imminent death; or
- (D) The threat that another person will be subjected to any or all of the above.⁵

Explicit in the above definitions is the reality the torturers prime motive is the destruction of the personhood of the victim—the destruction of the victimized person’s personality, the destruction of the victimized person’s relationship with/to her/him Self. Inflicting torture:

1. is intentional
2. has a purpose
3. is systematic, planned, and organized
4. is wanton cruelty and brutality
5. causes destructive pain and suffering of mind, spirit, and body
6. causes terrorization
7. causes horrification

¹ International Council of Nurses. (1989, May). *Position statement on nurses and torture*, adopted in Seoul, Geneva: Author; United Nations. (1985). *Outlawing an ancient evil: Torture*. New York: Department of Public Information United Nations; World Medical Assembly. (1975, October). *World Medical Association Declaration Guidelines for Medical Doctors Concerning Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Relation to Detention and Imprisonment*, Adopted Tokyo, Japan.

² International Council of Nurses. (1989, May). *Position statement on nurses and torture*, adopted in Seoul. Geneva: Author.

³ United Nations. (2001, June 25). *Press release: Joint declaration for the United Nations international day in support of victims of torture*. (Online).

<http://www.unhcr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/5BCF29615F2B4C17C1256A7600516D>

⁴ Amnesty International. *A Fact Sheet on Domestic Violence as Torture*. (Online).

http://www.amnestyusa.org/women/fact_sheets/domestic_violence.html

⁵ *United States Code*. (No date). Title 18 – Crimes and criminal procedure Part I – Crimes Chapter 113B – Torture, S 2340 Definitions.

8. causes dehumanization and de-spiritualization
9. is life-threatening, and
10. represents human actions of human evil

Naming, defining, protecting, and protesting against the commission of acts of torture has, until recently, been principally focussed on political state sanctioned torture. If, as a global community, all people are to be protected from acts of torture it is necessary to accept that acts of torture are not limited to the arena of state actor torturing; it is necessary to accept that acts of torture can also be relational, inflicted by torturers within parental-child relationships, within other kin-child relationships, within spouse or partner relationships, and by a stranger, a health professional, or by a person in a religious position, for instance. These are acts of non-state actor torture, acts of relational torture. Examples of non-state actor relational torture are acts of spousal torture, child/youth torture, or ritual abuse-torture (RAT). We acknowledge acts of extreme violence—relational abuse and all forms of relational torture—can be described in varying degrees by many of the descriptors in the above list. There are however markedly significant differences between the violent acts perpetrated by the torturer or the RAT torturer/family/group than by the violent acts perpetrated by the abuser. These significant differences and the impact on the victimized person need to be exposed, appropriately named, and fully comprehended and this can only happen when persons who have been so victimized are able to truthfully and completely tell of their ordeals, are respectfully and genuinely listened to, and understood.

Traumatization experienced by persons who have endured violent relational victimization—abuse or torture—suffer many similar victimization and traumatization responses. Being respectful, acknowledging, and understanding of another’s victimization and traumatization is important. In this paper, however, we are centering this section of our web site on the reality of non-political torture—relational torture, most specifically on RAT, and specifically on persons who hold and use their religious positional power and trust to perpetrate such criminal human rights violations.

Because this paper is addressing the reality that religious persons can be perpetrators of acts of relational torture it is important to keep in mind the historical relationship between the clergy and torturing. For example, the “clerical science”⁶ of torturing is evident in the witchcraft persecutions of the late sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century. In both the Catholic and Protestant religious courts (as well as the secular courts) these learned men believed that torture would free women from the devil’s power.⁷ Two Dominican professors of theology Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger wrote *Malleus Malificarum (Hammer of the Witches)*, a book that described the “how-to” for torturing the accused.⁸ This period of oppression, misogyny, and violence is known as the Inquisition. On March 12, 2000 Pope John Paul II, in a liturgical context, apologized for the violent historical transgressions such as the Inquisition that were committed by Roman Catholics in the name of the church.⁹

⁶ Trevor-Roper, H. R. (1967). *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (p. 46). London: Penguin Books.

⁷ Anderson, B. , & Zinsser, J. (1988). *A History of Their Own: Women in Europe From Prehistory to the Present* (Vol. 1, pp. 161-169). New York: Harper & Row.

⁸ Innes, B. (1998). *The History of Torture* (pp. 107-108). New York: St. Martin’s Press.

⁹ Falk, D. (2000, February 14). Rethinking Bruno and the Inquisition. *The Globe and Mail*, p. R10; Niebuhr, G. (2000, March 12). Mea Culpa: The Pope apologizes for his church. *The New York Times*, p. WK 3; Stanley, A. (2000, March). Rough draft of an apology. *The Sunday Herald*.

Also mentioned in the Pope's apology was the mistreatment of children.¹⁰ Moving away from this period in history into more modern times, into a Canadian perspective, apologies by religious churches and orders for their genocidal oppression, colonization and assimilationists policies, and for their acts of violence against First Nations children who were in residential schools have been given by the Anglican Church in August 1993; by the Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate in 1991; by the Presbyterian Church in 1994; and by the United Church in 1986 and in 1997.¹¹ It is estimated that approximately 20% (100,000 to 150,000) of Aboriginal children were in residential schools,¹² in an environment where discipline, historians suggest, was harsher than the accepted norm in Euro-Canadian institutions of the time. "Sometimes punishment and mistreatment might more accurately be called torture as we now understand it. For example: Sticking needles in the tongues of children who spoke their native languages"¹³ For the many children who fought back, who attempted to run away, and for other "transgressions" punishments meant being beaten, chained to beds or benches, stripped and whipped, strapped, severely flogged, deprived of food, put in isolation cells, being shaved bald, and suffering public humiliations; and some children died.¹⁴ Children were burned with cigarettes and children's ears whacked so hard as to cause hearing loss.¹⁵ In torture-sensitive language the loss of hearing due to this type of physical torture is called telephono.¹⁶

One specific example of acts of child torture which were called acts of abuse is taken from media articles discussing the Cree and Ojibwa children from Fort Albany First Nations who attended St. Anne's Residential School operated by the Roman Catholic Church from 1904-1973. Victimization reported consisted of severe beatings—being punched, strapped, kicked, hit with a ruler, hair pulled, and their heads pushed into the walls; whippings to their bare buttocks with a wire strap; forced immobility—forced to kneel on a concrete floor for hours, and locked overnight in an unlit basement. Electric shocking delivered to children strapped into a homemade electric chair was used for punishment and for the entertainment and pleasure of staff and visiting dignitaries. These are acts of physical torture not abuse. Sexualized torture included fondling, forced masturbation, and heterosexual and homosexual rapes, and forced impregnations and abortions. Mind-spirit dehumanization occurred when children were forced to eat their own vomitus, when forced to eat off the floor while being told to "eat like a dog" (animalization¹⁷), when forced to stand with their

¹⁰ Hughes, C. (2000, March 13). Pope issues histories apology for sins of church. *The Globe and Mail*, p. 43.

¹¹ Akiwenzie-Damm, K. , & Sutherland, C. (1998, March). Extracts from church apologies regarding residential schools. *Residential School Update*, pp. 20-21. Ottawa: First Nations Health Secretariat Assembly of First Nations.

¹² Akiwenzie-Damm, K. , & Sutherland, C. (1998, March). Questions and answers regarding residential schools. *Residential School Update*, pp. 4-5. Ottawa: First Nations Health Secretariat Assembly of First Nations.

¹³ Akiwenzie-Damm, K. , & Sutherland, C. (1998, March). Questions and answers regarding residential schools. and Resistance & protest. *Residential School Update*. p. 6, 14. Ottawa: First Nations Health Secretariat Assembly of First Nations.

¹⁴ Akiwenzie-Damm, K. , & Sutherland, C. (1998, March). Questions and answers regarding residential schools. *Residential School Update*. pp. 6-7. Ottawa: First Nations Health Secretariat Assembly of First Nations.

¹⁵ O'Hara, J. (2000, June 26). Abuse of trust What happened behind the walls of residential church schools is a tragedy that has left native victims traumatized. *MacLean's* 113(26), pp. 16-21.

¹⁶ Shrestha, N. M. , & Sharma, B. (1995). *Torture and torture victims A manual for medical professionals* (p. 9). Centre for victims of torture, Nepal (CVICT). In collaboration with Nepal Medical Association and RCT/IRCT, Denmark. P. O. Box 5839, Kathmandu, Nepal.

¹⁷ Jeanne coined this term for the purpose of clearly naming and exposing this act of mind-spirit torture that, during our kitchen table research project, persons so victimized were reporting being frequently subjected to.

underpants over their heads if their underpants had fecal stains, and when they were laughed at during electric shocking.¹⁸

In reports such as *Restoring Dignity Responding to Child Abuse in Canadian Institutions* by the Law Commission of Canada an ordeal involving an act of child torture was discussed under the heading of an act of discipline. The story was told to the Commission by the adult survivor, who, as a child had tried to run away from the institution. Caught, then stripped naked by a Christian Brother, who then forced the victim to lie naked across the bunk to be whipped with a leather strap—one side of which was flat, the other had lumps on it. The adult survivor states knowing the wounds were bleeding ... of feeling the blood. There was a salt shaker on the dresser ... begging the Christian Brother not to pour the salt on the wounds was of no avail ... the Christian Brother kept pouring salt into the bleeding wounds ... the survivor ends with ... “*God the pain*”.¹⁹

It has taken centuries for Western society, Canadian society, to evolve to a position to care about child maltreatment and to develop social and legal frameworks to name and define that violence against the child is wrong, is illegal. In Canada all child maltreatment was considered a single phenomenon until Young (cited in Sullivan, 2000) working with families known to child welfare agencies published her landmark study in 1964 that distinguished the difference between neglect and abuse (Canada’s first Children’s Aid Society was only founded in 1891 in Toronto).²⁰ Elsewhere, when Dr. Kempe became chairman, in 1961, of the program committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics, he organized a multidisciplinary conference entitled the “Battered-Child Syndrome” which set ablaze the need to attend to the reality that violent physical acts were being wilfully inflicted unto children.²¹ In response to this developing research and knowledge mandatory reporting legislation concerning child abuse within Canadian jurisdictions began in 1965 in Ontario. Other provinces followed.

There was resistance, especially to the reality of sexualized violence against children, thus naming and defining “child sexual abuse” did not occur until the 1970’s.²² When intentional violence and harm against the child is denied, rejected, or minimized the socio-cultural climate is such that perpetrators are not held accountable. Additionally, myths are held in place. For instance, statements such as “but he’s a minister, I don’t believe it, ministers don’t do terrible things like sexually abusing children” fails to acknowledge there are some clergy who are pedophilic perpetrators. Myths, denial, rejection, or minimization breeds a socio-cultural climate whereby a child realizes the truth of the perpetrator’s threat “that no one will believe you even if you tell.” So, to evolve our relationships into healthy ones that will nurture versus harm, society-at-large needs to acknowledge the extensiveness of violence that can be committed against the child and that acts of violence can be perpetrated by any person with intentional needs and desires to fulfill their pleasures

¹⁸ Moon, P. (1996, October 19). Hundreds of Cree and Ojibwa children violated. *The Globe and Mail*; Moon, P. (1996, October 21). School’s electric chair haunts natives. *The Globe and Mail*.

¹⁹ Law Commission of Canada. (2000, March). *Restoring Dignity Responding to Child Abuse in Canadian Institutions* (p. 38). Minister of Public Works and Government Services. (Online). <http://www.lcc.gc.ca>

²⁰ Sullivan, S. (2000). *Child neglect: Current definitions and models A review of child neglect research, 1993-1998*, p. 3-4. Family Violence Prevention Unit, Health Canada, Ottawa: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada.

²¹ Radbill, S. (1980). Children in a world of violence: A history of child abuse. In C. H. Kempe, & R. E. Helfer (Eds.). (p. 17). *The battered child* (3rd rev. & expanded ed). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²² Wachtel, A. (1999). *The “State of the art” in child abuse prevention, 1997*, p. 9. Family Violence Prevention Unit, Health Canada, Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

and entertainment for pedophilia and who have a willingness to ignore the harm they inflict onto the child.

Thus, evolving to the place to see the reality that acts of non-state actor torture or RAT does occur has been a gradual process. First societies had “to see” that many forms of abuse occur. Societies had to acknowledge that children from all races, both genders, are valued equally as persons and have human rights. Just as Canadian society-at-large has to care about the acts of neglect, abuse, and torture inflicted by some clergy unto Aboriginal children in residential schools we have to acknowledge and recognize equally the suffering that occurred in Mount Cashel, an orphanage in Newfoundland, run by Christian Brothers of Ireland in Canada. It housed another shocking reality of institutional violence against children with ten Christian Brothers convicted of abusing boys in their care.²³ A public inquiry heard testimonials from men who described ordeals of physical and sexualized abuse: of being fondled in bed, forced to watch priests masturbating in front of them, repeatedly spanked with a belt,²⁴ of being watched when showering, of being stripped, sodomized, orally raped, choked, and threatened with death.²⁵

Recognizing that many forms of violence co-exist and can be perpetrated by religious men and women against children within a specific environment is evident in the previous paragraphs. For instance one child in an institutional setting can experience abuse, another torture. As well, institutional violence can vary depending on the deviant needs and desires of the pedophilic perpetrator—some cleric perpetrators physically abuse and/or torture, others engage in sexualized abuse and/or torture, for example. Some function as groups as in institutions and others are lone pedophilic hunters. For instance, the media discloses that a senior Calvary Lutheran Church pastor in San Diego is convicted of molesting an 11-year-old boy and attempting to molest his younger brother;²⁶ a former Baptist minister from Louisa, Kentucky is convicted of sodomy of a seven-year-old boy and attempting the same on a nine-year-old girl;²⁷ in Ontario, a priest convicted of “depraved and callous” victimization of a youth—for sodomizing the youth with a wooden crucifix, for stripping him naked, for pinning him against the altar and forcedly orally raping the youth on the church altar, and threatening to victimize his younger brother, and to expose pornographic photos he had taken of the sodomy if the boy told.²⁸ This same priest was also convicted of attacking two teenage brothers, of attaching their genitalia to a rope-and-pulley system under the guise of “spiritual and personal growth”.²⁹ There are serial pedophilic priest rapists, priests such as John J. Geoghan of Boston alleged to have raped or molested at least 130 children, the youngest only four years old³⁰

²³ Schools win immunity to Mount Cashel suits. (2000, August 12). *The Sunday Daily News*, p. 8.

²⁴ Gatehouse, J. (1999, April 5). Are Mount Cashel charges enough to warrant extradition back to Canada? *National Post*; Pacienza, A. (2002, May 18). “We told you so”. *The Chronicle-Herald The Mail-Star*, p. C5.

²⁵ Harris, M. (1996, July 20). The church may have won the court case, but its moral defeat is permanent and beyond appeal. *The Saturday Daily News*.

²⁶ Soto, O. (2002, October 2). Boy in counseling was molested by clergyman.

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/northcountry>

²⁷ July 16, (2003, July 16). Convicted child molester who fled Kentucky courthouse captured in Ohio.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/news/archive/2003/07/16/nationa>

²⁸ Abbate, G. (2003, March 20). Priest’s victim tells court of abuse, aftermath. *Globe and Mail*, p. A22; Pazzano, S. (2003, March 19). Abused seeks \$4M Priest in prison for 80’s assaults. *Toronto Sun*.

²⁹ Pazzano, S. (2003, March 20). Priest’s victim asks \$4M Jailed cleric, diocese at fault: Lawyer. *Toronto Sun*.

³⁰ Hewitt, B., Dagostino, M., Francis, E., Eggert, C., Meadows, B., & Micheli, R. (2002 April 2). Sins of a father Ex-priest John Geoghan molested children while the church did little to stop him. *People*, pp. 58-60; Rezendes, M. (2002, September 8). 10m Geoghan deal is dwarfed by others. *Boston Globe* <http://www.boston.com>

and Jim Hickey of Mount Cashel, Newfoundland, convicted of 20 sexualized violent offences.³¹ A grand jury report from Boston stated more than 1,000 children were victimized by pedophilic priests since the 1940's.³² Understanding that many forms of pedophilic violence is perpetrated by clergy helps to prepare for and to understand the extensiveness of violence—neglect, abuse, torture, and ritual abuse-torture—that is committed against children by some persons with religious positional power.

Massive abuses of trust have occurred in both Canada and the United States (and throughout our global community) as the Catholic clergy who held supervisory, positional power failed to report to civil authorities the violent crimes being perpetrated against children by pedophilic priests. Perpetrating priests were moved from parish to parish ... “disappeared”... so the matter appeared fixed. Church leaders “... chose to protect the image and reputation of their institution rather than the safety and well-being of the children entrusted to their care. They acted with a misguided devotion to secrecy” is a statement in the conclusion of the Boston grand jury report.³³ A policy of secrecy that was spelled out in May 2001 when the Vatican sent a letter to every bishop in the world outlining a policy of 'strictest' secrecy in dealing with allegations of sexual abuse with threats of excommunication for those who spoke out. The instructions focused on sexual abuse initiated as part of the confessional relationship between a priest and a member of his congregation and also covered what it calls the 'worst crime', described as an obscene act perpetrated by a cleric with 'youths of either sex or with brute animals (bestiality)'. These instructions came from the 1962 Vatican document *Crimine Solicitationis* in the letter signed by Cardinal Ratzinger, who heads the office which ran the Inquisition in the Middle Ages.³⁴ This letter was sent a year after the Pope had apologized for the mistreatment of children, a letter sent eleven years ... eleven years ... after the Holy See acceded to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1990³⁵, thereby pledging to the global community to uphold its provisions including Article 37(a) which reads, in part, “No child shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”³⁶ which is applicable to our discussion on child torture and ritual abuse-torture.

During our “kitchen table” research project one participant reported that one of the perpetrators who inflicted acts of ritual abuse-torture upon her when she was a child was a Minister and that some of the violent organized pedophilic group gatherings—the “*rituals and ceremonies*”—happened in church basements. Another reported that as a “captive” adult she experienced physical, sexualized, and mind-spirit assaults by Ministers both male and female. Several women reported life-threatening ordeals related to religious-based exorcisms ... one woman stating the ordeal was so

³¹ Schmidt, S. (2002, April 6). Religious rehab A treatment facility for a clergy in crisis. *National Post*. pp. B1, B4-B5.

³² Lavoie, D. (2003, July 24). Likely 1,000 victims in Boston diocese sexual abuse case. *The Chronicle-Herald The Mail-Star*, p. D14.

³³ Lavoie, D. (2003, July 24). Likely 1,000 victims in Boston diocese sexual abuse case. *The Chronicle-Herald The Mail-Star*, p. D 14.

³⁴ Barnett, A. (2003, August 17). Vatican told bishops to cover up sex abuse Expulsion threat in secret documents. *The Observer*. <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,1020400,00.html>; Washington, R. (2003, July 30). Lawyers eye former pope's blueprint to shield clergy.

http://www2.bostonherald.com/news/local_regional/vati07302003.htm

³⁵ Catholics for a Free Choice. *New Shadow Report Details How Sexual Abuse Problems in Catholic Church Represent an International Crisis*. (Online). <http://www.cath4choice.org/new/pressrelease/100802ShadowReport.html>

³⁶ United Nations. (1989, November 20). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. (Online). <http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

violating that she attempted suicide following the clergy-led exorcism. Children die in religious based exorcism rituals, a result of wanton disregard for their safety. Terrance, an eight year old autistic boy, suffocated to death after a church elder sat on his chest.³⁷

The dominant theme that emerged in the story of the woman who reported that one of the RAT perpetrators was a Minister was that of a relationship connection between the woman's perpetrating mother and the perpetrating clergy. This relational connection involved, firstly, the cleric's and her parent's like-minded intentionally to participate in brutal pedophilic group RAT violence using her as the victim; and secondly, both parents willingness to traffic and exploit her into the control of the pedophilic clergy perpetrator for the purpose of making group pedophilic pornography involving sexualized, physical, and mind-spirit tortures, including bestiality.

Generally, the women participants of our research who were born into RAT family/groups that used christian-satanic or christian-luciferin language spoke of how the metaphysical dogma, props, and paraphernalia associated with religious beliefs and practices were used for inflicting acts of physical, sexualized, and mind-spirit tortures unto them as child victims. Religion was a tool, a weapon, an instrument, perpetrators—clergy and non-clergy—utilized to complicate the terror, the torture, and the horror of organized life-threatening RAT ordeals.

In 1993, the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women published its Final Report entitled *Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence ~ Achieving Equality* wherein was documented that ritual abuse/torture was a hideous crime that urgently required recognition in Canada. The women who spoke to the Panel told of their childhood, of enduring organized group pedophilic violence, of being exploited into pedophilic pornography and pedophilic sexualized slavery. They spoke of forced involvement in “snuff movies”; of being subjected to mind conditioning and programming; of forced participation in murder that was called “*sacrifice*”, and cannibalism. Terror, torture, and horror—fragmented, torn into pieces, disassociative, not feeling human so profound were their life-threatening ordeals—brutal crimes with international connections (pp. 45-47).

International criminal connections—a co-culture of terrorization, acts of torture, and horrification that involved trafficking and exploitation by perpetrators of RAT who come from all sectors of society is being continuously revealed in our on-going work. Persons who have been victimized by ordeals of RAT are placing their mark, with some details about their victimization, on the RAT prevalence map on the home page of our web site. Defining RAT means understanding the RAT torturer/family/group intentionally plan and organize terror, torture, and horror into brutal family/group pedophilic gatherings—**ritualisms**—which they disguise using the coded term “*rituals and ceremonies*”. Conceptualizing such RAT family/group gatherings means placing these human evil group activities in context, meaning ritualisms are used to organize the like-mindedness of the RAT co-culture. From this perspective ritualisms³⁸ are:

1. Planned group gatherings with a purpose, with a leader & an audience: i.e. “high priest” leads “rituals & ceremonies” for the purpose of inflicting violent physical, pedophilic, and mind-spirit torture;

³⁷ Knight Rider Newspapers. (2003, August 26). Autistic boy, 8, died as churchman sat on chest. Arizona Daily News. <http://cgi.azstarnet.com>

³⁸ Daft, R. (1995). *Organization theory & design* (5th Ed.) (pp. 333-338). New York: West Publishing.

2. Group gatherings which normalize and reinforce groupthink values, beliefs, and practices: i.e. insiders are superior, specialness; outsiders are viewed as inferior & weak;
3. Group actions used to strengthen group bonding: i.e. pedophilic RAT gang rape seen as appropriate adult behaviour with/against the “willing” child victim;
4. Used to design and organize power in relationships: i.e. men over women, religious position over laity, adults above the children.

RAT torturers commit all forms of **abuse**; they commit all forms of **torture**; they commit **ritual abuse-torture**! Although the literature commonly uses the words ritual abuse then proceeds to speak of the acts of torture that are inflicted onto the child victim we use the term ritual abuse-torture (RAT) because the women who participated in our kitchen table research project, who had been so victimized, stated that the term ritual abuse did not adequately define their life-threatening ordeals. The women preferred the use of the term ritual abuse-torture. We have shared this term with many persons who have been so victimized and their over-all response has been to agree—they had endured more than abuse; they had endured organized group pedophilic ritualisms, acts of abuse, and acts of torture. They had endured ritual abuse-torture!

Ritual abuse-torture defined:

Ritual abuse-torture is intentionally planned and organized kin and/or non-kin brutal group ritualisms; acts of human evil that terrify and horrify; acts of pedophilic, physical, sexualized, and mind-spirit tortures; acts that can include modern day slavery (pornography, trafficking, sexualized and labour-intensive exploitation); acts that cause life-threatening torment; acts that distorts beliefs and values, thoughts, emotions, perceptions, behaviours, and world-view of the victimized person; dehumanizing and despiritualizing acts that have the capacity to destroy the personality of the infant, toddler, child, youth or “captive” adult victim; a co-culture that can be inter-connected regionally, nationality, internationally, and transnationally; and, criminal acts that are a violation of the victimized person’s human rights.

In conclusion: Everyday evidence points to the reality children have been and continue to be victims of violence including being victims of torture thus are in need of special care, protection, and assistance. Accepting the global reality that acts of torture occur is necessary so the human community can effectively respond to assert the right of persons—infant, toddler, child, youth, or adult—not to be subjected to acts of torture by another person, persons, and/or State. Acknowledging that torturing needs to be stopped is communicated in Article 5 of the United Nations *Declaration of Human Rights* which states “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. As previously stated, Article 37(a) of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, adopted in 1989, reads, in part, “No child shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”³⁹ Canada ratified

³⁹ United Nations. (1989, November 20). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. (Online). <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

the *Convention* on December 11, 1991. In 2001 the *Convention* counted 192 States parties and signatories.⁴⁰

As persons who endured and survived RAT share the details of their ordeals the reality that religious men and women can be perpetrators of RAT will be exposed as well as the themes of how they functioned. Detailed knowledge of this reality is essential—it will provide the foundation for taking action to protect future generations of children. As well, it will assist persons who are now struggling to heal to know they are not alone in the terror and horror of their ordeals. As one woman, who was not connected to our research project, reached out to us stated “*I thought I was the only one this happened to ... I can’t believe that you know of others!*”

May the alleged or legally documented ordeals shared in the following section break the isolation for other persons who feel and believe they are all alone in surviving the terror, torture, and horror of RAT or of acts of torture inflicted by perpetrators who use their religious positions as priests, nuns, ministers, or rabbi to violate the human rights of the persons they victimize—be they infant, toddler, child, youth, or captive adult. Besides posting personal stories or poems, for example, we will also post media article summaries whenever we have knowledge of such reports and when these reports clearly identify the perpetrator’s acts to be non-political torture—child or youth torture, spousal/partner torture, or RAT that involve religious persons as perpetrators.

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⁴⁰ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Statement of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to the Second Substantive Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session on Children*, New York, 29 January-2 February 2001. (Online). <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/crcstat.htm>