

# Shame

*A poem drawn from research by  
Revd Dr Lorraine Turner*

And do you know for years I didn't say anything  
because I felt like a rape victim  
I felt ashamed  
I thought if I'd done something different  
perhaps it wouldn't have happened to me.

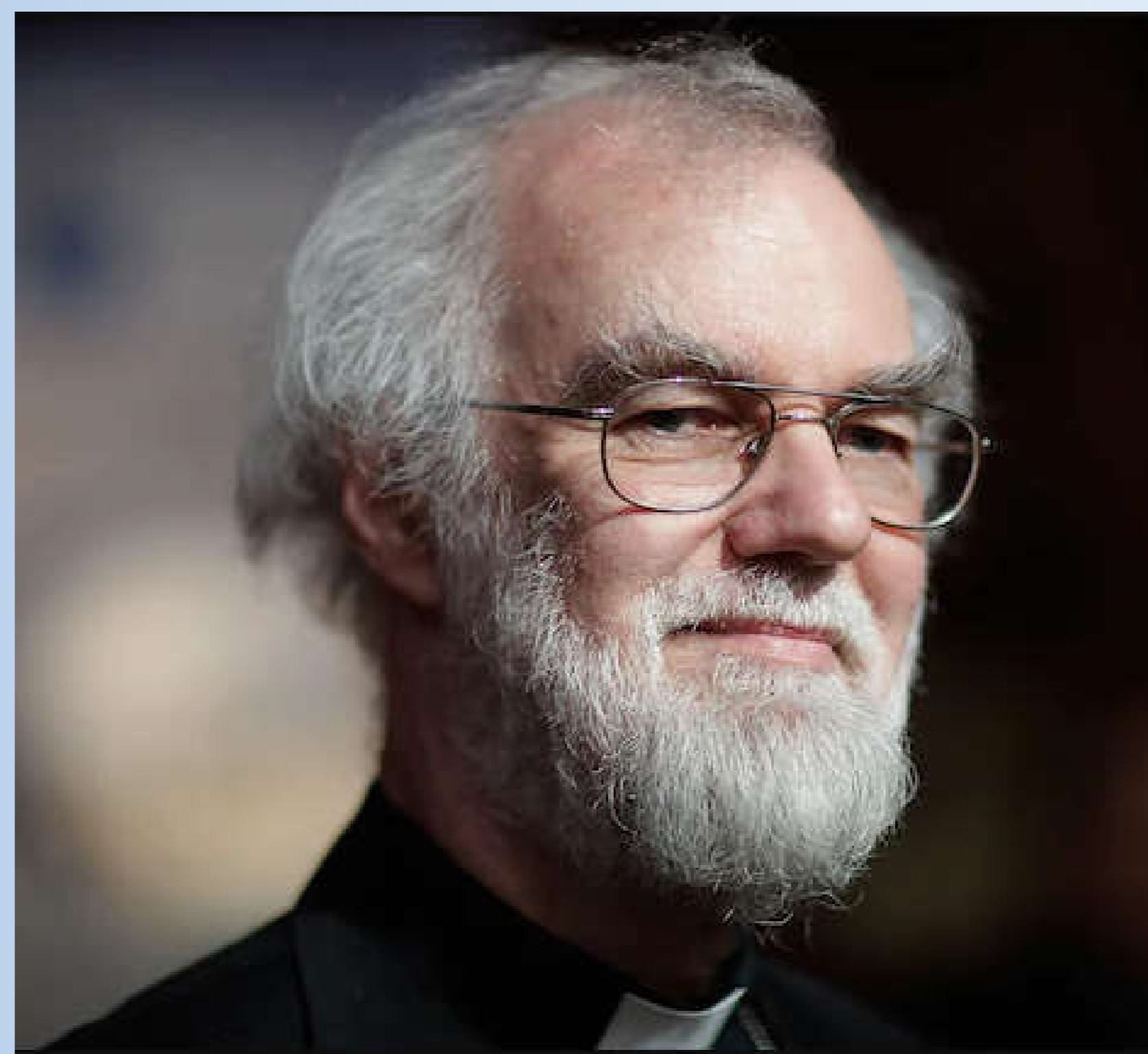
So there's a whole shame thing,  
we do it quietly in corners  
and it's secret  
and we don't tell other people.

I was just the scapegoat on which  
all the blame fell .  
So it was easier to heap all the blame on me  
and leave me to get on with it.  
Now that is *really* serious bullying, isn't it?

I thought I was alone in this  
I though nobody else was getting treatment like this  
and it's been happening to me for nearly thirty years.

They were all more concerned about not rocking the boat  
which I thought was pretty poor

They responded by sending a retired clergyman to me.  
And he gave me one interview



**“People are pushed,  
harrassed, and made to feel  
inferior or marginal,  
damaged, wounded and  
undermined”**

**The Rt Rev and the Rt Hon the  
Lord Williams of Oystermouth  
ABEL Conference - 31 May 2022**

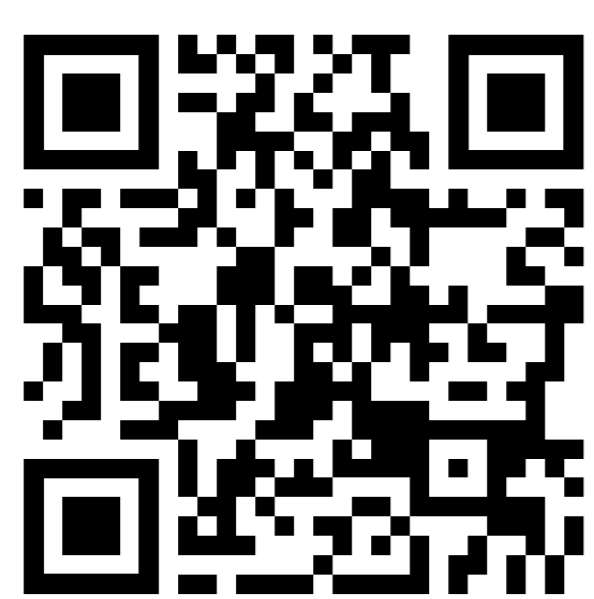
## ARE BULLIES BORN OR MADE ?

- About 1 in 100 people are born with **psychopathic tendencies** which make them unable to empathise with others, and they *may* resort to bullying to get their own way because they have no appreciation of how their actions negatively affect others
- Most other people resort to bullying behaviour because they have **LEARNED** it
- They have witnessed it, suffered it, or successfully used it themselves in the past
- **SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY** - You learn it from people around you
- **DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION** - You see other people go unpunished when they bully
- **DIFFERENTIAL SOCIAL ORGANISATION** - Bullying is seen as normal in your peer group
- **DIFFERENTIAL SOCIAL LOCATION** - Leading members of a peer group either adopt bullying tactics themselves or condone them, putting pressure on others to imitate
- **DIFFUSE RESPONSIBILITY** - Safety in numbers. “They can't punish us all”
- **DIFFERENTIAL RE-INFORCEMENT** - Lack of sanction and getting your own way through bullying **VS** personal punishment and removal of privileges
- **NEUTRALISATION** - Bullying is “OK in certain exceptional circumstances”
- **DISINHIBITION (Professor John Suler)** - A sense of anonymity can encourage bullying
- **PLAYFUL DISINHIBITION (Professor Qing Li)** - Initially harmless exchanges deteriorate
- **DE-INDIVIDUALISATION** - People lose their sense of self-awareness for their actions

## AT OUR ONLINE CONFERENCE ON 31st MAY, THESE WERE SOME OF THE KEY QUESTIONS POSED BY THE DELEGATES

- Negative acts may become a coping strategy for those experiencing bullying which can muddy the waters
- Is selection of senior clergy itself an aspect of passive bullying - in that it is not an open process and may be indicative of institutional bullying ?
- A number of bishops have never been in charge of a parish
- We need to define church: how does bullying in the parish church differ from bullying by the episcopacy and the wider church?
- Do you think that the lack of policy that is fit for purpose and the lack of lay accountability is a huge negative as it means bullies are attracted to church life and prosper there?
- How many bishops are there who are defined as having a disability by the Equality Act?
- What do we do when being bullied by a member of the laity in a place of leadership ?
- Is there any research into bullying of clergy by the congregation ?
- Issues of confidentiality and secrecy and what they look like in the parish situation.
- Reluctance to wash dirty linen in public and fear of clergy bringing bullying into open debate
- What resources are there for people being bullied by senior staff: eg silencing, sidelining and blocking from appointments and interviews.
- How much does public school culture and formation play a part in bullying in the institution? And how much does middle class and private education train people into these hierarchies?
- The issue of upward bullying, particularly of women in senior positions in the church. Accusations of bullying are often high profile and result in removal.
- What research has been done on bullying based on role/ontology. 'I am a bishop/archdeacon - they will do as I say.'

This poster is available online  
Flash this code with your mobile  
phone or tablet to  
download a copy from  
our website



### I wonder:

What would the C of E. look like if it were a place without anxiety ?

What would it be if it were a place high trust and high relationality, which invested relationships in costly ways, taking time to be with people, being available and not busy ?

“The busy-ness culture too soon becomes seen as a mark of status. We need to cultivate the art of slowness and taking time to be available. We need to in order respond to allegations clearly, transparently and compassionately.”

## THE ACTIVE BYSTANDER PROGRAMME

“What hurts the victim the most is not the cruelty of the oppressor but the silence of the bystander”

Elie Wiesel, Holocaust Survivor

What do I do when someone is being bullied?

Often we see bullying taking place and are unsure what to do. The Active Bystander Programme is one programme that can be used to help individuals and organisations address bullying.

### How Do I Prepare And Decide How To Act ?

- Notice something significant is happening. Assess for safety and barriers.
- Take some responsibility.
- Aim for de-escalation.
- Choose an intervention.
- Take action.

### What Interventions Are There ?

- Direct action
- Distraction
- Delegation
- Delay

[www.activebystander.co.uk](http://www.activebystander.co.uk)

## WE ASKED OUR DELEGATES: “WHAT DO WE NEED ?” THEY TOLD US:

- Relationality
- Good training provision and learning opportunity
- Trust in leaders who are willing to keep learning
- Follow up from the day conference
- Sharing, supervision and addressing isolation
- Support and accountability of clergy, laity, volunteers and employees
- Consider behaviour covenants in working with volunteers
- Finding better ways of doing things
- Being aware of the interactions of shame / power / boundaries
- Good safeguarding training:
  - Enables people to see the danger signs and intervene early
  - Creates a safe space
  - Raises awareness and need to protect
  - When things go wrong they can escalate quickly
- Good training about spiritual abuse/ bullying/ trauma helps people notice and articulate what is going on
- Where the work environment shows a high degree of relationality and mutuality it is better and healthier.
- We have an anxious leadership; fear can block the freedom to find a way. Need to make decisions based on prayer and not from fear.
- The issue of clericalism and the vicar on their throne; how the choreography of worship etc feeds into clericalism and power misuse.
- Issues of isolation and the need for mentoring / support/ supervision / accountability. We need to be aware and alert to the issues of isolation and remedies - and have systems and structures that help. The need to draw people together, to enable communication and ongoing learning.
- Conflict management experience and training can help pre-empt disasters
- The need for safe places to talk and reflect together - growing and learning together, giving skills and enabling healthy and hopeful environments. Also enables different skill sets to be appreciated and expands knowledge etc.
- Being team players and not hierarchies - with time for each other
- The need for accountability of lay and clergy alike - possibility of things like parish covenants.
- How do we as clergy inhabit our role, knowing we are broken, to enable health? How do we inhabit vulnerability?
- The need for authenticity, vulnerability and honesty without dismissing the other
- We need to reframe power from a win / lose paradigm to a win/win paradigm. We need to retell the story in a way that reflects the good news of the gospel and with a confidence in the gospel story

## The Abuser's Strategy for Surviving Accusations of Abuse or Bullying



## THE NEGATIVE ACTS QUESTIONNAIRE

At a simple level, 2 or more of these acts experienced or witnessed on a regular basis suggests that serious bullying is present

*Einarsen, S., Hoel, H. and Notelaers, G., 2009. Measuring exposure to bullying and harassment at work: Validity, factor structure and psychometric properties of the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised. Work & Stress, [e-journal] 23(1), pp.24-44.*

- Someone withholding information which affects your performance
- Being humiliated or ridiculed in connection with your ministry
- Being ordered to do tasks below your level of competence
- Having key areas of responsibility removed or replaced with more trivial or unpleasant tasks
- Spreading of gossip or rumours about you
- Being ignored or excluded
- Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your person, attitudes or your private life
- Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger
- Intimidating behaviours such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way
- Hints or signals from others that you should quit your present post
- Repeated reminders of your errors or mistakes
- Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when you approach
- Persistent criticism of your errors or mistakes
- Having your opinions ignored
- Practical jokes carried out by people you don't get along with
- Being given tasks with unreasonable deadlines
- Having allegations made against you
- Excessive monitoring of your ministerial activities
- Pressure not to claim something to which you are by right entitled (e.g. sick leave, holiday entitlement, travel expenses)
- Being the subject of excessive teasing or sarcasm
- Being exposed to an unmanageable workload
- Threats of violence or actual violence