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Research Report

Sacramental Incentives in Pastoral Ministry

Hans Schilderman and Bert Felling

In the Catholic Church, sacramental theology offers core concepts of pastoral ministry. It underpins the religious identity of pastors by clarifying the significance of sacramental activity, by emphasising the sacred foundation of vocation, and by illuminating the ordination conditions for pastoral ministry. But in what way is the sacramental theology of the office actually supported by pastors? In trying to answer this empirical question, we do not disavow the normative character of sacramental theology, nor do we pretend to prove the validity of specific perspectives, be it an orthodox or a non-orthodox stance. The aim of this question is to contribute insight into the crisis of pastoral ministry that, according to many theologians and sociologists, has characterised the Dutch Catholic Church over the last decades. Is this crisis reflected in the sacramental attitudes of pastors? Can answers be found in a lack of support for a theology of sacramental activity, vocation and ordination? According to other observers, the crisis of pastoral ministry is not so much theological as occupational. This assessment raises the question of how pastors evaluate their office from a professional point of view. In what way do pastors support policies to improve the quality of their work and thus try to counter the crisis? Here also, we do not claim to give normative answers but merely try to understand how pastors understand their profession in troubled times.

The basic issue that we address in this article is whether and how pastors' sacramental attitudes dispose them to support or reject issues of professional development in their occupation. In this paper, we address this issue on the basis of an empirical exploration. Our study is a representative, descriptive and exploratory empirical survey of Dutch Roman Catholic pastors in 1992. The purpose is to discover empirical insights into their conceptions of the theology of ministry (Schilderman 1998; Schilderman, Van der Ven & Felling 1999; Schilderman & Felling 2003 forthcoming).[1]

In this article, we will first give a short sketch of the crisis of pastoral ministry among Dutch Catholic pastors during the last decades (1). Then we examine, both conceptually and empirically, three aspects of sacramen-

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[1] N = 481, which was 48% of the gross sample (N = 1010) we took and 20% of the population (N = 2396).

tal theology that seem relevant for understanding the crisis of pastoral ministry, namely sacramental activity, vocation and ordination (2). In a third section we describe, again both conceptually and empirically, the pastors' attitudes towards pastoral professionalisation strategies and responsibilities (3). In the fourth section, we interpret the data by analysing the support that sacramental attitudes of pastors offer for professionalisation attitudes (4). Finally, we interpret the relevance of sacramental incentives for professionalisation for contributing to an understanding of the crisis of pastoral ministry (5).[2]

1. Crisis of Pastoral Ministry

Pastoral ministry in the Netherlands suffers a crisis, which we first describe and subsequently interpret from a sacramental and professional view.

Crisis

The position of pastoral ministry in the Dutch Roman Catholic Church can be described as an occupation in crisis, both from a structural and a cultural point of view. The structure of the pastoral profession has changed remarkably during the last decades. First, there has been stagnation in the recruitment of Roman Catholic priests. In 1960, 318 priests were ordained in the Netherlands, and in 1990 this number had decreased to 21, a reduction of more than 93%. In this same period, some 2100 priests resigned their office. The church statistics show that, between 1968 and 1981, the number of resignations each year exceeded the number of ordinations (see Table 1).

Secondly, the composition of the occupational group has changed because, in late sixties, pastoral workers were introduced in the church. 'Pastoral workers' are academically educated and professionally trained theologians who work in church ministry but lack ordination; thus, they are not authorised to administer the sacraments (albeit with the possible exception of a granted dispensation for baptism and marriage). Though a new recruitment channel thus was opened, the downswing of professional church personnel could not be stopped. Whereas the total number of pastors employed in local ministry in the Dutch Roman Catholic Church was 3857 in 1965 (all priests), in 1990 this number had diminished by 52% to 1843 (of which 80% are priests, 6% are deacons and 14% are pastoral workers) (KASKI 1992, 29-30). The aging of the professional group also helps to explain this decline.

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2   Unless indicated otherwise, all empirical data are to be found in the dissertation 'Pastorale Professionalisering; een empirisch-theologisch onderzoek onder rooms-katholieke pastores naar de betekenis van de ambtstheologie voor de professionalisering van pastorale arbeid' (with an English summary) Hans Schilderman. Kok Publishers Kampen 1998, 238-319. Other analyses are appended as an annex to this paper.
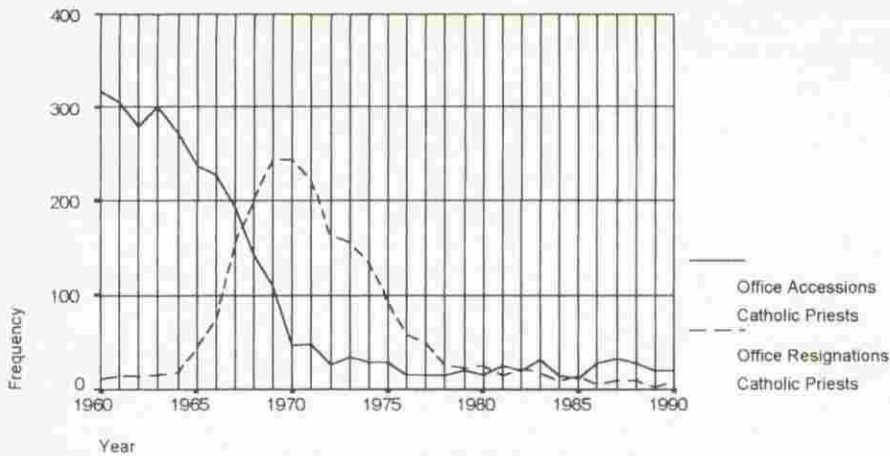
Table 1   the Office of Dutch Roman Catholic Priests Coarse of Ordination and
           Resignation in the period 1960-1990
           Source: based on Dutch Church Statistics, Kaski 1992, 31

Thirdly, the mobilisation of volunteers presents a major development.
In 1987, the Dutch Roman Catholic Church employed 332,000 volunteers
(Witteman-Devilee ea. 1989). The average number of volunteers in the
local Dutch parish in 1995 was 200 individuals, who spent an average of
2.7 hours a week and together represented 13.3 full time equivalent
employees per parish. The volunteers represented around half of the church
visitors who attended regularly, though only 6.2 % of all church members
(Spruit 1995). Volunteers take over various aspects of the pastoral work,
whereas church strategies towards an actual volunteer organisation and a
subsequent division of pastoral labour are often absent. Though the vol-
unteer efforts are enormous, there are also problems to be addressed, such
as the declining quality and quantity of volunteers, the ineffective organi-
sational structure in the church, and the ambivalent professional and in-
crowd volunteer attitudes (Bernts 1998, 81-83; Van der Ven 1999). These
facts concerning priest recruitment and both professional and laity partici-
pation show an occupational group in structural crisis.

Apart from the structural crisis, we also observe a cultural crisis in
about the same period, i.e., 1960-1990. During this period, there was a
vivid discussion in the Dutch Catholic Church, one that drew considerable
international attention. Basically, the discussion concerned the question of
what pastoral consequences could be drawn from the completed Catholic
emancipation in Dutch society. This emancipation on the one hand left the
Catholic clergy with diminished and unclear social missions, and on the
other hand questioned the ademocratic and clerical structures of the Ro-
man Catholic Church. For many pastors – and at that time for a large
group of intellectuals among the faithful – emancipation stirred an interest

in applying the aggiornamento of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) to the context of the Dutch Catholic church. This application was worked out with much enthusiasm at the Dutch Pastoral Council in Noordwijker-hout (1966-1970). In particular, some of the more liberal theologians advocated an innovation of the pastoral office, an introduction of laymen and -women as pastors and an abolition of celibacy as an ordination condition. The 'Dutch Example', however, was perceived internationally as a secular threat to basic theological principles (Scheffczyk 1972). The Dutch aspiration received no official recognition, and the Vatican aimed at a restoration of the former situation. The perception that the Dutch Catholic Church challenged the authority of the Roman church caused a rigid reaction. Among other things, it resulted in the appointment during the seventies of bishops who – sometimes drastically – restored conserva-tive pastoral and church policies.

Two reactions met the crisis of pastoral ministry. One reaction was resignation from the church, particularly by those who had profited most from the Dutch Catholic emancipation during the last century, i.e., the intellectuals. This process contributed largely to the pastoral recruitment problems in the church mentioned earlier (Simons and Winkeler 1987). Another reaction was the establishment of various liberal movements within the Dutch Catholic Church, a move that provided a social bond for people experiencing frustration with the centrist interventions of Rome (Van Dijk and Salemink 1986, 20-32). From this perspective, we also understand the formation of professional organisations of pastors in each Dutch diocese. These professional fellowships represent a kind of pastoral emancipation movement within the church and have a strong emphasis on both professional and religious interests. They were organised in the 'Federation of Societies for Pastoral Workers' (VPW) that, since then, have deployed various initiatives with regard to professionalisation.

Sacramental and Professional Perspectives

From a sociological perspective, the crisis of pastoral ministry in Dutch Catholic ministry can be explained from two perspectives. One is that of Layendecker, who focuses on the sacramental side of the crisis; the other is that of Schreuder, who emphasises the professionalisation side.

One interpretation of the crisis of pastoral ministry relates to changing views of the sacramental identity of the pastoral office. Layendecker, a Dutch sociologist of religion, supports this interpretation. He employs a notion that Weber found characteristic of the Catholic Church's labour organisation, namely office charisma. The inherent authority that cha-risma reflects has its match in the faithful understanding by individual persons of their religious well-being as mediated through sacramental acts of the pastor (Weber 1976 I, 142-148; Weber 1976 II, 661-681). Layen-decker understands the crisis of the Catholic Church as a crisis of this

official charisma, and he points to an internal church struggle for power in which desacralisation of the hierarchy is accompanied by growing influence of laity and intellectuals. Initially a well-educated executive pastoral staff contributed to the authority claims of the church. During the last decades, however, emancipated intellectuals, influenced by their changing social and cultural environment and encouraged by (post-) Vatican theological ideas, contributed to changes in the Church. A result is that the sacral character of the office seems to pine away in an appeal to the experience paradigm, democratic participation in the church and modern morality (Layendecker 1993, 103-137).

Another interpretation of the crisis of pastoral ministry relates to deficiencies in the professionalisation process. Another Dutch sociologist of religion, Schreuder, has advocated this interpretation. From the sixties, he suggests that the corrosion of traditional and legal authority on the one hand, and the failing adaptation to expert-authority on the other hand, account together for the crisis of Dutch pastoral ministry. Expert-authority appeals to the quality of the pastoral effort to match religious problems, needs and interests. This effort falls flat because of the folk-church structure of the Catholic Church, which is based on ritualism, confessional indoctrination, and social control. The failing appeal of pastors to expert-authority has both internal and external consequences for the pastoral occupation. The internal consequences are lessened legitimation of authority within the church. Schreuder supports the hypothesis that Catholic pastors no longer accept a non-rational account for church policies towards the pastoral professional group. The centrist administrative machinery is regarded as less able to adjust to the changing local conditions of the pastoral occupation (Schreuder 1969, 69-82). The external consequences refer to the declining acceptance by the faithful of authority claims by pastors. As the church loses its formerly enshrined position in popular belief, the pastors have to accommodate to changing religious affiliation and church participation motives. In the meanwhile, their status position in society is unfit to adjust to the mechanisms of modern occupations. That situation leaves pastors as 'out-laws' in the ongoing process of functional differentiation: highly educated but not professionalised (Schreuder 1964, 4-10).

2. Sacramental Aspects of Pastoral Ministry

In this paragraph we attempt to clarify empirically some basic characteristics of sacramental theology that appear to be relevant in interpreting the crisis in Dutch ministry. In the wide field of sacramental theology, we first focus on sacramental activity, since it refers to the basic ritual function and religious effects of sacraments and has a longer tradition of being controversial in church history. Secondly, we regard vocation as a relevant issue,

since it refers to the varying perceptions of the religious choice to become a pastor. Thirdly, we select the notion of ordination, since it is decisive for admission to the Catholic clergy and the integration of a priest or deacon, from both a symbolic and juridical perspective, into the religious leadership in the church.

Sacramental Activity

Over the centuries, sacramental activity has been the subject of ardent discourse. What is the relationship between human beings, ritual action and divine grace? This is a fundamental theological question that refers to the significance of the sacramental act itself, of the interpretation process of sacramental activity and of the relation of this activity to the mission and identity of the church. From this frame of reference, we discern in the theological literature three views of sacramental activity, namely an instrumental, a symbolic and a communitarian view.

First, the instrumental notion of sacramental activity emphasises the immediate and objective working of grace in the sacrament for individual persons; we find this notion stressed in the doctrinal authority of the Catholic Church. Sacraments are the means by which the Word of God becomes visible. Apostolic, metaphysical and christological arguments underpin the sacred origin. Apostolically, the sacraments go back to Jesus' initiative for the institution of Eucharist (I Cor. 11:24, etc.), baptism (Mt. 28:19), and confession (John 20:21-23). At the same time, the church warrants these sacramental initiatives. Metaphysically, the sacred foundations rest on the argument in (Neo-)Scholastic theology that sacraments comprise the grace they refer to, so that their administering necessarily implies salvation for those who accept the sacraments faithfully. Following a christological analogy, sacraments administer grace in the way God sends his Son out of love for humanity. This argument, based on revelation theology, puts the church in charge of administering sacramental grace, a task that expresses the church's responsibility for Christ's mission (Simonis et al. 1992, 13-26). Such a perspective stresses the official church concern for a valid administering of the sacramental rituals.

Secondly, we notice a symbolical notion of sacramental activity that has emerged during the last decades, and that stresses the experiential access to revelation. Theologians like Schillebeeckx and Semmelroth, who both were influential at the Second Vatican Council, abandoned the exclusively neo-scholastic interpretations and instead stressed the experiential conditions of attributing sacramental meaning. This anthropological view of sacraments emphasises the function of the symbol to integrate transcendence and immanence in everyday life (Boff 1972, 125-130; 377-392; 1983, 60-66). Schoonenberg demonstrated this function of the symbol in his view of the ascending Christ, in which he offered the example of Jesus' life as a symbol of God's love for humanity (Schoonenberg 1991, 174-176).

Schillebeeckx likewise interpreted Jesus as sacrament of encounter with God (Schillebeeckx 1963, 49-51). Compared to the instrumental interpretation of sacramental activity, the symbolical notion underlines the existential and religious attitude of the faithful as a condition for sacramental activity. This attitude is expressed sacramentally in the longing for grace, which indicates the disposition of those who receive the sacrament.

Thirdly, we discern a communitarian notion of sacramental activity, which stresses the religious significance of the local community, gathered to celebrate God's presence. Drawn from sacramental ecclesiology, this interpretation of sacramental activity stresses the social location of the church in which Christ's presence is recognized as vital for the mediation of grace. The communitarian notion corrects a strictly personal interpretation of sacramental activity, while it emphasises the shared celebration in which God is commemorated in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Its interest lies in the understanding of the church as not so much the object but rather the subject of mediated grace. Such a perspective does not view human action as contrasted to God's grace but instead sees the church community as integrated by God through this grace in the human activity of celebration (Meyer zu Schlochtern 1992). As a consequence, the communitarian interpretation of sacramental activity understands the acting community also as intervening: succeeding by realising the grace that it signifies sacramentally, or failing by being an obstacle in its communitarian activity (Boff 1972, 28-37; 476-498). Another way to formulate the communitarian view of sacramental activity is to understand this activity as 'performance', which connotes the inclusion of the public, its expressions, interpretations, and criticism. This view simultaneously emphasises the effects of this interplay, namely the performative function of the community, in which the ritual coincides with the grace mediated by God through the faith of the celebrating community (Schillebeeckx 2000). This view of sacramental activity therefore stresses the importance of the local church, gathered in its activity of celebrating the experience of God's grace.

What are the pastors' attitudes towards these three notions of sacramental activity? Sixty-six percent of the pastors approve of the view of instrumental activity and 9% reject it, while a quarter remains undecided. Though pastoral workers have no formal sacramental authority, they still support this notion of sacramental activity, albeit less than priests and deacons. Though members of the professional organisation (VPW) attach less support than non-members, they do in fact support the instrumental activity of sacraments. The symbolic reading of sacramental activity shows much empirical similarity with the instrumental approach. Some 68% of the pastors advocate this sense of activity, whereas 8% reject this notion and 25% doubt it. We notice no difference when we discriminate between church positions or with regard to membership of the professional organisation. Relatively speaking, the communitarian reading of sacramental

activity gets the most support: a large majority of (89%) of the pastors is in favour, and 1% disapproves of it, leaving 9% of the pastors in doubt. Pastoral workers offer more support for the communitarian notion of sacramental activity, though priests and deacons are also positive. We can conclude that all pastors, including all subgroups with regard to church position and professional membership, actually support all three notions of sacramental efficiency. So, unlike the historical controversy in dogmatic theology and the contrasting forms of epistemological foundation suggest, the various interpretations of sacramental activity do not seem to result in theological discordance among pastors. From this point of view, little support is found for the concern that the Dutch bishops have regularly expressed about diverging views of sacraments in the church. The data support the hypothesis that, from an empirical point of view, instrumental, symbolic, and communitarian notions find a rather unanimous support amongst pastors.[3]

Vocation

From a pastoral perspective, vocation refers to the motives to participate in sacramental activity as church officials and sacramental leadership. Vocational views express a commitment to what, for pastors, is normally a life-long and demanding ecclesiastical employment. This commitment to enter the pastoral office may be motivated by personal and existential deliberation; however, this choice may also be validated by an explicit religious calling by God to hold a pastoral office. Furthermore, community motives may also be present, by which a person feels urged to occupy a public office within and on behalf of this community. These personal, religious and communitarian motives are, of course, not mutually exclusive. Their analytical distinction, however, facilitates an empirically nuanced perception of vocation.

First, we describe the concept of personal vocation. It indicates the conscientious decision for priesthood, or pastoral ministry, as such. In classical vocational literature, we find this notion elaborated in terms of the natural conditions of vocation, such as talents, physical and mental health, and spiritual equilibrium. Thus personal vocation refers to religious motives, which in turn refer to the authenticity of the desire to enter an office, and religious effects, which in turn refer to an assessment of the behaviour consistency that the candidate demonstrates. The spiritual tra-

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3   Interesting is that the correlations are positive and significant at the 0.01 level, and that only very small minorities of pastors reject the sacramental activity views. A cross tabulation shows that there is a small group of pastors (N = 31) who support a communitarian and simultaneously reject the instrumental view of sacramental activity; a still smaller group (N = 17) rejects the instrumental view while supporting the symbolic view of sacramental activity.

ditions, which apply practical criteria based on biblical lists of qualities (like I Tim. 3:2-10; Tit. 1:7-9) or moral virtues and ecclesiastical guidelines (CIC 1024-1052; Pastores Dabo Vobis) to vocational discernment, guide the assessment of personal vocation.

Secondly, we turn to religious vocation. Here, the central notion is God's appeal to a person to engage in pastoral work. Classical literature describes this religious vocation as a form of grace that appeals to a person's free choice and thus cannot be enforced (Hostie 1963). In essence, religious vocation provides a voluntaristic concept in a double way: it remains based on the unfathomable will of God, while it simultaneously appeals to human freedom of choice. A vocational assent can be regarded as having a continuous character, always prompting human beings to understand their religious vocation in new circumstances. A religious vocation for the clerical office is of a specific nature. According to the Thomistic distinction of 'gratia gratum faciens' (openness for God's grace) and 'gratia gratis data' (God's grace to sanctify others) (S. Theol. 1, 2, q. 111, a. 1), religious vocation clearly relates to sacramental function in the clerical office. Schoonenberg rejects a mere additive view of religious vocation in which non-official and official grace is dichotomised. He regards religious vocation not as an ontological characteristic but as an openness for the Spirit, which situates available talents between and within persons (Schoonenberg 1985).

Finally, we point to a third concept, namely communitarian vocation. Here, the appeal of a community is decisive for the person's choice to become a pastor. The communitarian vocation has theological significance. Not only has it been a major characteristic of Reformation interpretations of vocation, but it also has gained considerable significance since the Second Vatican Council. The council stressed general vocation in which the calling refers to the general priesthood of all believers. Though this general call is distinguished from special vocation – which remains bound to the ordained office – it also offers an opportunity to understand the communitarian vocation from an ecumenical perspective (Witte and Geurts 1988). For instance, the Lima report about Baptism, Eucharist and Office (1982) defines the notion of communitarian vocation in a general sense but takes it as a condition for vocation in a more specific sense (Gosker 1990). Here, the Roman Catholic and Protestant views diverge; yet, a communitarian view offers a basis for common understanding in that it avoids personalism and correlates the special vocation of ministry to the general vocation of the church community.

We understand the notion of vocation to refer to the choice process, as differentiated from the ecclesiastical confirmation of this choice (which implies notions of ordination). To check whether this distinction is empirically valid, we first address the notion of ordination and then clarify empirically both the vocation and the ordination aspects together.

Ordination

In the Roman-Catholic church, ordination is a specific sacrament. It introduces pastors into the clergy, and awards them a jurisdiction and sacramental authority. This authority is especially expressed in the right to lead the sacramental ceremony of the Eucharist, where presiding over the celebration demonstrates the public character of the pastoral office and symbolically expresses the religious leadership of pastors in a church community. Historically, the concept of ordination has given rise to differing views of the ecclesiastical legitimacy of the pastoral office as a mediating institute between God and humanity. Schillebeeckx describes this controversy as a tension between concepts of absolute and relative ordination. We now describe these concepts as referring to two interpretations of ordination, both with historical and theological legitimacy.

A first notion of ordination can be referred to as absolute since it implies independence from local churches. What is decisive is that the candidate is integrated in the 'ordo' of the church as an institute. The view of absolute ordination points to a specific christological interpretation of the church. The church is Christ's mystical body in which the priest holds the office based on the task to *'in persona Christi Capitis munera docendi, sanctificandi et regendi adimplentes, Dei populam pascant'* (CIC 1008). Though a priest is incardinated in a diocese and thus is geographically dependent, his ordination is independent with regard to a calling and confirmation by a local faith community. Schillebeeckx understands the notion of absolute ordination to have originated since the third (1179) and fourth (1215) Council of Lateran, which – in order to regulate the problem of 'clerici vagantes' – decided that ordination should not depend on a local community but on a substantial income ('benificium') and Eucharistic authority. According to Schillebeeckx, the ordo-structure, as it was introduced in theology by Tertullian as a sacramental notion, became misunderstood from the thirteenth century on as an ontological concept of religious class; this misunderstanding mixed office charisma with sacred competence ('sacra potestas') and reduced the office to sacramental mediation of the priest between God and human beings (Schillebeeckx 1985, 189-194; Ruyschaert 1986, 49-62).

A second notion of ordination can be labelled as relative, since it emphasises that entering an office depends on the needs of the local faith community. Relative ordination implies the designation of a person in which the actual bond of a candidate with his local church entitles him to conduct the Eucharist. Schillebeeckx assumes that a territorial definition of this Eucharistic prerogative can be corroborated by a hermeneutic interpretation of the history of the pastoral office (Schillebeeckx 1982; 1985, 202-206). The primal church, as it emerged after Jesus' death, was characterised by local differences in ministry and lacked a definite order of offices. Actually, there were various services marked by different charis-

matic, pneumatic, and paracletic theologies of the office. This plurality facilitated faithfulness, not only to local needs and interests, but also to a concept of apostolicity accommodated to the actual contexts of the orthopraxis of Christian faith (Schillebeeckx 1985, 57-87; 119-123). The concept of relative ordination is, as opposed to strictly ontological conceptions, based on the grace and the mission of the Spirit. This pneumatological concept refers to the religious inspiration of the local community, by which the Spirit grants the candidate the right to consecration.[4]

So far we have dealt with vocation and ordination as if they were separate phenomena. But is this the correct approach? Are they separate phenomena, or have they something in common? Both the vocational literature and the ordination literature share a joint theological interest in the conditions for entering an office. The ordination literature makes use of vocational arguments for specific views, and the vocational literature amounts to decisions for specific ordination views. The core discussion about the pastoral office implies that vocation and ordination evoke and presuppose each other; therefore, we decide to offer a joint factor-analysis of the vocation and ordination variables.

From a combined factor-analysis of the three vocation and the two ordination variables we find four notions of office-entry present among pastors. First, we have personal vocation. For pastors who support this notion, well-deliberated thought and personal choice are decisive to becoming a pastor. Three quarters of the population (76%) are in favour of this notion, and 22% are in doubt. Deacons attach more significance to personal vocation. A second view of office-entry is religious vocation, which emphasises God's calling. It is supported by half of the population (54%), whereas a large minority (40%) is in doubt. This doubt is predominant among pastoral workers and members of the professional organisation, whereas priests, deacons and non-members of the professional organisation agree with the notion of religious vocation, albeit not fully. Thirdly, we find a view comprised of communitarian vocation and relative ordination. Pastors do not support our theoretical distinction of communitarian vocation and relative ordination. For them, these two concepts refer to a generic notion that we label as local office entry, which is comprised of the appeal of a local faith community and the local authorisation to confirm the candidate and assign him or her the prerogative to celebrate the Eucharist. This notion of local office entry is confirmed by one third (34%), doubted by one third (33%) and rejected by one third (33%) of the pastors. Whereas pastoral workers approve of this notion of pastoral office entry, priests and deacons show a tendency towards rejec-

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4   Schillebeeckx' analysis was criticised, especially with regard to the theological proof he advocated in Chalcedon's sixth canon that decided that absolute consecration of ministers is useless and illegitimate. This prompted Schillebeeckx to refine but maintain his interpretation (Schillebeeckx 1980, 49-52; Grelot 1983, van Bilsen 1981, 19-25; van Meershoek 1982, 27-28; Schillebeeckx 1985, 155-157).

tion. Members of the professional organisation (VPW) tend to agree, whereas non-members tend to disagree with local office entry. The last concept of office entry is absolute ordination, which refers to the authority of the official, upper-local church to assign candidates to the consecrated office. A small majority (56%) is in favour of absolute ordination and one quarter (24%) is in doubt, which leaves 21% of pastors in rejection of this view. Pastoral workers show doubt with a strong tendency to reject the view, though priests and deacons agree with it. VPW-members are in doubt and non-members are in favour of absolute ordination. These four empirical notions of pastoral office entry indicate a situation in which pastors are more personally than religiously motivated in their vocation and are divided in their interpretation of the role of the local versus the upper-local church where ordination is concerned.

3. Professional aspects of Pastoral Ministry

In this paragraph we attempt to clarify empirically some basic character-istics of professionalisation theory that appear to be relevant in interpret-ing the crisis in Dutch ministry. Professional aspects emphasise profes-sional development, or the professionalisation of pastoral ministry. We conceptually and empirically clarify two professional aspects of pastoral ministry, namely professional strategies and professional responsibilities.

Professional Strategies

Professional strategies aim to protect and develop the social domain of pastoral ministry as an occupation in the midst of the social division of labour. There are various approaches in conceptualising professional strat-egies. In the trait approach to professionalisation, professional strategies aim at the development of an occupation into a profession by adapting an occupation to perceived ideal features of professional groups. Among those characteristics are favourites, such as a systematic theory that speci-fies the work domain, a professional authority based on client needs, a socially sanctioned authority, an ethical code, and a professional culture enhanced by professional organisations (Greenwood 1957). There is disa-greement, however, about which traits characterise ideal professions. The trait theory of professionalisation lacks a theory that discriminates occu-pations from professions and fails in explaining the success of specific professional groups.

Another theory is the functional approach in professional strategies. It holds that those occupations are professionalized that demonstrate a du-rable involvement in the primary values of a society. For instance, the medical profession is functionally based on the primary values of health and disease that define the role-sets of doctors and patients. Their role-

interaction follows specific problem-solving functions that are character-
istic of professions. Parsons described professionalisation in this way by
stressing the importance of scientific application, universalism, functional
specification, affective neutrality and collective orientation (Parsons 1954;
1968). The functional approach fails, however, to recognise the social and
historical complexity of societal values and seems unable to discriminate
between the ideological use of professional strategies and their actual
deployment.

A third approach in professionalisation theory is the power-approach
that offers more elaborate explanations for the dynamic adaptation of
professional groups to various societal conditions (Mok 1973; 1978;
Gyarmati 1975; Van der Krogt 1981; Macdonald 1995). This so-called
power-approach of professionalisation avoids the pitfalls of the other two
approaches by stressing the key-concept of control over labour. Pro-
fessionalisation is the control by an occupational group of the elementary
conditions of its occupation in a strategic interaction with relevant
stakeholders (clients, other professional groups, labour organisations, edu-
cational organisations, and administration or government bodies). Since
this theory accounts for specific opportunities and constraints in a party
model of interaction, it is far more able to explain the success of occupa-
tions in varying contexts. Van der Krogt, drawing on a distinction based
on an extensive literature review, defines professionalisation according to
the power approach as follows: *"Professionalisation is a process according
to which members of an occupational group seek collectively, and appeal-
ing chiefly to expert-authority, to attain and protect a position of collective
power, with the objective to master both the value-in-use and the value-
in-exchange of the occupation"* (Van der Krogt 1981, 94; 131-150). In
short, professionalisation is gain of occupational control, and de-pro-
fessionalisation is loss of occupational control.

By analysing van der Krogt's definition according to the power-ap-
proach, we distinguish five professional strategies. First, competence-de-
velopment is a major strategy incentive. It is aimed at an improvement of
both knowledge and skills of the professional group. This goal is not only
decisive because of the need of a high expertise to meet the demands, but
also because of the necessity to protect a lucid and legitimized professional
domain. Two other strategies are based on what Adam Smith defined as
value-in-use and value-in-exchange of labour (Smith 1979, 117-166). A
strategy stimulating the value-in-use of labour aims at tuning labour tasks
to needs and interests of clients, a subject extensively elaborated in quality-
assessment literature (Crane 1993). A strategy of value-in-exchange ad-
dresses issues of labour recompensation. Recompensation here regards not
only material remuneration but also rewards in more symbolic terms, like
status and autonomy incentives. Representation and protection of interests
is a fourth professionalisation strategy. It focuses on collectivising, i.e., a
strategy to match the professional group with membership in the profes-

sional organization. This aim requires clarification and communication of common interests so that the professional organization is able to offer support for a strategy for both its members and external parties as well. Finally, development of collective power is a fifth professional strategy. It contains a strategic reinforcement of influence towards relevant actors in society. Note that this power-approach in professional strategies does not inevitably imply an appeal to a conflict model. In many cases co-operating with powerful groups may prove to be far more effective.

The first professional strategy, competence development, is supported by the whole occupational group of pastors. A vast majority of 95% supports this objective, whereas 5% are in doubt. If we look at the support of subgroups, we find no difference when we discriminate according to church position. Difference in ordination does not imply an increase or decrease in the upholding of competence, although members of professional organisation approve of it somewhat more.

The second professional strategy, which entails a tuning of pastoral tasks to existential needs, is also supported by a majority of the pastors (82%). A very small minority of pastors rejects this value-in-use strategy (3%), and 15% do not know whether to agree or not. No cleavage in opinion appears if we discriminate according to church position or membership of the professional organisation.

The third and fourth professional strategies, the value-in-exchange and the representation and protection of interests policies, are not recognized by pastors as different strategies. Our distinction is spurious since, for pastors, the items of both concepts refer to the same strategy. We define the now integrated strategy as "remunerative representation of interests." Thus we draw attention to the labour-union characteristics of this policy, which aim at promoting the employment interests of the occupational group. This strategy has support among 33% of the pastors and is rejected by 33%, whereas 34% are in doubt. This apparently controversial issue can be clarified by discriminating subgroups. The unordained pastors show a tendency to approve of this strategic aim. Priests are in doubt and the deacons disagree on this point. If we look at membership of the professional organisation, we find that, though both subgroups are in doubt, members tend to agree with the remunerative representation of interests strategy, whereas non-members tend to disagree.

Finally, the collective power strategy finds considerable support among pastors. We defined this concept in terms of the exertion of influence and the strengthening of the professional position within church administration and strategy. We thus emphasised the need for influence in the labour organisation that Catholic pastors depend on. More than half of the pastors (56%) approves of such a strategy. A minority (15%) disapproves and 28% doubt a strategy aimed at collective power for the professional group. Members of the professional organisation agree on this issue, whereas non-members are in doubt, though with a positive inclination.

Professional Responsibilities

Now that we have clarified some professional strategies, we ask who is to take the lead in these strategies. According to the power-approach, the members of the organized occupational group represent the primary actor. In Dutch Catholic ministry, since the seventies, this primary actor can be identified as the Federation of Societies for Pastoral Workers (VPW), which aims at the protection of pastoral interests and professional development. But obviously there are other stakeholders as well. The first of these is the Catholic Church, which not only is to be understood as the labour organization, but also explicitly claims authority in all issues regarding pastoral ministry. Secondly, the universities, to which the education for pastoral ministry is entrusted, are also a stakeholder, not in the least because of their strategic position with regard to questions of theological expertise. This situation prompts us to investigate the attitudes of pastors concerning the responsibility for professional strategies.

We examined the responsibility attitudes of pastors towards these three stakeholders in the professionalisation process, and we each time specified items according to various developmental aspects of the professionalisation strategy. We designed three scales, one for each actor, i.e., church, universities and professional organisations. According to our data, on average, pastors grant all three stakeholders comparable support; however, the deviation of the scale-scores indicates considerable controversy. Of the pastors, 70% assign responsibility to the church, 75% to universities and 52% to the professional organisations. Responsibility of the church is rejected by 7%, whereas accountability of universities is rejected by 6% and of professional organisations by 20%. Responsibility in the development of pastoral competence seems to be a controversial issue. Ordained pastors and non-members of the professional organisation support responsibility of the church more, though unordained and professional organisation members still support a church responsibility, but less so. Pastoral workers stress a responsibility of universities more than ordained colleagues do, but discrimination according to professional membership shows no difference in attitude. Priests and deacons are in doubt when it comes to addressing the competence of professional organisations, and so are non-members of these organisations. VPW-members and pastoral workers, though, are in favour of such a responsibility.

4. Exploring Pastoral Ministry

Now that we have clarified some attitudes of pastors about sacramental and professional aspects of the pastoral office, we address the question of their mutual relationship. We describe our analysis model and subsequently test it.

Analysis Model

The question that we now address concerns the relationship of the atti-
tudes towards professionalisation and sacraments. To what extent can
sacramental views of pastors be understood as incentives for the support
of specific professional strategies and responsibilities? Since diverging sac-
ramental views have always represented significant issues in the crisis of
Dutch pastoral ministry, we expect that they influence the debate about
the professional future of pastoral ministry. In this debate, pastors can take
three logical positions, namely positive, neutral and negative. First, pastors
may feel that there is a positive relationship between their sacramental and
professional views, which indicates that they are encouraged to support a
specific aspect of professionalisation on the basis of specific sacramental
views. Secondly, pastors can take a negative position in the debate, which
suggests that they feel discouraged from supporting a specific professional
strategy or responsibility on the basis of their sacramental view. And
thirdly, pastors may take a neutral position, which points to a disinterest
in the relationship of sacraments and profession. To explore the relation-
ship, we offer a regression analysis by which we try to predict the pastors'
attitudes towards professional strategies and responsibilities from their
attitudes towards sacramental aspects of pastoral ministry.

Before we engage in this analysis, however, we refine our model. Since
we also empirically clarified other characteristics of pastoral ministry, we
include some of these pastoral characteristics as well, namely those that we
think are relevant to understanding the crisis of pastoral ministry. First of
all, we noticed that the actual number of priests is falling dramatically. Just
to have a glimpse into the possible causes of this process, we include work-
satisfaction attitudes, such as collegial, career and task-satisfaction, in the
analysis as well. Secondly, since a new group of pastors – the pastoral
workers – has emerged, the church position is important. The problem for
these pastoral workers is that they are lay people in clerical terminology,
whereas they are in fact fully trained pastors, a reality that distinguishes
them from volunteers. For that reason they may well have good reasons
for supporting a professionalisation policy that profiles them as an occu-
pational group with a professional status of their own, as distinguished
from volunteers and clergy. Is this so, does this view indeed characterise
them as a group when compared to priests and deacons? To answer that
question, we also include some variables in our analysis that inform us
about the pastor's position, the membership of the professional organisa-
tion, and the members' work-field, competence, and experienced support.
Thirdly, the cultural aspects of the crisis may also reflect a deeper transi-
tion among pastors concerning the religious significance of their ritual
activity. If there is one thing that is characteristic of the restorative church
policies in the Netherlands, it is the emphasis of a valid administering of
the sacraments (Simonis 1992, 32). This stress not only expresses the

concern of the Church to warrant the sacramental competence of priests vis-à-vis pastoral workers, but it also emphasizes the internal disposition of pastors towards sacraments. This disposition is usually expressed in the spirituality of pastors, e.g., their religious and mystical experiences and pastoral devotion.

Thus, our regression model includes as dependent variables both professionalisation strategies towards competence, value-in-use, remunerative protection of interests, and collective power, and professionalisation responsibilities of church, universities, and professional organisations. As independent variables we first of all include the instrumental, symbolic and communitarian views of sacramental activity. Secondly, personal and religious vocation views are included, and thirdly local office entry and absolute ordination. Added are groups of professional, religious, and satisfaction characteristics. As professional characteristics we include church position, VPW-membership, pastoral work field, skill level, attitudinal level, and professional support. As religious characteristics, religious and mystical experiences and pastoral devotion are added. And as satisfaction characteristics, collegial, career, and task satisfaction are included. Thus, we have described the model for regression analyses.[5]

Looking for Incentives

What does our analysis have to offer for an exploration of sacramental incentives for professionalisation? (See Appendix.)[6] We will distill our exploration into nine observations. First, we learn that we have to be modest about the opportunities to formulate robust hypotheses concerning sacramental incentives. In most cases, sacramental views do not act as an incentive for professionalisation support. Where we do find an influence, it is only modest, when we take into account the low to moderate explained variance in the models.

Second, we find that, if sacramental views in pastoral ministry are influential, they offer positive support for professionalisation. There are only two exceptions to this observation, namely religious vocation and absolute ordination, both of which seem to discourage pastors supporting a responsibility for professional organisations.

Third, in sketching the profile of the positive sacramental incentive for professionalisation, we find communitarian characteristics. The view of local office entry that emphasizes communitarian vocation and relative

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5   We deploy a stepwise regression analysis, the last model of which contains only those background and independent variables that contribute to the explained variance.

6   In comparison to an analysis not controlled for background characteristics, the theological support for professionalisation remains intact in some cases and ceases in others. We notice that the addition of these variables does not substantially increase our total capability to predict the support for professionalisation.

ordination is the strongest incentive for pastoral professionalisation. It only lacks influence on the support of competence strategies and ecclesiastical responsibility. The communitarian view of sacramental activity contributes to the value-in-use strategy and an academic responsibility in professionalisation. We notice that the view of symbolic sacramental activity, which also acts as an incentive for professionalisation, is theologically not at odds with a communitarian view of sacramental activity.[7]

Fourth, we observe that, though all aspects of professionalisation can to some extent be predicted by sacramental views, this is particularly so for two characteristic aspects, namely remunerative protection of interests and professional responsibility. Interesting is that the latter view is sacramentally ambivalent in the sense that local office entry and symbolic sacramental activity are positive incentives and religious vocation and absolute ordination are negative. The strategy of remunerative representation of interests is supported on the basis of the same sacramental views, but lacks a negative sacramental incentive, though we already noticed that it represents an ambivalent notion in terms of its support.

Fifth, the additional scales that we used prove to be influential as well. Interesting is that, in only one case, the pastoral position, that of the pastoral worker, is relevant, namely in its influence on the remunerative representation of interests; its influence is absent in the other strategies and responsibilities. Sixth, membership in the professional organisation is of influence in supporting pastoral professional strategies of competence, remunerative protection of interests and a responsibility of the professional organisations. Seventh, the extent to which professionals ascribe professional attitudes to themselves is of influence in all professionalisation strategies. The influence of the actual skill-level is definitely weaker and only applies to the competence and value-in-uses strategies. Eighth, the frequency of religious or mystical experiences neither positively nor negatively supports professional strategies. Pastoral devotion, however, predicts negatively a remunerative representation of interests, and positively church responsibilities towards professionalisation. Ninth, the combination of higher task-satisfaction and lower career-satisfaction offers a disposition to agree more with a remunerative protection of interests and collective power.

5. Interpreting the Crisis of Pastoral Ministry

What is the suitability of our observations for an interpretation of the crisis of pastoral ministry as it is experienced in the Dutch Roman Catholic Church?

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7   From our empirical analysis we find, however, that though the symbolic sacramental activity is highly correlated to communitarian symbolic activity $(R = .35)$, this is not the case for local office entry $(R = .01)$.

Developing Interpretations

In the first section, we clarified the crisis of pastoral ministry in terms of Layendecker's and Schreuder's interpretations. These interpretations can be summarized in the characteristics of a desacralisation of the office, an unresolved authority conflict between lower and upper church strata, and de-professionalisation in pastoral ministry. To what extent do the relationships between the sacramental and professional views that we found match these interpretations? We of course have to acknowledge that our design, sample, and data were not set up to meet these hypotheses, but within the limits of our research we can, to some extent, judge the suitability of their interpretations.

First, from our data on pastors, we cannot corroborate a hypothesis with regard to a desacralisation of the office, at least not in terms of its pastoral support of ritual activity. We demonstrated that all the notions of sacramental activity that we investigated were supported by substantial majorities of the pastors. Even the orthodox view of instrumental activity of sacraments showed no negative support whatsoever for professionalisation, which we might expect to be emancipative in consequence. Also, the view of absolute ordination appears to be a negative incentive only when the assigning of responsibility to the professional organisations is advocated and the responsibility of the church is perceived to be at stake. If there is a church-battle to be fought about the office, the battlefield is not likely to be a discussion of the function, activity, or significance of sacraments as such.

Is there an authority conflict between church strata? There might well be. Elsewhere we dedicated an article to the question of church authority (Schilderman, Van der Ven and Felling 1999). Based on the data we have here, we note that the support of local office entry splits the pastors into three equal groups: those rejecting, those doubting and those supporting this view. This marks considerable disagreement about a non-orthodox view. Though a majority supports the orthodox view of absolute ordination, there is also a minority of more than 20% who disagrees.[8] We also see that absolute ordination is the one sacramental incentive that encourages ecclesiastical, and discourages professional, responsibility in professionalisation policies. Thus we find a potential conflict about office entry. On the basis of our research we find that this disagreement may correspond to church position.[9] This indication of latent conflict may also

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8   We find 68 pastors (15%) agreeing with local office entry while simultaneously rejecting absolute ordination, and 131 pastors (28%) agreeing with absolute ordination while simultaneously rejecting local office entry.

9   On the basis of anova-analysis we indeed observe that pastoral workers strongly tend to reject absolute ordination, while priests and deacons approve of it (eta .42). We also find that pastoral workers support local office entry, while priests and deacons tend to reject it (eta .29) (Schilderman 1998, 293-294).

be fuelled by a discomfort about the pastoral workers' lay status, which dissociates them from clerical prerogatives and associates them with the theologically and pastorally untrained or less trained church volunteers.

What about the tendency of de-professionalisation? This interpretation needs more scrutiny. On the basis of our research among pastors we cannot corroborate a hypothesis on this point. At least large support for pastoral professionalisation is observed. This fact comes across most clearly in the competence and value-in-use related policies, and is here also substantiated by higher skill and attitude levels. Pastors are ambivalent in their support of interest-protection and remuneration, but a majority of the pastors pursues collective pastoral influence in the church. In these cases the combination of career-dissatisfaction and task-satisfaction seems to contribute to professionalisation. The support for professionalisation is not clear-cut, though. Illustrative of the ambiguity is that support for professional responsibilities is the only dependent variable to find relatively broad, though both negative and positive, support of sacramental attitudes. The negative support that absolute ordination and apparently religious vocation, too, offer, indicates that further research is needed to clarify the tension between sacramental ritualism as characteristic of folk church and confessional orthodoxy on the one hand, and professionalism as characteristic of a functionally differentiated church and confessional assertiveness on the other.

Theological Outlook

Now that we have framed the professional and sacramental aspects of the problem, we arrive at the question of what theological insight is offered into the crisis of the Dutch Catholic ministry. Is the crisis of pastoral ministry to be regarded as a sacramental crisis, a vocational crisis, or an ordination crisis? Let's follow these suggestions on the basis of our data and answer the question of how pastoral professionalisation is to be understood in light of these three interpretations.

Does pastoral ministry in the Dutch Catholic Church suffer a sacramental crisis? The idea of sacramental activity that we have clarified empirically includes instrumental, symbolical and communitarian notions. Pastors support all notions, but especially the communitarian one. This tendency prompted us to be cautious with desacralisation hypotheses of the pastoral office. If, however, we understand the crisis of pastoral ministry as a professional problem, the notion of sacramental activity regains importance. The fact that – at the local level of the community – three offices can be discerned (priest, deacon and pastoral worker) seems to imply that they differ in their function and task profile, especially when ritual activities are involved. Since the demarcation of the offices primarily depends on sacramental competencies, this is not a bold suggestion; however, doubt is present for Dutch Catholic pastors.

In a recent empirical survey among Dutch parish pastors, it proved to be impossible to discern occupational profiles of pastors on the basis of empirical explorations. Though six combinations of tasks could be defined, they all included the same ritual activities. These combinations could not be broken down to differences in church position or other relevant professional, religious or social characteristics (Buis et al. 1998; Schilderman 1999b). The Dutch Catholic Church lacks internal job delineation, especially when ritual tasks are involved. Rather independent of their official status, pastors are generalized solo performers or soloist generalists: their tasks and functions are, to a considerable extent, empirically interchangeable. This observation is at odds with their variations in official status. Though it is clear that those involved respect the different sacramental competencies for priests, deacons and pastoral workers, the actual professional profiles do not validate these differences. Thus we think that, in order to define a sacramental crisis, one must elaborate it not so much in terms of differing notions of sacramental activity but – or also – in terms of the professional practices related to this sacramental activity. Our research showed that no one pastoral group has a monopoly of an instrumental view of this activity; in fact, pastors agree with other notions equally or even more strongly.

The implicit problem here is that sacramental notions refer to various religious and professional profiles of pastors. The pastor's roles and tasks differ when the pastor is regarded as an authorized server of sacraments (instrumental activity), as a hermeneutic interpreter of religious symbols (symbolical activity), or as a facilitator of religious community celebrations (communitarian activity). This professional interest in sacramental activity is not obvious, at least not from an instrumental view of sacramental activity; in fact, contrary to this instrumental view, the symbolic and communitarian view of sacramental activity proved to have at least some significance for professionalisation. Thus the question that we started with can be affirmed: there is a sacramental crisis, but we hypothesize that it is primarily related to professional indeterminateness regarding the question of how to shape new sacramental views into pastoral practices while authentically keeping in line with church orthodoxy on this point. To enact this hypothesis, a sacramental theology needs to be developed with a pastoral interest that meets the crisis of pastoral ministry.

As basic requirements for this theology, we propose the following. First, sacramental activity cannot be restricted to instrumental notions but is an activity in which, from the inclusive view of pastors, symbolic interpretations and communitarian expressions are to be involved. Second, these notions of sacramental activity need elaboration in terms of professional practices as based on an analysis of ritual understanding, expression, and interaction. Third, the professional practices related to sacramental activity have to be integrated into pastoral functions; that is, they must be adjusted to the differences in sacramental competencies among priests,

deacons, and pastoral workers. In fact, if these questions regarding the sacramental orthodoxy are taken into account, a pastoral field of ritual innovation seems to lie open.

Does pastoral ministry in the Dutch Catholic Church suffer a vocational crisis? As we saw in our first paragraph, the crisis of pastoral ministry can be regarded as a crisis of priest recruitment and a failure to provide sufficient and adequate alternatives. The phrase, however, that this situation represents a crisis of vocations is an understatement that links the recruitment problem to issues of religious affiliation and socialisation. The phrase suggests that the recruitment problem is a matter of a lack of personal faith on the part of candidates, and thus underestimates the structural problems related to an occupation in crisis. We nevertheless noticed that 40% of the pastors doubts the idea of religious calling and that a large majority embraces the notion of personal calling. The question here reads: does it – can it – point to a crisis of pastoral ministry?

To answer this question we make some observations. First, variations in the views of personal and religious vocation do not influence professionalisation attitudes, but the communitarian view does, albeit in connection with notions of relative ordination. This notion of local office entry is by far the strongest sacramental incentive for professionalisation. As vocational motive, it can – apart from the ordination question that we will address later – also be interpreted as a need to express a personally and professionally balanced relationship with the local community. This is not a bold suggestion, since local church communities may actually offer risks of autonomy loss. Brouwer based his grounded theory about pastoral professionalisation on an analysis of the burn-out syndrome, and found that role-vagueness represented risks, whereas occupational autonomy and professional support represented prevention variables (Brouwer 1995, 178-200). Zondag and Schilderman found that, although pastors support a self-oriented vocational attitude, they do not experience the pastoral occupation as supportive of those attitudes (Zondag en Schilderman 2000).

One can ask how this lacking sense of autonomy affects vocational motives. At first sight, this question seems at odds with an apparent local autonomy of church personnel in the Catholic Church. Whereas, in the echelons above the priest, all juridical competencies are described minutely, the parish lacks formal instructions of importance apart from those given at the priest's discretion (Van der Ven 1996, 334-347). We have to acknowledge, though, that this autonomy only refers to the priest in his formal leadership of the parish organisation and by no means in his professional performance as a church official. The autonomy of the priest is thus an administrative autonomy, not professional autonomy to determine standards and methods of labour, nor task autonomy to interpret labour activities in a personal manner, nor even style autonomy to develop a collective (sub-) culture within the labour process. In short, the administrative autonomy of local priests bears but little significance for questions

of labour quality, or for issues of participating in the organisation of labour, the labour process and procedures of labour qualifications (Mok 1987, 6-11; 1990, 119-138).

The experience of labour quality may prove to be an important condition of the initial and continuous vocation for the pastoral office. A certain freedom to determine and control labour processes, conditions, and qualifications enhances a sense of personal attribution of meaning to the occupation and to work satisfaction. In formulating a hypothesis that links a lack of labour quality to a crisis of vocations, a vocational theology can be developed that is in less danger of being personalised in an exclusive orientation on will and choice aspects of vocation, or of being reified in an exclusive religious attribution of vocation to God's action. On the other hand, risk, of functionalising must be avoided as well, in which vocation is primarily understood as appeal from employment characteristics.

The relationship of vocation with the question of quality of pastoral labour is theologically interesting for a number of reasons. First of all, hypotheses of the relationship of vocation and labour quality take into account functions and dysfunctions of vocation; thus, the question of mental or physical health and working conditions are included in a work quality approach to vocation. Second, such hypotheses demand an argued relationship between vocation and standards of professional pastoral functioning. In this way, a vocational assessment and feedback of work results is stimulated. Third, implied in labour quality is the issue of needs and problems of those who are served by pastoral labour. In this way, one avoids an interpretation of vocation that is limited to the person or function of pastors. The combination of these three aspects presents a challenge from a sacramental perspective: How can the faithful be pastorally served in a sound way?

Does pastoral ministry in the Dutch Catholic Church suffer an ordination crisis? Diverging notions of ordination were at the heart of the cultural crisis of pastoral ministry, as we discussed in our first paragraph. Empirically, this situation is mirrored by the discordance in local and upper-local interpretations of pastoral office entry. As we already noticed, the notion that locates pastoral office entry in local faith communities divides the pastoral population into three equal parts: those agreeing, those doubting and those disagreeing. Though a majority supports the idea that ascribes office entry to the realm of the official church, independent of local needs and aspirations, one third of the pastors disagree. Usually this tension between local and upper-local perspectives in the Catholic Church is interpreted as an authority conflict, one characterised by a failure to reconcile confessional authoritarianism and democratic libertinism in the church. As a professional issue, though, the problem can be described in other ways. The ordination crisis raises the question of how to adjust religious class characteristics of the clergy, such as celibacy, male sex-role, metaphysical status markers and institutional obedience, to actual pastoral performance.

The anthropologist Linton was the first to distinguish, with regard to identity, between ascribed and achieved roles (Linton 1936). To perceive one's identity as belonging to almost unchangeable roles, assigned according to fixed social positions and subsequent role behaviours, differs radically from an identity perception that depends on choice, labour performance, and norms and values as personally appropriated guidelines. From this perspective, the tension between local and upper-local office entry points not so much at authority conflicts between strata of the church as a labour organisation, but at status confusion with regard to the common good that is represented in the office. It makes a difference whether one defines one's personal relationship to the common good as static and in the end unchangeable, or as dynamic and in the end depending on one's contribution. Our intention is not to dichotomise these aspects or present them as choice options, but simply to arrest the problem. The ordination sacrament is a 'rite de passage' from laity to clergy, a personal introduction into a divine order in which there seems no doubt whatsoever as to what the common good is and how the pastoral office relates to it. For the growing group of pastoral workers, who engage in pastoral ministry but are not ordained, there is hardly an alternative but to adapt the achievement orientation of modern society and to define their identity in terms of performance; however, this option leaves the interpretation of the common good that they represent as church officials open ended. A lay orientation is not likely to be acknowledged in a clerical labour organisation, let alone developed assertively. Although there is abundant appreciation for the work efforts of both ordained and unordained officials, the church will feel compelled constantly to define the dissimilarities between lay and clerical positions. This perspective on the ordination crisis confronts the church with employment problems characteristic of its integration into modern societies and shows the need for new answers for effective pastoral fellowship in the church.

Looking back, we notice that sacramental attitudes, especially those that are community oriented, can function as incentives for professional strategies and responsibilities. An interpretation of these relationships showed opportunities to understand the crisis of pastoral ministry in the Dutch Catholic context from a professional perspective. In this view, the sacramental aspects of this crisis demand the formulation of professional requisites of ritual practices tailored to a balanced interpretation of pastoral tasks, functions, and competencies. The vocational aspects of the crisis of pastoral ministry call for a tuning of personal, religious, and communitarian vocation to quality conditions of pastoral labour. The ordination aspects of the crisis of pastoral ministry require the integration of criteria of pastoral labour performance within interpretations of the common good that is represented in the pastoral office. These interpretations of the crisis of the pastoral ministry need ongoing empirical research in theology. Meanwhile, they express a pastoral interest in sacramental the-

ology, as the Church seeks incentives to revitalise pastoral ministry at the beginning of a new millennium.

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag präsentiert die Ergebnisse einer Befragung unter niederländischen katholischen Pastoren hinsichtlich ihrer Einstellungen zur Sakramentalität und Professionalität. Zunächst werden einige Aspekte der gegenwärtigen Krise des pastoralen Amts beleuchtet. Sodann fassen die Autoren eine Reihe von unterschiedlichen Einstellungen zur sakramentalen Aktivität, zu Berufung und Ordination ins Auge. Darüber hinaus wird die Haltung der Pastoren gegenüber professionellen Strategien und Verantwortlichkeiten erhellt. Daran anknüpfend untersuchen die Vf. in theoretisch-explorativer Absicht den empirischen Zusammenhang von sakramentellen und professionellen Einstellungen der befragten Pastoren. Schließlich wird der Versuch unternommen, die Krise des pastoralen Amts vor dem Hintergrund der Untersuchungsergebnisse zu interpretieren.

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Appendix: Regression Table

Influence of Sacramental Attitudes on Professionalisation Attitudes among Dutch Catholic Pastors (stepwise for each dependent variable)

	strategies		responsibilities				
	competence	value-in-use	remunerative representation of interests	collective power	ecclesiastical	academic	professional
instrumental activity							
symbolic activity	0.12		0.10				0.10
communitarian activity		0.17				0.12	
personal vocation							
religious vocation							-0.10
local office entry		0.19	0.25	0.34		0.27	0.11
absolute ordination					0.20		-0.22
church position			.17 *	* = here, the church position indicated is that of a (not ordained) pastoral worker			
VPW-membership	0.14		0.18				0.21
pastoral work field	0.17	0.10					
skill-level	0.09	0.11					
attitudinal level	0.24	0.25	0.11	0.17			
professional support	0.09						
religious experiences							
mystical experiences							
pastoral devotion	-0.16		0.19				
collegial satisfaction			-0.08				
career satisfaction			-0.10	-0.05	-0.09		
task satisfaction			0.09	0.15			
R²	0.12	0.19	0.33	0.19	0.11	0.10	0.25

Explanatory note:

- A regressionanalysis estimates the linear relationship between a dependent variable (here: horizontal variables) and one or more independent variables (here: vertical variables). Thus, the analysis determines to what extent the professionalisation variables can be explained by theological and background variables.
- R^2 (row below) = Goodness-of-fit measure of a linear model, sometimes called the coefficient of determination. It is the proportion of variation in the dependent variable explained by the regression model. It ranges in value from 0 to 1. Small values indicate that the model does not fit the data well.
- The numbers in the columns are 'beta coefficients' that indicate the 'contribution' of each variable to the prediction model. They are sometimes called standardized regression coefficients; these are the regression coefficients when all variables are expressed in standardized (z-score) form. Transforming the independent variables to standardized form makes the coefficients more comparable since they are all in the same units of measure.