Chapter 6

Growing Up Clerical

The experience of growing up as the child of a clergyman is peculiar in many respects; growing up the child of a bishop is, if anything, even more peculiar. British society has borne witness to the increasing marginalization of the Church of England during the twentieth century, and the authority of its leaders has been eroded, yet bishops remain in the House of Lords, carry grandiose titles, officiate over public ceremony and occupy networks of civic hierarchy that remain the preserve of the privileged and the focus of limited but not insignificant regional power. But apart from their fathers being members of the social and spiritual elite, 'episcopal children' are also subject to a set of domestic arrangements that can be traced back to the conditions associated with parochial ministry. Indeed, it is these arrangements that characterize one of the formative experiences earlier identified as central to this study.

To some extent the pressures felt within the clergy household are a product of the trials and tribulations that are experienced as part of childhood in any generation. Resentment towards figures of authority, including parents, feelings of constraint and alienation during adolescence that breed yearnings for freedom and individuality, a thirst for rebellion when faced with unwelcome moral or religious expectations of conformity – all are widespread characteristics of growing up in western post-industrial cultures. In addition to this, the clergy child's difficulties with their father's public profile may also be found among children of local policemen, teachers, GPs – all of whom have a prominent and active presence in the immediate community. And yet the 'clerical home' presents a set of distinctive challenges and experiences that are not found elsewhere and are likely to shape the familial context – both home and role divisions within it – to an extent that we can expect processes surrounding socialization to be profoundly affected.

In this respect our study is built upon an unfashionable assumption: that the family is a significant factor in shaping values adopted and maintained in adulthood. More specifically, that the experience of being raised within a particular kind of family both bequeaths individuals a certain collection of resources, and that life values emerge in dialogue with these resources. As argued in Chapter 1, one way of conceiving these resources is with reference to the idea of spiritual capital as gift, encapsulating the generation and formulation of resources within an ecclesiastical context but acknowledging that such capital may be transformed and deployed in different contexts over time. To assume that the family is a *persistently* important factor in shaping value formation throughout the life-course is contentious, especially amidst narratives of late or post-modernity that emphasize fragmentation, creativity and the sovereign individual, reflexively shaping his or her own destiny independent of traditional social institutions such as education, social class or family background (Giddens, 1991). The concerns of the individual – not the family – have been

given center stage, and yet recent studies have appealed to empirical evidence that challenges this orthodoxy. In the USA, for example, Bengtson, Biblarz and Roberts (2002) have drawn from the longest-running longitudinal study of families in the world, examining continuity and divergence in values among members of several generational cohorts, including the baby-boomers and Generation X. Contrary to the post-modern narrative, their findings suggest that the family remains an important influence over people's values, that the values learnt within the family during childhood often persist in some form throughout life. The family remains an important shaper of social values that has an enduring influence on educational and occupational aspirations, achievements and social values (Hout, 1984). Similar evidence has been gathered in the UK by Furlong and Cartmel (1997), who found that – against hyper-modernist theorists such as Ulrick Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991), who take late modernity to be characterized by unpredictability and the negotiation of risks on an individual level – young people's life opportunities are still largely shaped by their location within social structures, including gender and the social class status they inherit from their family background.[1]

However, it is not our chief aim to compare the impact of clergy with non-clergy families. Rather, we appeal to the recognized importance of family in shaping social values as a foundation for an analysis of how being raised within a clergy household generates experiences which are later drawn from in adult life and incorporated into the narrative construction of identity. Using the theoretical terms discussed in Chapter 1, we aim to describe the locus for the generation of spiritual capital and embodiment of values and examine their distinguishing features before looking at qualitative data gathered from clergy offspring as adults to see how they reflect on such endowments in relation to their current professional and religious identities.

Accordingly, this chapter examines the nature of the clergy household as described by the children of bishops, bypassing the numerous cultural stereotypes and instead building on empirical evidence. In addressing this upbringing, one significant factor relates to the ideas, teachings and experiences of the 'formative years', which we take to be between the ages of 5 and 18, when they would have been more consciously aware of the impact their father's occupation had on their home life. Conscious awareness is important here because we are addressing the ways in which childhood experiences are consciously drawn from within the meaning-making processes undertaken in adulthood.

In some respects the characteristics of a clerical household are not wildly different from the domestic situation of many non-clerical families living in late twentieth-century Britain. The clergy of our study have enjoyed apparently stable marriages, most have more than one child,[2] and most – though not all – have wives who have willingly adopted fairly traditional roles focussed on maintaining the home and raising the children. Other characteristics are more unusual, though not particular

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1   National survey data also paint a robust picture of family life in contemporary Britain, with a majority maintaining high and regular contact, and depending more on extended families for support than on friendship networks (Park et al., 2002: 204–5).

2   Among the 89 bishops who have had families, the mean average is 3.1 children per family.

to clerical families, such as their tendency to have moved the family between geographical areas several times with the father's job. This is perhaps a function of the upwardly mobile status of the clergy of our study, who have climbed the rungs of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, perhaps occupying jobs as rural dean, archdeacon, or principal of a theological college along the way to becoming a bishop. Most of these changes would have required a move to a new neighborhood, perhaps a completely different region of England (or beyond), and such upheaval has left a lasting impression on many of their children, whose childhood experiences are colored by memories of cultural change and new challenges, but sometimes by a resentment at being uprooted, with the fracture of friendships, schooling and local connections that this often brings.

A more distinctive feature of clerical upbringing relates to an ambiguous social class status. While benefiting from tied housing, clergy salaries, relative to general standards of the time, were low.[3] Many told stories of 'just getting by', especially when in parochial ministry, and clergy children recalled financial limitations often preventing them from enjoying the consumer luxuries of their peers. For example, one bishop recalled that, of all of the people his children knew, his was the last family to have a television. Even as bishop, with all of the almost aristocratic connotations of this position, these clergy were not well paid, and their children were well aware of their family's financial limitations. And yet their father – as a vicar, archdeacon or bishop – enjoyed a certain high status, especially within the local community. This was manifest in a variety of ways, from a traditionalist deference expressed by passing local residents to invitations to elaborate functions alongside senior public figures like MPs or local counselors, chief constables and business leaders. Clergy children were aware that their father moved in influential circles, and carried significant authority at a local, regional or even national level. Given the middle- or upper-middle-class backgrounds of most of the clergy and clergy wives in this study, the culture of family life was also colored by intellectual family discussion, middle-class etiquette and the nurturing of high educational and career aspirations among the children. Hence, these clergy children were exposed to a mixture of sometimes conflicting ideas and values during their upbringing and, in terms of the sociology of knowledge, these were not always supported by the conventional social structures we associate with them. Education (cultural capital) was unaccompanied by wealth (economic capital); public status (symbolic capital) was maintained, but within a social context that harbored an increasingly skeptical attitude towards religious hierarchy, the grounds upon which this status is founded. Such ambiguity demands careful treatment and generates interesting questions about the kinds of social values instilled and embodied within the clerical household.

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3   Neil Burgess comments that during the 1960s, when a large number of our bishops were in parochial ministry, some curates were reported as living below supplementary benefit level (Burgess, 1998: 102). Leslie Paul's data from the early 1960s reveal that, while most incumbent clergy of that time earned above average industrial earnings, there was an astonishing range of annual stipends, with clergy at the lowest end of the scale – probably working in rural dioceses – earning less than the average salary of male industrial workers at that time (Paul, 1964: 127; 308–9).

The most distinctive aspects of their upbringing relate to the father's pastoral responsibilities, and 78 per cent spent some of their formative years living in a vicarage. This is highly significant for any understanding of how clergy children draw from their background in making sense of their current identities, for these experiences become a long-term focus of value formation. As we shall see, the children of clergymen express their core values in part by negotiating with the childhood experiences of religion, family and the church that shaped their outlook early in life. Because these experiences carry profound and enduring consequences, we divide the central section of this chapter into three distinctive facets of the 'clergy upbringing': the clergy household as an ideological household, the home as public space, and experiences of public exposure outside of the home framed by the father's status. Together, these three dimensions shed light on a more general trend related to the imposition of inflated expectations on to clergy children. All are rooted in the cultural identity of the clergyman, but find their most explicit and socially significant expression in the clergy child's experience of being raised within a vicarage.

However, vicarage life does not exhaust the issue; for some 47 per cent of our sample,[4] these formative years overlapped with their father's tenure as a bishop. It is difficult to say what precise difference this makes to the experience of home life. Some difficulties – such as the invasion of private family space – appear to be exacerbated in some cases but alleviated in others, much depending on the size of the bishop's residence and the bishop's management of his work space *vis-à-vis* the previous vicarage. Intrusion into the home is sometimes perpetuated in the episcopal residence because of the emphasis on increased pastoral responsibilities in recent decades. Positive advantages, such as those related to social and cultural capital, are often enhanced by the transition to episcopal status, with fresh social networks opening up new opportunities. However, no clear trends attributable across the population can be argued and we offer only tentative suggestions on an 'episcopal' experience of family nurture in an additional section.

The Ideological Household

Childrearing norms change over time, with the late twentieth century shifting in emphasis from obedience to autonomy, from expecting children to conform to their parents' rules and expectations to an acknowledgement that allowing them a greater freedom might actually encourage a more healthy maturation (Bengtson, Biblarz and Roberts, 2002: 43). And yet such changes are neither simple nor experienced in the same way by all, and the ways parents embody them may, in large part, be shaped by whether or not they see parenting as demanding an expression of their ideological convictions. While we may expect all parents to act upon some set of values, these are not always explicit or formally articulated. What we have with clergy families, however, is something quite distinctive: a family led by a father whose life is meant to be an embodiment and expression of a religious tradition, at once leader by instruction as well as by example, and whose formal religious vows

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4   Of which 33 per cent overlap with our 'vicarage' group mentioned above.

include his family's lifestyle. He is frequently engaged in teaching the values he is expected to embody, and this expectation is heightened in parochial ministry by the priest's geographical proximity and frequent contact with those who look to him for guidance. The clergyman is made constantly aware of the values by which he works and lives, and may therefore be expected to organize his family life with them clearly in mind. Consequently, the process of childrearing may be described as in part an ideological process, although the clergyman's orientation to family life may lead him to express his values in a variety of ways. Some of the clergy we spoke to had clearly made an effort to minimize the explicit use of theological language in the home, in part so as not to add to their children's sense of being under pressure to conform or maintain an unrealistic religious or moral integrity. Others made a more obvious effort to integrate all spheres of their lives into a concerted attempt to affirm and advance a particular theology. Their attempt to embody their tradition was effectively extended into a desire to express it corporately through the lives of their immediate family.

In the twenty-first century we might expect there to be a more obvious balance between conjugal roles, between the power of both husband *and* wife to shape family life, and this would also apply to clerical families. But the imbalance described above, and illustrated in cases described in the previous chapter, has to be understood in light of the changing understandings of gender roles emerging during the 1950s through to the 1980s, and if many women tended to occupy a more traditional, supportive domestic role during this period, clergy wives were even more likely to do so. As such, while they played a crucial role in sustaining the clerical household and the pastoral care and hospitality expected of the vicarage, our clergy wives appear to have generally deferred to their husband in many respects, including his ideological framework. This many of them came to share, and see as their duty to support and advance, as in the 'shared ministry' model discussed in Chapter 5, further illustrating how family life is organized around an attempt to negotiate a set of values which are inextricably bound up in the clergyman's professional identity.

Aside from the complex implications associated with the blurring of boundaries between family life and vocational duty, this distinctive feature raises the question of how the clergyman's ideology is manifest in the family context. We are concerned with how clergymen express what Bourdieu calls 'knowledgeable mastery', that is, specialist theological knowledge, within their everyday family lives. The time lag between experience and reportage is significant here, for our impressions are built on narratives of the clergy home constructed by bishops, wives and children many years after the process of raising the children. For the older and younger generations there is arguably a temptation to coalesce memories into meaningful forms and perhaps, in doing so, build up what Charlotte Linde (1993) calls 'coherence systems'. One way in which narratives acquire a sense of meaningfulness is when the narrator appeals to pre-existing schools of thought or bodies of knowledge. Within our context we might expect elderly bishops to appeal to the theological traditions they have embraced in interpreting their family life. Indeed, some of them will have played an active part in the construction of these theological traditions, both as influential authors and leading churchmen. What was interesting in listening to our tape-recorded interviews was hearing how the wives and children of bishops also sometimes appealed to the

same sets of ideas, thinkers, concepts and explanations, illustrating how, if these ideological tools are present in the expressed outlook of the clergyman, they also find their way into the discursive life of his family. In such ways is spiritual capital absorbed as theological literacy.

And yet to describe such ideological resources as 'theological' is arguably misleading, for the bodies of knowledge and values to which these clergy refer embrace social, political and ethical concerns, some of which have a more obvious theological root than others. David Sheppard's *Bias to the Poor* (1983) owed a great deal to liberation theology, and in turn to Marxist economics, just as John Robinson's *Honest to God* (1963) drew from philosophical and sociological insights of its time as much as, for example, Paul Tillich's theology. Moreover, such movements gain their currency from their relationship to the age in which they are expressed and taken up. The values of the 'parish and people' movement – which exerted a strong influence over some of our bishops – cannot be detached from the cultural and geographical idiosyncrasies of mid twentieth-century Anglican Britain. The more recent popularity of contemplative spirituality cannot be appreciated apart from the therapeutic overtones of clinical theology, the interest in inner healing filtered through the wider cultural influence of the human potential movement, and perhaps the feminization of the clergy driven by the rising influence of women in the church. The emerging clusters of ideas, values and associated practices are complex and multi-referential, and they are a distinctive product of the 1940–2000 period. This complexity allows them to be appropriated by clergy children in a variety of different ways, and we will explore in later chapters how political, ethical and theological concerns – bound together here – may be separated out and reconceived as part of an attempt to achieve meaning in adult life.

This notion of clergy being an embodiment of an ideology is especially important for the individuals within this study because their upwardly mobile status means they are more likely to be theologically, ethically and politically articulate. Indeed, while a pastoral model of episcopal responsibility had become dominant by the end of the twentieth century, many of our bishops were also aware of the need for members of the episcopate to be theologically competent, following in the footsteps of individuals they had known and learnt from, like Michael Ramsey, John V. Taylor and Stephen Sykes. While many felt their generation had fallen short of this ideal, they had nevertheless made a concerted effort to incorporate theological study into their vocation, and into an ongoing process of ministerial development.

Some of the most striking examples of how bishops' ideological convictions radically shaped their children's early experiences illustrate the significance of theologico-political convictions. This is perhaps to be expected, as the practical implications of a leftist or liberation theology are more easily imagined and realized in concrete domestic terms than the implications of a perspective grounded in, say, clinical theology, parish and people, or the radical theology of John Robinson. Moreover, an effort to live out the principles of a leftist theology is likely to be experienced as unusual by clergy children, given that these ideas were, during their childhood, far from the cultural and political norm. A life lived in this way is a life publicly identifiable as distinctive and, in some respects, counter-cultural. One bishop, when in parochial ministry, expressed his conviction that he ought to live

amongst the working-class members of his parish by waiving his right to a tied house, which was in a more salubrious area, and instead purchased a Georgian residence within the heart of the community. Paradoxically, and as recounted by his daughter, this marked them out as a family more keenly, as they were the only people living in their own house; all of the other parishioners lived 'on the estate'. An effort to overcome class differences served only to heighten an awareness of them, and such tensions were recalled as most uncomfortable by the clergy children we spoke to. They generated for them a thoroughly ambivalent status: both clearly middle-class in terms of parental background and education, and yet with little money and with aspirations to live amongst and thereby understand the working-class culture of the locality. While such aspirations are to be applauded as a genuinely sympathetic and socially engaged attempt to live out an incarnational theology, they also have serious implications for clergy children, who may experience feelings of alienation, isolation and confusion as they struggle to find a sense of identity in this ambiguous situation.

Such political and theological persuasions were also recalled as having a direct influence on which schools clergy children attended. One respondent recalled that, despite consistently under-achieving and having a miserable experience at the local comprehensive, her parents refused to send her to a private school because of their political convictions. As she put it: 'it would have been fee-paying and that wasn't in the script'. Their leftist beliefs committed them to the welfare state and to the socialist value of quality education for all, rather than just for those with the wealth to pay for it, although their daughter now interprets this cynically as a social experiment, in which she was the suffering party. She also finds this difficult to reconcile with her father's distinctively middle-class background, which included attendance at a prestigious public school which, from one perspective, bequeathed to him the cultural capital essential to his later ecclesiastical achievements. This displays a paradoxical rejection of the foundations of cultural capital – 'he drew a line under his background' – while on another level it reveals a thoroughgoing pursuit of ministerial ambition dependent upon these resources.

Another respondent recalled how her father's Christian Socialism shaped his distinctive outlook on family and parish life, which were practically merged so that 'we felt part of an extended family'. She describes her father's vocation as self-sacrificial and dutiful, with a strong emphasis upon sharing common resources among the community, but comments that 'vocation, duty and ideals [were] being put into practice … possibly at the expense of the nuclear family'. Here, the presence of an ideology shaping practice effectively drew attention away from the immediate needs of the domestic household in favor of a more communal model, and radically shaped the experience of family life. Tellingly, both examples cited above are of clergy offspring who subsequently sent their own children to private schools and who found a need to live a religious and family life markedly at odds with their own childhood.

In practical terms the ideological convictions of bishops appear to have been manifest in family life through four different routes. First, and most obviously, there is the explicit teaching of values to the children in the home, either in occasional conversations, moments of chastisement or more focussed moments of principled

guidance. Given the time lag between our interviews and the experiences to which they refer we do not have a great deal of evidence about this, presumably because, unless childrearing practices are ritualized or attached to unique occasions of significance, they are often not readily recalled from memory.[5] Second, there is the maintenance of Christian devotional practices in the home, such as grace at family meals, family prayers, and Bible stories at bed-time. The efforts of some bishops to separate their work from family life extended to abstaining from these elementary rituals, while others attached a great deal of importance to them, adding multiple service attendance and even occasional communion services in the home. One respondent emphasized the formative experience of living in a house where formal prayer was a regular practice; theirs was a 'Christian praying home, not just the vicar's house'.

Third, the bishop's beliefs and values were channeled into the home through regular discussion of theological and ethical issues. Here, the father's knowledge and commitment to open debate may generate opportunities for his children to question and explore his ideas and values, an experience that was often invoked as empowering. One daughter spoke of regular Sunday lunch discussions, when she and her siblings would rip 'apart dad's sermon'. Another related intellectual empowerment to the parochial context, saying they 'enjoyed the opportunity to question [their] own religious/humanitarian beliefs'. In this respect the introduction of an ideological component into the clerical family was not about the imposition of rules and conventions to which the children were expected to conform. Rather, the clergyman's enthusiasm for theological discussion fostered the development of debating skills, wider knowledge and personal confidence. When he allowed his own work or sermons to be part of the discussion, then he also subverted any authoritarian aspect of his own role, arguably facilitating a healthy rectifying balance to the sometimes unquestioning deference of parishioners. The clergy family here becomes a site for the generation of valuable cultural capital, which may be drawn from later in life if the context allows it. One telling case was recounted by a bishop's son who recalled home life as a context in which people talked to him on an equal level, as a conversation partner in an open and sincere discussion. However, this caused problems when he entered the more tightly controlled environment of public school, where his desire to challenge and question ideas was interpreted as insolence. The tension between intellectual empowerment and institutional control represents, it seems, a paradox for the lives of bishops' children as well as bishops themselves.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, the ideology embraced by the clergyman is expressed and affirmed in the pastoral care of his parishioners within the clerical home. Not only does the father embody his tradition but his interactions with others also represent and advance it, presenting to his children the all pervasiveness of their father's convictions and the fact that such expressions of a practical theology have a proper place within the domestic sphere. To this important characteristic of 'growing up clerical' we now turn.

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5   Perhaps more significant here, in terms of explicit religious instruction, is Sunday School (Gill, 1999: 92), and 69 per cent of our population of clergy children said they had been regular attendees.

The Home as Public Space

When asked what it was like being raised the son or daughter of a clergyman most of our respondents mentioned the peculiarities of living in a home that was in many respects a public space. Their comments focussed on the fact of intrusion, specifically on the fact that their family space was used for the pastoral care of outsiders. One had herself gone on to marry a clergyman and found herself reflecting with some concern on the experiences of her own children. Her reservations about the consequences of a vicarage upbringing were profound, commenting that she 'hated the fact that my parents always seemed to *belong* to other people first *before* our family' (original emphasis). This was a common criticism, grounded in a feeling of coming second to the needs of the parish or diocese. One respondent offered a comparison with how clergy function in the present day, and with what parishioners have come to expect of their minister:

> … if the phone had gone at any point in my childhood, my father would have been there for that person, whatever else was happening in the family. And yet … if I phoned the minister [now], I'd probably get an answering machine. I'm sure he would respond, but Dad would have been there for everybody. And that's not necessarily the best thing for the family, is it? Though it's wonderful for the congregation.

Another respondent extended this criticism to their mother, who had been central to the pastoral care dispensed within the home. They enjoyed living in a house that was often occupied by a variety of people, but recalled 'feeling a bit put out that "yet again" there was someone with a problem talking to my mum, when I wanted to talk to her'. Professional pressures have practical implications and the demands of work in the vicarage may mean that clergy find it difficult to find time for their families, to take proper holidays or enjoy leisure pursuits apart from church responsibilities. Pressures of work may also mean that clergy are too tired for these things, and while necessary periods of rest may be required in order for them to fulfill professional obligations, it is easy to see why clergy children might perceive this as neglect.

In these cases the 'public' nature of the vicarage is associated with the needs of parishioners, given priority over the needs of the family; the parish intrudes into what the child sees as family space. More profoundly, it is a space in which the pastoral care of the vicar is visibly and tangibly dispensed, but to those in need who are outside of the family. A sense of feeling excluded from parental intimacy is likely to be exacerbated by the fact that the father's attention is not only visibly diverted away from family needs, but that this attention is devoted to a duty of care that is often close in kind to that expected within the familial context. The roles performed by the clergyman – teacher, comforter, advisor, consoler, helper, mediator – have obvious overlaps with the roles commonly associated with parenthood, and while such processes refer, strictly speaking, to 'professional' relationships, the nature of parochial ministry means that the relationship between pastor and parishioner is not simply one of practitioner/client. Behavioral boundaries marking out professional from platonic or familial interaction are far less clear here than they would be with, for example, patients and doctors or teachers and pupils. The nature of the minister's work arguably demands a degree of warmth and personal concern that challenges

professional distance, but in doing this it renders ambiguous the boundaries between family relationships and relationships with parishioners. As such, we might expect clergy children to react with concern and perhaps confusion when such relationships are conducted within their family homes.

For some this experience was replicated – but on a larger scale – after their father became a bishop. The marginalization of 'family space', even within a sizeable residence, was recalled by one respondent as a source of much disdain, leading to a description of the 'family home' as a 'public building', devoted first and foremost to the day-to-day running of the diocese. She described the bishop's residence as an 'enormous house', but focusses her description on the fact that 'it had an office, it had a chaplain's study, and my father's study, you know, the phone was going all the time … there was no private area apart from my own room'. She even recalled how the designated 'family room' was transformed into a 'waiting room' when clergy were visiting, this enhancing her perception that the business of the church took precedence over family life.

In this case the experience of being intruded upon led to feelings of resentment projected onto the church and its personnel, who were associated with the cause of the situation. But it was the lack of privacy that was felt most profoundly, a lack of personal space, which is reflected upon by some as frustrating a quest for identity, explored in more detail later on. The intrusion of outsiders and outside influences – all associated with or connected to the church – led to a feeling of being smothered, which in turn triggers in some a yearning for escape. The same respondent goes on:

> I spent a lot of time out of the house in order not to be in this environment, which I really didn't like…There was no privacy. There was no opportunity just to relax and be yourself … I was always on show, always... And I loved being in ordinary homes, where kids played and watched TV and people sat around having tea and chatted, you know, just ordinary stuff. Particularly when I was seventeen and I met the next boyfriend … and his family were absolutely wonderful to me. I still keep in touch with them now, and I used to like being there. I felt that the level of conversation was somehow a bit more authentic, it was more real. There wasn't a sense of everything being good and everything being nice, it was 'this is the real world, we can be critical, we can talk about things that aren't very nice'.

The respondent views the church as penetrating every aspect of her home life to the point where she searches for an alternative family context in which to find space to be herself. Part of the pressures from which she sought refuge have to do with an evangelical discourse expressed by her parents, which she appropriates as idealistic and detached from the 'real world'. She associates this both with her mother and father, and with the home life they created around them, and found it stifling and alienating, an obstacle which was blocking any authentic exploration of life on her part. The extent of her negative feelings drove her to seek out a surrogate family, which took on such significance in her life that she keeps in touch with them now.

While this example is rather extreme, it highlights trends which are not atypical. When asked to identify the distinctive challenges of being brought up in a clergy household, another interviewee emphasized:

Adjusting to the fact that the house isn't a straightforward private home. So adjusting to a lot of visitors to the house. And then, asserting my self. I think a vicarage child has some need to find themselves apart from a vicarage identity. I can certainly remember it being said, through my childhood, that vicars' sons were either the best or the worst of people. There were clearly expectations around but also, I think, some sort of dynamic at work in which you need to find yourself in relation to this quite strong formative experience. You need to know where you lie.

This individual had gone on to become a parochial clergyman himself, with children of his own, so is especially aware of the realities of being raised in a vicarage from the perspective of child and parent. He reflects on a 'strong formative experience' and focusses on the search for identity in a context that is somehow a constraining influence that blocks or frustrates a sense of personal autonomy. This has less to do with social intrusion, and appeals to a more general experience of being raised in an environment pervaded with 'public' processes. The ontological quest for identity is made sense of against the background of the vicar's life and work, built around a series of expectations, processes and responsibilities that draw in the regular participation of outsiders. In this sense the time and space of the parochial clergyman are 'owned' by people external to his immediate family, and this obstructs the quest for individuality and independence of purpose on the part of the clergy child.

And yet not all bishops' children described the invasion of home life in negative terms. Indeed, for some, the hospitality and pastoral care offered to outsiders was remembered fondly and appropriated as a strong and positive source of moral education. Having an 'open house' is in some cases incorporated into a positive image of healthy family life, a paradigm to be emulated or at least an ideal towards which one might strive. One interviewee recalled: 'the house was a constant stream of people. The front door seemed to be always open …'. He told us stories of how the vicarage was a place of refuge for those in need, that his mother used to make tea and marmalade sandwiches for the homeless, and would offer a kind ear to those waiting to see the vicar. Most significantly, he remembered these experiences positively as an education about the world and a source of great moral example. It taught him the importance of providing for the less fortunate, and became the foundational experience upon which later social skills would be built and practiced at work. Moreover, living in a house in which many strange individuals were often visiting appears to have generated for many a sense of learning how to interact comfortably with a wide range of people. One bishop's daughter found that she 'became able to just talk to anybody, it didn't really matter whether the person who had just arrived for tea was an MP or a missionary from Africa or some poor soul who was struggling and suffering and we had them for a meal'.

Some mentioned the advantages of having a father whose work was based at home, so that he is, for example, potentially more available to contribute to family life, do the school run, help with dinner or simply be there when needed. While some emphasized that, while their father was in the house, his preoccupation with work meant that he was 'never truly there', others affirmed a positive view, their father's occupation allowing them more opportunity to be integrated into family life, an opportunity some had clearly used to the positive advantage of the children. As

one individual poignantly commented: '[my father] was always around, so I suppose I grew up fully aware that I had two parents …'. In cases such as this the home was not seen as invaded but enhanced as a consequence of the vicar's work. This is especially striking when set within a historical context in which changes in parental practice and employment patterns meant that such an arrangement was becoming increasingly rare. Here, as in many other respects, the clergy family appears as a distinctive exception to a dominant cultural trend.

Overall, however, the sense that the father was present and available during childhood was affirmed only by a minority of respondents. Most concur with the notion, expressed emphatically by one interviewee, that 'my mother has … had a much greater impact, I think, on growing up. I mean, she was always there, she didn't work … she was the one who gave us … emotional support …'. In our questionnaire we asked bishops' children who had been the most important person in their personal development. We left this an open question, and answers varied, from those who cited family members to those who highlighted the importance of spiritual mentors or inspirational teachers. But it is significant to note that while 36 per cent named their father, 47 per cent pinpointed their mother. Thus, while some clergy had clearly attempted to integrate parochial and family responsibilities to a degree that was recalled positively by their children, more have emerged from family contexts in which the mother has played the central role. In this respect, while the father's presence is clear and dominant in so far as his work shaped family life, the emotional and familial processes associated with the care and nurture of his children appear to have fallen to the clergy wife.

Exposure and the Public Gaze

Aside from the clergy home, clergy children also have to deal with their father's profile within their locality; they are easily identifiable and many have expectations of them. Clergy also share with local politicians a persistent call from members of the public to intervene in affairs as a matter of principle. The local populace often feel their vicar is both representative and advocate, and while it is easy to overstate this status in a post-Christian culture, it is not insignificant, especially in rural areas or where the media help constitute an arena of opinion. Moreover, when the bishops in our study were in parochial ministry – during the 1950s and 1960s – the local standing of the vicar was less in question than it is now, and their family lives would have been familiar to many within the parish.

This exposure was sometimes intensified by clergy who made a point of making their priestly role explicit to the local community, sometimes to the embarrassment of their children. As one bishop's son put it: 'he wore a cassock all the time … your identity as a vicarage family was both very, very clear: not negative, but also quite exposed … our house was not an obviously private house'. Another respondent recalled how, when receiving lifts from friends, she would ask to be dropped off a block away as she was embarrassed by where she was living. She talked of the difficulty in having parents who did not conform as this marked her out as different in the local community, an experience that was both uncomfortable and potentially

alienating. Such exposure was, for some, exacerbated upon their father's elevation to the episcopate as his status was then even more public, and even more unusual.

Such public standing has obvious consequences for the children of parochial clergy, not least that they are often easily identifiable as the vicar's children and are consequently associated with their father's status. In this respect clergy children can be seen as involuntary actors on a public stage,[6] behaving in the knowledge that their performance is being measured against certain role expectations. Many bishops' children had an experience of exposure that highlighted social class difference: for example, those who grew up in working-class parishes recalled how their father was viewed as separate from other local people, and that this difference was projected in turn on to his family. Education, wealth and religious piety all inform the socially constructed image of the local clergyman during the 1950s and 1960s, and together form an identity that is both socially other and religiously elevated. The consequences of this status vary by locality, although respondents mentioned reactions from local people that ranged from a sense of alienation and distance, deference to authority, amused mockery and wary suspicion, and all were in some measure applied to the clergyman's wife and children as well as to the clergyman himself. Consequently, some reported a sense of isolation from their local communities, a feeling often exacerbated by the frequent house moves that accompanied changes in their father's professional position.

Feelings of exposure in the local community also intensified pressures to conform to norms of respectability. One interviewee recalled stories of his youth, during a time when his father was a vicar in a working-class area of London. He remembered times when his mother would walk into shops and local residents would change their conversations accordingly, keen not to say anything untoward in the presence of the vicar's wife. One bishop's son reminisced about his childhood, remembering his capacity for rebelliousness, but recalled that a disincentive had been 'the realization that my dad had a … serious social standing in the community and anything that I did would influence that standing'. His knowledge that bad behavior would be noted by local people and have a detrimental effect on his father's reputation was enough for him to curb his behavior, thus illustrating how associations of moral integrity attached to a clerical status may impose themselves upon clergy children and influence their conduct. This pressure is especially acute when the father is working within a close-knit or sparsely populated area in which the local elite are more widely known and recognized. One woman recalled her experience living in the town in which her father was based as the diocesan bishop, and commented that it was always 'difficult to hide', that she had a public profile that most people do not have to live with. While many enjoyed their father's status in the wider community and church, and embraced the social capital that was generated by this, the exposure that it brought was for some both oppressive and stifling.

Indeed, such status had an ambiguous effect on the way in which clergy children were dealt with in institutional contexts, particularly church and school. Several cited their father's involvement in their local school, for example, as a prominent aspect

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6   A perspective developed in Chapter 7 with reference to the work of Erving Goffman (1959).

of their childhood experience. Clergy were governors, took occasional assemblies or even taught lessons, and if their involvement did not stretch this far their status in the local community might generate invitations to speak at functions and participate in school events. Several felt they had been given high-status roles in school simply because their father was the local vicar or bishop. Such positive discrimination is invariably experienced as embarrassing in the long term, as it highlights a spurious ascription of social capital – children wish to be recognized for their own merits rather than for their father's – and because it further marks them out as different among their peers, possibly incurring some vilification from jealous pupils. However, reverse discrimination was also possible, with one daughter telling us how, as her church had been bombed during the war, a new building was built and the Princess Royal had come to lay the new foundation stone. She recalled not being allowed to carry the brownie flag 'because it would have been seen as favoritism'. One bishop's son was ambivalent, describing seeing his father at school with a 'mixture of embarrassment and pride'.

Inflated Expectations

The issue of public exposure highlights the oft-cited problem of clergy children feeling that they are expected to behave in a certain way, usually with a high expectation of social conformity, educational achievement, moral integrity and religious piety. Hardy suggests that these experiences mark clergy children for life, that such expectations persist into adulthood, and that the lives of clergy offspring are evaluated in light of the expectation that they be 'outstanding achievers' (Hardy, 2001: 546). These expectations arise from multiple sources, including the local (and in some cases wider) community, the parish congregation and from within the clergy family itself (McCown and Sharma, 1992). It is worth noting that we are dealing with clergy who were upwardly mobile high achievers for their generation and who are likely to have served as strong, perhaps imposing, role models for their children. But interestingly, when we spoke to bishops' children about the expectations imposed upon them they rarely mentioned their parents as actively pressing this imposition. More frequently, expectations were communicated by subtle suggestion or cultural absorption, clergy children picking up a sense that others were judging them according to different rules to other children. When these expectations were expressed within an institutionalized context, as at school, they may be expected to be more enduring, and clergy children were often held accountable to their stereotype even by their peers. Indeed, some commented that both staff and students were complicit in sustaining a common image of the clergy child, unfairly using their father's status as a moral yardstick with which to chastise and taunt them. When asked what kind of expectations he thought people had of him as the son of a clergyman, one respondent emphasized being in frequent adult company at an early age, and that this generated expectations of behavioral conformity replicated at school, where his father's status was well known.

Another, who was made head boy of his cathedral choir school (he suspects because of his father's position), linked his father's standing among the school staff

with expectations placed on him as a pupil. He comments that 'all the teachers knew dad' and refers to a definite 'level of responsibility' that was expected of him. In a very real sense, then, clergy children share in their father's dual status, in being expected to embody an ideal and be human (Burton, 1999), although in the child's experience this expectation is invoked less as a professional aspiration and more as a cynical labeling tool, recalled as inappropriate, unfair and in some cases having lasting damaging effects.

There are also implications arising from one's status as a moral exemplar. As one daughter of a bishop commented, if you do not behave according to the high expectations of others there is a feeling that 'you're not only letting your parents down, you might be letting … the whole community down'. There is a sense of representing a collective, of guarding an image, and the notion of respectability is manifest in the pressure to conform and preserve the image of the clergy family as orderly, separate and morally upstanding. Also important is how the local nexus of relationships becomes the meaning-making context, a factor that brings notions of hierarchy (colored by social class and ecclesiastical difference) to the fore. That is, while the projection of otherness onto the clergy family may have associations of class privilege, local status and spirituality, it also comes with expectations that these qualities be reflected in appropriate behavior. One respondent compared his family's status in the local area to that of the royal family, commenting that they would have benefited from 'someone to manage our PR. The impact was one of conformity to status, [our having a] separate entity within the village.'

It is a well-known fact that congregations often expect the clergyman's family to be an exemplary model: morally upstanding, reliable, devout, functional and content – an example of Christian life (Rowatt, 2001: 523). We might venture to say that the transition to episcopal status intensifies this pressure, as the bishop's family is regarded as a desirable model by other more junior clergy who look to their bishop for pastoral guidance through lifestyle as well as verbal advice. But it is worth reflecting on the fact that clergy are aware of these pressures as well, and some appear to actively arrange their family lives so as to minimize their negative impact upon their children's upbringing. As one bishop put it: 'it's difficult enough to be a clergy child anyway – all the expectations that people throw at you, if your parents are going to back them up … [you'd have a] hell of a life ahead'. One of the cases we examined is particularly illuminating in this respect and highlights the ways in which the clergy household may be organized not just in deference to external pressures but in critical response to them. It also highlights how these factors may interact with other pertinent forces which exert their influence over the clergyman and his family.

'Sarah' is the daughter of a clergyman who became a suffragan bishop. She is the eldest of two daughters, and both her and her sister, while acknowledging their father's absence due to ministerial responsibilities, have fond memories of their childhood. Sarah describes her father as being quite 'detached from his job' and as a consequence they did not feel pressures to behave in a particularly moral way. She contrasts this with other clergy children she has encountered, who had negative experiences, emphasizing how 'most of our friends, unless they were church friends, they didn't even know that dad was a vicar'. When we asked Sarah why her parents

had made such an effort to create a welcome and pressure-free family life she referred to the fact that her mother had been a clergy child herself and had exerted a firm influence over family life. Most importantly, she had been determined her daughters were not going to experience the same unhealthy repressed life that she had. While she had gone back on her vow never to marry a clergyman, she raised her own daughters in light of her own experience of being raised in the shadow of her father. Sarah suggests that this instilled in her mother high expectations associated with the maternal role, while also demanding a commitment to her husband's ministry that prevented her from fulfilling these responsibilities to her satisfaction. This paradoxical experience had, according to her daughter, led to a preoccupation with guilt and a determination that her daughters not acquire the same principles.

The resulting low-pressure, laid-back family life was also influenced by Sarah's father's liberal Anglicanism (in our questionnaire he described himself as an 'affirming catholic' with a background in 'prayer book catholicism') and her experience of Christianity during childhood was not at all associated with the doctrinaire, authoritarian or dictatorial. Neither daughter was ever made to go to church during the teenage years, and their home life was noticeably void of any theological discourse which might have marked it out as a space dedicated to their father's ministerial vocation. To Sarah, he:

> seemed quite normal, but wearing funny clothes, he didn't preach at us … other people that we know, whose parents [were religious] … had [a] much more religious home life than us. I mean, we said grace, but that was about it. We … never kind of talked about you know, Jesus … God did not come into conversation at all … It was my dad's job, and it was very separate actually …

So a separation of home life from ministerial vocation appears to have been not only possible but desirable among some clergy. Of course, the extent to which this is perceived as a separation rather than a subtle expression of a kind of incarnational theology depends on who is interpreting the situation, and some of our clergy may well opt for the latter understanding. However, what is important for this chapter is the fact that clergy children perceived a separation and that the narrative expression of this reveals some interesting inter-generational correlations, particularly to do with the clergy upbringing of the mother. Previous experience of living in a home dedicated to clerical ministry may have a tempering influence over the way in which one raises one's own children in a similar context. This tendency was also apparent in the recollections of some clergy children who were younger siblings, like one whose parents had always made it clear that they had no expectations of him with respect to religious belief. He explained this with reference to the experience of his elder brothers and sisters, at least two or three of whom had rejected the church entirely. His parents' attitude, it seems, had changed in light of this, so that the 'clergy home' was managed in a way that discouraged rather than heightened this sense of high religious and moral expectations. His elder siblings had had to 'forge their own way', while he had enjoyed a much more 'open-minded parenting experience than they did'. The perception of high expectations, it seems, can have a significant influence not just on clergy children but also on the clergyman and his wife as they

negotiate the problems of parenting, yet another aspect of the negotiation of spiritual capital as a resource generated within the clerical household.

The Episcopal Factor

We mentioned earlier that most of the experiences invoked by our respondents as significant to their upbringing could be described with reference to the vicarage context. And yet they are distinctive in being the children of bishops, those elevated to a position of leadership in the Church of England. How this impacted upon their childhood and development is a complex question, and several different threads need unravelling. First, we need to distinguish between the impact of having a father as a bishop during one's formative years (a description which applies to 47 per cent of our sample) and the significance one's father's episcopal status might have in ongoing narratives of identity constructed during adulthood. Both may be important in making sense of current attitudes to professional or religious identity, but while the first has to do with the social context of upbringing the second appeals to the father as an enduring conversation partner as both parent and representative of the hierarchy of the church. Engagement with the latter is likely to be more sober and distant, although no less relevant, as we shall seek to demonstrate in the following chapters.

Second, we need to distinguish between the significance of being raised by an upwardly mobile clergyman and being raised within the context of the material and social peculiarities of an episcopal residence. The first is entwined in the various experiences charted earlier on, and is a difficult aspect to pin down. But it is significant that the qualities ultimately recognized as worthy of episcopal status within these men were present in their lives and work well before their consecration. The impact of living in an episcopal residence is easier to chart, and responses appear to be polarized between those clergy children who enjoyed and celebrated the material and social benefits associated with their father's status and those who were embarrassed by what they came to see as unwarranted wealth and opulence. One bishop's daughter claimed she 'wouldn't bring people back to our huge house as I felt it was morally wrong that a bishop should live in such privilege'.

The feeling that the outward trappings of their father's status were a backward step was not restricted to comments about luxurious residences. One respondent contrasted her experience of being a 'bishop's daughter' with the life her family had enjoyed when in a close-knit working-class parish: 'When you become a bishop it all changes, because people start kowtowing and being sycophantic.' For her the deference conferred on her father after his consecration revealed what she saw as the hypocrisy of the Church of England, and actually detracted from her own spiritual experience of worshipping in the Anglican Church. Another respondent felt his father's status adversely affected how others reacted to his own Christian faith, as it was interpreted as inevitable rather than something based on his own personal commitment. His status as a Christian was ascribed rather than achieved, and he felt that his 'own profession of faith was diminished when people found out my dad was a bishop'.

But elevation to the episcopacy confers social advantages as well, such as the dislocation of the clergyman from the geographical centre of his ministry. This is especially the case with suffragan bishops as their residences carry no necessary significance for their episcopal responsibilities, and even those who have an area remit are unlikely to be as explicitly associated with this area by local residents as the parochial clergyman. The wife of one suffragan bishop, reflecting on her children's upbringing, commented that 'it was easier for them than for vicarage children as their father rarely appeared on home ground to embarrass them'. In such situations the problems associated with the clergy home as a 'public space' are unlikely to apply to anywhere near the same degree as with a parochial clergyman. The bishop's work is not bounded by the area close by his residence, he is not directly responsible for a population of parishioners and his house is not linked to a local church, being thereby potentially identifiable by passers-by as a clergyman's residence. Because of the wider geographical remit of the bishop's ministry he is also less likely to have connections with his children's school. Hence, the cases that stand out as not impinging negatively upon the lives of the children are the families of suffragan bishops, whose ambiguous status is here a potential advantage because of the geographical and possibly vocational detachment of home from ministerial responsibility.

The foregoing is offered as a kind of axial discussion, as it raises numerous themes that will be taken up again in the following chapters. Specifically, while here we have aimed to highlight the kinds of capital that are generated within a clerical upbringing – both positive and negative – we will now turn our attention to how such resources are reflected upon as significant by clergy children as they make sense of their identities in adulthood. We begin with their religious lives.