



Unmasking Faith-Based Abuse

Report on Faith-Based Abuse 2020

Statistics on Crimes with a Faith-Based Nexus



Compiled by CY CHRIST's Case Tracking Center
Gathered from the Department of Justice, FBI,
Department of Homeland Security ICE HSI

Table of Contents

Message from the President	6
About the Author:	8
CY CHRIST Research Center	9
Acknowledgements	11
Method	12
Financial Abuse	13
Money Laundering	15
Offenders	15
Age	16
Positions	16
Victims	17
Amounts Stolen	18
Cases	19
Section Overview	21
Sexual Abuse	22
Hands on Sexual Abuse	22
Pornography	23
Offenders	24
Age	24
Positions	25
Victims	25
Victimology	25
Cases	26
Section Overview	28
Trafficking in Persons	29

Myths of Human Trafficking	29
Human Smuggling Vs. Human Trafficking	29
Labor Trafficking & Sexual Trafficking	30
Crimes	30
Visa Fraud & Immigration	31
Marriage Fraud	31
Document Servitude	31
Conspiracy	32
Coercion & Enticement	32
2020 Trafficking Cases	32
Positions	34
Victims	34
Victimology	34
Cases	35
Section Overview	40
2020 in Summary	42
Total Cases	42
Total Offenders	43
Total Victims	44
Concluding Remarks	46
Limitations	47
References	48
Figure 1	14
Figure 2	16
Figure 3	17

Figure 4	17
Figure 5	18
Figure 6	19
Figure 7	24
Figure 8	25
Figure 9	26
Figure 10	30
Figure 11	34
Figure 12	35
Figure 13	42
Figure 14	44
Figure 15	45
Financial Abuse Case Study 1	19
Financial Abuse Case Study 2	20
Sexual Abuse - Hands On Case Study 1	26
Sexual Abuse - Pornography Elicited Case Study 2	27
Organizational Trafficking Case Study 1	36
Individual Trafficking Case Study2	38



CY CHRIST
Research Center
Faith-Based Abuse Case Tracking Center

Message from the President

I'm incredibly excited to be releasing the first Report on Faith-Based Abuse. This report highlights statistics, trends, specific cases and their details for the year of 2020. Our hope is that this report and subsequent ones will help churches around the country, of all denominations to see the consequences of faith-based abuse and what they can do to prevent it in their own congregations.

Whenever abuse occurs, the effects are far reaching, scarring, and may last the lifetime of those affected or even generations. I personally view faith-based abuse as the worst kind of abuse one can perpetrate. This is because you're not dealing with a temporal life, you're dealing with a person's very soul and have an influence over their eternity.

Perhaps that's why Christ viewed the perpetrators of crimes against children with such contempt. He said "whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea." (Mark 9:2.)¹

Christ ascribed such a curse on those who hurt children because they can have great sway over their destiny, but I believe it applies to all of God's children, young and old.

When someone who is supposed to be the shepherd hurts the sheep, they betray not only the sheep who they've been charged with guiding, leading, and helping to usher into the eternal fold, they betray God.

¹ Remnant Publications. (2009). The Remnant Study Bible © 2009 by Remnant Publications. Used by permission.

The damage that these offenders do has eternal consequences. The case that I've held as one of the most dear to my heart is the case of a 12-year-old boy in Teaneck, New Jersey. He was molested by a Franciscan brother -Edmund Coakley. The betrayal of trust, abuse of power, abuse of body, abuse of sex, and most importantly, abuse of spirit was too much for the boy. In 1979 he swallowed a bottle of liniment. In hospital he told a nurse that life was "not worth living."²

Instead of guiding and growing the boy to love God and to appreciate the life He has given us, Coakley betrayed the trust, and abused the boy's spirit. What could have been a soul saved to Christ, was a soul destroyed by someone who claimed to come in His name.

The solemn and enormous duty of guarding and guiding souls falls to Christians. When they betray that responsibility, they betray not only God's children but God Himself.

I pray often for that boy and for his family and for the many more like him. As Christians we have a responsibility to all of God's children, young and old. Christ said in Matthew 19:14, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for such is the kingdom of heaven." Perhaps we can add, "do not abuse them."³

We hope these statistics unmask the problems of abuse in the Christian community and that people will take action.



Jordan M. de Graaff
President, Victim Advocate
CY CHRIST

² Berry, J. (1992). Rumblyings in the Fourth Estate. In Lead us not into temptation: Catholic priests and the sexual abuse of children (pp. 107), Doubleday.

³ Ibid

About the Author:

CY CHRIST's **Case Tracking Center (CTC)**⁴ tracks criminal and civil cases with a faith-based nexus. Currently, the Center gathers and tracks cases that are in the Federal system using the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). We follow cases from indictments/charges, through to sentencing and use that information to author statistics, and reports. By providing these statistics, we hope to open the eyes of faith-based communities to the threats they are facing and proact/react in a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach.

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⁴ *Case tracking center*. C.Y. C.H.R.I.S.T. (2021, April 6). Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://cychrist.org/case-tracking-center/>

CY CHRIST Research Center

The CY CHRIST Research Center is responsible for conducting research on a variety of topics and oversees the case tracking center. The research areas include Clergy Sexual Abuse, pedophilia among the clergy, financial crimes, human trafficking, impact on victims, and a plethora of other areas. Research is used not only to reveal problems in faith communities, but to open up avenues where churches can help others affected by these crimes and promote healing and resilience for them.

The Research Center is also responsible for managing and overseeing all grants that would come to CY CHRIST and ensuring the objectives of these grants are meant and reported to the independent donors or grant-writing agencies, such as the NIJ or BJA. Grants help organizations to meet goals in providing services to victims, conducting research on important topics that have been under-researched or require more understanding. Clergy Sexual Abuse, and abuse in faith-communities has been largely been understudied.

Research is gathered in a number of ways, varying from eyewitness and first-hand reports, of victims, by-standers, offenders, or those involved in the response to incidents of faith-based abuse (e.g. investigators, prosecutors, victim advocates, mental health workers/counselors). Or is gathered from eyewitness reports, interviews, or court documents. The majority of information contained in this report is gathered from court documents.

The information gathered from research goes to develop our trainings and workshops that we put offer for churches and faith-communities, or how we can better work to help victims, or make reforms in churches to eliminate the possibility of abuse.

The Research Center's primary mission is to help inform the rest of the organization as to the best course of action to take to fulfill our main mission, which is to "raise awareness of faith-based abuse among all denominations; motivate members and victims to report all instances of misconduct without fear of retaliation, provide survivors with the resources to recover and and feel safe; fully attend to members' and victims' needs, properly report

misconduct; strive to seek justice and help eliminate the possibility of abuse in the christian church.”⁵

We hope that the research provided by the Research Center will help everyone with making their faith-community a safe-place for members and be the repository of the riches of His grace.

⁵ *About cy christ*. C.Y. C.H.R.I.S.T. (2019, June 30). Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://cychrist.org/about-cy-christ/>

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the work of everyone who is working to end faith-based abuse, and restore victims. These include those in the criminal justice profession, civil lawyers, prosecutors, district attorneys, offices of the state attorney generals, clerks, and judges.

We wish to acknowledge the work of self-sacrificing, brave, and humble law enforcement professionals such as special agents, of both state and federal agencies, detectives, officers, deputies, those in law enforcement command and leadership positions.

We want to acknowledge the dedicated work of those in the health field. Mental health counselors and therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and pastoral counselors.

We want to thank the amazing work of social workers, educators, and the victim advocates.

Most of all we want to acknowledge the survivors of abuse, not only of faith-based abuse but of any type of abuse. We cannot begin to imagine the hardships you've had to endure and everything you've gone through. We hope that this report will in some way help you to know that although there is still a major problem in faith-communities, there are people who are dedicated to making churches that reflect God's love and care to the world. We especially want to thank the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Homeland Security Investigation's Immigration and Customs Enforcement for providing the information needed to make this report possible.

Method

These statistics are gathered from the Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Homeland Security Investigation's Immigration and Customs Enforcement. As soon as a case becomes public the CY CHRIST Case Tracking Center begins a file on it to track the case and its outcome. Cases are organized by the type of faith-based abuse crime, financial, sexual, trafficking, and beginning with 2021 hate crimes against faith-communities will also be tracked.

From these cases we gather demographics on alleged offenders, and known victims where there is enough information. We rely solely on federal records to gather this information, such as indictments, affidavits, arrest warrants, etc.

Cases included are new cases that began in 2020, and are counted as new cases. Indictments, a case is considered new when an indictment is brought, or an alleged offender is arrested and charged.

The cases are divided by major category: financial, sexual, and trafficking. Under these are subcategories relating specifically to the types of crimes, however the section on offenders, victims, and cases are in each category. The "Cases" section highlights several cases from each category.

*All "offenders" are considered innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. They are referred to as offenders throughout this document. No other personally identifying information is provided on either offenders or victims, only demographic information.

Financial Abuse

We define Faith-Based Financial Abuse where a church, a church leader, or a church members, uses their position and/or faith to financially defraud, or extort money. Victims may be their churches, their church members, or people not of a faith-background but were moved because of the faith-based background or affiliation of the offender. This type of fraud is also known as affinity fraud.⁶

In 2020 there were four Faith-Based Financial Abuse (FA) cases brought, involving four primary offenders, three known and an unknown number of co-conspirators. These are new cases where either an individual was charged, indicted and or arrested for defrauding or extorting money with a faith-based context.

Several different types of crimes are associated with financial abuse but can generally be divided into three main groups: fraud, embezzlement, and/or money laundering.

Figure 1 shows all types of financial crimes and the number of charges for them.

⁶ FBI. (2021, September 23). *Affinity fraud ponzi scheme*. FBI. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/pennsylvania-affinity-fraud-ponzi-scheme-092321>

Figure 1

Faith-Based Financial Crimes in 2020^{7,8,9,10,11}

Crime Charged/Indicted*	Counts
Wire Fraud	10
Mail Fraud	11
Conspiracy	1
Possession of Counterfeit and Unauthorized Access Devices	1
Aggravated Identity Theft	3
Tax Fraud	4
Money Laundering	1

We do not explain those crimes here but they are provided for informational purposes only. We will give a brief explanation of the three major categories, which are fraud, embezzlement, and money laundering.

Fraud

For the purposes of this report, fraud is defined as the knowing and intended deception of a person, church, ministry, organization, group, or congregation to gain their monies and use them for personal gain, or other

⁷ In one case, there was an 8 count indictment for wire fraud, mail fraud, and money laundering but it did not indicate how many counts for which charges. This report only gave 1 count for each charge.

⁸ *Jacksonville man indicted for defrauding a religious organization and filing false income tax returns.* The United States Department of Justice. (2020, June 4). Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdfl/pr/jacksonville-man-indicted-defrauding-religious-organization-and-filing-false-income-tax>

⁹ *Corvallis man accused of fraud scheme falsely claiming to support Christian missionaries and organizations.* The United States Department of Justice. (2020, June 11). Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-or/pr/corvallis-man-accused-fraud-scheme-falsely-claiming-support-christian-missionaries-and>

¹⁰ *Las Vegas man indicted for scheme targeting church funds.* The United States Department of Justice. (2020, September 1). Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-nv/pr/las-vegas-man-indicted-scheme-targeting-church-funds>

¹¹ *Bedford priest charged in scheme to defraud church of more ...* (n.d.). Retrieved February 22, 2022, from https://article.wn.com/view/2020/11/20/Bedford_priest_charged_in_scheme_to_defraud_church_of_more_t/

purpose not related or known by those who gave the money. An example of this is an elder asking for donations to fund a mission trip but instead uses it on a personal vacation.

Embezzlement

Embezzlement is the unlawful obtainment of an organization, church, ministry, or group's money by someone who was entrusted with access to it by their position. A common example is of a priest or treasurer who had access to their church's bank account to make deposits or payments for church expenses, but instead transferred, or withdrew money to put in their own accounts, or for personal use.

Money Laundering

According to the Department of Justice, Money Laundering is where “a defendant must conduct or attempt to conduct a financial transaction, knowing that the property involved in the financial transaction represents the proceeds of some unlawful activity.”¹²

The single case of money laundering seen in 2020 also contained charges of wire fraud, and mail fraud, very little information was offered in regards to the money laundering aspect. To date it is the only case of money laundering that the Case Tracking Center has seen. More information will be provided on this case in the Cases section of this report.

Offenders

There were seven known offenders in the four cases of FA in 2020. One of the cases involving co-conspirators did not specify the number of co-conspirators.

This section will break down the offenders' demographics,¹³ such as age, gender, and position. There are no details available on the citizenship, race, and ethnicity of these offenders. A note of importance is that these

¹²2101. Money Laundering Overview. (2020, January 17). Retrieved September 13, 2021, from <https://www.justice.gov/archives/jm/criminal-resource-manual-2101-money-laundering-overview>

¹³ Some demographics were not reported for three individuals.

offenders have only being charged, arrested and or indicted. They are considered innocent until proven guilty in the court of law.

Age

At the time of their indictment the offenders varied in age from 40 to 57 with a median age of 44.5.

There is a large gap between the start of their crimes and their indictment/arrest, the largest of which is 8 years. Figure 2, shows the age of the offenders at the time they started their crimes, and their age when they were arrested as well as the number of years their crimes continued.¹⁴

Figure 2

Differential Ages of Offenders

Age at time of offense	Age at time of indictment/arrest	Number of years scheme Lasted	Average
37	40	2	38.5
43	50	7	46.5
46	52	4	49
49	57	8	53

Positions

In 2020, most offenders held no positions within their church or did not use that position within their church to commit FA. One offender held a position of priest, pastor, and administrator, giving him access to the funds for his two churches. One offender was a director of a religious organization, another allegedly founded their own organization. The fourth offender and an unspecified number of co-conspirators seemingly had no direct connection with the two churches whose funds they allegedly stole.

¹⁴ Some crimes did not continue right up until the time of indictment/arrest.

Figure 3**Organizational Affiliation & Positions of Offenders**

Church/Organization	Position	Crimes Charged
Religious Organization	Director	Wire fraud, tax fraud
Offender's Own Purported Organization	President	Wire fraud, mail fraud, money laundering
No Known Affiliation	No position	Conspiracy, wire fraud, mail fraud, possession of counterfeit access devices, aggravated identity theft
Catholic Churches/Parishes	Director, Administrator, Priest/Pastor,	Mail fraud

Victims

There are two main categories of victims: individuals and groups. Groups include congregations, churches, organizations, parishes, etc. Individuals are members or not affiliated with a religious entity but were defrauded or otherwise victimized by the offender.

There were twenty known¹⁵ individual victims¹⁶ and five group victims of financial abuse in 2020.

Figure 4**Known Victims, Type & Relation to Offender**

Group (5)	Relation to Offender
Organization	Employer
Parish	Congregation
Parish	Congregation
Christian Church	Stranger
Lutheran Church	Stranger
Individual (20)	
	20 Acquaintances

¹⁵ In one case it was unclear whether there were additional victims and how many there were.

¹⁶ All 20 known individual victims were from one case.

For 92% of victims (n=23) (both group and individual) knew their offenders and trusted their offenders. The remaining 8% (n=2) were unknown to the victims.

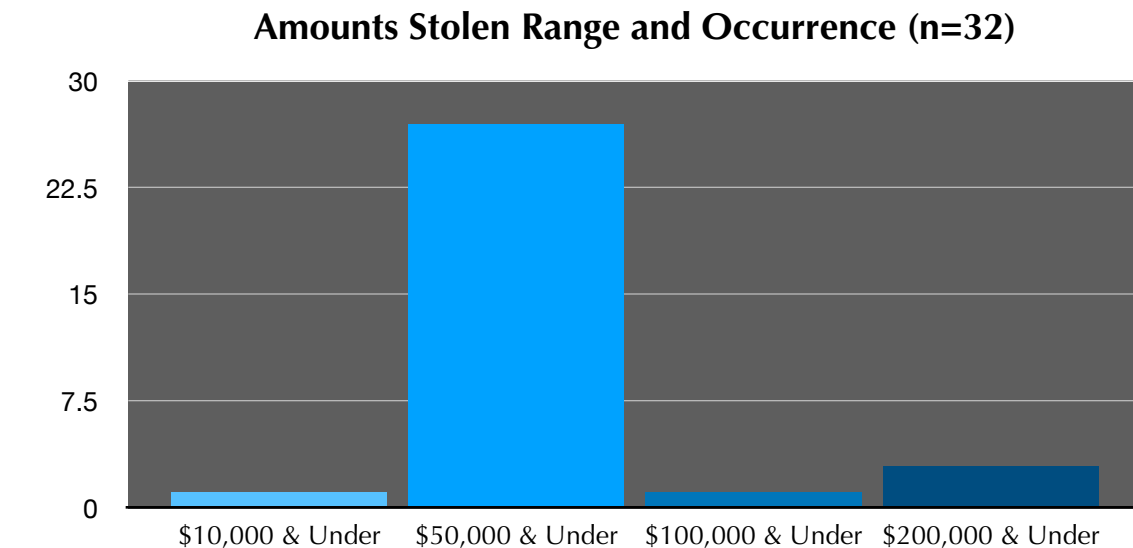
Amounts Stolen

A total of \$1,969,524.73 was stolen in the four cases of FA. The lowest amount stolen was \$2,035.96 and the highest was approximately \$200,000. The average amount stolen was \$45,000. In most cases the money was stolen over the course of the scheme and not all at once. In the four cases there were thirty-two separate known attempts to steal varying amounts of money. Figure 5 displays ranges for the individual amounts stolen and how often someone stole from within that range, where data was available.¹⁷

The most common range of money stolen was \$11,000 to \$50,000 with twenty-seven incidences, the next common was \$200,000 and under with three incidents. The remaining two ranges \$10,000 and under and \$100,000 and under had one incidence each.

Figure 6 shows the exact amounts and on how many occasions an offender stole that amount.¹⁸

Figure 5



¹⁷ Amounts may not add up perfectly due to lack of data.

¹⁸ Note, some of the amounts were stolen over a period of time, but were listed in court documents as a specific amount. This report uses information available in court documents.

Figure 6

Amounts Stolen by Occasion

Cases	Amounts x Occasions					Total
Case 1	\$40,900 x 5				\$44,000	\$273,500
Case 2	\$50,000 x20					\$1,000,000
Case 3	\$200,000	\$200,000				\$400,000
Case 4	\$2,035.06	\$35,686.97	\$70,404.32	\$187,898.38		\$296,024.73

Cases

This section highlights two of the four cases, leaving out identifiable information on the offenders and victims. These are used for case examples that can help churches, and individuals realize the scope, extent, and threats of financial abuse.

The two cases reflect the two different offender-victim relationships, unknown strangers, and a trusted priest.

Financial Abuse Case Study 1

Starting in November 2017 and continuing up until July 2018, one offender and an unspecified number of co-conspirators conspired to steal money from two churches’ bank accounts. They targeted a pension fund and an extension fund of two separate churches. These accounts provided financial services for members of the religious community, including ministers. The offender and his co-conspirators fraudulently obtained the names and personal identifying information of the church members responsible for the accounts.

Armed with the names and PII of the account holders the offender then impersonated those individuals and would make withdrawals, money transfers from those accounts.

The offender and his co-conspirators attempted to obtain \$400,000 from both of the churches’ accounts.

This type of financial abuse is less common with churches. In the majority of cases, the offenders are known to the congregation and have direct access to the accounts. This case demonstrates the threat of non-members and church officers targeting funds. Churches should ensure the Personal Identifying Information (PII) of account holders is secure, use two-factor authentication for logging onto their bank account, and implement a series of other checks and balances to protect against outside threats.

Case 2, gives an example of an offender who was known by his congregations and had direct access to the accounts and details his scheme to embezzle from the accounts.

Financial Abuse Case Study 2

This offender held several positions in the Russian Orthodox/Catholic church. Ranging from pastor-administrator and priest of two parishes, and the director of a shrine.*

The offender had access to the bank accounts of the three institutions he was running and beginning in May of 2014 and until July 2018, the offender began embezzling monies from these institutions.

The Eparchy (the organization that oversees the parishes) that the offender was under had guidelines established for its priests and administrators that detailed the expenses that a parish would pay for priests and guidelines for reimbursements.

Despite these guidelines, the offender used institution funds for prohibited personal expenses. Between May 2014 to June 2015, the offender embezzled approximately \$35,686.97. Some of this money he used for items such as department store shopping, automotive, and grocery payments. Then from January 2015 to July 2018 the offender allegedly embezzled an additional \$70,404.32. He spent this money on personal items such as car dealers, contractors, grocery, department, and outlet stores, and online music services.

Again the offender allegedly embezzled \$187,898.38 from January 2015 to July 2018 from the other church of which he was pastoring. This money he used on prohibited personal expenses such as firearm ammunition, car dealers, online shopping and other shopping.

After his embezzlement was uncovered and the offender was terminated from his positions, he continued to use a debit card from one of his churches. He spent \$2,035.06 with this church's debit card. In total, the defendant allegedly stole \$293,989 from all three bank accounts which he had access to.

*The offender held some of these positions over different periods of time and not concurrently.

The offender in the above case egregiously stole money from his congregations and institutions which he led. One of the parishes suffered financial ruin as a result of his greed.

The purpose of this report is not so much to give advice as it is to inform however, we still offer some brief steps that can be taken to guard against inside threats. Such as ensuring multiple persons have access to and monitor accounts, receive alerts for purchases over a certain amount, regularly review bank statements; unless otherwise necessary refrain from giving a debit and credit card to individuals and instead reimbursing for expenses.

Section Overview

Faith-Based Financial Abuse continued to be a problem in 2020, with at least 25 victims, ranging from organizations and institutions and individuals. Four primary offenders abused their positions in their church/organization and betrayed the trust put in them. Or otherwise selfishly moved to steal money from the cause of God. The \$1,969,524.73 stolen in 2020 could've been used to spread the gospel message, minister to those in need, or provide for the churches' ministers. Instead offenders used this money for their own personal gain. It may take years for organizations and individuals to recover from the losses and some may not make it.

CY CHRIST will continue to monitor these cases and new ones as they emerge. CY CHRIST is also working on training on Financial Abuse that will help churches and individuals in safe-guarding their money. Check cychrist.org for additional information on cases of Faith-Based Financial Abuse.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the most known type of faith-based abuse largely because of the Catholic Church's scandal involving church officials abusing minor parishioners, or school kids. Sexual abuse is any type of sexual act, or threat of a sexual act against a member of the church, a person being ministered to by a church or minister, or an offense with another faith-based nexus.

In 2020 there were a total of two cases of Faith-Based Sexual Abuse brought to federal law enforcement involving two offenders and multiple victims. These offenders committed hands on sexual abuse and eliciting pornographic material from a minor.

At CY CHRIST we organize Sexual Abuse into two classes and there are an additional two subcategories which will be expounded on further:

- Hands on Sexual Abuse
- Pornography
 - Elicited
 - Possession

It is important to note that these two categories are not mutually exclusive. They can occur together, with an offender first meeting a victim online, eliciting pornography and later meeting in person for the offender to hands-on abuse the victim. It may happen conversely, or the two may happen together or individually.

Hands on Sexual Abuse

In these cases, the offender themselves commits the abuse in-person, either by taking advantage of another person, or by force, fraud, or coercion. These can be both minor victims and adults, although the majority of federal cases that involve sexual abuse involves minor victims. It is important to note that though sexual trafficking is a type of sexual abuse, we categorize it under trafficking.

Pornography

The next two types are based on pornography. The use of child pornography is the same as if the individual committed the abuse. By consuming child pornography, offenders allow the cycle of abuse to continue.¹⁹ Some offenders produce their own pornography from the abuse they inflict. Those are counted as hands-on abuse. There are two ways that abusers can obtain pornographic material without physically assaulting their victims and these are the two categories listed below:

Elicited. The elicitation of child pornography means that the individual themselves elicited a victim into providing them with sexual images. The offenders use largely the same method as in-person, by taking advantage, using force, fraud, or coercion. Although force, may only be threats.

Possession is when the individual obtains pornography by some other means other than directly from the victim. Examples of this include websites, pedophile chat-rooms, or images shared from other abusers.

There are several types of crimes that can be charged that have a nexus to sexual abuse. In the two cases there were a total of five counts in the two cases. One case involved three counts of transporting a minor across state lines to engage in illegal sexual activity and one count of coercing a minor to cross a state line to engage in illegal sexual activity. The second case had one count of receipt of child pornography. Figure 7 indicates type of crime and how many counts.

¹⁹ FBI. (2020, December 28). *Innocent images program marks 25 years*. FBI. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/innocent-images-program-marks-25-years-122820>

Figure 7

Faith-Based Sexual Abuse Crimes in 2020^{20,21}

Crime Charged/Indicted	Counts
Transporting a Minor Across State Lines to Engage in Illegal Sexual Activity	3
Coercing a Minor to Cross State Lines to Engage in Illegal Sexual Activity	1
Receipt of Child Pornography	1

Offenders

This section will break down the offenders’ demographics, such as age, gender, and position. There are no details available on the citizenship, race, and ethnicity of these offenders. A note of importance is that these offenders have only being charged, arrested and or indicted. They are considered innocent until proven guilty in the court of law.

There were two known offenders indicted/charged with sexual abuse crimes. Both were males.

Age

The oldest was 65 years old at the time of his arrest, the other was 50. the median age of the offenders is 57.5. One offender’s conduct is believed to have started as long ago as 1980.²² The other offender’s abuse started in 1996 and victimized girls until at least 2003, however the abuse may have continued until June 2020. Figure 8 depicts the approximate age of the offenders at the time of their alleged first offense, the age at time of arrest or indictment and the approximate number of years that they carried on the abuse.

²⁰ <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edar/pr/former-youth-pastor-charged-multiple-sex-crimes>

²¹ <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edar/pr/former-youth-pastor-charged-multiple-sex-crimes>

²² The FBI is seeking information and listed 1980-2020 as times where the offender may have been abusing victims.

Figure 8

Differential Ages of Offenders²³

Age at time of offense	Age at time of indictment/arrest	Number of years abuse potentially Lasted	Average
25	65	40 years	45
26	50	23 years	38

Positions

The two offenders were both pastors. One was a Roman Catholic and was employed at a number of Catholic churches, parishes, and schools, and dioceses in New York. The other offender was a youth pastor and committed his abuse while employed at two separate churches in Texas and Arkansas.

Victims

There are very little details available on victim demographics due to the highly sensitive nature of these crimes, and in these cases it is unclear if there are additional unknown victims. Furthermore, the number of victims are recorded over time in these cases. Abuse may have begun and end decades ago, but may only be coming out now.

For cases of sexual abuse, we count individual victims and not the congregations that these offenders are a part of or lead. We recognize that the effects of sexual violence and victimization spreads far beyond the initial victim. Close friends and family may experience vicarious trauma as a result of the experience of a loved one. Congregations may feel betrayed, violated, and abhorred. We respect these feelings and encourage everyone who has experienced traumatization to seek help.

Victimology

There were a total of four (n=4) known victims. Their abuse spanned between 1997 and 2020. They ranged in age from 14 years old to 16 years old with a median age of 15. One victim was a 15 year old male. Two victims

²³ The case that potentially lasted 40 years is based on an FBI document listing the offender's assignments over the past 40 years in an effort to encourage victims to come forward.

were between 14-16 year old females, and one victim’s demographics were unknown. Figure 9 represents victim demographics by year they were first abused. ²⁴

Figure 9

Victimology

Victims	Gender	Age
Victim 1 (1996)	Female	14
Victim 2 (2001)	Unknown	Unknown
Victim 3 (2002)	Female	16
Victim 4 (2019)	Male	15

Cases

A brief summary of both cases are highlighted in this section. The first case represents hands-on abuse and some of the methods the offender used to isolate his victims and abuse them. The second case represents Pornography Elicited, and demonstrates the offender’s methods for eliciting sexually explicit images from an adolescent victim.

Sexual Abuse - Hands On Case Study 1

The offender was a youth pastor in Texas and in 1992 he began the process known as “grooming,” on a 14 year old girl in the youth group. This included making frequent inappropriate comments to her and he also told her that he loved her. Then in May of 1997 when the girl was now 15 years old, the offender led an eighth grade camping trip to Arkansas.

During the trip the offender isolated the girl and sexually assaulted her. He told her not to tell anyone. In 2002, the offender, now pastoring a youth group in Arkansas began grooming a 16 year old girl and had inappropriate sexual contact with her. He had sexual relations on multiple occasions during 2002-2003. In the summer of 2003 the youth group attended an

²⁴ Abuse may occur over long periods of time and through several ages for victims.

event in Florida. There, the offender was able to isolate the victim by asking her to ride on a charter bus with him, instead of the bus the rest of her friends were on. On the bus ride, the offender sexual assaulted her.

This case, although missing a great deal of details, including the abuse of a third minor, demonstrates some of the techniques used to abuse minors. This is known as grooming²⁵ and the offender used a variety of methods. They may have started as comments or remarks, seemingly harmless but later escalated to inappropriate sexual comments. By telling the first victim that he “loved her” he was hoping that she would truly believe that and would be less likely to resist him, and less likely to report any misconduct. The grooming went on for about a year until the offender had an opportunity to isolate the victim on a camping trip and to assault her.

The same isolation tactic was used with the second victim, to get her alone and sexually assault her. It is highly likely that a similar grooming tactics was used on this victim, although those details are not currently available. Both cases represent a pattern of predatory behavior.

Sexual Abuse - Pornography Elicited Case Study 2

In the summer of 2019, a 15 year old male in New York uploaded sexually explicit photos onto “Grindr.” He was contacted by the offender on that app and then subsequently moved to texting. The offender was a pastor of a Catholic institution in the City of New York. The offender sent sexually explicit photos of himself to the victim. They continued communicating over text and the offender made sexually suggestive and explicit remarks, sent sexually explicit photos to the victim, and advised the victim on ways to conceal their relationship and communication. They texted about meeting up and the offender mentioned the specific acts he was hoping to do to the victim. When FBI agents interviewed the offender, he admitted being the one who sent the photos of himself to the victim, and admitted he believed he was speaking to a 15 year old boy. Furthermore, he also said he met with a different 15 year old boy and had sexual relations at the victim’s high school. The offender also stated that he attempted to meet with minors for sexual encounters and numerous occasions.

The FBI has asked the public for assistance with identifying other potential victims and released a list of the offender’s assignments since 1980.

²⁵ Chancellor, A. S. (2014). Special Offenders. In *Investigating sexual assault cases* (p. 188). essay, Jones & Bartlett Learning.

This case represents the alarming ease at which offenders can gain access to victims via the internet. The offender in this case had previously contacted other minors and met with at least one victim. This offender also used grooming tactics, including sending sexually explicit photos, making sexually explicit/suggestive comments, being willing to “spoil,” the victim (i.e. by money or other gifts of value to the victim).²⁶

The offender also asked for additional sexually explicit photos from the victim. It is highly likely that the offender has been engaged in similar conduct since the 1980s. He had nine assignments in New York between 1980 and 2020. The longest of these assignments was nine years and the shortest assignment one year. At least two of these assignments were to schools. Given the history with which the Catholic church has frequently moved priests to other assignments because of sexual abuse, it is likely that the same situation occurred in this case.

Section Overview

Although there were only two reported cases of sexual abuse in 2020, it is important to note that there were many other instances. The Research Center at this time only has access to Federal cases. There may have been many other cases involving tribal, state, county, or municipal law enforcement, and an even greater number of cases go unreported to law enforcement. Furthermore, although only 4 victims are listed, there are many more who are unknown. Both from these offenders and others.

Sexual abuse by clergy continues to be a significant problem to all denominations. The abuse not only severely impacts the direct victims in their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual lives, but it also affects friends and family, and even the congregation for which these offenders were supposed to serve.

With the ever more prevalent interconnectedness of the world and our lives to electronics and networks, it is easier for offenders to victimize not only those in their congregation, but they can victimize virtually anyone. CY CHRIST continues to work to help victims and congregations recover and prevent these incidents. Visit cychrist.org for more information.

²⁶ Providing anything of value for sexual acts from a minor is considered Human Sexual Trafficking.

Trafficking in Persons

The abuse of trafficking in persons, more commonly known as human trafficking, *is* modern day slavery. It is impossible to tell how many victims there are just in the United States of this crime. However, it is estimated to be the second largest criminal enterprise, just behind drug trafficking. While drug trafficking is valued at 32.1 billion dollars, human trafficking is estimated to be valued at 31.6 billion dollars.²⁷

Myths of Human Trafficking

There are many myths that surround human trafficking. Although it is equated with modern day slavery, it does not mean that victims are chained up, completely restricted, or never have any moments to escape, neither does it mean that all victims want to be rescued. Human trafficking is an exploitation based crime. Traffickers exploit vulnerabilities in victims in order to traffic them. Although many deceptions on television may show victims being abducted and forced into slavery, the reality is that traffickers can easily find “willing” victims who are incredibly vulnerable.²⁸

Human Smuggling Vs. Human Trafficking

Another common point of confusion, is that human smuggling and human trafficking are the same thing. They are not. Smuggling, is the act of secretly bringing people or items into a country. Trafficking, is essentially using people to earn money for you. An easy way to remember the difference is that smuggling is *transportation* based, while trafficking is *exploitation* based.²⁹

Although human smuggling and trafficking are two very different

²⁷ *Human trafficking is now the second most profitable criminal activity in the United States!* Monique Burr Foundation. (2020, July 2). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.mbfpreventioneducation.org/human-trafficking-is-now-the-second-most-profitable-criminal-activity-in-the-united-states/>

²⁸ *Myths & Facts*. National Human Trafficking Hotline. (2019, May 3). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/what-human-trafficking/myths-misconceptions>

²⁹ *Myths and misconceptions*. Myths and Misconceptions | Homeland Security. (n.d.). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/myths-and-misconceptions>

crimes, they are sometimes connected. A smuggler may smuggle a victim into the country and then a trafficker exploits the victim. There are also many different ways that victims can be brought into the country and it is important not to always assume secret tunnels, shipping containers, or semis are the main methods of smuggling.

Labor Trafficking & Sexual Trafficking

The final consideration is that there are two types of human trafficking: Labor trafficking, and Sexual trafficking. Labor trafficking, also sometimes called “forced” labor, is exploiting a person to work for free, against their will, and/or under force, fraud, or coercion.³⁰

Sexual trafficking is exploiting a person to gain money for sexual acts also by force, fraud, or coercion. Force, fraud, and coercion can be incredibly broad in their meanings. Traffickers may be creative and use different methods to “coerce” victims into labor or sexual trafficking.

Crimes

There are many crimes that can be associated with trafficking, from the actual crime of trafficking, to ones that helped get victims into the country, such as marriage fraud, visa fraud, illegal possession of identity documents, etc. The context of these crimes will be clear in case study 1. Figure 10 depicts the crimes and counts associated with human trafficking in 2020.

Figure 10
Faith-Based Human Trafficking Related Crimes in 2020³¹

Crime Charged/Indicted*	Counts
Sexual Trafficking of a Minor	5
Sexual Trafficking of an Adult	5
Visa & Immigration Fraud	Unspecified
Marriage Fraud	Unspecified but as many as 82 counts

³⁰ <https://www.justice.gov/crt/involuntary-servitude-forced-labor-and-sex-trafficking-statutes-enforced>

³¹ In one case there was a 10 count Indictment for sexual trafficking of a minor and sexual trafficking of an adult by force, fraud, or coercion. This report divided it equally between the two.

Crime Charged/Indicted*	Counts
Document Servitude	Unspecified
Conspiracy	Unspecified
Coercion & Enticement	Unspecified

Visa Fraud & Immigration

In 18 USC §1546, it is a crime to give a false statement under oath in any document required by the immigration laws or regulations, like applications for visas.³² Statements such as the reason someone is coming into the United States, in case study 1 as set forth below the trafficker's lied on their victims' visa.

Marriage Fraud

Marriage fraud when individuals enter into a marriage for the purpose of evading any provision of the immigration laws. When a U.S. citizen marries a non-U.S. citizen, that person then becomes an immediate relative and is entitled to become a U.S. citizen. Marrying a non-U.S. citizen is not illegal, however it rises to the level of criminal conduct when one is paid to enter into a fraudulent marriage for the purpose of evading immigration laws.³³ As set forth in Case Study 1, the traffickers arranged sham marriages for the purpose of evading immigration laws.

Document Servitude

A common tactic of traffickers is to confiscate victims' identity papers.³⁴ Whether they be driver's licenses, passports, or visa, with no ID victims will

³² 1947. 18 U.S.C. 1546 -- fraud and misuse of visas, permits, and related documents, and false personation. The United States Department of Justice. (2020, January 17). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/archives/jm/criminal-resource-manual-1947-18-usc-1546-fraud-and-misuse-visas-permits-and-related-documents>

³³ 1948. marriage fraud -- 8 U.S.C. 1325(c) and 18 U.S.C. 1546. The United States Department of Justice. (2020, January 17). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/archives/jm/criminal-resource-manual-1948-marriage-fraud-8-usc-1325c-and-18-usc-1546>

³⁴ <https://www.justice.gov/crt/involuntary-servitude-forced-labor-and-sex-trafficking-statutes-enforced>

have trouble accessing services such as healthcare, food stamps, affordable housing, and many other services that are necessary for them to be able to leave the trafficker.

Conspiracy

18 U.S.C §371 is the general conspiracy clause. It states that if “two or more persons conspire either to commit any offense against the United States, or to defraud the United States, or any agency thereof in any manner or for any purpose.”³⁵ Case Study 1 represents their conspiracy to defraud the government by committing immigration fraud.

Coercion & Enticement

18 U.S.C. §2422 (b) makes it a illegal to persuade, induce, entice, or coerce anyone to travel in interstate or foreign commerce to engage in sexual activity.³⁶ In Case Study 2, the offender made the victim travel across state lines and engaged in sexual acts with the victim. This crime was charged in addition to 18 U.S.C. §1591 (a) Sexual Trafficking of a Minor, and Sexual Trafficking of an Adult by Force, Fraud, or Coercion.

2020 Trafficking Cases

There were two new cases of trafficking brought in 2020 with 4 offenders and at least 84 victims.^{37,38} There are cases where an entire church

³⁵ 923. *18 U.S.C. § 371-conspiracy to defraud the United States*. The United States Department of Justice. (2020, January 21). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/archives/jm/criminal-resource-manual-923-18-usc-371-conspiracy-defraud-us>

³⁶ 2001. *coercion and enticement (18 U.S.C. 2422)*. The United States Department of Justice. (2020, January 17). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/archives/jm/criminal-resource-manual-2001-coercion-and-enticement-18-usc-2422>

³⁷ *Grand Jury indicts 3 top administrators of Philippine Church in scheme to traffic workers and defraud immigration system*. The United States Department of Justice. (2020, February 13). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-cdca/pr/grand-jury-indicts-3-top-administrators-philippine-church-scheme-traffic-workers-and>

³⁸ *Findlay area priest indicted on charges of sex trafficking and coercion*. The United States Department of Justice. (2020, October 30). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndoh/pr/findlay-area-priest-indicted-charges-sex-trafficking-and-coercion>

organization is involved with trafficking victims, in which case we mention number of offenders and if a church was complicit in a trafficking scheme.

Offenders

There were 4 offenders in 2020, and 1 church organization involved in trafficking. Three of these offenders were a part of the church organization, and an additional individual offender. This section goes into the known demographics of these offenders. Once again, these offenders are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Because in all the other case categories the offenders were male, there was no need to include a gender demographic. In these cases however, there were three female offenders, one male offender.

Age

The oldest offender was 59 and the youngest was 41, with a median of 50.5. As in the previous sections, there is a large gap between the offenders' first known offense/how long the scheme operated, and when the offender was indicted. In one case the offenders operated the scheme for over 20 years, in the other case, the offender first began the inappropriate relations with his first victim in 1999.

Figure 11 depicts offender's age at start of abuse/scheme, and how long it continued for.

Figure 10

Differential Ages of Offenders³⁹

Age at time of offense	Age at time of indictment/arrest	Number of years abuse potentially Lasted	Average
39	59	20	49
21	41	20	31
28	48	20	38
33	53	21	43

³⁹ For the first three offenders, the scheme lasted for over 20 years, however it is not specified if the offenders were involved in the scheme from the beginning and continued until their indictment.

Positions

Three out of the four offenders (n=3 75%) had high level administrative/leadership positions in their church, including the highest leadership role for the United States (church was based in the Philippines). One offender's "official" administrative position was not specified but for the scheme, it is alleged they were responsible for handling fraudulent immigration documents and passports of the victims and in this document they are termed "Human Resource Director." The third offender handled all the financial aspect of the U.S. "church," and "fundraising."

The fourth offender started the abuse when in Catholic Seminary and continued as he advanced to the Priest and Pastor of a Parish, which included a school. Figure 11 depicts the religious organization and offender's position.

Figure 11

Organizational Affiliation & Positions of Offenders

Church/Organization	Position
US Church Branch	US Leader
US Church Branch	"Human Resource Director"
US Church Branch	Treasurer
Catholic Parish & School	Priest/Pastor

Victims

Although this section contains the majority of victims in 2020 (n=84) there is little information available on demographics. However, there are still some details provided.

Victimology

From information provided, it can be inferred that 72 of the victims (n=72 85.71%) are Asian, and at least one (n=1 1.19%) Caucasian. The remaining 10 victims (n=10 8.4%) are unknown.

For only 2 (n=2 2.38%) of the 84 victims is the age known. The youngest was at least 12 years old at the start of the first offense and the other

was at least 6 years old when they first came in contact with the offender and at least 14 when the abuse started. At the time of the indictment/arrest of the offender the victims were 32 and 26 years old respectively, and the abuse did continue throughout that period.⁴⁰

The gender of the victims are known in only two of the (n=2 2.38%) of the cases. Both are male. The rest of the victims can almost safely be postulated as females given some of the information provided.⁴¹

Figure 12 depicts victimology for the two victims with the most demographic information available:

Figure 12

Victimology

Victims	Gender	Age at First Abuse	2020 Age
Victim 1 (1999)	Male	12	32
Victim 2 (2000)	Male	6	26
Victims 3-82	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN

Cases

The two case studies below are more lengthy and in-depth than those in previous sections, due to the duration of the scheme/abuse, and acts committed within. The first case study represents organizational compliance and role in the scheme, as well as tactics used to obtain and control victims. The second case study, although more closely linked with Sexual Abuse - Hands-On, is included in this section because the offender’s actions met the criteria for human trafficking of a minor, and of an adult by force, fraud, or coercion and will be expanded on in greater length.

⁴⁰ The victims were part of the same case with the same offender.

⁴¹ *United States v. Cabactulan*, Case No.: MJ 20-00354-DUTY (C.D. Cal. Feb. 14, 2020)

Organizational Trafficking Case Study 1

Three Administrators of a church based in the Philippines orchestrated an immigration, marriage, financial fraud, and labor trafficking scheme for over 20 years. The administrators, hereon referred to as the offenders, obtained visas for church members to enter the US, either as Full Time Workers (FTWs), on student visas with schools with lenient attendance policies, or based on fraudulent marriages which were conducted by the church officials.

The church brought these members into the US and referred to them as “Miracle Workers,” to raise money for a sham charity that allegedly helped impoverished children in the Philippines. The reality is that little to none of the approximate \$20 million raised between 2014 and 2019 was used to help children in need and instead went to finance the lavish lifestyles of these offenders and other church leaders.

Most of this money was made from street level solicitation. Victims were told that they would raise money by performing at musical events. However, once they arrived in the United States they were required to turn over their passports to the administrators and then began being sent across the U.S, working long hours as street-level solicitors in order to reach a daily quota. They received little to no pay for their efforts. From information in court documents some of these victims may have also smuggled money back to the Philippines.

Some victims knew they were coming to the U.S. to be fundraisers, some were unaware of the actual purpose until they were forced to solicit on the streets nearly everyday of the year. Victims reported working very long hours, often sleeping in cars, and not having access to over-the-counter medicine or even clothes.

To keep victims in the U.S. the offenders falsified immigration documents or arranged sham marriages. These marriages were arranged between the victims and other church workers or members who were U.S. citizens. The offenders possessed ATM cards to show immigration officials that the victims and members had shared bank accounts. Two of the offenders had wedding rings available to conduct these fraudulent marriage ceremonies.

Federal agents executed several search warrants on church properties in California, Hawaii.

At one of the compounds in California, agents found nearly a hundred passports from the Philippines, Ukraine, and the United States. Immigration records indicate that over the past 20 years there have been at least 82 fraudulent marriages between victims and church employees or members.

The agents also discovered a file titled "Traitor" in the possession of one of the defendants. This file contained information on members who had fled the church.

Other court records indicate that workers were mentally and physically abused, beaten with paddles, isolated, and forced to fast. Victims also report being punished for leaving the KOJC, for having relationships with non-KOJC members, and for making negative statements about leadership. Female victims were pressured to have sex with KOJC's senior leader, which is referred to as "night duty."

Several victims reported severe abuse. One said they were sent to the "upper six" a chamber at the compound where they were isolated were forced to fast and listen to reordered sermons for at least three days. Still another reported an incident where they had their head shaved, and were forced to wear an orange shirt that said "SOS" on the back which stood for "Son of Satan." This victim also reported being hit on the back with a paddle over a hundred times their first day in isolation.

Case Study 1 is an excellent example of the most severe form of human trafficking. Victims were not only coerced by threats, or fraud, but were physically abused. Their documents were taken from them. They were slaves to this church. This case also demonstrates the methods used by the offenders to keep control over the victims. Of particular interest to this report is the religious overtones used as it constitutes Spiritual abuse, as well as physical and mental.

This case continues to be active, with its head leader having been indicted earlier in 2022. The federal agencies involved are continuing to encourage potential victims to come forward. The FBI is the principle agency and tips can be directed to the Los Angeles field office at (310) 477-6565.

Beginning in 2000 when the victim was in Catholic school he met the offender while the offender was in seminary. (This offender abused at least 2 victims, they're referred to Victim 1 and Victim 2). From that point on the offender engaged in process known as "grooming." The offender took advantage of the Victim 1's troubled family life, and became a father figure to him, regularly coming over to his house, gave the victim money, showed affection to him, and began to inappropriately touch him and make sexual comments.

After the offender graduated from seminary and became a priest, he transferred to a nearby parish but continued to visit Victim 1 but escalated to raping him. Victim 1 had become addicted to opiates as a teen after an injury and as a result of the inappropriate touching by the offender. The offender took advantage of Victim 1's addiction and enticed him with money to come to his residence to continue the abuse. Victim 1 did not want to be abused but could not go through the effects of withdrawal. The abuse continued.

When Victim 1 was in his 20s the offender made an "action" or "confession video," where he confessed to raping Victim 1 and self-described his grooming process, and some of the inappropriate touching. The offender also made another video of him sexually abusing Victim 1. Within the last year of the offender being indicted, Victim 1 reported that he had gone to the offender's house and was abused 6 or 7 times.

The offender sent the videos to Victim 1 and then taunted him with them, saying that if Victim 1 took the videos to the police that he would never be able to give Victim 1 money, that everyone would know who Victim 1 was, and that the parish would be ruined. The offender communicated with Victim 1 via text and would make sexual remarks about Victim 1 and guilt Victim 1.

Also in 2000, while the offender was grooming Victim 1, he also began grooming Victim 2 when the victim was in the first grade.

The offender began coming over to Victim's 2 house and spent time with Victim 2's older brothers. It was when Victim 2 was in the 8th grade that the offender began making inappropriate comments. Victim 2 also began using opioids and became addicted.

When Victim 2 was in the 9th grade and was home from school sick from what he described "dope-sick," the offender came over to his house. Victim 2 was the only one home at the time and the offender offered to pay the victim money for sexual acts. Victim 2 did not want to do it, but knowing that he could use the money to get opiates and relieve the pain he was in, he gave in.

The offender continued to make sexual comments to Victim 2 that would shame him into keeping silent. He told Victim 2 that he could tell no one about it because he (the offender) would get in a lot of trouble.

The abuse continued with Victim 2, with the offender making disparaging comments, and telling Victim 2 of the trouble he would be in if Victim 2 told anyone about what he was doing to him.

Victim 2 told agents that he was scared to report because he felt like no one would believe him - a young troubled drug-addict, whether as a minor or adult - over the offender, a respected Catholic Priest.

During the investigation and in court document, the offender's parish has a pre-school and kindergarten-8th grade associated with it.

Case Study 2 demonstrates the kind of trafficking that is more common, but less thought about by the public. In the statute, trafficking can occur by "force, fraud, or coercion." It is incredibly common for traffickers to use drugs and exploit a victim's addiction to traffic them. This meets the definition of

coercion and has been used to make many human trafficking cases.^{42,43,44} Additionally, receiving anything of value for sexual acts constitutes sexual trafficking.

This case study shows the offender's grooming method, starting with getting to know the family, the intended victim, and overtime making sexual comments, and inappropriate touching. The offender also identified a problem that he could exploit in his victims, which was being addicted to opiates. The offender used that to gain access and abuse the victims, and to keep them from reporting it. The offender also engaged in communications and other methods that he used to shame the victims, keep them quiet, and continue to exploiting them, far into their adulthood. Because the offender gave cash to the victims after the sexual abuse, he committed human trafficking.

Section Overview

Human trafficking has, in the last 2 years, been the cases with the largest amount of victims, and some of the most severe forms of abuse. A trend among all the cases of faith-based abuse, though the case numbers are low, victim counts are high and the damage done is incredibly extensive.

Trafficking is not always - and sometimes very rarely - the stereotypical Eastern European mafia, with European girl victims, brought over in containers and chained up. The reality is that trafficking looks more like Case Ctudy 2. However, in faith-based settings, trafficking is trending to be more organized, with church leaders, and even the entire organization being complicit in it. The abuse inflicted, especially in Case 1 has strong spiritual ties, and just by virtue of the possession and environment, Case 2 represents spiritual undertones which causes spiritual harm to the victims.

⁴² *Father and son sentenced on sex trafficking charges.* The United States Department of Justice. (2022, January 21). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edmi/pr/father-and-son-sentenced-sex-trafficking-charges>

⁴³ *Canton man pleads guilty to sex trafficking.* The United States Department of Justice. (2022, January 7). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndoh/pr/canton-man-pleads-guilty-forcing-victims-commercial-sex-acts>

⁴⁴<https://www.justice.gov/usao-mt/pr/billings-man-admits-sex-trafficking-firearms-and-prostitution-related-crimes>

Case 1 continues to be under investigation, with investigating agencies encouraging victims to come forward and more information coming to light. CY CHRIST continues to monitor this case and all others, and encourages all churches to do things to prevent trafficking, to know the signs, and report suspected trafficking to law enforcement.

CY CHRIST continues its efforts to help victims, and churches and monitors cases. For more information, visit cychrist.org

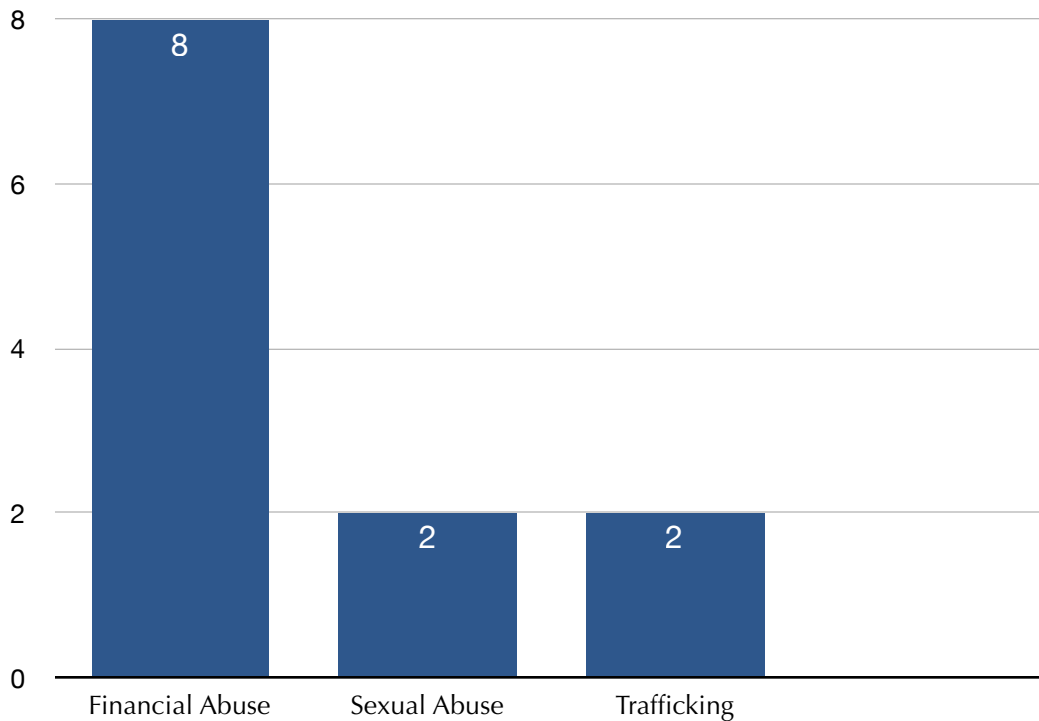
2020 in Summary

This section summarizes information from all the cases in 2020, such as the total cases brought to federal courts, total offenders listed, and the known total of victims. This section shows both the total number and numbers by category.

Total Cases

There were a total of 8 cases (n=8) in federal court that had a faith-based nexus. 4 of those cases (50%), were under the category of financial abuse, 2 of those cases (20%) were sexual abuse, 2 cases (20%) were trafficking. Figure 13 shows the cases by category.

Figure 13



Faith-Based Abuse Cases in 2020

All of the abuses lasted for multiple years. The shortest scheme lasted two years and was a financial abuse scheme, the longest offender's abuse may have lasted as long as 40 years based on information provided by the FBI. The average number of years the scheme lasted was 15.6.

Total Offenders

Of the 8 cases of Faith-Based abuse in 2020 there were a total of 13 known offenders.⁴⁵ (n=13) 9 offenders 69.23% committed financial abuse⁴⁶, 2 offenders 15.38% committed sexual abuse, and 4 offenders 30.77% committed trafficking crimes.

6 of these offenders (46.15%) were involved in "violent" crimes which would be sexual crimes and trafficking, many of these offenders used force, or coercive methods.

There were 3 female offenders (23.07%) and 10 male offenders (76.92%). Their ages at the start of their offenses ranged from the youngest being 21⁴⁷ and the oldest being 49, with a median age of 35. At the time of their arrests the youngest offender was 41, oldest was 65 with a median age of 53.⁴⁸

Figure 14 shows offenders by category.

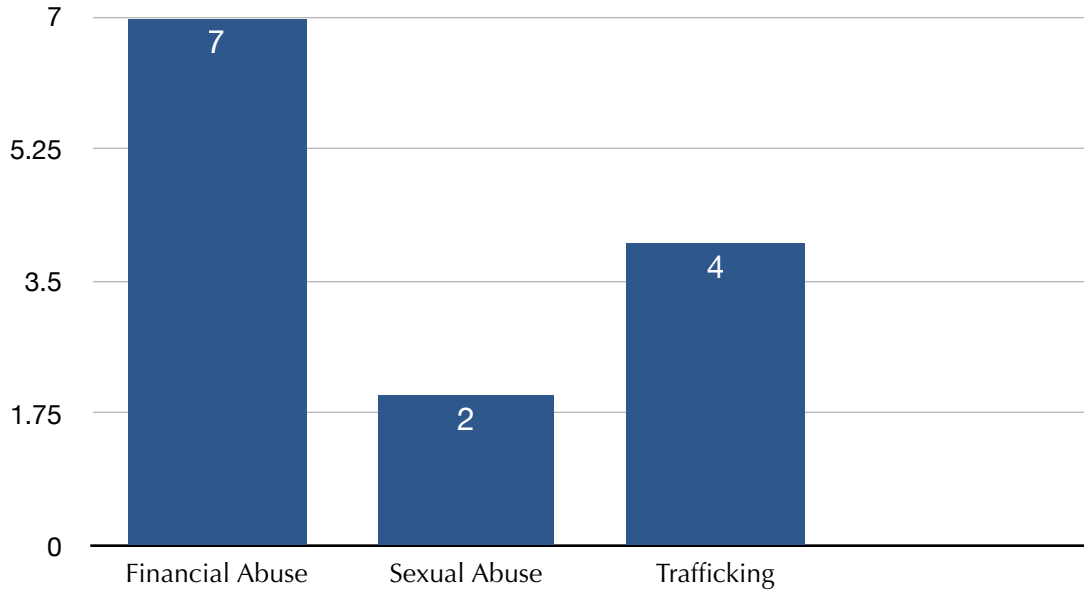
⁴⁵ As previously stated, one case had co-conspirators but did not mention how many were involved.

⁴⁶ This category had the unknown number of co-conspirators.

⁴⁷ Based on how long the scheme ran for and current age of offender. However it is not outlined in court documents if this offender was present for the duration of the scheme.

⁴⁸ Schemes lasted for multiple years. See "Total Cases," in "2020 in Summary."

Figure 14



Total Victims

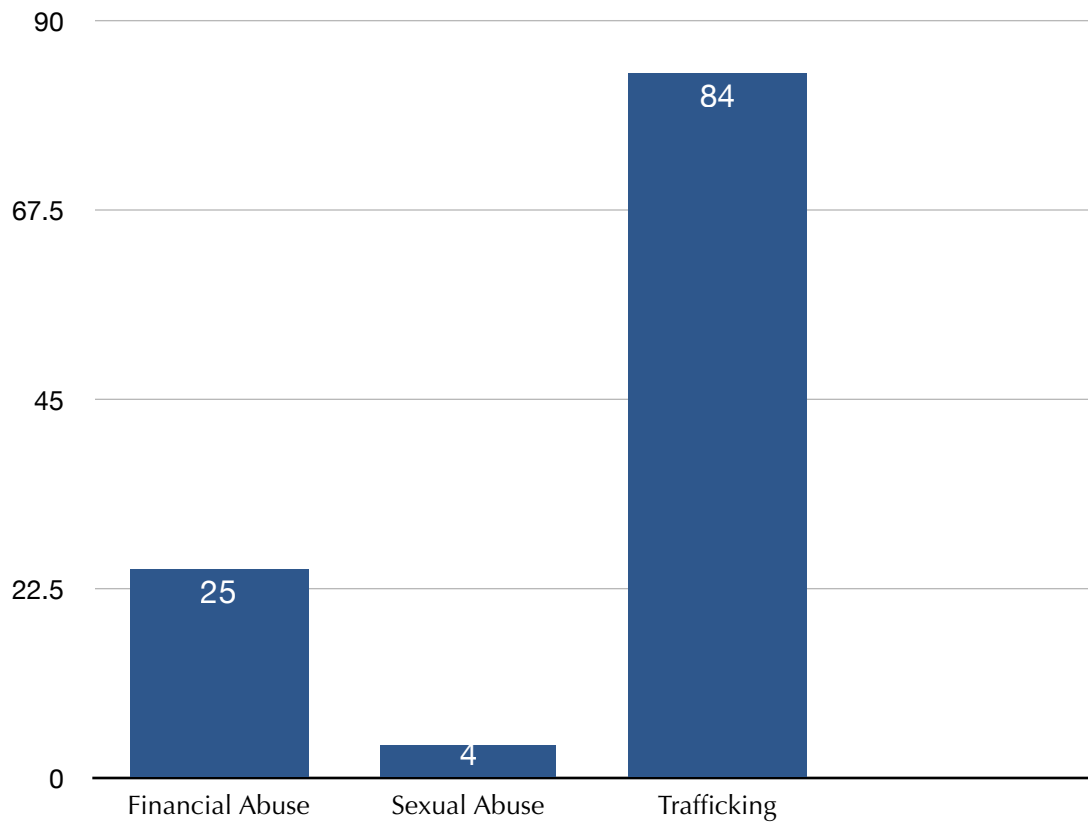
Of the 13 faith-based abuse cases, there were a total of 107 victims (n=107). In the Financial Abuse section there were also 5 Group victims⁴⁹. For the majority of these victims demographic information such as age, gender, and ethnicity was unavailable. 3 victims were male (60%) and 2 females (40%).

The youngest victim was 6 years old when the abuse began and oldest was 16. The victims of trafficking were adults but no further information on their age was available.

Ethnicity was based on passport information available on 73 victims (n=73). 72 of them are Asian, and one is Caucasian. The remaining 34 victims, ethnicity was unknown. Figure 15 shows victims by category, and it includes the 5 group victims.

⁴⁹ See Financial Abuse, Victims section.

Figure 15



Concluding Remarks

This report was put together with a great degree of objectivity from a research perspective. The wounds inflicted on the victims of these abuses cannot be undone and the road to healing will be a lengthy process. Our hope is that this report will help churches and members realize the gravity of the problem, be informed on what they can do to prevent it, and help victims.

This report was limited in that it could only provide information on cases in the federal system. We invite members of the public to send information to the research center on cases they're aware of with a faith-based nexus so we can expand our research. Information can be sent to research@cychrist.org and casetracking@cychrist.org. Please include as much information as possible.

We thank you for taking the time to read this report and hope that the information provided was informative and helpful.

Limitations

The authors wish to not only acknowledge but draw attention to the limitations of this report. As mentioned in the “Method” section, the research could only be gathered by cases in the federal system because of the ease of information sharing. There were only 13 cases brought to the federal system with a faith-based nexus. We do not believe this is representative of the state of faith-based abuse.

Because of that, this report does not seek to find trends year-to-year, or to say if the situation improves or gets worse based on the numbers reported. Due to the lack of representative cases, we feel that would not be prudent. In the future we may note the differences year to year but there is not enough information to acknowledge that at this point. We acknowledge this report lacks demographic information on offenders and victims alike.

We look forward to improving our research, and these reports in the future and expanding the possibilities of research and how it drives our mission to prevent abuse in the faith-based environment.

References

1947. 18 U.S.C. 1546 -- fraud and misuse of visas, permits, and related documents, and false personation. The United States Department of Justice. (2020, January 17). Retrieved February 25, 2022, from <https://www.justice.gov/archives/jm/criminal-resource-manual-1947-18-usc-1546-fraud-and-misuse-visas-permits-and-related-documents>

A common crime associated with human trafficking, bringing the victims into the United States under false pretenses, and misleading/false information provided on immigration documents.

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