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RELIGIOUS AND PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

The Church Law of the Catholic Church defines the pastoral office as follows: 'Officium ecclesiasticum est quodlibet munus ordinatione sive divina sive ecclesiastica stabiliter constitutum in finem spiritualem exercendum' (An ecclesiastical office is any post which by divine or ecclesiastical disposition is established in a stable manner to further a spiritual purpose, CIC 145, §1). This definition links two characteristic aspects of pastoral ministry, namely the professional function of a pastor, which is implied in 'any post … established in a durable manner', and its religious aim, which is implied in 'a spiritual purpose'. By using the terms 'professional' and 'religious', we stress two distinct aspects of the pastoral office in contemporary society. The professional aspect of pastoral ministry refers to its integration in the institutional form of the church, its expression in social structures and cultures, and its parallels with other occupations. The religious aspect of pastoral ministry refers to its personal faith identity and spiritual mission goals, which here are taken in reference to the Christian and Catholic tradition.[1] What is the relationship between these aspects of the pastoral office, as experienced in the pastoral commitment of the office holders? What are the characteristics of professional and religious commitment of pastors, and what is the relationship between them? This article addresses these two aspects of pastoral commitment and their relationship.

In this paper, we address these questions on the basis of an empirical exploration. Our study is a representative descriptive and explorative empirical survey among Dutch Roman Catholic pastors in 1992,[2] aimed at providing an

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[1] The term 'spiritual' in the official definition is polysemic. It may refer to religion, but – at least in Great Britain – also to the church. In church-documents 'spiritual' is sometimes contrasted with 'temporal' to indicate the perennial quality of religious goods or aims. In this article, we understand the term spiritual to refer to this quality of personal religious commitment as it is experienced, evaluated and expressed in behavior, or – shorter – as appropriated religion.

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

insight into the conception of the theology of ministry that these pastors have.[3] According to our representative sample, the Dutch Catholic pastors have the following basic social characteristics. Three fourths of the pastors is priest, one fifth is 'pastoral worker' (not ordained), and the rest is deacon. The average age of 55 is relatively high, and we notice that priests and 'pastoral workers' differ 10 years of age. The majority of the pastors reports religious and mystical experiences, and regards empathy as an important source of religious experience. A majority of pastors shows little or no traditional pastoral devotion. Regarding their pastoral working tasks pastors wish to spend more time on pastoral care, catechesis and diaconal work, and they wish to spend less time on church development and liturgy. Pastors regard themselves as being competent in pastoral ministry. Our findings confirm this by a high support level of professional attitudes although it seems to be undermined by a low level of observed professional skills.[4] Generally, pastors are satisfied with their various working tasks but only a small minority is satisfied with their career and employability. Furthermore, pastors experience very little professional support outside their local working situation. They report role conflicts, especially in contacts with church members. Pastors expect that the Christian identity of their ministry will survive in the future, though they also expect a certain specialisation of their job towards the domain of existential care.

Two characteristics are of specific importance in our contribution, because they indicate key-features of sacramental and professional identity, namely pastoral position and membership of the professional organisation. The pastoral position specifies the ecclesiastical function as it is related to the sacramental competence of the pastor. This is relevant because in the Dutch context, pastors do not in all instances share the same sacramental and professional characteristics. In the Dutch Catholic Church, the popular term 'pastors' is often generically used to indicate priests, deacons and 'pastoral workers'. Pastoral workers are theologically and pastorally fully educated at universities, but they lack the ordination and thus they are not authorised to spend the sacraments. Since the sixties, they were employed in the church to meet the shortfall of priests. The professional organisation of pastors is the 'Federation of Societies for Pastoral Workers' (in Dutch: 'Federatie Verenigingen voor Pastoraal Werkenden', acronym: VPW). It organises about half of the Catholic pastors in the Dutch dioceses, both ordained (priests and deacons) and not ordained (pastoral workers in the strict sense). This characteristic is important because the VPW aims

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[3]   J.B.A.M. Schilderman, *Pastorale professionalisering. Een empirisch-theologisch onderzoek onder rooms-katholieke pastores naar de betekenis van de ambtstheologie voor de professionalisering van pastorale arbeid*, Kampen 1998.

at professionalisation of the occupational group of Catholic pastors. Thus, members can be expected to support professionalisation more, and non-members less. When we empirically describe religious and professional attitudes in our paper, we will specify this subsequently by distinguishing these two characteristics.

Religious Commitment

In describing the religious commitment of Catholic pastors, we do not claim to present an exhaustive survey of all their religious characteristics or a cohering view of pastoral spirituality as a concept. We merely want to empirically clarify some relevant aspects of the spiritual life of pastors without claiming to describe or validate an elaborated pastor-specific religiosity. We do however want to clarify the pastors' religious commitment by answering the question how he or she values specific religious experiences, situations and roles. We also want to investigate two basic attitudes and the actual religious behaviour of pastors. We award special attention to this last aspect by checking if and how religious behaviour of pastors is influenced by these religious experiences and attitudes.

Experiential Aspects

The experiential aspects of religious commitment focus on the presence of religion in the everyday life of pastors. The paradigm of experience has gained theological significance. From an ecclesiastical point of view, the Second Vatican Council has emphasised the concept of experience by stressing its religious significance in history and its relevance for social contexts of Christian faith. From a scientific point of view, the regulatory position of the experience paradigm for hermeneutic interpretation of the Christian tradition can hardly be overlooked. That is why we are specifically interested in the experiential aspect of religious commitment. First, we pose the question what the spiritual experiences of pastors are, by discerning religious and mystical experiences. Secondly, we focus on the allocation of spiritual experiences, by categorising some contexts of spiritual experiences. Thirdly, we clarify what images pastors have of themselves from a spiritual perspective.

   To gain an empirical insight into the experiential aspect of religious commitment, we use a standardised scale, which contains twelve items in which pastors

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4   J.B.A.M. Schilderman et al., 'Pastorale bekwaamheid als kerkelijke survivalstrategie', in: *Praktische Theologie* 22 (1995) no.2, 21-43 (141-163).

were able to report both religious and mystical experiences.[5] The religious items reflect an experience of a divine reality that has a sanctifying and benevolent meaning for a person. An example is '*I have had experiences in which I appeared to be close with a divine reality*'. The mystical items must be distinguished from religious experiences. The mystical items lack terms like God and sanctification, and instead stress sacred unity, fulfilment and transcendence within reality itself. Here, an example is '*I have had experiences in which I felt one with all that surrounds me*'. In our analysis, we are not able to discriminate these two dimensions of spiritual experiences among pastors. This is an indication that pastors do not spontaneously discriminate religious and mystical aspects of their spiritual experiences. Only when we on beforehand distinguish the religious and mystical items, a factor-analysis offers reliable scales.[6] A majority (63%) of the pastors reports religious experiences, whereas 9% does not, which leaves 28% that personally doubts these experiences. The frequency of mystical experiences shows a similar pattern. A majority (62%) reports mystical experiences, and 14% does not recognise these experiences, whereas almost a quarter (24%) personally doubts these experiences as fitting their own spirituality.

We also asked pastors to examine to which extent they experience various situations as incentives for their religious commitment. We offered our respondents a list of twelve simple situations like the birth of a child, listening to music, social engagement, and asked whether these offered an occasion for spiritual experiences.[7] In a factor-analysis, we find three latent concepts that underlie these twelve items. The spiritual-aesthetic context stresses beauty experiences as an opportunity for spiritual experience. It contains experiences such as listening to classical music, looking at a beautiful painting, and nature. Of the pastors, 68% recognises these opportunities, 5% do not and 27% are in doubt. The spiritual-intimacy context stresses existential encounter in human contacts as motives for spiritual experiences. This context describes contacts with seriously ill persons, death of a family-member or friend, experience of the inner

[5] R.W. Hood, 'Religious Orientation and the Report of Religious Experience', in: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 9 (1970), 285-291; R.W. Hood, 'The Construction and Preliminary Validation of a Measure of Reported Mystical Experience', in: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 14 (1975), 29-41; F.W.P. van der Slik, *Overtuigingen, attituden, gedrag en ervaringen. Een onderzoek naar de godsdienstigheid van ouders en hun kinderen*, Nijmegen 1992, 113-117.

[6] Obviously, we find a very high correlation between the scales (r=.71).

[7] G. van Gerwen, *Pastorale begeleiding door vrijwilligers. Empirisch-theologisch onderzoek naar de motivatie tot deelname aan pastorale zorg in levenscrises*, Kampen 1990, 126-128; J.A. van der Ven & B. Biemans, *Religie in fragmenten. Een onderzoek onder studenten*, Kampen-Weinheim 1994, 199.

self, and helping someone. A large majority (90%) recognises this context, 2% does not and 8% is in doubt. Finally, we found that love offered another cause for spirituality. This refers to occasions such as childbirth and loving partnership. For a small majority (58%), this indeed is a context for spiritual experiences, but for about a quarter (24%) it is not, leaving 18% of the pastors in doubt.

For pastors, religious commitment is not only a matter of conviction, but also a matter of understanding and signifying their own pastoral role. To explore these various notions of the pastoral role, we choose to categorise more or less established images of the religious roles of the pastors. By images, we here mean metaphors that function as religious codes by which attributes of the pastoral office are expressed, and that thus refer to specific domains. From a practical-theological perspective, these domains of the religious role may refer to traditional religious texts, to the perception of the social network in which pastors are employed, or they may relate to the professional position that they hold. To explore these roles, we designed a list of some 16 spiritual images of the pastor, which we categorised according to these traditional, communitarian and functional domains. First, images of the pastoral role can symbolise the meaning of the Christian tradition. For this domain, we offered images such as shepherd, priest and prophet. Secondly, images may also characterise the communitarian domain of the pastoral office, and express the spiritual significance of the pastor for the local faith community. For this domain, we have offered family images such as father, mother, sister and brother, and social images such as (girl-)friend and sidekick. Finally, role-images can inform about the actual performance of the pastor. For this functional domain, we formulated images such as spiritual leader, teacher, personal spiritual adviser, guide, social worker, therapist, and companion. A factor-analysis offered no empirical support for our theoretical distinction between traditional, communitarian and functional images. Instead, the various specific images can be ordered into five generic types. First, we find the image of the leader, which unites specific images that stress the official ministry for the faithful, such as priest, father, spiritual leader, shepherd, and spiritual advisor. For 36% of the pastors, this is an attractive image, for a quarter (25%) it is not, whereas 39% doubts it. The image of the counsellor unites images of prophet, guide and teacher, and thus stresses normative guidelines in interpersonal contact. For 37%, this is an appealing spiritual image; for 19%, it is not attractive, whereas 44% is in doubt. A third image we found is caretaker. This metaphor consists of images such as social worker, therapist and companion. It expresses concern for persons in distress and subsequent professional support and relief. Thirty-one percent engages with this image and 13% does not, which leaves a majority (56%) in doubt. The image of the fellow man is a fourth image. It expresses basic equality as an

essential responsibility in interpersonal contact, and unites images such as (girl-) friend, sidekick and brother. For Firet, this image is a basic characteristic of pastoral dialogue.[8] We have a majority (57%) who is in favour of this image, and 13% who is not, whereas 30% doubts the suitability of this image. Finally, we found the image of woman that consists of female family images like mother and sister. For a minority of the (largely male) pastoral population (16%) this is an appealing image, and for a majority (67%) it is not, leaving 17% in doubt.

Attitudinal Aspects

Spiritual attitudes present an important aspect of religious commitment. They embody the faith dispositions that guide behaviour. This is not merely a disposition that reflects personal inspiration, but it also provides a public modelling function. This model answers expectations that a spiritual life is possible and fruitful, and actually contributes to the spiritual life of the faithful. This notion of pastoral spirituality complies with two basic attitudes that reflect the spiritual function of pastoral ministry. First, we want to discover whether pastors actually feel that a personal spiritual life is a necessary condition for pastoral ministry. The historical strive for religious perfection that we referred to in our first paragraph, indicates that religious commitment is a traditional condition for pastoral ministry. It is stressed by the doctrinal authority of the Catholic Church in the statutorily provisions of the educational facilities for pastoral ministry,[9] in the documents of episcopal synods,[10] and in II Vatican Council decrees.[11] The emphasis is not exclusively ecclesiastical though. The 'Clinical Pastoral Education' represents a non-ecclesiastical variant that stresses the need for pastors to explore and develop their biographical religious experiences, and emphasises, in correspondence with psychodynamic and client-centred theories, the attitudes of congruency and genuineness in professional relationships.[12] Secondly, we acknowledge that religious commitment not only is a condition for pastoral ministry, but also an aim. That is why we also want to find out whether pastors feel that religious commitment of the pastorant presents the kernel and main objective of pastoral work. Both ecclesiastical and professional stakeholders also stress this attitudinal aspect. For instance, Greshake emphasises that personal holiness of pastors cannot be seen apart from the official ecclesiastical

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[8]   J. Firet, *Het agogisch moment in het pastoraal optreden*, Kampen 1982, 203-222, 313-345.
[9]   *Sapientia Christiana, Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (1970).
[10] *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992).
[11] *Optatam Totius.*
[12] H.C.I. Andriessen, *Leren aan ervaring en supervisie*, Nijmegen 1975; W. Zijlstra, *Pastorale vorming*, Assen 1969; W. Zijlstra, *Op zoek naar een nieuwe horizon. Handboek voor klinische pastorale vorming*, Nijkerk 1989.

mission to sanctify others.[13] Rahner has elaborated the pastoral task of mystagogy, stressing the spiritual function of pastors to guide the religious development of the faithful in their orientation towards the mystery of God.[14] Likewise, the Clinical Pastoral Education emphasised the role of the pastor as a religious and attitudinal instrument to clarify and develop the spirituality of pastorants.[15]

In a factor-analysis, we indeed find these two beliefs to be vividly present among pastors. The first belief we label, somewhat technically, spiritual conditionality. The second belief we label as spiritual finality. A large majority (86%) feels that religious commitment is an indispensable asset of pastoral ministry, and a very small minority (1%) disagrees, and 13% doubts this belief. 70% of all pastors believe that it is a primary task of the pastor to develop religious commitment of pastorants, whereas 4% rejects this view and a quarter (26%) doubts this belief.

Behavioural Aspects

The behavioural aspects of spirituality refer to the practice of religious commitment. It focuses on actual expressions, i.e., observable characteristics of spirituality. We expect that pastors especially stress the traditional importance of religious ritual. This corresponds with strong traditions of spirituality that the large majority was confronted with during seminary education. Besides, we also acknowledge that though new spiritual styles of expression may have emerged, they did never sink in to more extensive religious expressions that could be considered typically pastoral. In exploring this expectation, we confronted our respondents with a list of thirteen expressions of their faith that includes both typically Christian and other religious items. Our question was: 'How do you express your own faith?'. For 90% of the pastors, reading religious writings represent a form of spiritual behaviour, followed by prayer before and after meals (85%), reading the Bible (77%), prayers at other times of the day (60%), liturgical participation outside ones pastoral position (46%), Christian mediation (41%), reciting ones breviary (50%), singing psalms and religious songs (23%), fasting (19%), praying the rosary (17%), and confession (14%). Religious expressions such as yoga (3%) or Zen-meditation (4%) are considered appropriate religious expressions only for minorities.

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[13] G. Greshake, *Priester zijn. Een actuele benadering en bezinning*, Apeldoorn 1983.
[14] K. Rahner, *Handbuch der Pastoraltheologie*, Freiburg 1964; K. Rahner, 'Bemerkungen zur Spiritualität des Weltpriesters', in: F. Wulf (Ed.), *Mitten unter den Menschen. Spiritualität, Aufgaben und Probleme der Priester und Ordensleute*, Düsseldorf 1979, 27-42.
[15] H.J.M. Vossen, 'Klinisch pastorale vorming als religieus-communicatief leerproces', in: *Praktische Theologie* 17 (1990), 40-60, esp. 52-57.

When we explore these behavioural aspects of religious commitment, we find that six of the items that we just mentioned, can be ordered into a probabilistic scalogram. A scalogram is a uni-dimensional and cumulatively increasing scale, in which each item empirically presupposes the preceding item. Thus, this scale allows us to predict subsequent aspects of spirituality of pastors. The items from which we construct our scale, indicate a conventional priest spirituality, marked by the following rituals (in descending order): praying before and after the meal, praying at other moments of the day, periodical prayer ('breviarium'), fasting, praying the rosary, and confession. Since there is a (cumulative) cohesion of these expressions, we can interpret this scale to measure the degree of (traditional) ritual expression of spirituality, and label it as pastoral devotion. We find that 60% of the pastors demonstrate weak or no pastoral devotion. About 18% show somewhat, and almost 22% strong or very strong pastoral devotion. We were not able to construct a cohering scale of other, more non-conventional, items such as spiritual reading, religious chant, Yoga or Zen-meditation.

The behavioural aspects of religious commitment are of specific importance for the pastoral office, since they refer to actual expressions that are thus open for public scrutiny. This, and the historical and institutional emphasis on idealistic expressions of religious commitment, raises the question whether or not this public aspect of spirituality is supported by experiences and attitudes. That is why we now examine the influence of the described experiences and attitudes on our behavioural spirituality scale. In this question, we will draw two additional characteristics of pastors that we regard to be of importance for a critical assessment of this question. The first characteristic is church position. Here, we are specifically interested in those positions that differ from the mainstream of priests, namely 'pastoral workers', i.e., the not ordained pastors, and deacons, a clerical group for which specific criteria of clerical admission and competence apply. The second characteristic is membership of the professional organisation 'VPW' that unites Catholic pastors with a specific theological and professional profile.[16] How can the behavioural aspect of spirituality thus be explained? By means of a regression analysis, we try to establish what spiritual and professional characteristics of pastors may serve as predictors of pastoral devotion.[17] First, we notice that we indeed can predict pastoral devotion to a considerable extent. The frequency of spiritual experiences, that stress a sanctuary and divine

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[16] Schilderman, *Pastorale professionalisering*.

[17] This regression analysis explained pastoral devotion to a considerable extent (r^2=.37), with subsequent beta's of religious experience (.22), mystical experience (-.22), spiritual conditionality (.12), the spiritual image of the leader (.27), the church positions of deacon (.14) and pastoral worker (-.18), and VPW-membership (-.23).

presence for persons, contributes considerably to ritual commitment. The frequency of mystical experiences, on the contrary, does not. Experiences that refer to more abstract – though existential – concepts of divinity predict a lesser degree of pastoral devotion instead. Thus, we notice that pastoral devotion allows us to discriminate religious from mystical experiences. Contrary to what one could expect from modern theology, the contexts of spiritual experiences do not seem to influence pastoral devotion. The spiritual images are only of influence on the behavioural aspects of spirituality when the image of the leader is at stake. The more a pastor understands his or her spirituality from the pastoral image of the pastor as a leader, the more pastoral devotion he or she is inclined to demonstrate. The attitudinal aspects of spirituality are also of influence. The more pastors stress the need for a personally gained religious commitment for pastoral ministry, the stronger pastoral devotion will be felt, whereas the emphasis they put on religious commitment as a professional aim is of no influence. Deacons and pastoral workers show contrasts in pastoral devotion. Whereas deacons seem to have a talent for a higher devotional level, pastoral workers are susceptible for lower levels of pastoral devotion. They share that with members of the professional organisation, the VPW.

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

As we pointed out, we understand professional commitment to be as much a vital characteristic of pastoral commitment as religious commitment. Here, we will understand professional commitment as personal support for professionalisation policies. Professionalisation can be understood as '*a process according to which members of an occupational group seek collectively, and appealing chiefly to expert-authority, to attain and protect a position of collective power, with the objective to master both the value-in-use and the value-in-exchange of the occupation*'.[18] This definition refers both to specific strategies and to involved parties. It reflects a so-called power-approach in the sociology of occupations, which is understood here in purely analytical-theoretical terms and with a descriptive aim; that is not in a normative-theological way or with a prescriptive aim. In this paragraph, we will on the one hand clarify these strategies and find out to

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[18]   Th. van der Krogt, *Professionalisering en collectieve macht. Een conceptueel kader*, 's-Gravenhage 1981, 94, 131-150. For a discussion of the employed theory of professionalisation, see: J.B.A.M. Schilderman, J.A. van der Ven & A.J.A. Felling, 'Professionalizing the Shepards', in: *Journal of Empirical Theology* 12 (1999) no.1, 59-90; J.B.A.M. Schilderman & A.J.A. Felling, 'Sacramental Incentives in the Pastoral Office', in: *International Journal of Practical Theology* (forthcoming).

what extent they are supported by pastors. On the other hand we will report the pastors view with regard to the responsibilities that are involved in the social arena of pastoral professionalisation.

Strategies

The definition of professionalisation that we mentioned above, allows us to distinguish five separate strategies. First, stimulating competence is a major strategy incentive. It is aimed at an improvement of both knowledge and skills of the professional group. This is not only decisive because of the need of a high expertise to meet the demands, but also because of the necessity to protect a lucid and legitimized professional domain. Two other strategies are based on what Adam Smith defined as value-in-use and value-in-exchange of labour.[19] A strategy stimulating the value-in-use of labour aims at tuning labour tasks to needs and interests of clients; a subject extensively elaborated in quality-assessment literature.[20] A strategy on value-in-exchange addresses issues on labour remuneration. This not only regards material remuneration but also rewards in more symbolic terms like status and autonomy incentives. Representation and protection of interests is a fourth professionalisation strategy. It focuses on collectivising, i.e., a strategy to match the professional group with membership of the professional organization. This requires clarification and communication of common interests so that the professional organization is able to offer support for a strategy towards both its members and external parties as well. Finally, development of collective power is a fifth strategy of professionalisation. It contains a strategic reinforcement of influence towards relevant actors in society. Note that this by no means implies an appeal to a conflict model. In many cases co-operating or even cooptation with conventional interest groups may prove to be far more effective.

Our factor analysis shows that the professionalisation strategy-concepts are present in the consciousness of pastors, though our distinction of the 'value-in-exchange'-strategy and the 'representation and protection of interests'-strategy seems to be spurious: this distinction has no empirical support. For pastors, items of both concepts refer to the same strategy. We define it as 'remunerative representation of interests', drawing attention to labour-union-characteristics of the professional organisation that indicate the necessity of professional organisation of the occupational group. Now, we describe these four empirical concepts.

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[19] A. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations: books I-III*, Harmondsworth 1979.

[20] F.G. Crane, *Professional services marketing. Strategy and tactics*, New York-London-Norwood 1993.

The occupational group as a whole supports the strategic aim of competence. A vast majority of 95% supports this objective, whereas 5% is in doubt. If we look at the support of subgroups, we find no difference if we discriminate according to church position. Difference in ordination does not imply an increase or decrease in the upholding of competence. However, members of professional organisation approve of it somewhat more.

A vast majority of the pastors of 82% also agrees with a strategy to enhance the professional profile by tuning pastoral tasks to existential needs, questions and problems of people. A few pastors reject this strategy (3%) and 15% doubts whether to agree or not. There appears to be no cleavage in opinion if we discriminate according to church position or membership of the professional organisation.

The strategy of representation of interests and remuneration has support among 33% of the pastors, and is rejected by 33%, whereas 34% is in doubt. This apparently controversial issue can be clarified by our discrimination into subgroups. The not ordained pastors show a tendency to approve of this strategic aim. Priests are in doubt and the deacons disagree at this point. If we look at membership of the professional organisation, we find that though both subgroups are in doubt, members tend to agree with the remuneration and representation strategy whereas non-members tend to disagree.

Finally, we mapped out support for the strive for collective power in the occupation. We defined this concept in empirical terms of the exertion of influence and the strengthening of the professional position within church administration and strategy. Thus, we emphasised the need for influence in the labour organisation that Catholic pastors depend on. More than half of the pastors (57%) approves of such a strategy. A minority (15%) disapproves and 28% doubts a strategy aimed at collective power for the professional group. Members of the professional organisation agree on this issue, whereas non-members are in doubt, though with a positive inclination.

Responsibilities

Now that we clarified the professionalisation strategies we still have to ask who is in charge of these strategies. According to the power-approach, the members of the organized occupational group represent the primary actor, though this not at all excludes other actors that exercise occupational control as well. As we mentioned, since the seventies the acting basis for these strategies is formed by the 'Federation of Societies for Pastoral Workers', that aims at the protection of pastoral interests and professional development. But obviously there are other stakeholders as well. First of all this is the Catholic Church, that not only is to be understood as the labour organization, but explicitly claims authority in all

issues regarding pastoral ministry. Secondly, the universities, to which the education for pastoral ministry is entrusted, is stakeholder, not in the least because of its strategic position with regard to questions of theological expertise. This prompts us to investigate the attitudes of pastors concerning the responsibility for professionalisation strategies.

According to the power-approach of professionalisation, the question who bears the responsibility for the professionalisation strategy is of specific interest. Controversy within the occupational group as to who is the legitimate policy actor undermines the professionalisation process. By definition, the power-approach refers to the necessity of a strong influence of the occupational group. However, we note that this does not necessarily imply a conflict-model. Cooperation with other actors may in many cases contribute substantially to the mastering of the occupation. Therefore, we have to identify other actors who actually practice occupational control as well. What then are the attitudes of Catholic pastors towards the responsible actors in a strategy aimed at the development of professional competence?

We have examined the responsibility attitudes of pastors towards three stakeholders in the professionalisation process, and we specified items each time according to various developmental aspects of the professionalisation strategy. We designed three scales, according to each actor, i.e., church, universities and professional organisations. According to our data, in average all three stakeholders are granted comparable support. However, the deviation of the scale-scores indicates considerable controversy. Of the pastors, 70% assigns responsibility to the church, and 75% to universities, and 52% to the professional organisations. Responsibility of the church is rejected by 7%, whereas accountability of universities is rejected by 6% and of professional organisations by 20%. Responsibility in the development of pastoral competence seems to be a controversial issue. Ordained pastors and non-members of the professional organisation support responsibility of the church more, though not-ordained and professional organisation members still support a church responsibility, but less so. Pastoral workers stress a responsibility of universities more than their ordained colleagues do, but discrimination according to professional membership shows no difference in attitude. Priests and deacons are in doubt when it comes to address the competence of professional organisations, and so are non-members of these organisations. VPW-members and pastoral workers though, are in favour for such a responsibility.

How can we interpret the data in determining the eligibility of the power approach in professionalisation for Dutch Catholic pastors? To begin with, our power approach proves to be productive in pinpointing the support for professionalisation strategies. A vast majority of the pastors is in favour of a strategy that aims at improvement of competence and at developing a need-oriented

profession. The coherence of professionalisation assent calves when the professional position in the labour organisation, i.e., the church, is at stake. When remuneration, representation and power issues are raised, the ordained pastors are more cautious and often in doubt, when compared to their not ordained colleagues. In addition, membership of the professional organisation seems of concern. Non-members of professional organisations show still more reticence in the regarding issues. Also the assignment of responsibility for pastoral professionalisation seems to be important as well. Pastoral workers and non-VPW-members are inclined to stress the responsibility of the professional organisations and to de-emphasise church responsibility, compared respectively to priests and VPW-members. Pastoral workers compared to priests stress university responsibility but VPW-members compared to non-members do not. In short, a professionalisation strategy is advocated amongst Catholic pastors, but a subsequent strategy about the power basis that it demands, undermines collective action of the occupational group.

RELIGIOUS MEANING OF PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

Now that we have characterised religious and professional aspects of pastoral commitment, we address the question of their mutual relationship. What meaning, if any at all, has religious commitment for professional commitment?

Incompatibilité des Humeurs

Why is it theologically interesting to explore the relationship of religious and professional commitment? Though everybody involved will acknowledge that pastors have a spiritual profession, there is also an apparent inclination among theologians towards dichotomising religious and professional motives in pastoral commitment. This tendency seems to reflect incompatible humours that are expressed in popular analogies that link religious and professional characteristics of the pastoral office with a wide range of dichotomies in pastoral practice. By way of illustration we sketch some of these connotations that express concerns with regard to the spiritual aim of the pastoral profession. First of all we have the discrepancy of sacred and secular realms, represented respectively by religious and professional commitment. Whereas religious involvement represents the supernatural, professional commitment is perceived as belonging to the temporal goods. Though important in its own right it may involve dangers for secularisation, even as far as the perceived risk that the profession becomes a faith alternative. Connected to that, spirituality may be understood as exclusively linked to the church and the profession to the state. The spiritual is an

obvious characteristic of the church whereas professional characteristics refer to attributes of state institutions, involving the problem of the state-churches-discussion in the pastoral office. Another connotation in this sense may be that religious commitment demands obedience to the tradition and the church doctrines and that it is perceived as belonging to clerical culture. Professional commitment on the other hand seems to reflect other aspirations such as a policy-orientation towards future developments, emancipation from the ecclesiastical labour organization, and an achievement orientation in professional cultures. Quite another opposition is that religious commitment may be felt to offer a critical force opposed to the dominant mechanisms of society whereas professionalisation is an adaptive mechanism, uncritical by nature and born out of necessity. Other dichotomies can be found without effort. We mention the spatial metaphor of relation quality: nearness and distance. In pastoral contact spirituality may refer to a vocational orientation of standing morally close to people: with empathy, positive and authentic as opposed to the professional distance ascribed to occupational involvement which is based on utilitarian principles or even sheer profit. One can of course qualify these connotations as accessory, belonging to accidental use of language in specific cultures of engagement. This however fails to understand that these connotations refer to established codes, conventional mechanisms from which the pastoral office is actually qualified. These dichotomising codes themselves have no intrinsic spiritual value or professional use. This seems to be an insight though, that is not quickly gained in theological discourse. For instance, Baart criticizes the notion of certain pastoral professionalisation strategies as a-moral because of their technological orientation that blinds the pastor for existential life-questions of the faithful and that impoverishes pastoral ministry, even to the extent of pastoral motivation problems and burn-out-syndromes.[21] Fuchs sees grave risks in certain conceptions of professionalisation that seem to transform the office into a fully client-oriented occupation that presents God as a banality and misunderstands divine grace in an autonomous achievement-orientation.[22] A failure to account for

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[21] A.J. Baart, 'Pastoraat. De zogenaamde onbekwaamheid van de pastor', in: E. Borgman, B. van Dijk & T. Salemink (Eds.), *Katholieken in de moderne tijd. Een onderzoek door de Acht-Mei-beweging*, Zoetermeer 1995, 129-151; A.J. Baart, 'Wat heet professioneel? Naar een sterke opvatting van professionaliteit', in: *Sociale Interventie* 5 (1996) no.3, 113-123; A.J. Baart, 'Op zoek naar pastorale bekwaamheid', in: *Praktische Humanistiek* 6 (1996) no.1, 4-15; J.B.A.M. Schilderman, 'Normen en feiten in de pastorale professionaliteit', in: *Praktische Theologie* 5 (1999), 537-557.

[22] O. Fuchs, 'Wie funktioniert die Theologie in empirischen Untersuchungen?', in: *Theologische Quartalschrift* 180 (2000) no.3, 191-210; J.B.A.M. Schilderman, 'Kirche und Professionalisierung als empirisch-theologisches Problem' (Offered to the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, Tübingen).

dysfunctional codes of the pastoral office may contribute to a rupture of the spiritual objective of the office from its social and institutional form in pastoral practice. This is even more dangerous since the dichotomies do neither justice to a conceptual clarification of spirituality and professionality. To describe the pastoral profession as a threat to the moral impetus of spirituality, to understand it as a secular emancipation strategy from the church, or as an uncritical adaptation to market-mechanisms, offers a caricature of the concept. So does a definition of spirituality that claims a morality by nature; that is said to be unworldly and necessarily ecclesiastic in expression, or beneficial by decree. It is in the professional approach of the religious aim and the religious validation of the actual professional effort that offer chances of a more nuanced clarification of commitment in the pastoral office.

Exploring Pastoral Commitment

From this sketch we derive our question if and how pastors attribute spiritual meaning to their profession. We will answer this question in an empirical sense by exploring the actual relationship between the aspects of religious and professional commitment that we clarified in the preceding paragraphs of this contribution. Thus we leave aside the normative discussion for this moment, to address it again in our next paragraph after we answered the underlying empirical question. The empirical question to be answered here reads: is there actually a tension apparent when we compare the religious commitment of pastors and their support for professionalisation? We will offer an answer to this question by applying regression analyses in which we try to find out to what extend religious commitment can predict professional commitment. If such a prediction is statistically present, we will interpret that as an indication of religious support for professional commitment. We will check this relationship by involving three other relevant variables as well, namely functional, performance and evaluative scale-types.[23] As functional characteristics, we add church position, VPW-membership and pastoral work field to our analysis. The first characteristics already proved to be fruitful; the latter refers to the labour organisation, in this case categorical ministry, i.e., pastoral work in non-ecclesiastical and usually care institutions. As performance characteristics, we draw two professionalism scales into the analysis, i.e., the technical skill level and the support level of professional attitudes. Beside that, we enclose a scale that measures the experienced professional support by pastors. As evaluative characteristics, we add collegial, career and task satisfaction scales to determine the influence of

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[23] We control for the influence of background variables according to a stepwise-analysis, in which consequently those variables that do not add to the explained variance are excluded.

actual work experiences. Elsewhere, we accounted for the construction of these scales.[24]

We present the results of our analysis in the form of some observations and in reference to a regression-table (see Annex). When looking at the results of our analysis at first glance, we observe that religious commitment indeed influences professional commitment, though on the whole this influence cannot be said to be strong, universal or unambiguous. In some cases aspects of religious commitment do explain aspects of professional commitment. In other cases there is positive influence and in still other cases a negative influence of spirituality can be noticed on the support of professional policies. When addressing the expected tension of religious and professional commitment, we arrive at a nuanced view. First of all, pastoral devotion – our conventional behavioural indicator of spirituality – offers negative support for several aspects of professional commitment. Pastoral devotion proves to be a disposition to disagree with remunerative and power policies of professionalisation. Though church responsibilities are stressed on the basis of pastoral devotion, those of university and professional organisations tend to be rejected. The spiritual image of the leader also demonstrates this latter influence.[25] The spiritual image of the care-taker on the other hand, seems to undermine pastoral support for an ecclesiastical responsibility. In the experiential realm we find that religious experiences contribute to a rejection of remunerative professionalisation policies, whereas mystical experiences represent a slightly negative predictor of the power policies. Apart from these dissociating relationships of spiritual and professional commitment we are not able to verify the 'incompatiblitité des humeurs' among Dutch Catholic pastors: it is usually lacking and in other cases simply refuted. Professional commitment seems to be religiously appreciated in a variety of ways. Along this way we observe that aesthetic and love-context are positive dispositions for remuneration policies, while the value-in-use policies are attractive for pastors that experience their spirituality in intimacy. The image of the care-taker supports three out of four types of professionalisation strategies. It also supports academic responsibility in questions of professional commitment. For a professional responsibility, the aesthetic context of spirituality proves to be a predictor, whereas church responsibilities in professionalisation are supported by pastoral devotion and the attitude of spiritual finality in pastoral work. Apart from the aspects of religious commitment, we included professional characteristics as well. These variables proved to be influential, especially in predicting remunerative representation of interests. Among others,

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[24] Schilderman, *Pastorale professionalisering*, 22-32.
[25] The correlations between pastoral devotion and the leader-image (r=.46) are high.

laity, membership of the professional organization, employment in care work domains are influential characteristics here. Though membership of the professional organization is a clear disposition for protection of professional interests and responsibilities, there is no proof whatsoever that collegial satisfaction is a positive incentive in professional commitment. Career dissatisfaction is influential though in the interest and power-based strategies. When looking at the performance-aspects, we note that though professional attitudes support professional commitment, the actual skill-level offers no contribution, with the exception of support for value-in-use strategies. In a subsequent inquiry, we found that skill-based and attitudinal-based performances were not correlated and can empirically be explained by specific religious characteristics. Skill-level is influenced positively by adherence to the spiritual image of the woman and spiritual finality, and is predicted negatively by pastoral devotion.[26] The attitudinal performance level is positively influenced by support for spiritual conditionality, spiritual intimacy and pastoral devotion.[27]

Religious Validation of Professional Commitment

In this paragraph, we discuss the results of our investigation. What is the religious relevance of professional commitment? We will first offer a short interpretation of the results that we presented. The hypotheses derived from our findings will be confronted again with the problem of the 'incompatibilité des humeurs' that we presupposed. Finally, we will sketch an ecclesiological outlook of the main question that puzzled us, how to understand the relationship of religious and professional commitment.

Interpretation

What can be concluded from the data that we presented? First of all, we stress the need for nuances in answering questions about the relationship of religious and professional commitment. This prudence is called for since frequency of religious and mystical experiences is of no or even slightly negative influence on professional commitment. This first of all indicates that hypotheses concerning an incompatibility of spirituality and professionalism are not a common denominator in the consciousness of Dutch Roman-Catholic on pastors. To be

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[26] This regression analysis explained skill-level weakly (r^2=.06), with subsequent beta's of image of woman (.21), spiritual finality (-.13) and pastoral devotion (-.12).

[27] This regression analysis explained the attitudinal level moderately (r^2=.25), with subsequent beta's of spiritual conditionality (.35), spiritual intimacy (-.22) and pastoral devotion (.13).

more subtle, we have to look into the religious incentives and spiritual imagery. When observing the type of religious predictions that account for professional commitment, the tension between spirituality and professionalism seems to be especially apparent when responsibilities and church authority interests are at stake. Any reference to other professional interests or groups runs risks of controversy. This is validated for instance by the fact that the spiritual image of caretaker, with its professional connotations in state welfare, and for that matter the employment in care-institutions as well, supports many aspects of professional commitment while it undermines support for ecclesiastical responsibility. The spiritual image of the pastor as a church leader shows an opposite frame of reference when professional responsibilities are at stake. This image seems to be closely linked with the relatively strong characteristic of pastoral devotion that also undermines the power-oriented professionalisation strategies.

These observations lead us to the following hypotheses. The presumed dichotomy between religious and professional commitment is not present among Dutch Catholic pastors. If a tension between spirituality and professionalism exists, it surfaces in those issues that challenge church authority and which are resisted by rather orthodox and devotional minorities within the pastoral population. A religious support of professional commitment is likely to be found in pastoral care settings outside of the local churches. In general, a less controversial link of religion and profession might be furthered in an attitudinal approach of pastoral performance, in which personal exploration and expression of spirituality are stressed. Constructive points of spiritual reference are the close-to-life context in, and from which the pastoral profession is shaped, and which can best be described in catchwords such as beauty, intimacy, love and care.

'Compatibilité des Humeurs?'

Does our interpretation justify the conclusion of compatible mind frames among pastors when assessing the relationship of spirituality and professionalism? To answer this question, we first recall that a dichotomy of the sketched aspects of pastoral commitment is theologically motivated, that is argued on the basis of theories and convictions of academic theologians and church officials. The tensions related to institutional interests that we found may indeed indicate these differences in stakeholders' interests. Like we reported, pastors themselves reflect on the whole a more balanced view in our survey. Nevertheless, we think that this at a closer look does not resolve the issue. Let us clarify that by confronting our data with another, qualitative research on pastoral spirituality that also pays attention to the relationship of religious and professional commitment. Zuidberg finds that, for most pastors, their professional commitment

is tightly associated with their religious commitment. There are two groups, however, that differ in this respect. One group, a large majority, identifies spirituality with professional competence. When speaking about their pastoral identity, these pastors use a non-professional and religious vocabulary. In our investigation, the attitudinal level that we found to be of so much influence on professional commitment may well reflect this vocabulary.[28] The other group, a minority, uses a professional vocabulary when discussing their pastoral identity. With this vocabulary, they are capable to explore and develop their spirituality as a means for their pastorate. For the first group, spirituality is mainly a personal disposition that happens to coincide with their office. For the second group, spirituality also is one of the professional assets that develop their ministry.[29] Zuidberg's finding that pastoral professionalism is mainly attitudinal in nature, and lacks knowledge, insight and, indeed, skill, corroborates the high levels of ascribed attitudinal performance and low skill-levels that we researched in our survey. This biased professionalism of pastors raises a number of problems. There are questions to be asked regarding the implied low occupational prestige, the imbalanced performance requirements, and the educational immunity of attitudes. The problem that concerns us here, however, is that of the professional position: what are the consequences with regard to the spiritual aim of their professional task? Let us take up that question with another observation, again derived from the research of Zuidberg, who reports that overall, pastors are personally involved with God. However, they actually address a personal God mainly in their public prayers, while privately varying in their view of God. Half of the pastors does not pray alone but mainly prays in their liturgical function, and subsequently experiences their spiritual identity in a communitarian sense, in their local communities only. On the other hand, there are pastors who attach importance to a private expression of their faith. They feel that their spiritual identity grows in personal contact, be it religiously or socially, at least not confined to their public role.[30] This observation suggests a double bind in the interaction of professional and spiritual performance, due to an attitudinal bias in pastoral commitment. One can hypothesize that the emphasis on attitudes personalizes the pastoral role publicly and privately to a considerable extent. In their public performance the pastor's personal spiritual dispositions are likely to represent the frame of reference from which they appeal to shared religious convictions, thus creating a motivational dependency

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[28] The attitudinal level is a constructed scale of four separate attitudinal scales of which the evangelical attitude was the most significant and most supported orientation.

[29] G. Zuidberg, *The God of the Pastor. The Spirituality of Roman Catholic Pastors in the Netherlands*, Leiden 2001.

[30] Zuidberg, *The God of the Pastor*, 243-244.

on public spiritual performance.[31] In their private performance, pastors live up to the close-to-life conventions that are more or less characteristic of Christian spirituality, but probably only as far as this supports and fits the attitudinal constraints of their professional ministry. Pastoral ministry therefore is highly personalized but less standardized, as other research has clearly indicated.[32] Thus, the presumed incompatibility of spirituality and professionalism might still be firmly integrated in functional dispositions of pastors and interwoven with the functional requirements of the pastoral profession.

For future research, it seems to be worthwhile to discriminate pastoral commitment along two analytical dimensions. The first dimension is that of a limited versus an extensive professional performance. A limited professionalism mainly appeals to an attitudinal frame of reference, which implies trust in practical routines, an orientation at the micro-level of ones work environment, little knowledge of and interest in professional literature, and the conviction that ones job represents an intuitional art. This pole contrasts with an extensive type of professionalism, which is characterized by a high appreciation of collective policies, a positive evaluation of theory and research related to ones practice, an orientation on professional literature, an orientation of the micro-level on the meso- and macro-level of ones work environment, and the conviction that the job demands rational embedded skills.[33] The second dimension is that of private and public spiritual performance. Private spiritual performance is the personally acquired and expressed religious commitment in practices not explicitly expressed before and scrutinized by a larger audience. Public spirituality is religious commitment accessible for, shared and usually influenced by a larger audience, especially the functionally addressed public. When we locate the two dimensions of pastoral commitment at right angles with each other, we can describe four logical cells of a matrix.

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[31] H. Zondag & H. Schilderman, 'Roeping: motivatie en religieuze oriëntatie', in: *Praktische Theologie* 27 (2000) no.1, 48-71.

[32] T. Buis et al., *Beroepsprofielen in het parochiepastoraat*, The Hague-Nijmegen 1998, 29-44.

[33] J. Giesbers & Th. Bergen, *Professionaliteit en professionalisering van leraren*, Culemborg 1992; Van der Ven 1993, 404-406.

Table 1: Aspects of Pastoral Commitment

		Spiritual Performance	
		Private	Public
Professional Performance	Limited	a (personalized commitment)	b (contextual commitment)
	Extensive	c (instrumental commitment)	d (strategic (commitment)

In this matrix, cell a represents a type of private spiritual performance with a mainly attitudinal type of professional commitment. It is the form of highly personalized pastoral commitment of which the classic clerical spirituality, resembling our concept of pastoral devotion, offers an example. This personal spiritual expression defines the professional performance and is considered as a nuclear and indispensable denominator of the pastoral office. This type of commitment may typically be developed in the traditional church seminaries. Cell b reflects a public type of pastoral commitment with the sketched attitudinal bias. It refers to a contextual type of pastoral commitment for which participative expression of spirituality in ones pastorate is decisive. Here, the personal commitment is publicly tuned to local community contexts, albeit without an integrative professional commitment. During the last decades, a majority of Dutch pastors may have migrated from a highly personalized to a contextual type of pastoral commitment. Thus, it follows the educational emphasis from the sixties of the last century, as represented by the mainstream theological faculties, which stresses both an experience and a community oriented faith. Cell c refers to private spiritual performance from an integrative approach that includes knowledge, insight and skills in pastoral commitment. We label it as instrumental commitment since the person of the pastor is regarded an instrument for professional deployment in the religious and existential contacts that characterise pastoral ministry. In some respects, our image of the care-taker offers an example of this form of commitment. It is typically developed in Clinical Pastoral Education with its characteristic emphasis on value clarification, self-guided personal learning aims, and the instrumental significance of an introspectively and well-balanced faith for the client contact. Cell d refers to public spiritual performance from an integrated professional perspective. We regard it as strategic because the extended professionalism is deployed not only to personally identify with contexts, but also to develop this context following

spiritual aims according to well-balanced functional standards. Cell d has a historic example in Rautenstrauchs ideal of the pastor as a spiritually formed and well-educated professional ('avant-la-lettre'), fully equipped to take the moral and spiritual lead in civic society. In modern postgraduate curricula one can find modern variants that foster these more extensively elaborated types of pastoral commitment. If research proves that these four types of pastoral commitment have an empirical basis among groups of pastors, it may increase insight into the support of professionalism in relationship to different styles of spirituality, and thus refine the discussions at hand.

Ecclesiological Outlook

We have still not been able to explain why power and interest related issues in professionalism in some cases corroborate the incompatible moods among pastors. Recalling part of the codex definition of the pastoral office that we started our contribution with, the denotation 'munus ordinatione […] ecclesiastica' seems to be firmly impressed in the consciousness of pastors when matters of spirituality and professionalism are at stake. Our previous discussion addressed the dispositional aspect of the problem, but why are the institutional aspects apparently such a matter of controversy?

   One of the underlying problems of our discussion is that matters of pastoral professionalism are rarely recognized and discussed in ecclesiology. Instead they are outshined by systematic theological notions of the religious initiative and prerogative of God on the one hand and spiritually defined concepts of clerical order on the other.[34] In the ecclesiology of Vatican II, the understanding of church as 'people of God' expresses the spiritual significance of the mutual loyalty of God and man in its social and historic form, before issues of church structure are raised. However, the Constitution emphasises priesthood as a common denominator for both clerical and laic members of the people of God. The holy priesthood is granted – in interdependence – to all faithful (LG 10). This is prophetically emphasised by a 'sensu fidei', a shared spiritual sensitivity aimed at a consensus in faith and moral, that is spiritually guided by the Holy Spirit that gives each His gifts, as He pleases (LG 12). The Constitution states that as far as the church members' knowledge, competence and expertise reach, they are authorised and compelled to address all issues that concern the well-being of the Church (LG 37). This egalitarian approach in the nature of all church members

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[34] In the official texts of Vatican II the word 'church' is the most frequent noun (1147), followed by 'God' (1001) and 'Christ' (903), leaving the incidence of words like 'men' (509), 'Spirit' (445), 'religious (299), 'spiritual' (169), 'office' (162), 'profession' (39) or 'professional' (19) behind.

is corrected not only by clear definitions of the Episcopal tasks and responsibilities (LG 24-29), but also by applying the concept of vocation so, that it assigns spiritual motives to clerical and secular motives to laic members of the Church (LG 31).[35] Thus, vocation is both the common denominator of the people of God, understood as share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ; and the demarcation-criterion that directs laity to secular tasks or contexts and clergy to sacred ministry. Even though all church members are called to Christian fulfilment and a loving perfection, this applies especially to priests and deacons for whom the spirituality has to be expressed in service of their pastoral office, whereas for other members secular service is impressed upon as an expression of Gods love (LG 40). The demarcation criterion between priesthood and laity within the people of God is expressed in spiritual and not in professional terms. If one would reconstruct a professional definition of the clergy out of the relevant doctrinal texts, it would probably be one for which a non-secular disposition towards the aim of holiness in the sense of personal perfection is decisive. This vocational inclination, be it motivated towards secular or sacred contexts, is that of a devotion to the world ('consecratio mundi'), but not at all an accommodation to the contextual requirements of occupational development. The presence of the church in the world is – at the penalty of imminent secularisation – never to be confused with the presence of the world in the church.

From these sketched aspects of ecclesiological doctrines one can question the consequences for professional characteristics of the pastoral office, respectively for the development of its spiritual aim. Whereas policies relating to the personal sphere are likely to meet some benevolence, chances are indeed high that professionalisation, especially in its institutionally related aspects are viewed as secular, profane, and laity-bound and therefore considered spiritually controversial or even suspect by definition. Only in contexts outside the church that demand professionalism, as those of care-settings, an attuning of the spiritual view of the pastoral profession to a professional view of its spiritual aim is called for, and even inevitable at the penalty of deprofessionalization and loss of occupation. Unless there are chances to develop an ecclesiology which understands a devotion to the world as an assignment to address spirituality not only as an ideal personal disposition that defines the profession, but also as a professional effort to develop spirituality within its worldly contingencies, a blind spot is likely to remain. From a pastoral theological perspective, this blind spot refers

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[35] 'Laicis indoles saecularis propria et pecularius est. […] Laicorum est, ex vocatione propria, res temporales gerendo et secundum Deum ordinando, regnum Dei quaerere'.

to lack of theories, instruments and methods in assessing and developing spirituality inside and outside of the church settings. For most pastors, the needs and problems of the flock are of great importance and ask for collective strategies on professional domains of spiritual quality and expertise. To understand these concerns not only as extrinsic claims of modern times, but also as intrinsic conditions and objectives of church development offers one of the crucial challenges of practical theology today.

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Summary

In this contribution, we clarify the pastoral commitment of Dutch Roman-Catholic pastors by describing it as the interplay of religious and professional commitment, which we analyze both analytically and empirically. Our main research question regards an empirical and theological inquiry into the relationship of both aspects of pastoral commitment. We clarify that the incompatible humours of religious and professional commitment that we find in theological and ecclesiastical discussions, have to be nuanced when one takes the empirical topography of pastoral consciousness into account. Pastors seem to reflect more balanced views on the relationship of religious and professional commitment, which are described and discussed in this contribution. Distinctions are provided that understand pastoral spirituality on continua of religious display and professional performance. Both dispositional and ecclesiological viewpoints are drawn in to account for the varieties in tension between spiritual and professional commitment in pastoral ministry.

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ANNEX: REGRESSION TABLE[36]

Table A: Influence of Religious Commitment on Professional Commitment among Dutch Catholic Pastors (controlled for professional characteristics)

		professional commitment						
		strategies				responsibilities		
		competence	value-in-use	remunerative representation of interests	collective power	ecclesiastical responsibility	academic responsibility	professional responsibility
religious commitment								
experential aspects	religious experience			-,09				
	mystical experience				-,05			
	spiritual-aesthetic context			.12				.13
	spiritual-intimacy context		.16					
	spiritual love context			.12				
	spiritual image leader					.27	-,16	-,16
	spiritual image counsellor							

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

	spiritual image caretaker	.11	.16		.09	-,10	.17	
	spiritual image fellow-man							
	spiritual image woman							
attitudinal aspects	spiritual conditionality							
	spiritual finality				.09			
behavioural aspects	pastoral devotion			-,21	-,15	.17	-,11	-,17
professional characteristics								
function	church position*			.13				
function	VPW-membership**	.13		.23				.27
	pastoral work field***	.16	.14	.17				
performance	skill-level		.18					
performance	attitudinal level	.27	.23	.14	.22		.10	
	professional support			.14				.12
evaluation	collegial satisfaction					-.08		
evaluation	careeer satisfaction			-.15	-.10			
	task satisfaction					.21		
R²		.12	.16	.33	.12	.15	.06	.24

* = Pastoral Worker (not ordained)
** = Member of the professional organisation
*** = Employment in care-related institutions