

UNDERSTANDING
THE NEEDS OF
ADULT SURVIVORS
OF INSTITUTIONAL
SEXUAL ABUSE

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November 2006

MY EXPERIENCE

- Sexually abused by Father Charles Sylvestre for 2 years; age 9-11
- Left unprotected by the church who knew about the actions of my abuser; denied my allegations - 30 years
- The police, CAS, my principal, a social worker all remained silent not helping me bring my cries forward



TRY TO IMAGINE

- Their silence, inaction compounds the original abuse
- Leaves you devalued, rejected, unworthy, insignificant and profoundly alone
- This is the hallmark of institutional abuse
- Think of these feelings states for yourself, your children - now imagine your lives, your relationships, your fears, your behaviours; the destruction
- Clergy abuse is the defining and confining moment in the rest of your life

CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

- Did It Really Happen?
- Defining your damage for sentencing
- The lab rat phenomena; when will there be enough data?
- Victim impact statements; exposing your soul
- Crown attorneys; victim witness support personnel



CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

- How damaged are you? The complicated challenge
- More testing; more judgment - don't test me test the clergy - prevention
- Appearances can be deceiving
- Connecting the dots of PTSD
- Motivation to heal?
- Trusting the victims; stop looking for the outliers



CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

- Goals for civil litigation; the monetary trap
- Effecting change in large corporations
- Creating behavioural change;
 - the if _____, then _____ scenario.
- Time frames for litigation; setting the priorities



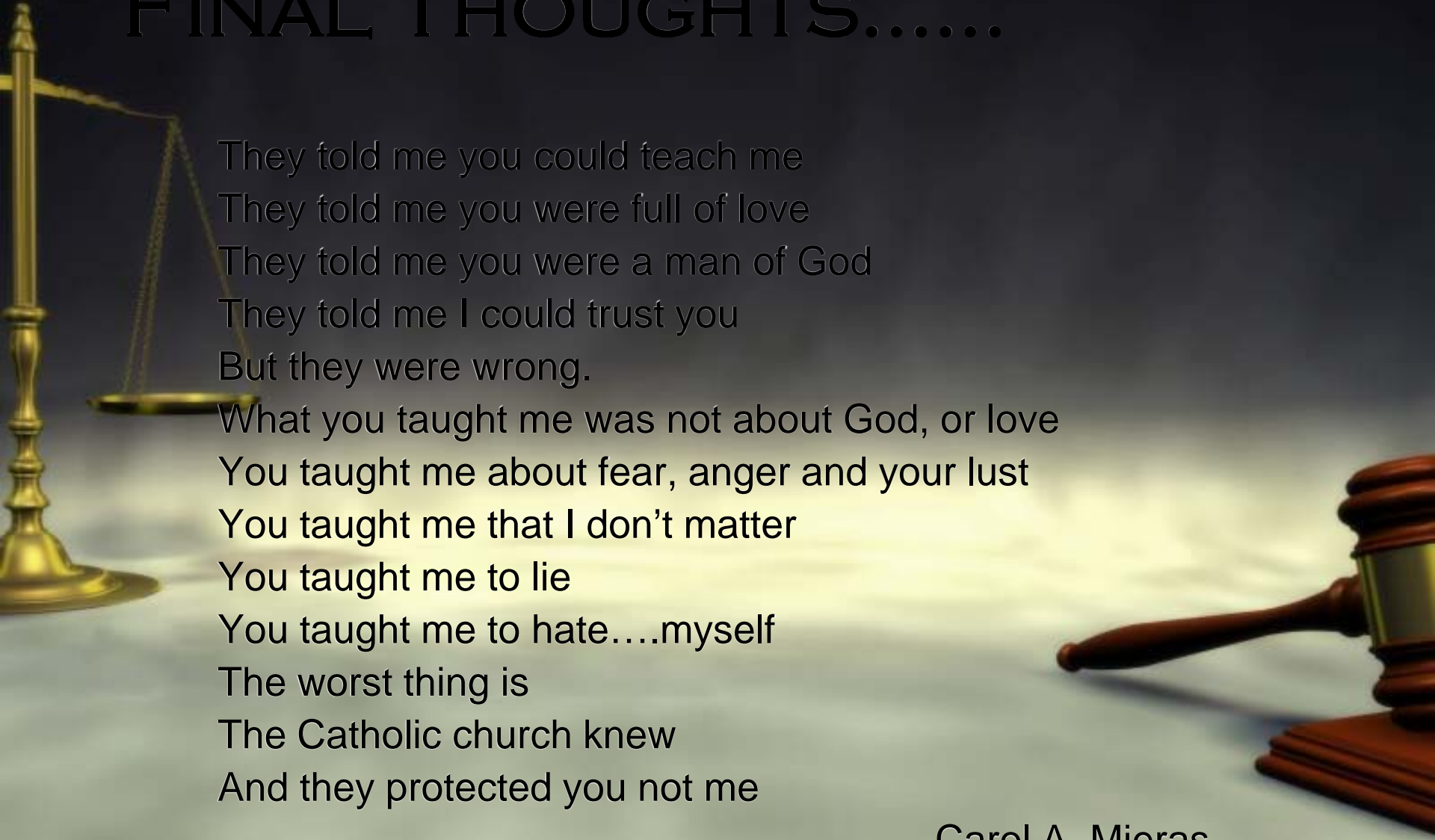
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- Disability is the difference between the amount of support offered and the amount of support needed
- ESSENTIAL - access to experienced, qualified therapists and the \$ to support this
 - Importance of curiosity; the thin and the thick diagnosis
- Victims need to be participants in the process - empowerment

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- More information is better - don't leave me alone again
- Trusting the victims
- Examining what we value in court proceedings
 - Who is really on trial?
 - Balancing victims' rights with those of the accused
- Critical examination of the laws of burden of proof
- Minimum amounts \$ payable for abuse victims

FINAL THOUGHTS.....



They told me you could teach me
They told me you were full of love
They told me you were a man of God
They told me I could trust you
But they were wrong.
What you taught me was not about God, or love
You taught me about fear, anger and your lust
You taught me that I don't matter
You taught me to lie
You taught me to hate....myself
The worst thing is
The Catholic church knew
And they protected you not me

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