# Child Sex Abusers in Protestant Christian Churches: An Offender Typology

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**ABSTRACT**

Sexual abuse that occurs within religious settings has been the focus of prior research for over 50 years. However, the overwhelming majority of this research has focused on the Roman Catholic Church, not Protestant Christian churches. Yet, Protestant Christian Churches are the most prominent religious institutions, both in the physical number of churches and total participants, across the United States. By examining 326 alleged instances of sexual abuse at or through activities provided by the Protestant Christian church, this study sought to create the first typology of sexual abusers within this setting. This study found that three types of offenders exist within these settings, the (1) opportunist, (2) groomer, and (3) serial offender. Policy implications, limitations, and future directions for research will also be discussed.

## Introduction

Sexual abuse within religious settings has been the focus of various media coverage for nearly 50 years (Bailey, 2013; The Boston Globe, 2004). However, this topic received renewed attention over the past two decades with the bombshell report of widespread sexual abuse and cover-up within the Roman Catholic Church, as detailed by the *Boston Globe*, culminating with the 2015 Academy Award☐ Best Picture-winning movie *Spotlight* (The Boston Globe, 2004). Extensive investigation into the sexual abuses found an estimated 16,000 victims involving 3,700 Roman Catholic clergies (Bishop Accountability, 2011). As a result, individuals began questioning the extent of sexual abuse among other religious settings, such as Protestant Christian churches.

Protestant Christianity refers to any denomination of Christianity not affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, such as the Southern Baptist Convention and United Methodists. From a sheer numerical standpoint, Protestant Christian congregations substantially outweigh the number of physical Catholic churches and even individual members within the United States. Specifically, the Roman Catholic Church has 17,000 parishes and 51 million members (Masci & Smith, 2018) compared to the estimated 314,000 Protestant Christian congregations and 60 million members (Grammich et al., 2012; Pew Research Center, 2007). Moreover, Protestant Christian congregations are not generally organized by a global or national structure. The Roman Catholic Church's hierarchical structure allowed for the cover-up and subsequent discovery of widespread sexual abuse. Consequently, instances of sexual abuse within Protestant

Christianity might appear isolated when they could be part of a larger overall pattern of offender and offending behaviors.

Some estimates exist on the total instances of sexual abuse within these settings. One estimate comes from three of the largest faith-based insurance companies that insure nearly 160,000 churches. These three faith-based insurance companies reported a total of 7,095 insurance claims of sexual abuse by clerical members, church employees, congregation members, or others involved within these settings from the period of 1987 to 2007 (Seattle-Post Intelligencer, 2007). These reports indicate an average of 260 claims of sexual abuse per year. In addition, Denney, Kerley, and Gross (2018) published one of the first empirical studies on sexual abuse in the U.S. within Protestant Christian settings that examined news articles reporting on arrests involving sexual abuse, finding 326 total cases reported from 1999 to 2014. Most recently, the *Houston Chronicle* published a series titled "Abuse of Faith," uncovering sexual abuse and cover-up within the largest Protestant Christian organization in the U.S.- the Southern Baptist Convention- identifying 700 total alleged predators over 20 years (Downen, Olsen, & Tedesco, 2019).

It is clear that sexual abuse occurs within these organizations, thus underscoring the importance of examining sexual victimization and related contextual characteristics, such as offender-types, that arise within this setting. The need to further understand sexual abuse within this setting is imperative since the impacts of sexual victimization are so severe. Effects of sexual victimizations include, but are not limited to, depression, suicide/suicidal thoughts, substance use/abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), eating disorder(s), and more. (Bensley, Van Eenwyk, & Simmons, 2000; Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, DaCosta, & Cassavia, 1990; Briere & Runtz, 1988; Dube, Anda, Whitfield, Brown, Felitti, Dong, & Giles, 2005; Gold, 1986; Kendall-Tackett, Williams, & Finkelhor, 1993; Macmillan & Munn, 2001; Najdowski & Ullman, 2009; Rossow & Lauritzen, 2001; Simpson & Miller, 2002). This study will provide a typology of offenders that commit sexual abuse at or through activities provided by Protestant Christian churches with the goals of assisting the discovery, investigation, and prevention of sexual abuses that occur within these environments.

## Literature Review

Research related to sexual abuse that occurs at or through activities provided by Protestant Christian churches has been sparse. Most related research has focused on sexual abuse that occurs within the Roman Catholic church. Since the Protestant Christian church grossly outweighs the size and scope of the Roman Catholic Church

within the U.S., the sheer number of individuals involved in such practices increases the overall opportunities for sexual abuse. Therefore, it is imperative to understand an overview of sexual abuse within Protestant Christian settings, clergy offender characteristics, clergy planning and grooming methods, child sexual victimization, and common sex offender characteristics and typologies.

**Overview of Sexual Abuse within Protestant Christian Settings**

Though there has not been a strong research focus on Protestant Christian sexual abuse, studies have focused on clergy sexual abuse and related issues. The majority of prior research has focused on individual abuse cases, recovering from abuse, or preventing abuse altogether (Benson, 1994; Bradshaw, 1977; Fortune & Poling, 1994; Kennedy, 2003). However, the bulk of prior literature on this topic has focused on sexual misconduct among clergy. It is important to note that sexual misconduct is inherently different from abuse. Specifically, sexual misconduct refers to behaviors that may be deviant within these communities (e.g., adultery, pre-marital sex, etc.) yet not illegal. Despite this important distinction, this prior literature could help understand the context in which sexual abuse arises and the construction of offender typologies.

*Clergy Offender Characteristics*

One overwhelming offender characteristic that has been found is that almost all identified offenders of both clergy sexual misconduct and sexual abuse have been male (Francis & Baldo, 1998; Friberg & Laaser, 1998; Garland & Argueta, 2010; Thoburn & Whitman, 2004). This finding should come as no surprise since clergy are almost entirely male due to most Christian organizations' patriarchal structure. For example, a 2010 study found that 88% of Protestant congregations have males as their leaders (Cooperative Congregations Studies Partnership, 2010). Another essential characteristic is that clergy that has been found to engage in sexual misconduct have greater overall levels of narcissism when using the Raskin and Hall (1979) Narcissistic Personality Inventory (Brock & Lukens, 1989; Francis & Baldo, 1998; Hands, 1992; Muse, 1992; Muse & Chase, 1993; Rediger, 1990; Steinke, 1989). It is posited that one's increased feeling of importance could lead to higher overall propensity levels to commit sexual abuse as they are in positions of power within the church and exploit that power for sexual purposes.

It has been found that individuals within this setting that commit sexual misconduct are generally between the ages of 51 and 60 (Francis & Baldo, 1998). Moreover, those

in ministry for at least 25 years were more commonly associated with sexual misconduct (Friberg & Laaser, 1998). Therefore, one might become increasingly comfortable committing sexual misconduct and perhaps even abuse with more positional experience. For the position in the church, Thoburn and Whitman (2004) found that the role of an associate pastor was the most represented to engage in sexual misconduct. As such, clergy who engage in sexual misconduct appear mostly middle-aged and in mid-level positions within their church. This finding is similar to what is reported in John Jay College (2004), where they found that 42% of those that sexually abused children occupied the role of associate pastor. Head priests consisted of 25% of those that sexually abused children (John Jay College, 2004). Now that the common demographic characteristics of those who engage in sexual misconduct have been discussed, it is crucial to understand known clergy offenders' planning and grooming methods.

### Clergy Planning and Grooming Methods

Within any leadership position in an organization or a church, there is built-in power and control. With power and control being identified as two critical characteristics of sexual abuse (Brownmiller, 1975), it has been argued that any power position within the church could be a primer for sexual abuse (Stermac & Segal, 1989). Not only does the individual have the power that comes with their position, but the purported backing of a higher power (i.e., God). Capps (1993) provided three primary reasons why religious environments might be conducive to sexual abuse. First, the position within the church gives the offender access to victims across the church. For example, a Pastor potentially has access to every church member, whether a child or an elderly person, simply by their position. Second, those in positions of power generally have little oversight. This lack of oversight allows them to move (and potentially abuse) freely with little chance of discovery. Third, these individuals might be privy to knowledge (e.g., marriage difficulties, sexual promiscuity among teens, etc.) due to their positions that can then be used to exploit a situation.

In an expansion of Capps (1993), Garland and Argueta (2010) listed six primary reasons why the church environment could be conducive to sexual offending after examining the experiences of 46 identified victims and victim family members of clergy sexual misconduct. The six themes that appeared are as follows: (1) family members, friends, and victims ignored warnings signs; (2) the niceness culture; (3) the ease of private communication; (4) no oversight; (5) multiple roles; and (6) an inherent trust in the sanctuary. It is critical to expand on several points. For the niceness culture,

Garland and Argueta (2010) reference that the expectation for being friendly while attending church services could mask sexual flirtation that occurs, thus opening the door for mixed signals or direct sexual abuse. For the multiple roles point, it is not uncommon for many clergies to be both a youth pastor and provide counseling to their congregation members. As such, they might become privy to certain information that they otherwise might not be aware of and use it to their advantage to abuse sexually. For example, a teenager might disclose that they are sexually active. The person in a position of power might threaten to disclose that information to their parents if they do not give in to their demands. It is argued that the items above, individually or collectively, allow clergy with an opportunity to sexually abuse within this setting. Now that an overview of what is known regarding clergy offender characteristics and grooming, it is imperative to provide an overview of child sexual victimization.

**Overview of Child Sexual Victimization**

Due to the severe nature and consequences of sexual victimization, there has been no shortage of studies on child sexual abuse. Some studies have estimated that as many as 25% of all children in the U.S. will experience a sexual assault before turning 18 years of age (Spinazzola, Ford, & Zucker, 2005). However, the overall likelihood of sexual victimization does vary across sexes. Overall, girls are generally reported as being significantly more likely to become victims of sexual abuse during their childhood when compared to boys (Bolen & Scannapieco, 1999; Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Levenson & D'Amora, 2007). Most estimates place the percentage of girls being sexually abused at 20% to 30% (Levenson & D'Amora, 2007; Finkelhor et al., 1990), though some estimates have been as high as 40% (Bolen & Scannapieco, 1999).

Generally speaking, boys are expected to experience a lower overall likelihood of sexual victimization during their childhood. One example is when MacMillan et al. (1997) found that 12.8% of girls in their sample were sexually abused compared to only 4.3% of boys. A second example is when Bolen and Scannapieco (1999) found that 13% of boys had been sexually abused compared to 40% of girls. However, this considerable difference may be due to disclosure issues as girls are more likely to reveal their sexual abuse for a myriad of reasons when compared to boys (Brochman, 1991; Walwrath, Ybarra, & Holden, 2003). One common reason for not disclosing or delaying disclosure can be their relationship with the abuser, as most sexually abused children know their offender in some capacity (Arata, 1998; Smith, Letourneau, & Saunders, 2000). For example, as high as 74% of child victims of sexual abuse know

their abuser (Snyder, 2000). Therefore, this further highlights the need to examine sexual abuse that occurs within religious settings. The child's age also has significant ramifications for sexual abuse in how often and to what extent it may appear.

### Age and Sexual Victimization

The three age ranges with the highest rate for sexual victimization are all on the younger end of the age spectrum. The highest overall known rate of sexual victimization is for those between the ages of 16 and 19 at 5.5 per 1,000 (Rennison & Rand, 2003). Those between 20 and 24 are the second-highest known sexual victimization rate at 2.9 assaults per 1,000 (Rennison & Rand, 2003). The third highest sexual victimization age range is between 12 and 15, at 2.1 assaults per 1,000 people (Rennison & Rand, 2003). The most common age of victims is crucial for understanding sexual abuse within this environment. A total of 23% (9.6 million) of U.S. adolescents (10 to 19 years of age) identify as being of the Protestant Christian faith, with approximately half participating in Church youth groups (Smith, Denton, Faris, & Regnerus, 2002). In addition, about 38% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders report attending a Protestant Christian church function weekly, with 16% doing so one or two times per month (Smith et al., 2002). Considering this, it makes sense that those under 18 at Protestant churches would be the most likely victims of sexual assault, especially when one considers the general societal trends of abuse among these age groups and the relationship dynamics between offender and victim. These age ranges being targeted for sexual abuse within these settings were confirmed in Denney et al. (2018).

### Common Offender Characteristics and Typologies

Perhaps the most widely agreed-upon characteristic of sex offenders is that the overwhelming majority are adult males (Rennison, 2001; Rennison & Rand, 2003). Another essential attribute of offenders and victims is that most sexual assault victims know their offender, with Snyder (2000) reporting this percentage as high as 74%. However, there are some slight differences between female and male victims on whether they know their offender or not. For example, Rennison and Rand (2003) found that nearly 70% of female victims know their offender compared to 52% of male victims in their sample. It is also important to note that most offenders are not blood-related but are generally a friend, family friend, or some sort of acquaintance to the victim (Rennison & Rand, 2003). Adding the dynamics of the age of the victim and the context of the offender/victim relationship within the Protestant Christian setting, it is no surprise that sexual victimizations might occur in the context of minors in the church and those in positions of power, such as a pastor or youth minister.

### *Typologies*

Despite the wide variation in characteristics among sex offenders, typologies have emerged as an excellent way to classify offender types. A typology is a scientific classification of a group of shared attributes. Though there are many similarities among sex offenders, they are not standardized with uniform characteristics (Gordon & Porporino, 1990). For example, there are essential differences in why offenders might target an adult female versus a pre-pubescent male. Unfortunately, only one prior study was located that created typologies for clergy that engaged in sexual abuse.

Grenz and Bell (2001) identified three primary categories for clergy sexual offenders being the (1) *predator*, (2) *wanderer*, and (3) *lover*. The predator classification was comprised of individuals that would actively seek opportunities to sexually offend within their congregation. Wanderers were identified as those who only sexually offend when they experience life struggles, such as marital difficulties. Consequently, wanderers were viewed to commit these sexual offenses to relieve feelings of guilt. Finally, lovers were individuals that genuinely believed they had fallen in love with a member of their congregation. Since this was the only prior typology identified that pertained to the individuals that are the focus of this study, it is crucial to focus on the more commonly cited typologies for sex offenders and how they are constructed.

Most sex offenders are generalists, not specialists (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004; Smallbone & Wortley, 2004). That is, most sex offenders tend to victimize when a perceived opportunity presents itself instead of actively seeking out someone that might fit their victim preferences, such as a specific height or hair color. Generally, sex offenders that target children are more likely to specialize in victim selection when compared to those who target adults (Miethe, Olson, & Mitchell, 2006; Simon, 2000). Because of the vast differences that can exist among sex offenders, most typologies have been developed around their primary victim preference (i.e., adult or child) or various offender characteristics (Robertiello & Terry, 2007).

**Adult Victim Typologies.** Robertiello and Terry (2007) reviewed sex offender typologists and found that offenders typically fall into one of four main categories. The first category, *compensatory offenders*, will usually use the minimum physical force possible to restrain the victim to achieve sexual gratification. The second category, *opportunistic offenders*, are highly impulsive and will offend when they perceive an opportunity. The third category, *power/control offenders*, receives sexual gratification from the control of their victim. The fourth and final category is the *sadistic offender*.

These offenders have the primary goal of causing as much fear and pain for the victim as possible. It is through fear and physical pain whereby they derive their sexual gratification. Like adult sex offenders, typologies have also been created for those who target children (Groth, Hobson, & Gary, 1982; Knight & Prentky, 1990).

**Child Victim Typologies.** Typologies for those who target children often focus on the familial connection (i.e., whether the offender is blood-related to the victim) (Gould, 1994). However, since this study does not include those who sexually abused family members, non-familial offender typologies will be the focus. A relatively recent work by Miller (2013) provides a summary of child sex abuser typologies that is similar to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) typology of child molesters (Robertiello & Terry, 2007; Terry & Tallon, 2004). These typologies are broken into two categories, each with four subsections.

The first category is the *situational child molester* (Miller, 2013). These individuals will sexually abuse a child primarily merely because they perceive an opportunity to do so. However, it is also possible these individuals will prey upon other individuals deemed as helpless (e.g., disabled adults) when an opportunity is presented.

The first subsection of the situational child molester is the *regressed pedophile*. These individuals will be sexually involved with adults from time to time; however, they will primarily target female children. Often, these individuals have poor coping skills and will sexually offend when various life stressors present themselves (Terry & Tallon, 2004). Generally, they will select child victims deemed as easily accessible to relieve these life stressors (Robertiello & Terry, 2007: Terry & Tallon, 2004). The second subsection is the *morally indiscriminate pedophile*. Individuals occupying this subsection will generally sexually abuse by using force. Moreover, they will typically fantasize about similar actions using deviant pornography (e.g., bondage) to assist in creating and reinforcing their fantasy. Like the previous typology, these individuals may target children and occasional adults (Terry & Tallon, 2004).

The third subsection of situational child molesters is the *sexually indiscriminate*. These are individuals that will often victimize their children or children within their family. These offenders will commonly report victimizing out of boredom and doing so as an extension of their deviant fantasies (Terry & Tallon, 2004).

The fourth and final subsection of the situational child molester is the *naïve/inadequate* molester. Offenders occupying this category have difficulties forming and maintaining relationships with adult peers. Moreover, these offenders typically

have a cognitive disorder. The totality of this issue is that they will sexually abuse children without understanding or demonstrating remorse for their actions.

The second category of child sex offenders found by Miller (2013) and Terry and Tallon (2004) is the *preferential child molester*. Unlike situational child molesters, these offenders will typically do so because they have a sexual preference for children, not a mere opportunity to abuse. The first subtype is the *seductive molester*. This subtype refers to an individual who engages in grooming behaviors to lure and earn a victim's trust to engage in and continue their sexual abuse. Grooming refers to the offender providing a form of manipulation or general enticement (e.g., affection, compliments, gifts, etc.) to initiate and continue their sexual abuse. Typically, offenders within this category will refrain from violence but emphasize what they perceive as affection to earn children's trust. They often will be abusing several children at the same time.

The second form of a preferential child molester is the *fixated molester*. This subgroup is an individual that will also use grooming strategies to target and carry out their abuse. However, what separates these individuals from the former subgroup is that they generally have a child's mental intelligence and emotional equivalent. Consequently, they view children as equals. Often, these individuals will be sexually abusing multiple children simultaneously and use the Internet to recruit and communicate with a victim(s) (Miller, 2013).

The third and final form of preferential child molesters is the *sadistic pedophile*. Similar to adult sadistic offenders, these individuals will often engage in physical and sexual torture. There is a potential for this physical and sexual torture to result in death. As such, these are the most likely of offender-types to use violence, frequently extreme.

As one can see, typologies can be extremely useful for understanding offenders in how and they target the victims when there is such a variety of information that can be considered. This issue, combined with the relatively new research environment of the Protestant Christian church as a potential conducive environment for sexual abuse, is imperative that examination into the types of offenders that operate within this arena be continued. The importance of the sustained study is evident when one considers the inherent positions of power and control, the niceness culture promoted within religious settings, and the sheer number of interactions among millions of youth on a daily and weekly basis in the U.S. (e.g., church service, mission trips, choir practice, youth group trips, etc.). Consequently, the positions of power within these organizations and their

mere interactions with congregants could lead to many opportunities for sexual offenses within these settings. Therefore, the construction of offender typologies is crucial to aid in the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of individuals that engage in sexual abuse within this setting.

## The Present Study

There is one primary goal of the present study. This goal is to create a typology of individuals alleged to have been sexually abused at or within activities connected to Protestant Christian churches (e.g., mission trips, camping trips, etc.). In addition, this study aims to provide more empirical information related to the offenders within these settings that can be potentially used in the investigation, prevention, and prosecution of sexual offenders in or at activities provided by Protestant Christian churches.

## Methods

### Sample

The sample for the present study consists of a collection of online news articles from local news agencies that reported on alleged instances of sexual victimization that occurred physically at or through activities involving Protestant Christian churches. In addition, three individual websites that functioned as a news depository for information on this topic were located[1]. Each website operated during a unique timeframe that covered 32 years (1982-2014)[2]. These same websites were used in a prior study analyzing the characters of offenses and offenders at Protestant Christian churches (citation withheld for blind peer-review process).

Each news article contained varied information about a sexual crime that occurred at or during activities surrounding a Protestant Christian church. Examples of included information were the offense-type, context of the offense(s), offender information (e.g., age, sex, role within the church), and some victim information (e.g., age range and position within the church). There were a total of 2,240 individual cases across all three websites. Cases before 1999 were removed from inclusion since this project was originally part of a more extensive study that involved the examination of the U.S. Census and American Community Survey that was not readily available in a digital format before 1999. Once duplicate cases, international cases, and cases that involved civil lawsuits, non-Protestant churches, or misconduct were removed, there were 326 unique instances.

### *Content Analysis*

A content analysis was performed on news articles involving 326 individual cases of child sexual abuse that allegedly took place at activities surrounding Protestant Christian churches. Since some of the news links available did not contain all relevant information for the study, search terms that included the alleged offender's name, church, or a combination of each were used in Google and Google News to identify related articles. This method has been utilized in other studies that performed a content analysis on online news articles (Denton, 2010; Stinson, Liederbach, Brewer, Schmalzried, Mathna, & Long, 2013). Individual articles were typically from local news stations or newspapers, with a case yielding an average of three news articles per search. In total, approximately 969 news articles on the 326 cases were analyzed.

Once relevant articles were identified, each was read multiple times to record any necessary data pertinent to the study's goal. Examples of the information recorded are the *sex offense(s) charged* (e.g., child sexual abuse, rape), the *physical location of the offense* (e.g., offender's home, at the church, on a church-sponsored trip), *alleged offender demographic information* (e.g., age, sex, race/ethnicity), *victim information* (when available), *offender's role within the church* (e.g., pastor, volunteer), and other contextual information. Finally, all data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet for organization and analysis.

Once data was organized, a content analysis was performed utilizing a grounded theory approach and principles of analytic induction to identify key themes and concepts (Charmaz, 1983, 2006). A grounded theory approach was best for studying this topic as there is not enough prior research to apply a pre-existing theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). A grounded theory approach has been utilized to examine understudied sex offenses, offenders, and related issues (Gannon, Rose, & Ward, 2010; Gee, Devilly, & Ward, 2004; Meloy, 2006; Webster & Beech, 2000). Moreover, grounded theory provides a researcher to seek and conceptualize latent social patterns and structures of one's interest via simultaneous comparison. Applying any other theoretical lens to the formation of offender and victim typologies may limit the data in this understudied area, potentially stunting the development of theoretical explanations that could arise (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

## Findings

Sex offenders often have diverse offense histories. As such, prior research has generally organized offenders by the offender/offense characteristics or even primary victim preference (e.g., children or adults) (Robertiello & Terry, 2007). Locations have been frequently identified as a critical factor for understanding the context of a sexual

offense (Beauregard, Rossmo, & Proulx, 2007; Colombino, Calkins-Mercado, Levenson, & Jeglic, 2011), offense location(s) were used as a key proxy for offense characteristics when developing offender typologies. Before discussing the typologies, it is imperative to briefly provide the sample characteristics published in [citation withheld for blind peer-review process] contextual purposes.

The reported sex offense can be divided into two categories, *contact,* and *non-contact offenses*. Contact offenses are an alleged instance of direct physical, sexual contact between an offender and victim (s) (Mair & Stevens, 1994). Non-contact offenses are an alleged instance where an offender does not have direct physical contact with a victim (Mair & Stevens, 1994). For example, this could include sexual harassment and child pornography. In total, the overwhelming majority of alleged offenses were contact (80%; n= 363), while non-contact offenses consisted of 18.9% (n= 89).

It is also essential to mention the victims per case and the reported location of offenses for contextual purposes. Each case ranged from as low as one known victim to as many as 20 victims.[3] Despite the wide range, most cases included only one known victim at 61.7% (n= 205).[4] A substantial minority had two reported victims per case (19%; n= 63). The remainder of the cases were three or more known victims.

For the construction of typologies, the known offense location(s) proved imperative as the physical location is key to understanding the context surrounding a sex offense. For example, it would suggest that these types of victimizations are opportunistic if they occur on church grounds. Conversely, victimization that occurs off church grounds suggests a higher level of planning and grooming to isolate the individual away from the church campus or related activity. Moreover, if one victimized both on and off-campus, it would suggest an ongoing relationship with varied victimization opportunities. When considering all 326 cases, the offense location was reported in 70.9% (n= 231) cases, leaving roughly 30% (n= 95) unknown. Within the reported locations, 62.3% (n= 144) had one known location with nearly 40% (n= 87) having multiple locations. Most (45.5%; n= 105) cases occurred off church grounds, such as the offender's home, a hotel/motel room, or the offender's car. A substantial minority of offenses occurred solely on the church grounds (35.5%; n=82), such as the offender's office or in the church parking lot. Fully 19% (n= 44) of offenses occurred both on and off the church grounds.

**Typologies**

Three typologies emerged from the data. As stated above, offenders were organized via offender, offense, and victim characteristics. The separation of offenders followed three steps. First, since there were only four female offenders, they were removed from the sample with a final sample size of 326. Second, individual cases were categorized on whether they involved one or multiple victims at the arrest time. Third, cases were separated by the reported offense location. The three typologies that emerged were the (1) *opportunist*, *(2) groomer*, and (3) *serial offender*. The following will provide a detailed description of each typology, their representation within the data (e.g., race/ethnicity, role, and victim preference), and specific examples from the data used to create these typologies.

### *The Opportunist*

Offenders who met the typology of an opportunist had only one known victim at the time of their arrest. Additionally, these were individuals who did not specialize in committing offenses at a particular location, as a later typology, *the groomer*, did. Specifically, these individuals were charged with a sexual crime that occurred explicitly at the church campus or during an off-site church-sponsored activity (e.g., camping trip, mission trip, etc.). Overwhelmingly, opportunists committed their offenses while fulfilling their designated role within the church, such as a Youth Minister or a Sunday School Teacher. Moreover, these individuals were not reported to have committed any sexual offense at their house, the victim's home, or other off-site locations that were not directly connected to church-related activities.

Chiefly, what separates these offenders from the different typologies that emerged was the emphasis on an opportunity. These individuals were not reported to have created a specialized situation outside of the church activity to carry out their sexual victimization. Offenses outside of a church activity indicate a higher degree of planning, such as those who groom their victims and environment. However, these individuals capitalized on perceived opportunities within their specific church roles to sexually victimize, primarily with children they had direct contact with or control over in their official capacities. This phenomenon is evidenced by 73.8% of known offenses occurring exclusively at the church or an off-site church-sponsored activity, with 26.2% occurring at both the church and an off-site location. It is imperative to keep in mind that the remaining two typologies, groomers and serial offenders, could have initially begun their offending as an opportunist.

-- Insert Table 1 about here --

Multiple examples will be provided to illustrate the opportunist typology. One example is the arrest of Reginald Robinson, a 24-year-old volunteer with a youth group at Beth Judah Ministries Church of God in Christ (Kansas City, Missouri). Arrested in 2002, Robinson was charged with the molestation and sodomization of a 13-year-old church member. The offense is alleged to have occurred within the church basement. Thus, the teenage victim was under the direct control of Robinson in his supervisory role as a youth volunteer. Additionally, this offense occurred at the church and during a church activity. Therefore, the offender seemingly exploited a perceived opportunity through his volunteer role to sexually assault the victim while attending a church activity.

The second example of an opportunist was a 53-year-old Music Minister, Mark Michaels. Michaels was the Music Minister at Bethany Baptist Church in Montclair, California. Michaels was arrested for the alleged molestation of a 15-year-old boy. The victim was a member of Michaels' choir, whereby the sexual victimizations were alleged to have occurred both at the church and inside of Michaels' car while it was parked in the church parking lot. Like the previous example, this offense included an individual directly connected to the offender's role within the church and at the physical church location, thus underscoring the importance of opportunity.

A third example of an offender who fell under an opportunist typology was a 67-year-old pastor named Travis Payne. A pastor from South Texarkana Baptist Church (Texarkana, Arkansas) was arrested in 2012 (March) for Second-Degree Sexual Assault. The victim, in this case, was a three-year-old female church member. The mother discovered Payne sexually assaulting her daughter in the bathroom while she was attending church services. This case demonstrates that the offender does not have direct supervisory control over the individual they choose to victimize. Yet, they take advantage of a perceived opportunity to offend through official church functions.

Opportunists represented approximately 1/3rd of the offenders (33.5%; n= 85)[5]. The average age of opportunists was 39.8 years of age with a standard deviation of 13 years and a mode of 21 years. Race/ethnicity was only known for 80% (n=68) of the opportunists with the majority being White (77.9%; n= 53) with Black representing 17.6% (n=12) and Hispanic representing 4.4% (n= 3).

Primarily, opportunists occupied the role of pastor or youth minister within the church. Specifically, pastors and youth ministers each accounted for 30.6% (n= 26) of the offender roles. Youth volunteers were the next most represented role, constituting 11.8% (n= 10) of the valid sample. It is essential to point out that two of the three top

opportunist roles held a direct supervisory position in contact with youth at the offender's church.

Victim selection is also imperative to understand more about particular offenders. Overall, opportunists targeted female victims at 64.3% (n= 54) compared to the 35.7% (n= 30) that chose male victims. It is also important to mention the ages of victims. Overwhelmingly, opportunists targeted adolescents (12 to 17 years-of-age) at 88.2% (n= 75). A small minority (9.4%; n= 8) of victims were children (0 to 11 years of age). Only two (2.4%) adult victims were chosen by opportunists. One of the adult victims was a 30-year-old female who had been raped, while the other was a 'young adult' who had improper sexual comments made to them. It is clear through the data that most *opportunists* occupied a role within the church whereby they had some form of control over their victims, who were overwhelmingly adolescents or children.

### The Groomer

The second typology to emerge from the data was the groomer. Groomers were similar to opportunists, whereby they had only one known victim at the time of their arrest. The key difference that exists between the opportunists and groomers is that the groomers offended off-site exclusively. That is, all known victimization occurred away from the church campus and church-sponsored activities. These offenses were primarily known to have occurred at the offender's home, the victim's home, or an off-site location not connected to the church (e.g., hotel, motel, etc.). In fact, 62.3% (n= 38) took place at the offender's residence with 21.3% (n= 13) occurring at a general off-site location (e.g., motel) and 16.4% (n= 10) even were alleged to occur at the victim's residence.

There are two critical reasons why opportunists and groomers must be separated from one another. The first reason is that opportunists capitalize on perceived opportunities to sexually victimize while assuming their official role and duties within the church. Comparatively, groomers create opportunities to offend sexually. As opposed to the capitalization of opportunities, creating opportunities suggests a higher overall degree of planning by the offender. The second reason is that those who create such opportunities to victimize sexually have a strong potential to repeat such behavior. Repeat sexual victimization could include the same victim or multiple victims, leading to the third typology of serial offenders.

-- Insert Table 2 about here --

Several examples of the groomer typology will be provided. The first example of the groomer typology is Michael Babock from Washington state. Babcock was a 29-year-old youth minister at Sunrise Chapel (Everett, Washington). Babcock reportedly had a 10-year-old church member over to his house for a sleepover. At this sleepover, he was alleged to have sexually assaulted him, culminating in a charge of *First-Degree Child Molestation* in December 2000. Since this was a sleepover at the youth minister's residence, this event did not physically occur at the church or through a church-sponsored activity. Instead, the offender created this situation precisely to sexually offend through having a sleepover to isolate the child to an environment entirely under his control.

A second example of the groomer typology is with a then 33-year-old James Harris of Georgia. Harris was a Sunday School Teacher at Brookwood Baptist Church (Lawrenceville, Georgia). Arrested in January 2011, Harris was alleged to have sexually victimized a 14-year-old male congregant numerous times across three years. Through his role as the boy's Sunday School Teacher, he would take the boy to the shopping mall, baseball games, and multiple other non-church-related activities, including a motel room. Harris even was alleged to have purchased a cellular phone to stay in contact with the boy. In contrast to an opportunist, Harris, a groomer, created numerous occasions and opportunities to sexually victimize the boy over a multiple-year period. Further, in contrast to the opportunist, no known victimizations were alleged to have occurred at the church or off-site church-sponsored activity.

A third example of a groomer is a 26-year-old Youth Minister named Michael Mohler. Mohler was a youth minister at First United Methodist Church (Troy, Ohio), arrested in July 2013. Mohler allegedly engaged in numerous sexual activities on multiple occasions with a 15-year-old female member of his youth group. It was alleged that the victim approached Mohler the prior year when she was having difficulties with her boyfriend. Mohler soon purchased the female gifts, inviting her to his house to watch movies and go out to dinner with her. The alleged sexual activity was reported when he had the female over to his home under the guise of watching movies. Like the previous examples, Mohler also created opportunities to offend in an environment where he had complete control. Moreover, this occurred after a lengthy period of grooming behaviors, such as dinner, gifts, and providing relationship advice.

Fully 21.6% (n= 55) of offenders with available information were identified as a groomer. Groomers were slightly younger when compared to opportunists, with a total mean age of 38.2 years. One key difference is the mode age of groomers. Groomers

had a mode age of 35, whereas the mode age of opportunists was 21. The standard deviation for groomers is 11.8 years, also less than opportunists, albeit slightly. The racial/ethnic composition was very similar when comparing the two with 66% (n= 31) being White, 25.5% (n= 12) being Black, and 8.5% (n= 4) being Hispanic.

For opportunists, most offenders occupied a role within the church whereby they had direct contact or supervision over youth. However, the same relationship dynamic was not present for groomers. The two most represented roles were Pastor (45.1%; n= 23) and Youth Minister (33.3%; n= 17). The remaining present roles were as follows: Music Minister (5.9%; n= 3); Associate Pastor (5.9%; n= 3); General Volunteer (3.9%; n= 2); Deacon (3.9%; n= 2); and Choir Volunteer (2.0%; n= 1). The Youth Minister role was the only role to directly have a supervisory responsibility for youth of any age as specific job duties whereby they would have direct contact with minors as part of their role. As such, most offenders (66.7%; n= 34) categorized as groomers had to specifically create a situation to be alone with the victim outside of their normal job duties. Ultimately, this suggests planning as a key part of the commission of these offenses, thus underscoring the need for further separation from opportunists.

Groomers were very similar to opportunists in their victim-type. Most groomer victims were adolescents (12-17) with children (0 to 11) representing 12.7% (n= 7). The overwhelming majority of victims were female (81.5%; n= 44) with only 18.5% (n= 10) being male. There were no known adult victims.

It is evident with the groomers that these were not isolated incidents of sexual victimization. Instead, these were offenders alleged to have sexually victimized their chosen victim numerous times over weeks, months, or years. This characteristic is similar to the third and final typology of the serial offender. However, the critical difference is that groomers only had one known victim, whereas serial offenders had multiple known victims.

### The Serial Offender

The third and final typology to emerge from the data was that of the *serial offender*. Serial offenders differ from the other two typologies in one prominent way, the total number of known victims at the time of the arrest. Whereas the first two typologies had one known victim, serial offenders were known to have more than one victim at the time of their arrest. Another essential distinction between serial offenders and the previous two typologies is the locations in which the victimization was known to take place. The first two typologies were selected based on where the offending occurred

(i.e., exclusively off the church campus, solely at the church campus, or a mix of both on and off church grounds). In contrast, serial offenders were chosen if they had more than one known victim at the time of the arrest.

Serial offenders appear to be intrinsically different from other typologies for four important reasons. The first reason is that it can be inferred that offenders who have multiple victims have been carrying out such actions for an extended period. That is, they have been able to develop the expertise and experience to select, groom, and victimize while going undetected. Elements of grooming behaviors were found in each of the serial offender cases. A second reason is that these offenders may have victimized individuals are multiple churches yet could evade detection. In some cases, individuals were discovered to have been sexually abusing at their church. Still, they were instructed to find another position to avoid the media attention from such an offense.

A third reason is that serial offenders could have potentially begun as an opportunist or groomer, yet their behavior escalated to include multiple victims after avoiding detection and perhaps gaining more comfort and confidence with their offending actions. This potential reason is evidenced by serial offenders committing their offenses primarily at the church grounds (37.6%; n= 41) and at the offender's residence (33.9%; n= 37). Overall, serial offenders were slightly more inclined to commit their offenses away from the church grounds (51.4%; n= 56) (i.e., Offender's Home, Victim's Home, general off-site location) with a 48.6% (n=53) alleged to have occurred at the church.

A fourth reason why it is essential to separate serial offenders from others is that individuals with more than one victim might be more inclined to suffer from a paraphilia. In essence, serial offenders may be attempting to fulfill a more profound sexual desire caused by a paraphilia rather than when an opportunity presents itself, such as with an opportunist. Therefore, serial offenders may hold a position of power and control within the church as a means to sexually offend.

-- Insert Table 3 about here --

Similar to the above, three illustrations of serial offenders that emerged from the data are provided. The first example of a serial offender is James Souder, a 42-year-old church member at the First Baptist Church in Farmersville, Texas, arrested in April 2007. His arrest was for the alleged sexual molestation of three adolescent boys aged 14, 15, and 17. It was reported that Souder was relatively new to the community and

was not married, and did not have children. Despite this, he was very active in the church, volunteering in the church choir, men's Bible study, and volunteered with the youth group. Through these volunteer efforts with the youth group, he began to purportedly mentor them. Soon after this, Souder was alleged to pay adolescents in exchange for performing a variety of chores at his house. Eventually, Souder told some of the boys that he was in the process of becoming a nurse and that he needed to perform a medical exam on them as part of his studies. This act was the impetus for Souder to begin physically touching and ultimately sexually assaulting the boys.

For Souder, he meets the classification of a serial offender for several reasons. First, he used his position as an adult church member to volunteer with the youth group. Second, he created numerous opportunities, such as paid job opportunities, to bring the boys to his house, a location whereby he had complete control. Third, he created a facade that he was a nursing student that needed the adolescents' assistance, which served as the impetus for physical contact. Thus, this demonstrates how he is inherently different from the opportunists or groomers.

The second example of a serial offender is Marty Meadows, who was arrested in June 2002. At the time, Marty was a 34-year-old Youth Minister at Sunset Lane Baptist Church (Bessemer City, North Carolina). Meadows was arrested for the sexual victimization of seven total female members of the church's youth group. It was reported that Meadows would recruit girls from his youth group under the age of 15 into his' singing group.' Once present, he would engage in 'sexual truth or dare.' It is likely that Meadows specifically formed this 'singing group' to isolate victims for a considerable time under the guise of a church activity to carry out his sex offenses. The reports were not clear how long this victimization took place.

A third example of a serial offender is the arrest of David Pierce. Pierce was arrested in 2009, following 29 years of employment as a Music Minister at the First Baptist Church located in Benton, Arkansas. Through his arrest, it was revealed that Pierce had would typically groom young males, around the ages of 11 and 12, that were a part of his choir to serve as their' mentor.' Many of these boys did not have a male figure within their life, such as their father. Often, these boys were believed by Pierce to come from troubled homelives. In addition, Pierce was reported to engage in a practice he referred to as 'charting,' whereby he would take measurements of each boy's height, weight, and ultimately their penis length. Pierce would even have older boys within the group who had been through this process for years to gain the trust of the new boys.

It was reported that most of the sexual abuse would occur when Pierce would organize camping trips. The abuse during the camping trips often would include forced group masturbation and instructing the boys to stand naked in a nearby stream. It was also reported that some of the boys would continue sexual contact into their early 20s. For example, one of Pierce's victims, who had been groomed since he was 12-years of age, was told to perform a sexual act with a sex toy in Pierce's office when he was in his early 20s after informing Pierce of his upcoming marriage. At the time of his arrested, it was believed that Pierce had at least sexually assaulted 12 boys in 29 years. Initially, he was charged with crimes related to the sexual abuse of only four boys due to the statute of limitations.

Serial offenders represented nearly half of all offender types at 44.9% (n= 11). Serial offenders were the oldest overall typology among all typologies, with a mean age of 41.8 years. Despite this difference, they had a slightly older mode when compared to opportunists (21) and were considerably younger than groomers (35) with a mode of 25. In addition, the standard deviation for serial offenders was the largest of all typologies at 14.8 years. In total, this suggests that serial offenders were older and generally held a position within a church for a more extended period when compared to the other typologies. This finding also indicates that serial offenders were relatively successful at avoiding detection for extended periods, emphasizing their mastery of grooming techniques.

For racial/ethnic characteristics, serial offenders were similar to the other typologies. The vast majority of serial offenders were White (74.7%; n= 68), followed by Black (14.3%; n=13), Hispanic (9.9%; n=9), and Native American (1.1%; n= 1). For the offender-role, this was similar to groomers with 37.6% (n= 41) of serial offenders occupying the role of pastor and youth ministers represented 28.4% (n= 14). The third most represented role was also someone with direct supervisory capacity over youth being youth volunteers at 12.8% (n= 14). The remainder of serial offender roles were as follows: Sunday School Teacher (4.6%; n= 5), Music Minister (2.8%; n= 3), Volunteer (3.7%; n= 4); Associate Pastor (3.7%; n= 4), Deacon (2.6%; n= 3); Church Member (1.8%; n= 2), and Church Camp Worker (0.9%; n= 1).

For victim-type, serial offenders showed a slight preference towards females at 52.7% (n= 58). Despite this, this typology had the highest overall representation of male-only victims at 47.3% (n= 52). This finding is a striking difference compared to the opportunist (35.7%; n= 30) and the groomer (18.5%; n= 10). As such, this suggests that serial offenders might suffer from a paraphilia whereby they are offending to

fulfill sexual urges with a specific group of victims (i.e., young males). This characteristic is a key distinction from the previous two typologies. Despite the different representations of male victims, the age range of victims was similar to the previous typologies. Primarily, serial offenders targeted adolescents at 55.3% (n= 63) with 18.4% (n= 21) focusing on children. Approximately 1/5$^{th}$ of all cases (21.2%; n= 24) had both adolescent and child victims. Serial offenders were also known to have young adult victims, representing only 4.4% (n= 5). It is important to mention that all but two of these cases involved a young adult between the ages of 18 to 22 that had been minors when the offense first took place.

## Discussion

The goal of the present study was to create a typology of alleged sexual predators that committed their offense(s) at or through activities provided by the Protestant Christian church. Three typologies emerged by examining news reports on the arrest of 326 individuals meeting the above criteria. These were the typologies of the opportunist, groomer, and serial offender.

The first offender typology of the opportunist were male offenders who had only one known victim at the time of their arrest. Moreover, these were individuals who had either committed their offenses at the church, during an off-site church-sponsored activity or through some combination of these two location-types and another off-site location (i.e., the offender's home, victim's home, etc.). The opportunists represented 33.5% of the total sample. Commonly, sex offenders are generalists more so than specialists (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004; Lussier et al., 2005; Miethe et al., 2006; Simon, 2000; Smallbone & Wortley, 2004; Zimring et al., 2007). That is, offenders will generally choose any victim available when an opportunity presents itself. This study found that opportunists primarily selected female adolescent church members as their victims compared to prior research.

It is likely that the opportunists within this study are similar to the offenders who occupied the situational child molester in Miller (2013). Situational child molesters, according to Miller (2013), are offenders who sexually victimize children because they view that an opportunity to do so has presented itself. Like situational child molesters, opportunists may prey upon those they perceive as helpless, such as a child or adults with a disability. It is possible that the opportunists could be similar to the four individual types of situational child molesters (i.e., naïve/inadequate, regressed pedophile, indiscriminate pedophile, or sexually indiscriminate). Unfortunately, data did not allow for this level of analysis. Future research should examine whether

opportunists within this environment share similarities with the four subtypes of situational child molesters.

The second offender typology that emerged from the data was *groomers*. As with opportunists, these offenders also only had one known victim. However, the critical difference between the two offenders concerned the location in which they chose to offend. Specifically, groomers were only known to have committed their offenses at off-site locations, such as their home or the victim's home. Also similar to opportunists, groomers primarily targeted female adolescent victims. In total, groomers represented 21.6% (n= 66) of all offenders.

The characteristics of groomers in the present study closely resemble the seductive molester typology found in prior works (Miller, 2013; Terry & Tallon, 2004). Seductive molesters are individuals that will implement grooming techniques to both initially and continue their sexual victimization on a chosen victim. Individuals that meet this categorization also are delusional to the point where they believe there is a mutual attraction between themselves and the victim (Miller, 2013; Terry & Tallon, 2004). There was evidence that some youth ministers would even perform mock wedding ceremonies to groom their victims into believing that God condoned the sexual activity. However, the very presence of the belief in mutual attraction could not be verified in the data. Future studies should further explore those who choose to groom their victims within this setting, especially examining differences among groomers with the seductive molesters.

The third and final typology to emerge from the data were serial offenders. Serial offenders are those that had more than one known victim at the time of their arrest. In contrast to the two previous typologies, no location criteria were placed upon these offenders as those having more than one victim suggest a myriad of other potential issues. Similar to the last two typologies, serial offenders also preferred female adolescent victims. However, serial offenders had the highest representation of both male and child victims. Nearly half of the offenders in the study were identified as serial offenders. This typology was the most represented in the study.

It is important to expand upon the high representation of serial offenders in the present study. It may suggest that individuals might discover what these offenders are doing; however, they allow them to continue to operate in the environment and continue their abuse. There were multiple instances of these offenders having a known abuse history without law enforcement being contacted until it occurred again or at a new employer. As such, many of these offenders were allowed to remain in their

positions of power. Remaining in a position of power allowed them to continue their sexual victimization. It is essential to consider serial offenders could have potentially started as opportunists or groomers. Yet, their grooming tactics and victim preferences could have evolved as they remained in their position. Future research should examine how sexual victimization progresses in this environment.

The second reason why the high presence of serial offenders within this environment is essential is due to the potential that these offenders sought out these positions to sexually offend. Prior research by Beauregard et al. (2007) found that most of the offenders in their sample of serial sex offenders would seek out their victims at specific places. Approximately 1/5$^{th}$ of their sample of serial sex offenders became involved in a profession to access their victim-type (Beauregard et al., 2007). They also found that 20% of their sample had joined a youth-centric organization, with nearly 10% doing so with the specific goal to abuse sexually. As such, serial offenders may be the most likely offender typologies to emerge that actively sought positions within the church environment to offend sexually. Future research must examine both the backgrounds and the motivations of serial offenders. This further study is essential to understand the offenders' reason to join this environment, whether it started for employment or for more nefarious purposes.

**Implications**

From a policy standpoint, the responsibility to prevent, intervene, and report instances of sexual abuse within one's church fall squarely on church officials' shoulders. Findings in the present study demonstrate that the majority of sexual abusers within this environment are serial offenders. As such, they are experienced and have likely carried out their abuses for extended periods. Therefore, clear policies and procedures – along with their enforcement – are imperative to prevent and intervene in instances of sexual abuse within one's church. Examples of such policies include two adults with adolescents or children at all times and highly structured off-site activities. The two aforementioned policy examples would appear to address the majority of alleged abuses within this environment. However, it may also be helpful for national organizations, whereby individual churches must abide by rules and regulations to be recognized as a member church (e.g., Southern Baptist Convention), actively implement mechanisms to prevent and investigate instances of sexual abuse. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention may want to create a known offender registry to prevent those accused from obtaining positions in other member churches.

This study also has implications for qualitative and quantitative research. For qualitative, this research highlights a much-needed area of further detailed examination. For example, in-depth interviews with offenders would greatly assist with understanding the grooming tactics of sexual abusers within a unique setting, such as a church. For quantitative research, this study highlights the need to develop and maintain detailed databases to track offense information over long periods. Moreover, large databases would allow for the analysis of trends related to the offense, offender, and victim characteristics.

**Conclusion**

This study has demonstrated that there are distinct sex abusers that operate within Protestant Christian Churches. Each type of abuser is unique in how they offend, how often, and who they target. With most abusers being identified as serial offenders, churches must develop better policies and procedures to prevent and identify instances of sexual abuse. Further examination of this topic must be conducted to assist in preventing, intervening, and investigating sexual abuse within this environment.

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## Table 1. Opportunist Offender Characteristics

| Measure | % | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Offender Age* | | 39.8 | 13.5 |
| *Offender Race* | | | |
| White | 77.9% | | |
| Black | 17.6% | | |
| Hispanic | 4.4% | | |
| *Offender Role* | | | |
| Pastor | 45.1% | | |
| Youth Minister | 33.3% | | |
| Youth Volunteer | 5.9% | | |
| Associate Pastor | 5.9% | | |
| Sunday School Teacher | 4.9% | | |
| Music Minister | 3.7% | | |
| Volunteer | 3.7% | | |
| Church Member | 2.5% | | |
| Deacon | 1.2% | | |
| Choir Volunteer | 1.2% | | |
| Church Camp Worker | 1.2% | | |
| *Offense Location* | | | |
| At the Church | 57.4% | | |
| Off-Site Church-Sponsored Activity | 18.9% | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Off-Site | 8.2% |
| Offender's Home | 13.1% |
| Victim's Home | 2.4% |
| *Victim Sex* | |
| Male | 35.7% |
| Female | 64.3% |
| *Victim Age* | |
| Children | 9.4% |
| Adolescents | 88.2% |
| Adults | 2.4% |

**n= 85**

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**Table 2. Groomer Offender Characteristics**

| Measure | % | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Offender Age* | | 38.3 | 11.8 |
| *Offender Race* | | | |
| White | 66.0% | | |
| Black | 25.5% | | |
| Hispanic | 8.5% | | |
| *Offender Role* | | | |
| Pastor | 45.1% | | |
| Youth Minister | 33.3% | | |
| Associate Pastor | 5.9% | | |
| Music Minister | 5.9% | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Deacon | 3.9% |
| Volunteer | 3.9% |
| Choir Volunteer | 2.0% |
| *Offense Location* | |
| Offender's Home | 67.3% |
| Off-Site | 16.4% |
| Victim's Home | 16.4% |
| *Victim Sex* | |
| Male | 18.5% |
| Female | 81.5% |
| *Victim Age* | |
| Children | 12.7% |
| Adolescents | 87.3% |

**n= 55**

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**Table 3. Serial Offender Characteristics**

| **Measure** | **%** | **M** | **SD** |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Offender Age* | | 41.8 | 14.8 |
| *Offender Race* | | | |
| White | 74.7% | | |
| Black | 14.3% | | |
| Hispanic | 9.9% | | |
| Native American | 1.1% | | |

*Offender Role*

| | |
|---|---|
| Pastor | 37.6% |
| Youth Minister | 28.4% |
| Youth Volunteer | 12.8% |
| Sunday School Teacher | 4.6% |
| Associate Pastor | 3.7% |
| Volunteer | 3.7% |
| Deacon | 2.8% |
| Music Minister | 2.8% |
| Church Member | 1.8% |
| Church Camp Worker | 0.9% |

*Offense Location*

| | |
|---|---|
| At the Church | 37.6% |
| Off-Site Church-Sponsored Activity | 11.0% |
| Off-Site | 11.9% |
| Offender's Home | 33.9% |
| Victim's Home | 5.6% |

*Victim Sex*

| | |
|---|---|
| Male | 47.3% |
| Female | 52.7% |

*Victim Age*

| | |
|---|---|
| Children | 30.7% |
| Adolescents | 64.9% |

Adult                                        4.4%

**n= 114**

## Footnotes

1.  The three websites used were: (1) www.reformation.com, (2)
www.stopbaptistpredators.org, (3) www.mojoey.blogspot.com/p/the-morally-
corrupt.html. ↵

2.  Time frames for individual websites are as follows: (1) www.reformation.com
(1982-2003), (2) www.stopbaptistpredators.com (2002-2012), and (3)
www.mojoey.blogspot.com/p/the-morally-corrupt.html (2009-2014). ↵

3.  Child pornography cases were removed from analyses here, resulting in a *n* of
321 cases. ↵

4.  It is important to note that often during the investigation of sexual offenses that
more victims are discovered. However, with this analysis included only those who
had been arrested for a sex offenses and not officially adjudicated then it is possible
that with only one reported victim, in fact, had multiple victims. ↵

5.  In total, 254 offenders were available to create the typologies once the criteria of
offense location(s), approximate victim count, and other vital information needed. ↵