



MACSAS – Minister & Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors
PO Box 622, Brentford, Middx TW8 1AU
Website: www.macsas.org.uk Email: macsas1@hotmail.com

MACSAS PRESS RELEASE

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DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER INQUIRY REPORT

MACSAS welcomes the release of the Diocese of Chichester Inquiry Report undertaken by Baroness Butler-Sloss into the handling of child sexual abuse allegations against two vicars **Roy Cotton** and **Colin Pritchard** within the Diocese.

The report highlights:

- The lack of understanding of the seriousness of historic child sexual abuse allegations by both Diocesan officials and the Police
- The failure to lead from the top within the Diocese when determining what actions to take against the alleged abusers
- The lack of proper control and negligence exhibited by the area Bishop
- The lack of communication between Diocesan Bishops, Safeguarding Advisers and the police
- Poor and chaotic record keeping

All contributed to the failure to take appropriate actions against Cotton and Pritchard.

At no time were the allegations of historic child sexual abuse treated with the seriousness that reflected the harm Cotton & Pritchard had caused to the victims who reported the cases or the ongoing danger these men posed to other children.

MACSAS welcomes the recommendations made by Baroness Butler-Sloss and in particular that all allegations of child sexual abuse should be treated with the same seriousness whether the victims report historic abuse or allegations refer to current abuse and whether or not the alleged abuser has been convicted. This is essential if safeguarding procedures are to be effective and children protected from harm.

MACSAS also welcomes the recommendations that victims be treated with compassion and respect when they report cases, that support is offered to them throughout investigation and assessment processes, that an apology be offered where appropriate, and that support including payment for counselling be provided for an open-ended period of time in acknowledgement of the harm caused to the victims by the abuse.

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In the recent MACSAS Report “The Stones Cry Out” (May 2011) (downloaded at www.macsas.org.uk) the findings from our Survey conducted in 2010 clearly indicate that the concerns raised within the Chichester Report are being repeated across Dioceses in England & Wales.

MACSAS call for the recommendations made in the Chichester Inquiry report to be incorporated within the Church of England National Safeguarding Policy “Protecting All God’s Children” and adopted by other Dioceses.

MACSAS also calls for all allegations of child sexual abuse within Dioceses to be reported to the National Safeguarding Adviser, together with the actions taken by statutory authorities and Diocesan Authorities in each case. A summary of these records should be reported annually to ensure the effective implementation of procedures within all Dioceses.

The MACSAS Report made a number of recommendations for improving safeguarding procedures which incorporate and extend the Chichester recommendations.

All inquiries can be made to **Anne Lawrence, Chair of MACSAS** on **07939574368** or through the MACSAS email macsas1@hotmail.com