

Role of Screening: Selection of Candidates to Priesthood and Religious Life

Mathew M. Vallipalam

Director, Centre for Religious Research, Gethsemany, Changanacherry,
Kerala, India

Abstract

Selection of candidates to priesthood and religious life is a very difficult task for vocation facilitators and animators of formation. Formation is clearly the work of the Holy Spirit, however, from the human point of view; it is the vocation facilitator's duty to screen the candidates by making use of the modern facilities available like psychological tests. Such tests are capable of giving insights into the candidate's future orientation and would help one to know how emotionally stable the candidate is. The improved selection methods and proper guidance at the right time will reduce the number of dropouts. Therefore, screening is essential and helpful for the formees as well as the formators. The screening could be done in two stages: Before admitting the candidate into the formation house and then during the initial stages of formation. The experts who are involved in the screening process should be attentive to the directives given by the Holy See, the Congregation of Catholic Education, the Canon Law and directives of the regional bishops and major superiors. Moreover, those who are involved in the screening process of candidates should be persons of conviction and having appreciation for their own vocation.

Introduction

Screening, selection, testing, and interviews are terms often repeated in the field of formation of priests and religious in the Catholic Church. Screening is a general term for the selection process through which applicants are either accepted or rejected. Selection implies the use of

tests and other strategies to select applicants for a job or some educational programmes. Those who succeed in the test are selected and those who fail to meet the selection standards are dropped (Aiken, 1988a). Theoretically the term screening means methodical examination with the purpose of separating things into different groups. In this sense, we can also make use of the term "weeding." Psychological tests can be made use of for various purposes like selection, placement and classification. The word, *select* which springs from the Latin verb *seligere* means to choose. The selection of individuals for a purpose is usually done by evaluating their fitness, by judging their excellence, or by judging some other distinguishing features (Dello, 1964).

When the assortment is carried out in succession, the early phases are called screening and the term selection is reserved for the intensive final stages. The word screening is at times used to specify rapid, coarse selection process even when it is not followed by further selection procedures (Anastasi, 1988). Vocation to priesthood and consecrated life is often dealt under the theological, spiritual and canonical aspects though it has psychological, sociological and anthropological implications. Vocation has two dimensions: the divine and the human. It is divine since initially it is an invitation from God, and it is human, because it is also a response from the part of the one who is called. A good screening process is required to determine whether a candidate possesses adequate human and spiritual maturity to be admitted.

The kind of screening process to be employed depends on the goals and consequent dynamics of the initial phase of formation. The criteria for admission to seminary and religious formation houses should be based on clear and realistic goals. The screening will verify whether a candidate has the ability to withstand the dynamics of the initial formation period. Different stages of formation have different goals achieve. The screening process involves a cordial mutual sharing between the formator and the candidates. If the candidates are for religious life the formator has to explain the charism, history, mode of life, ministries and spirituality of the Institutes to which the candidates are seeking admission. Candidates in their turn have to provide evidence of their attitudes, motivation and maturity to the formator (Futrell, 1982). A proper selection of applicants to priesthood and religious life is of great importance to the future of the Church and the religious congregations. Therefore, scientific tools offered by the human sciences are to be for the selection of candidates so that

the Church gets priests and religious who are capable of loving and serving the people of God. The ecclesiastical authorities are now recommending strict screening process before candidates are selected for training to priesthood. This screening process has to continue throughout the formation period. For instance, National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States of America (1982a) says:

Students applying to the seminary for the first time should therefore undergo a thorough screening process. Personal interviews with the applicant and their parents, home visits, evaluation from their pastor and teachers, academic records and intellectual potential as indicated by standardized tests are all components of an effective admission program and must be weighed with judgment as to their apparent motivation. While responsibility for a comprehensive screening program for applicants to the seminary falls directly on the seminary administration, it may be shared with the applicant's diocese or vocation director at the discretion of the seminary.

In the screening process whatever is applicable to candidates to priesthood is applicable to candidates to the religious life and secular institutes as well. For obtaining information about the candidate interview is the most common method used.

Vocation can be considered from three different points of view: 1) the spiritual, referring to the call of God, 2) the psychic, as the response of individual, and 3) the social, as the milieu through which God calls and the individual responds. Therefore, while discerning the vocation, the assistance of behavioural sciences, especially psychology and sociology, can be profitably utilized. The family history, educational background, spiritual life, motivation and interest in the future ministry, physical and mental fitness, their emotional maturity, etc. are important areas to be considered while the selection of applicants is done. An appropriate psychological assessment method will be of great assistance in the selection process (Vanchipurackal, 1993). Though the Catholics are less than two percent of the Indian population, according to the global statistics on vocations in the Catholic Church, the largest number of vocations is from India (Secretaria Status, 2007). However, unfortunately a systematic selection procedure is yet to be implemented here both to priesthood as well as to religious life.

The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC) (2007a) in its final statement of the first Asian Vocation Symposium states:

Screening should involve formal psychological testing in depth-interview based on the behavioural patterns of the candidate, a review of the candidates personal history, family background and relationships, even an initial exploration of conscious and unconscious motivations, etc.

While screening candidates, two important matters are to be kept in mind - the candidate's right to privacy and the responsibility of the authorities of the seminary or congregation to get the full details of candidates in order to take a prudent and better evaluation.

Historical Background of Screening

Human beings differ not only physically but also there are vast individual differences in mental characteristics and behaviour patterns. They differ in abilities, knowledge, interests, attitudes and temperament. To gather information and to make decisions about individuals some form of screening is essential. A variety of screening techniques are being used by educational institutions, psychological clinics, industries, and placement agencies. There are numerous professional organizations that specialize in producing, and distributing psychological tests and other assessment instruments.

In his book the *History of Psychological Testing*, DuBois (1970) mentions that even during 2200 B.C., in China, there existed a well established civil service system. The emperor devised a method to determine whether his officials were fit to perform their governmental services or not. This system of evaluation was continued by Chinese emperors and their officials and centuries later, British and French officials too developed similar methods of assessment. In the 1900s the British designed their civil service examination procedures. In the social structure of medieval European society an individual's activities were controlled by the class into which he or she was born, giving very little freedom for personal choice or preference. In the beginning of the 19th century scientists graded individual differences based on mental abilities. It was in Germany, by the end of the 19th century, that scientific psychology originated. The researches done by French psychiatrists and psychologists on mental disorders also contributed substantially towards the development of clinical assessment techniques and various tests. The field of psychological testing has grown rapidly since the 1920's (Aiken, 1988b), and ever since hundreds of tests were commercially produced and distributed (Hill & Hood, 1999).

W.C. Bier, the principal founder of the American Psychological Association, has written extensively and dedicated his time and energy towards the development of the basic rationale for psychological assessment of candidates for priesthood and religious life. He has indicated that the selection of suitable candidates and the systematic observation of them during the period of formation have been the traditionally the responsibility of the ecclesiastical authority. However, he advocated psychological tests in the evaluation of candidates for future Church personnel since psychology at present is capable of providing precise information which enables the authority to make a decision based on greater evidence.

A systematic study of the extent of psychological disorder among priests and religious done by Moore (1936), an American psychologist, reported that priests and religious showed a higher rate of institutionalization for functional psychopathology than the national average. Based on his findings he proposed a psychological assessment of all the candidates in order to identify such cases at the time of admission. He held the opinion that if such candidates could be excluded from getting selected, the rate of subsequent mental disorder would be lowered. Later, this view was supported by McAllister and Veldt (1961) in their study on mental illness of clergy. The study conducted in India by Lourdes and his companions (1991) indicated that in comparison with the laity the clergy are more prone to excessive nervousness, bad temper, exhibitionism, excessive conservatism and jealousy. They could easily be led away and manipulated than lay persons. If there is in place a proper and effective screening programme many of the future problems could be avoided.

The Mind of the Church

The official documents of the Church indicate that whatever be the quantity of candidates their selection should be done through an intense screening process to ensure the quality of the vocation. It was Pope Gelasius I (492-496), who for the first time in the history of the Catholic Church instructed that those whose minds are deranged should be excluded from the priesthood. This stance was repeated and enforced by means of subsequent ecclesiastical legislations (Dunne, 1957). Fitness for priesthood consists not only in the absence of physical or mental defects but also in the possession of positive qualities. It is not enough that a priest perform his liturgical duties in a routine way. He is obliged to reach out and touch the hearts of people through his words and deeds. Priests and religious should have adequate strength to meet the demands of their vocation which

is to be at the service of others. The Church always had a great concern towards the admission and formation of her priests and religious. Pope Pius XII (1956) strongly supported psychological testing of candidates seeking admission in seminaries. Even though the document *Sedes sapientiae* speaks only about candidates for religious priesthood, it indicated the mind of the Church regarding the use of psychological methods of assessment for candidates for priesthood and religious life. The document says:

The peculiar signs and motives of genuine vocation must be attentively weighed in those to be admitted to the novitiate according to the age and conditions of the candidates. Both the moral and the intellectual qualities of the candidates must be accurately and thoroughly examined. Moreover, their physical and psychological fitness must also be investigated relying in this on the medical history and diagnostic judgment of an experienced doctor, even in relation to possible hereditary diseases and especially mental ones.

The vital concern regarding the selection of the applicants to priesthood is very clearly expressed in the Decree on the Training for Priests (1967):

Depending on the age of each seminarian and his state of progress, careful inquiry should be made concerning the rightness of his intention and the freedom of his choice, his spiritual, moral and intellectual fitness, the suitability of his bodily and mental health, and any tendencies he might have inherited from his family. His ability to bear priestly burdens and exercise pastoral duties must also be weighed.

The new code of Canon law (Canon Law Society Trust, 1983) for the Latin Church gives direction about the psychological requirements of candidates for priesthood. The terms used in the Code are 'psychological health', 'psychological qualities' and 'psychic defects' (Landakadavil, 1989).

Citations from *Optatam Totius* no. 6 and *Pastores Dabo Vobis* nos. 43 and 44, are extensively used in the document issued by the Syro-Malabar Church (2007) while giving instructions regarding the selection and formation of its priests and religious. The document reemphasizes the need for screening as follows:

The above mentioned factors are to be seriously taken into consideration while selecting the candidate for priesthood. Screening by qualified persons for similar programmes done

before selection or in the early stage of formation will be useful for better understanding of the candidates and their self understanding especially motivational factors.

The Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India (2004) also has taken serious steps towards the selection of seminarians to priesthood. Their document asserts that before entering the minor seminary the candidates must be properly selected with the help of responsible and competent personnel and this should be continued at every stage of formation. "In this selection besides the candidate's spiritual orientation, his physical and psychological fitness, family background and intellectual ability are also to be considered." Almost two decades ago a consultation seminar on Priestly Formation in North India declared that candidates to priesthood should be selected after an initial screening by more than one person, and possibly, after psychological testing though these are not the ultimate criteria for admission (Bishops of the Hindi Region, 1982).

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1970) published the Basic Plan for Priestly Formation after discussing it at the synod of bishops held in Rome in October 1967. It strongly emphasized that students applying to the seminary for the first time should undergo a thorough screening process. In order to identify their motivation and intellectual potential, standardized tests are to be conducted. Interviews with parents, teachers and parish priests are also considered as essential components of an effective admission programme. The Congregation of Catholic Education published a document in 2008 giving guidelines for the use of psychology in the admission and formation of candidates for the priesthood. This is one of the most important documents in this regard. The role of screening and testing of the candidates is very clearly indicated in this document. It argues that psychologists can offer valuable assistance in the process of discernment to priesthood. In case of particular need, recourse to a psychologist can 'help candidates overcome those wounds' in view of aiming toward a style of life like that of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. It also reminds us that psychological service cannot replace spiritual direction, and psychologists who give such support should have a solid human and spiritual maturity.

The programme of priestly formation prepared by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States of America (1982b) is of interest. The document suggests:

It is necessary that the seminary provide for adequate psychological entrance testing and appropriate procedures to handle faculty referral of students for professional counseling and therapy. It is recommended that safeguards be introduced to guarantee the proper use and to prevent the misuse of information derived from this source. There is normally much to be gained by contracting a competent psychiatrist to meet regularly with the faculty and discuss questions and problems that they face in this and other areas for seminary life.

While commenting on the teaching of John Paul II, Coleman and Freed (2000) indicate that prior to admission to any formation programme a procedure of screening is necessary. According to them the Pope's exhortation delineates the assessment in three levels: formal psychological testing, in depth interviews based on behavioural patterns and a studied review of the candidate's personal history.

Purpose of Screening

FABC (2007b) in its Asian Vocation Symposium has clearly defined the purpose of screening candidates to priesthood and religious life. It is "to ascertain as far as possible the candidate's functional ability, availability for formation and suitability for priestly and religious life." The procedures of screening are meant to confirm the capabilities of the candidate to be humanly healthy, psychologically whole and be committed to Christian discipleship. This is a requirement expected during and after the entire process of formation. The final statement says that formators take psychological testing so as to accompany candidates more effectively and efficiently with greater pastoral charity. Through the screening of the candidates we want to know whether a candidate to priesthood or religious life is in some way troubled and thus of potential risk for the diocese or religious Institute. The purpose of assessment is to discover strengths and weaknesses in a candidate.

It is always better to eliminate the candidates who are not fit for the priesthood and religious life during the initial formation period. The presence of unsuitable candidates will do harm to those who are genuine. An efficient screening process will enable candidates either to work on their defects and improve subsequently or to arrive at a decision to leave the formation house since they discerned their proper vocation. Screening can also help to clarify certain situations and prevent certain applicants from entering the formation house or seminary.

G. Manalel, (1996) an Indian psychologist and formator, puts forward three valid points to support the screening of the candidates. 1) Though a good number of the candidates are from emotionally healthy and well balanced families there are candidates who have unrealistic expectations and this can cause problems either during initial or ongoing formation. Screening will help to evaluate their background and individual differences. 2) Sometimes pre-psychiatric people are attracted to priesthood and religious life. Therefore, procedures should be developed for screening out candidates with predisposition for mental diseases at the time they apply for admission. 3) Priestly and religious ministry makes extraordinary demands upon the candidates. In this case, some candidates are not able to cope with. Therefore, he concludes with Bier that the candidates should have stronger emotional resources than the average person in order to cope successfully with its psychological demands. While making a special observation of the Indian situation he suggests that screening of candidates in India can reduce the number of dropouts.

However, screening of candidates has its own specific problems. Those who pass all tests and fulfill all requirements will be few in number and others are to be sent away. Initially there was strong opposition against enforcing scientific methodology in the screening process since call to priesthood as well as religious life is ultimately comes from God. Bier (1963) has given some clarification on this matter and defends the basic rationale behind the psychological assessment of candidates. He argued that the selection of suitable candidates for priesthood has always been one of the traditional responsibilities of an ecclesiastical authority either bishop or religious superior. Screening is most helpful in the process of identifying both the strengths and the areas to be developed.

Screening Process

In the process of discernment of vocation, screening or personality assessment of the candidates has become very useful and convincing instrument. Authors have various opinions regarding the areas of screening the applicants. According to Saffiotti (1998a) a careful assessment should include the following eight components:

- i) a psychosocial history, including family history, home environment, educational experiences, etc.,
- ii) a psychosexual history including early sexual experiences, attitude toward sexuality and sexual orientation,
- iii) a history of alcohol and other substance use,

- iv) a clinical review comprising a review of past and current medical and psychiatric status and history of counselling and psychotherapy,
- v) psychological tests, consists of objective and projective tests,
- vi) neuropsychological screening to examine the functioning of brain,
- vii) a spirituality assessment including God experience and spiritual crisis and
- viii) a good medical test.

Lourdes (1970) mentions five areas of screening:

- 1) intellectual ability,
- 2) psychological maturity,
- 3) mental and psychological health,
- 4) religious, moral and apostolic traits, and
- 5) aptitudes, interests and motives.

According to him intellectual ability of a candidate cannot be assessed by academic performance alone. Psychological maturity would include emotional adjustment, genuine acceptance of others, social environment, ability to take sound judgments and positive and optimistic attitude to all reality. One of the major symptoms of the emotional immaturity is emotional maladjustment like restlessness, defensive introversion, disturbances in sleep, hunger for excessive love and affection, a constant feeling of loneliness, withdrawing tendencies and impulsive behavior. Physical and mental health is based on family life. Psychology might help to discover a form of piety or asceticism which is the result of warps in personality or a defense mechanism against deep-seated frustrations. To know the aptitudes, interests and motives we need a proper knowledge of testing techniques.

In his article on psychological screening in religious vocation, Manalel (1993) stresses the following areas that are to be considered during the screening process: behavior and appearance, motivation, interest, intelligence, academic performance, personality, modes of adjustment, quality of interpersonal relationships, family background and health. Different devices and methods are used in screening programmes and the simplest method is the questionnaire. There are many tests but none of them are foolproof. However, some tests are more valid than others like Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and general test of intelligence would be the most useful single test as a routine screening device for candidates. These tests are not meant for refusing admission but to suggest more careful consideration of

them before giving admission. It should be kept in mind that these tests will not give access to all the hidden recesses of the mind completely and reveal everything accurately. However, tests give information more quickly than observations and interviews.

Duckro and others (2001) hold the view that psychological assessment consists of a unique combination of behavioural observation, narrative history and psychological testing. It requires the candidate to open the self to scrutiny in a way that often feels uncomfortable. Changing the perspective of the candidate is an important part of establishing a successful assessment process.

Psychologists have developed a variety of tests to measure human characteristics variability from person to person. These tests are based on the assumption that this variability can be measured. Technically, a psychological test is a systematic way of comparing the behaviour of two or more persons. Unfortunately, most of our seminaries and formation houses do not have experts who are capable of conducting such tests for candidates. Tucker (1993) indicates three major types of tests which are of great benefit in seminaries: 1) intelligence tests, 2) clinical tests and 3) personality tests. Intelligence test is to measure one's general, relatively stable capacity to learn and deal effectively with his/her environment. The result of intelligence tests are often reported in terms of an intelligence quotient (I.Q.) score which indicates the position of person's intelligence test performance relatively to the average performance of his/her age group.

Clinical tests are of two kinds: objective and projective. Objective tests are very popular. They are tests scored by comparing an examinee's responses to a list of correct answers determined beforehand, in contrast to a subjectively scored test. The most widely used objective test is the MMPI. These tests are easy and inexpensive to conduct. The MMPI can give information about candidate's degree of psychological distress, personality style and presence of certain symptoms of psychopathology. Seminaries and other formation houses in the western countries administer the MMPI as their primary test. The nature of objective test is such that it is highly verbal, fairly intelligent individuals can produce profiles that are valid and look reasonably normal even when there are serious underlying problems.

Saffiotti (1998b) after her extensive observation and research stated that a lot of priests and religious are undergoing high degrees of internal turmoil and conflict. According to her if one uses only objective tests to assess psychological state of candidate, there is a

significant probability of missing some important pieces of the entire portrait. These pieces are generally provided by projective tests. Projective tests are ambiguous and it is comparatively unstructured stimuli. Therefore, these tests give the examiner a glimpse into a candidate's inner world, including whatever conflicts, tensions, stresses, distortions and vulnerabilities might be present. The most widely used tests are Rorschach Inkblot test, ambiguous pictures, etc. These tests are very practical for evaluating the clergy, the religious and their candidates. Saffiotti suggests that it is vital to include projective tests as part of any candidate assessment if one wants to have a reasonably complete picture of the individual's psychological strengths and weaknesses and of the issues that are likely to become problematic in the course of formation.

The Church needs efficient and competent leadership. The psychological screening of candidates can ensure the quality of the future leadership. Concerning the screening of candidates Gray (2003) pinpoints three major functions of it: 1) these tests and their interpretation can uncover serious liabilities that hamper a candidate from functioning peacefully and productively in a service that demands relational skills. Ministerial formation of the candidates expects a healthy self-identity, a good sense of one's talents and energies, and a basic integration of the ups and downs of life into a realistic view of the world. 2) these tests emphasize possible future problems especially in the areas of sexuality, relationships with authority, anger, fear, and social adaptability. 3) psychological screening can alert formators to concentrate on areas of underdevelopment in candidates. In such cases they can directly or through some experts provide assistance to candidates. Psychological assessment of candidates is therefore an essential part of the discernment.

Strictly speaking psychologists are not in a position to make a decision on veracity of an individual's vocation since it is a call from God. However, they are capable of measuring the aptitudes of the candidate. Roche (1973) in her article on Screening indicates three major areas to be assessed in a candidate: 1) spiritual fitness, 2) moral fitness and 3) psychological fitness. Spiritual fitness comprises a sense of dedication, right motivation, freedom to choose the vocation. Moral fitness includes piety, attachment to material goods, obedience, zeal and charity. In psychological fitness we have to check whether any personality disturbances that could lead one to schizophrenic or manic-depressive tendencies, schizoid, and paranoid personalities, etc. Candidate's ability for interpersonal relationship and community

life is also to be assessed. Special investigation is required in certain other areas, such as neurosis or psychopathic trends, exceptionally scrupulous, epilepsy, and obsessions.

Molosky and Johanson (1986) have proposed some models of assessment that could be used to evaluate candidates. Asking people to make recommendations about a candidate can be called intuitive model in which we get only some peripheral information. Another model is called behavioural model which is concerned not with signs but rather with samples of behavior. This will give insights about what a person will do tomorrow by knowing what has been thought, felt or done yesterday. This model looks at the actual behavior rather than the potential. It tries to gather a sampling of typical attitudes, emotions, behaviours and skills that have been developed. There are certain advantages for this model. It demands that we know what we are looking for in a candidate. It demands a respect for the person. The stress is on the positive skills rather than the negative. This is carried out by formation personnel and the data is the form of evidence from candidate's life. A third model is called trait assessment. Psychological testing of this kind usually looks for signs which indicate the underlying personality of an individual. Tests of this nature provide us with sketches of potentiality rather than actuality. Behaviour model is better than trait model because what we miss from this model we could get from behavioural model.

The role of testing is to provide evidence on the psychological suitability of candidates. Bier (1965) holds the view that the investigation about the candidates through psychological testing is not going to interfere with the work of grace. "It would be an over simplification, however, to say that psychology can contribute nothing to the discernment of the right intention of the seminary applicant at any time under any conditions." Certainly psychology can contribute considerably the field of discernment though psychological tests are merely instruments. The effectiveness of these methods is very much dependent on candidate's age, education, experience and maturity. In India, it is highly recommended to conduct the testing prior to the admission of candidates, and later on, by the end of each stage of formation especially before the first and the final profession of religious and just before entering the major seminary and before the diaconate in the case of clerical candidates. It is advisable for both formees and formators before they take the final decision regarding their future ministry.

Responsibility of Superiors and Formators

It is the serious responsibility of the ecclesiastical superiors and formators to make the right judgment on the psychological fitness of the candidates for priesthood and religious life. Psychological test results can help them to a great extent. The psychologists who administer such testing programmes are only offering recommendations rather than making decisions. It is the ecclesiastical authorities or formator who should admit or reject a candidate based on all the information available.

Ecclesiastical authorities are quite conscious of the past mistakes in the selection of the candidates to priesthood. Sacred Congregation of Catholic Education (1974) says, "Errors in discerning vocations are not rare, and in all too many cases psychological defects, sometime so pathological kind reveal themselves only after ordination to the priesthood. Detecting defects earlier would help avoid many tragic experiences." The document admits that the selection of candidates for the priestly life is a very difficult task:

All those engaged in training students for the priesthood need to take this office very seriously and prepare them accordingly. Selection should be done in accordance with modern, psychological diagnosis without losing sight of supernatural factors and of the complexities of human influences on an individual However, when in doubt or when seminary superiors feel that a student needs particular help to decide his vocation, special remedies may be employed, such as psychological testing before the candidate begins his theological course.

Though this document was published more than a quarter of century ago it is almost ignored by many superiors and formators in India. The need of psychological preparation in formation was clearly articulated by John Paul II (1992) in his post-synod Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*.

Psychologists who are open to the spiritual world are in a better position to assist seminarians in their vocation discernment process. However, psychologists should be chosen based on their competency and their ability to understand and respect the teaching of the Church. If it is required the formees should be allowed to visit an expert in psychology in view of solving personal problems. Those who conduct psychological tests need to be well acquainted with priestly and religious life and its values. However, unfortunately in India most of

the experts have no personal interest in the priestly or religious life at all. For instance, within the last three decades many experts in this field left their priesthood or religious life (Vallipalam, 2002). Psychological consultation especially the tests are quite common in the western countries but in countries like India such tests are not given serious consideration. Around 10% of the total consecrated people in the Catholic Church are from India (2007). As the number increases the problems also increase. The authorities and formators have to take serious step in the assessment of candidates. Pitaud, (2010) a seminary formator writes:

Today, psychological consultation is considered normal in most seminaries, even if this is made more difficult in some countries by the conditions in which it can be carried out. The teams of formation leaders are accustomed to working with psychologists who help them to refine their discernment in this area. Although it seems preferable to avoid making things systematic, there should be no hesitation to suggest that the seminarians about whose maturity the council has a question should consult a psychologist. He should be chosen according to his competency and his ability to understand and respect what derives from faith and commitment to celibacy. He should help the seminarian to re-read their affective history, take the drama away from it, integrate it into their development, free themselves from some more or less morbid senses of guilt in this way become committed with greater freedom, if they can, if this is really their vocation.

It is up to the formators to fulfill their responsibility in the discernment of vocation of their candidates by integrating psychological dimension into their evaluation process. The assessment results should be given to the candidates. Confidentiality should be respected. Without the consent of the candidates the assessment result should not be given to anyone. In other words, the tests and other assessment result should be known to those individuals authorized by the candidates. Arbuckle, (1985) a well known scholar in the field of vocation and formation expressed the opinion that major superiors must be able to choose the best and the right people as formators and give them adequate training. He also recommends that "they must insist on an adequate screening of candidates."

Conclusion

The role of screening and selection of candidate to priesthood and religious life is an important aspect of vocation. It is advisable that

the first screening be done at the time of admission to the initial formation. A follow up program is highly recommended at every stage of formation. It is difficult to predict on the basis of tests who will be success in the future but it might be easier to predict who will not be a success though psychological tests which is their limitation. There are various devices and methods that are used in the screening process. The simplest method is the questionnaire though there are many other psychological tests. However most of the psychological tests available are prepared in the western context.

Experience shows that in spite of all their limitations, these tests are very useful. However, it is advisable to prepare these tests in the local context. If tests are not available or no expert is there to administer the test, much of the information can be gathered through a careful interview by skilled persons. The advantage of using tests in assessment is that they tap into conflicts, struggles and areas of difficulty that an individual could not access consciously or would be as afraid or ashamed to discuss openly. There areas are otherwise inaccessible without extended psychotherapy, interviews or observation. The tests are very much dependent on the expertise of the one who administer and interpret them and also the honest and sincere cooperation of the candidates. Finally, psychologists who work in the areas of vocation and formation should have a deep faith in the Catholic Church as well as a high esteem for his or her own vocation as religious or priest. We must also bear in mind that psychology is an inaccurate science and unless it takes into account the essential spiritual nature of man it can be a harmful set of techniques.

References

- Abbott, W.M. ed. (1967). Decree on Priestly Formation. *The Documents of Vatican II*. London: Western Publishing Company, Inc., 6.
- Aiken, L.R. (1988a). *Psychological Testing and Assessment*. 6th Edition. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 494.
- Aiken, L.R. (1988b). 3-5.
- Anastasi, A. (1988). *Psychological Testing*. 6th Edition. New York: Macmillan publishing Company, 189.
- Arbuckle, G. (1985). Initial Formation: Anthropological Insight into the 60s and 70s. Select Reprinting from the Bulletins of the International Union of Superiors General (Women) Rome from 1979-1983. Book 2. *Apostolic Formation for Women Religious*. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation.

- Bier, W. C. (1953). Psychological Testing of Candidates and the Theology of Vocation. *Review for Religious*, 12, 291-304.
- Bier, W. C. (1963). A Testimonial. *Catholic Psychological Records*. 1: 3-5.
- Bier, W. C. (1965). Selection of Seminarians. In J. Lee. & I. Putz. eds. *Seminary Education in a Time of Change*. Indiana: Fides Publishers, Inc. 170-204.
- Bishops of the Hindi Region. (1982). *Priestly Formation in North India: Problems, Challenges, Hopes*, Varanasi: Navasadhana.
- Canon Law Society Trust. (1983). *Code of Canon Law*. Great Brittan: 241, 1029, & 1041.
- Coleman G.D. & Freed R. (2000). Assessing Seminary Candidates. *Asian Journal of Vocation and Formation*, 24(2): 22-33.
- Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India. (2004). *Charter of Priestly Formation for India* (Revised on the Basis of the Apostolic Visitation), Bangalore: CCBI Centre, 2.2.
- Congregation for Catholic Education. (2008). *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- D'Arcy, P. F. & Kennedy, E.C. (1965). *The Genius of the Apostolate*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 253-254.
- Dello, I.C.J. (1964). Selection of Candidates for the Novitiate and Religious Profession. in *Franciscan Educational Conference*, 44: 3-49. Chicago, Illinois: Franciscan Herald Press.
- DuBois, P. H. (1970). *The History of Psychological Testing*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Duckro, P. N. & others, (2001). Psychological Assessment in Lay Formation. *Human Development*, 22 (4): 45.
- Dunne, E. T. (1957). *Priestly and Religious Formation*. Dublin: Clonmore & Reynolds, 20-23.
- Federation of Asian Bishops Conference. (2007a). *Vocation in Asia: Formation to Radicality*. Thailand: SAR.
- Federation of Asian Bishops Conference. (2007b).

- Futrell, J. C. (1982). The Dynamics of Religious Formation. *Human Development*, 2 (4): 138-147.
- Grey, H. J. (2003). Psychology, Narrative and Ministerial Formation. *The Way*, 42(3): 81-93.
- Harrower, M. (1963). Psychological Tests in the Unitarian Universalist Ministry. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 2: 129-142.
- Hill P. C. & Hood R. W. Jr. (Eds.) (1999). *Measures of Religiosity*. Birmingham: Religious Education press.
- John, Paul II. (1992). *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 66.
- Landakadavil, A. (1989). *Candidates to the Priesthood*. Shillong: Vendrame Institute Publications.
- Lourdes, P. (1970). Psychology and Vocations. *Recruit*, 15(4): 3-7.
- Lourdes, P. & others (1991). *The Human Face of Clergy*. Pune: N.V.S.C., 131
- Manalel, G. (1993). Psychological Screening of Religious Vocations. *Asian Quest*, 17:4-11
- Manalel, G. (1996). Priests in India: Psychological Formation. Thomas P. Ed. *Priestly Formation in India*, Alwaye: Pontifical Institute of Publications, 158-168.
- McAllister, R. J & Veldt, A. V. (1961). Factors in Mental Illness among Hospitalized Clergy. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 132: 80-88.
- Molosky, J. & Johanson D. (1986). Assessment of Candidates. *Best of Call to Growth/ Ministry*. (Special Edition 1980-1986). Chicago: The National Conference of Religious Vocation Directors, 29-40.
- Moor, T. V. (1936). Insanity in Priests and Religious: I. The Rate of Insanity in Priests and Religious; II. The Detection of Prepsychotics Who Apply for Admission to the Priesthood or Religious communities, *American Ecclesiastical Review*, 95: 485-498, 601-103.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States of America, (1982a). *The Program of Priestly Formation*, Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 463.

- National Conference of Catholic Bishops United States of America, (1982b).94.
- Pitaud, B. (2010). Human Formation in Seminaries. *Omnis Terra*, XLIV (404): 78-85.
- Pope, Pius XII. (1956). Sedes Sapientiae. *Acta Apostolica Sedis*, XLVII (5): 33.
- Roche, I. (1973). Screening: Appraisal of Psychological Fitness to Religious Life. *The Search*, 1 (4): 21-27.
- Sacred Congregation of Catholic Education. (1970). *The Basic Plan for Priestly Formation*. Vatican: 39.
- Sacred Congregation of Catholic Education. (1974). *A Guide to Formation of Priestly Celibacy*. Vatican: 38.
- Saffiotti, L. M. (1998a). Crucial Issues in Psychological Assessment. *Asian Journal of Vocation and Formation*, 22(2):16-17.
- Saffiotti, L. M. (1998b).18.
- Secretaria Status. (2007). *Statistical Yearbook of the Church*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Syro-Malabar Commission for Clergy and Institutes of Consecrated Life. (2007). *The Charter for Priestly Formation in the Syro-Malabar Church*. Kochi: Secretariat, 52.
- Tucker, J. S. (1993). Psychological Consideration in the Formation of Priestly Celibacy. In V. Cajilig, ed. *Hundredfold Harvest*. Tagaytay City: Office of Education & Student Chaplaincy Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference, 142.
- Vallipalam, M. M. (2002). Discernment of Vocation at the Level of Minor Seminary. *Indian Theological Studies*, 39 (1): 33.
- Vanchipurackal, G. (1993). *Reflections of Priestly Vocation*. Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 39.