



When Faith Hurts: Recognizing & Responding to the Spiritual Impact of Trauma

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How did we get here?

- A girl with a question
- Faith based working group
- Keeping the Faith book chapter
- Augsburg study
- Spiritual injury articles
- Seminary curriculum
- Chaplains for Children
- GRACE
- Sacred Spaces
- Seminary Degree with an emphasis children and scripture



The Agenda

- The prevalence of child abuse
- Physical and emotional impact (throughout)
- How children disclose sexual abuse (familial abuse)
- How boys experience CSA
- The impact of sexual abuse on spirituality
- Spiritual blocks to disclosure
- Child protection policies for churches
- Policies when convicted sex offender seeks to join church or attend services
- Physical abuse signs
 - Corporal punishment



The Agenda

- Ministering to:
 - Survivors of child abuse
 - Perpetrators of child abuse
 - The importance to engaging theologically
- Engaging the faith community theologically
- Personal safety education
- Social media policies
- Care in Action
- Coordinating mental health & spiritual care
- Experiential exercises
 - Responding to a crisis
 - Responding to spiritual needs of children and adults



Prevalence of abuse, physical and emotional impact



Most children are abused in the home

- **Percentage of children abused by biological parents or non-biological parent or partner**
 - 100% of neglected children
 - 93% of emotionally abused children
 - 91% of physically abused children
 - 60% of sexually abused children
- **NIS 4 (2010)**



Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study

- Over 17,000 men and women surveyed on 10 types of adverse childhood experiences (sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, witness of domestic violence, etc)
- Now over 25 ACE studies (1998 to present)



Ten Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Emotional abuse (humiliation, threats) (11%)
- Physical abuse (hit hard enough to receive injuries) (28%)
- Contact sexual abuse (28% women, 16% men)
- Mother treated violently (13%)
- Household member alcoholic or drug user (27%)
- Household member imprisoned (6%)
- Household member chronically depressed, suicidal, mentally ill, psychiatric hospitalization (17%)
- Not raised by both biological parents (23%)
- Neglect—physical (10%)
- Neglect—emotional (15%)



1 or more ACE increases risk of:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Cancer | • Depression |
| • Heart disease | • Anxiety disorders |
| • STDs | • Hallucinations |
| • Liver disease | • Sleep disturbances |
| • Smoking | • Memory disturbances |
| • Alcohol abuse | • Anger problems |
| • Obesity | • Domestic violence risk |
| • Drug dependence | • Job problems |
| • IV Drug Use | • Relationship problems |
| • Early intercourse, pregnancy | |

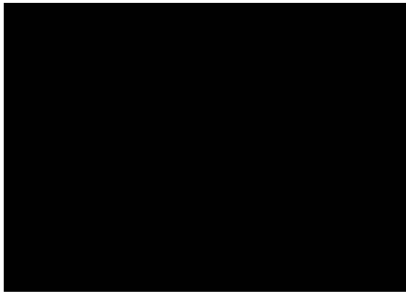


Polyvictimization research

- Exposure to multiple forms of victimization was common.
- Almost 66% of the sample was exposed to more than one type of victimization, 30% experienced five or more types, and 10% experienced 11 or more different forms of victimization in their lifetimes.
- Poly-victims comprise a substantial portion of the children who would be identified by screening for an individual victimization type, such as sexual assault or witnessing parental violence.
- Poly-victimization is more highly related to trauma symptoms than experiencing repeated victimizations of a single type and explains a large part of the associations between individual forms of victimization and symptom levels.
 - (Turner, Finkelhor, et al, 2010)



Ron: Impact of Child Abuse



Polyvictimization/ACE

- Multiple abuses (sexual, physical, emotional, witnessing abuse of siblings, etc) and abusers (uncle, mother, pedophile boyfriend, etc)
- Signs of abuse or neglect?
 - Multiple beatings, "eyes swollen shut" for days
 - "Long walk home"—falling down, crying, etc
- "Food meant sex" (ACE & obesity)
- "Drugs became my friend"
- Lost job
- Had no friends
- Physically sick



Legal obligations to act

- In most states, failing to report is a crime (in Minnesota, the penalty is up to 90 days in jail).
- Failing to report or otherwise enact appropriate policies subjects the faith community to civil lawsuits
- Churches in the U.S. have paid more than 4 billion dollars in damages.
 - Timothy Lytton, *Holding Bishops Accountable* (2008)



How do children disclose sexual abuse?

- Secrecy
- Helplessness
- Entrapment and accommodation
- Delayed, conflicting and unconvincing disclosure
- Retraction
 - *Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome*, Dr. Roland Summit, *Child Abuse & Neglect* (1983)



Boys are even less likely to disclose

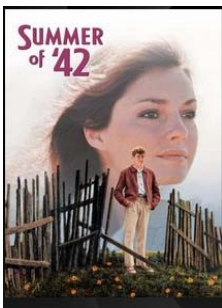


Research on child abuse disclosures by boys

- Boys disclose less frequently than girls
 - Afraid of being labeled weak, gay, and worried about reaction of parents and peers
- Boys disclose much later in life with one study finding that boys who did disclose took over 20 years to report
- “Victimization and the way it is experienced are different for boys than girls.”
 - Parent & Benson (2012)



Another reason boys don't disclose



We make light of the sexual abuse of boys

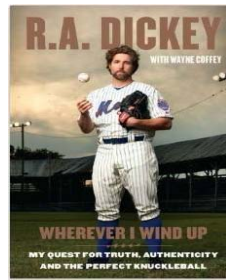
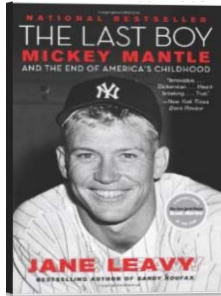


“Where were these teachers when I was in school?”

—Jay Leno



The reality of boys being sexually abused by older girls/women



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The Last Boy (Leavy 2010)

- Mickey Mantle was sexually abused by
 - Older half sister
 - Neighborhood boy
 - Teacher
- Abuse violated every taboo—familial, gender, professional

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The Last Boy (Leavy 2010)

- The abuse left Mantle feeling weak, telling a friend “Everybody talks about my arms and how strong I was. I was a piss-ass sissy.”
- Isolation: “I don’t get close to people. I’m weird or something, I guess.”

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The impact on Mantle

“Mantle’s story is consistent with a cluster of symptoms often seen in survivors...sexual compulsivity or extreme promiscuity, alcoholism or substance abuse; difficulty regulating emotions; bed wetting; a distorted sense of self; self-loathing, shame; a schism between a public image and the private self...”

– Leavy (2010)



Why didn't Mantle get help?

“American culture leaves no room for men to see themselves as victims; if they are victims they are not men. Nowhere would it have been more essential to hide those feelings than in a major league locker room.”

– Jane Leavy (2010)



R.A. Dickey (8 years old, 13 year old female babysitter)

“I feel discarded, like a piece of trash. She acts as though she is mad at me, as if I hadn’t followed her orders properly. I lie on a bed by myself wondering if what just happened is real. I am still trembling, still sweating. I feel paralyzed, my limbs leaden...”



R.A. Dickey

- “The babysitter has her way with me four or five more times that summer, and into the fall, and each time feels more wicked than the time before. The venues shift to the bathtub and other places. I try to cover my private parts with bubble bath but that doesn’t work. With each encounter, my goal was simply to get it over with as quickly as possible...”



R.A. Dickey

- “Every time that I know I’m going back over there, the sweat starts to come back. My mouth gets dry. I sit in the front seat of the car, next to my mother, anxiety surging in me like a hot spring. I don’t know if my mother notices. I never tell her why I am so afraid. I never tell anyone until I am thirty-one years old...”



R.A. Dickey

“I just keep my terrible secret, keep it all inside, the details of what went on beneath the hot, sticky sheets of a Tennessee summer, of the orders and the odor and the hurt of a little boy who is scared and ashamed and believes he has done something terribly wrong, but doesn’t know what that is.”



What is spirituality?

- **“Relating to religion or religious belief; relating to, or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things.”**
 - The Oxford American Dictionary (2001)
- **Spirituality has been defined as a “search or quest for the Sacred” or as a “private, personal, affective experience with ‘the Divine.’”**
 - Walker (2009)



The spiritual impact of abuse

Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy

© 2009 American Psychological Association
1043-9882/09/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0016231

Changes in Personal Religion/Spirituality During and After Childhood Abuse: A Review and Synthesis

Donald F. Walker, Henri Webb Reid, Tiffany O'Neill, and Lindsay Brown
Richmont Graduate University

Psychologists have begun to consider the potential role of traumatic experiences on the victim's spirituality and religiousness as well as the role personal religious and spiritual faith might have in recovery from abuse. In this review, the authors were particularly interested in these issues as they pertain to childhood abuse. The authors identified 34 studies of child abuse as they relate to spirituality and religiosity that included information on a total of 19,090 participants. The studies were classified according to both the form of abuse and the form of religiousness or spirituality that were examined. The majority of studies indicated either some decline in religiousness or spirituality ($N = 14$) or a combination of both growth and decline ($N = 12$). Seven studies gave preliminary indications that religiousness/spirituality can moderate the development of posttraumatic symptoms or symptoms associated with other Axis I disorders. The authors discuss implications for both therapy and future research.

Keywords: childhood abuse, religion and spirituality



The impact of abuse on spirituality

- **Subjects of most studies, victims or perpetrators have Judeo-Christian background**
- **A study of 527 child abuse victims (physical, sexual or emotional) found these victims had a “significant” spiritual injury**
- **The injuries included feelings of guilt, anger, grief, despair, doubt, fear of death and belief God is unfair.**
- **However, the victims reported praying more frequently & having a “spiritual experience.”**
 - Lawson, et al, Child Abuse & Neglect (1998)



When the perpetrator is clergy, the impact on spirituality is greater

- Clergy use “religious cover” to justify abuse (i.e. their “good works” overshadow the abuse; God gave this child to me)
- Clergy often communicate this cover to the victims
- When this happens, church attendance of these survivors decreases, less likely to trust God, and their relationship with God “ceases to grow.”
 - McLaughlin, Devastated Spirituality: The Impact of Clergy Sexual Abuse on the Survivor's Relationship with God (1994).



Examples of faith leaders invoking God to justify sexual abuse

- “Mr. Geier, now 59, said that between the ages of 14 and 15, starting around 1965, Father Murphy molested him four times in a closet at the school. The priest, a hearing man fluent in sign language, said that God wanted him to teach the boy about sex but that he had to keep it quiet because it was under the sacrament of confession. Mr. Geier said he felt sick.”
 - Laurie Goodstein, New York Times, March 26, 2010
- The case of the “bedtime prayers”
- The case of the girl who “got it over with”
- “Pedophiles need to become more positive and make the claim that pedophilia is an acceptable expression of God's will for love and unity among human beings.”
 - Ralph Underwager, ordained Missouri Synod Lutheran minister, Journal of Paedophilia (1993)



How is religion used in the abuse of a child ?

Jack Schaap, Indiana Pastor, Claimed Jesus Wanted Him To Have Sex With Teenage Girl

The Huffington Post | By Meredith Bennett-Smith | Posted: 03/14/2013 4:53 pm EDT | Updated: 03/15/2013 12:26 pm EDT

Recommend 11,215 people recommend this.



Jack Schaap, a former megachurch pastor accused of having sex with a teenage girl, gives an animated sermon on “Publishing the Shout.”



Pastor Schaap

- Schaap's teenage victim "particularly susceptible to this offense due to her mental state." *Probation pre-sentence report*
- Schaap sees an e-mail the teenager in his church is "frightened, confused, and emotionally traumatized" and was engaging in "self-destructive behaviors."
- The e-mail notes the child has "a tender heart and...is still very teachable and moldable."



Pastor Schaap

- One week later, Schaap begins to "counsel" victim
- Among the victim's troubles, she discloses an emotional breakup with boyfriend
- Schaap transitions from pastor to friend to child molester—sexually assaulting the teenager in 3 states



Schaap's letter to victim

"You opened your heart wide to me—you made me more than a Pastor/Rescuer—you made me your friend, your confidant, your beloved....In our 'fantasy talk' you have affectionately spoken of being 'my wife.' That is exactly what Christ desires for us. He wants to marry us & become eternal lovers! I tried to craftily catch your heart...Thank you for the privilege of helping a struggling teenager...You have such a wonderful life ahead of you. I must be careful not to spoil that with my selfish fantasy desires...When we get scared, Jesus sends his spirit to live within us...I must follow the example of Christ. I have espoused you to Him as a chaste virgin..."



Victim's letter to Schaap

"I was in love with you and I would not admit that I was a victim...I also felt so guilty and partially responsible, like maybe it was my fault....Then I became really angry towards God. For a second I did not believe in God. I thought there can't be a God because he would not let this happen and if there is a God, I hate him because he let this happen because you told me that he was OK with this..."



Victim's letter to judge

"My entire life the Church has been my universe. Growing up, I watched (Schaap) in Church, listening to his sermons three times a week. I was raised by my parents and teachers to trust and obey my pastor. He was a celebrity to me, a father figure, and a man of God...I felt most safe when I was in Church. I first met (Schaap) when I was in kindergarten, and still had my baby teeth..."



Victim's letter to judge

"As my pastor, I sought guidance and counseling when I was in need of help. He told me to confide in him...He told me I was special, that he loved me, and that he wanted to marry me. He told me that I was his precious gift from God...he made me believe what we were doing was okay and right in the eyes of God. I felt so special when he texted me from the holy altar during his sermons..."



Would Schaap's victim...

- Benefit from medical care?
- From psychological care?
- Spiritual care?



Shattered Faith



How often do offenders use religious cover in sexually abusing children?

- 93% of sex offenders describe themselves as "religious"
 - Abel study of 3,952 male offenders
- In a survey of 2,864 church leaders, 20% knew of a sex offender attending/member of their church (Christianity Today 2010)
- Hard core offenders maintaining significant involvement with religious institutions "had more sexual offense convictions, more victims, and younger victims."
 - Eshuys & Smallbone, *Religious Affiliations Among Adult Sexual Offenders* (2006)
- Why?
- Faith community provides "cheap Grace", gullible religious people, and easy access to children



Many offenders view religious people as gullible

“If children can be silenced and the average person is easy to fool, many offenders report that religious people are even easier to fool than most people.”

--Anna Salter



How sex offenders view religious institutions

- “I consider church people easy to fool...They have a trust that comes from being Christians...They tend to be better folks all around. And they seem to want to believe in the good that exists in all people...I think they want to believe in people. And because of that, you can easily convince, with or without convincing words.”
- The case of the choir director



How do predators select victims?

- Q. At church, you did not molest all the children. How did you choose?
- A. “First of all you start the grooming process from day one...the children that you’re interested in...You find a child you might be attracted to...For me, it might be nobody fat. It had to be a you know, a nice looking child...You maybe look at a kid that doesn’t have a father image at home, or a father that cares about them...if you’ve got a group of 25 kids, you might find 9 that are appealing...then you start looking at their family backgrounds. You find out all you can...which ones are the most accessible...you get it down to one that is the easiest target, and that’s the one you do.”



Religious institutions often provide easy access to children

- “Any situation that provides ideal conditions for pedophiles will draw them, and it will be very difficult to distinguish them from their nonpedophilic and entirely moral colleagues...boarding schools, overnight camps, male choirs—any setting that puts groups of kids regularly together under the supervision and care of a ‘counselor’ or other adult for overnight trips will draw pedophiles...”
– Dr. Anna Salter
- The day I called the local church camp



Spirituality-Based Blocks to Disclosing Child Abuse

Vieth, When Faith Hurts: Overcoming Spirituality Based Blocks & Problems Before, During and After the Forensic Interview (Revised & Expanded), 2(10) CenterPiece (2011)



Perpetrator Induced

- Perpetrator manipulates child's faith to convince the child that he/she is sinful (i.e. child's biological reaction means child enjoyed contact as much as perpetrator)
- The victim who initiated sexual contact as means of “getting it over with.”



Child induced

- Even if perpetrator does not manipulate child's faith, the victim's own analysis of religious doctrine may cause a block
- Example: my conversation with a 13 year old
- Seven year old: "Am I still a virgin in God's eyes?"



Doctrinal induced

- A child may correctly understand a religious doctrine—and may be tormented by its application
- The police officer in the back of the room



Institution induced

- Many faith institutions are more interested in addressing the spiritual needs of perpetrators than victims
- Many members of a congregation will rally around the perpetrator
- Even if a perpetrator confesses, many church leaders urge reconciliation (the case of the Sunday School teacher)
- The case of the crowded courtroom



Religious leader induced

- Numerous studies document that when the perpetrator is a faith leader, the damage to the child's psyche is particularly pronounced
- One victim's comments about the Eucharist



What have we learned so far?

- Child abuse impacts spirituality (sense of betrayal, doubts, guilt and decreases involvement in religion)
- Spiritual harm is greater when the perpetrator is a member of clergy
- However, victims often report being more spiritual than non-victims (i.e. increased prayer activity)



The role of spirituality in coping with abuse

- Researchers have found a victim's "spiritual coping behavior" may play a positive or negative role in the ability to cope with the abuse
- Victims of severe abuse and very young victims are more likely to remain "stuck" in their spiritual development (i.e. remain angry with God)
- Nonetheless many victims reporting "greater resolution" of childhood abuse were able to "actively turn to their spirituality to cope...rather than attempt to cope on their own."
- Gall, *Spirituality and Coping with Life Stress Among Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*, 30 Child Abuse & Neglect 829 (2006)
- "Comforted by Velvet Paws"



Child Protection Policies



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Berkovits (2018)

Preventing Abuse in Christian Organizations That Serve Youth: Ten Policies to Create Safer Environments¹

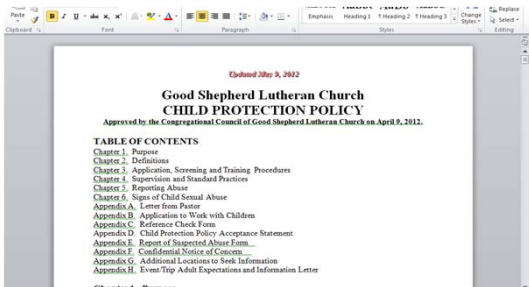
Shira M. Berkovits²

It is critical for leaders of youth-serving organizations (YSOs)³ to adopt child protection policies proactively, before they are faced with a problem. Policies clearly acceptable and unacceptable behaviors that guide adults' to model safe interactions with children. When a policy is well communicated, it becomes integral to institutional culture and its violations are easily identifiable, making it possible for bystanders to intervene and institutions to respond. Without policies, leaders may forget or dismiss important response steps, become more susceptible to pressure, and introduce

A good policy can function as a deterrent, sending a clear message to potential abusers: Abuse is not tolerated here and will be reported immediately.

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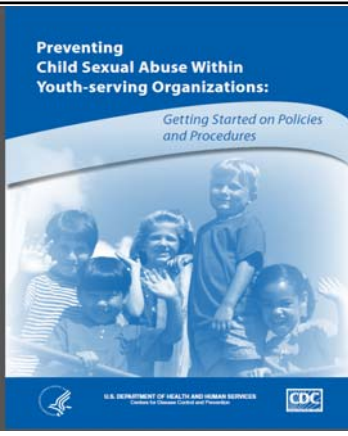
The goal



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Follow the CDC standards

- Screening/selection of employees & volunteers
- Guidelines on interactions
- Monitoring behavior
- Ensuring safe environments
- Responding to inappropriate behavior
- Training of employees, caregivers, youth




Screening and selection

- **CDC recommends five pre-employment screenings:**
 - Informing applicant of policies, requiring written acknowledgment, and asking questions
 - Written application with questions pertinent to abuse
 - Personal interview with additional questions about reporting, etc
 - Verbal, not just written references



Background checks

- **Criminal background checks (but note that most predators have never been caught—Abel study, etc)**
- **Google search and search newspapers where counselors/employees may have worked**



Monitoring behavior

- Two deep leadership—at least two adults on “all trips and outings”
- No one on one contact (if there is some reason for a private discussion with a child, do it in the view of others)
- Respect for privacy—do not watch a child change clothes or shower nor should a child see a counselor naked



Policies and guidelines

- Separate sleeping accommodations for counselors and children (if overnight trips, etc)
- Limit or prohibit events at workers homes
- Appropriate attire (no skinny dipping, etc)
- Windows and open doors
- Sexual comments, jokes, and behaviors around children strictly prohibited
- Prohibiting corporal punishment
- Limiting cameras, imaging, digital devices
- Bullying prohibited



Keep an eye out at camp

- At the camp, does a counselor single out a child for gifts, particularly expensive gifts, or other favors? (teacher's buddy)
- Is that child from a family where parents are divorced or where parents are not involved?
- Do they make unusual statements such as commenting on a boy or girl's development? (teacher would slam on car breaks and call the behavior a “ball busting” episode)
- Do they find a way to “accidentally” see the child undressing or going to the bathroom? (teacher's bathroom rules)
- Trust your gut (teacher's instructions to sleep in underwear with sleeping bags undone, teacher's “bedwetting” excuse, Lutheran school pornography case)



Education and training

- **CDC recommends training for:**
 - Employees/volunteers
 - Children
 - Parents
- **CDC recommends course content**



Children with disabilities

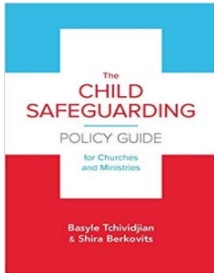
- **Several studies find that children with disabilities are at greater risk for abuse & neglect**
 - OJJDP (2015)
- **Accordingly, policies should be aware of this enhanced risk and take into account the needs of particularly vulnerable populations**



Resources



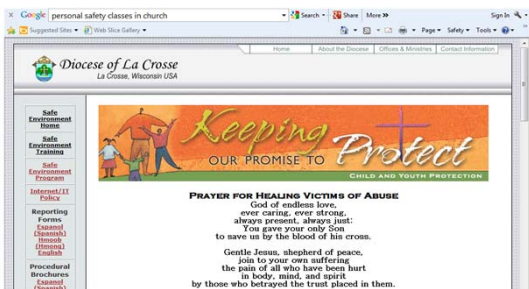
An essential resource



- **Companion guide for Synagogues to be published in 2019**



Personal Safety Classes



Research supports personal safety training

- **“Ample empirical evidence” to support personal safety training (Finkelhor 2007)**
- **Children more likely to use self-protection techniques if instructed (Finkelhor 1995)**
- **In person training much more effective**
- **Make clear the difference between sinning and being the victim of sin**



One of many resources

NEW GROWTH PRESS PRESENTS



GOD MADE ALL OF ME
A Book to Help Children Protect Their Bodies
by Justin and Lindsay Hickomb

About the Book
Protect Your Child with Truth from God's Word
Parents can help to keep their children safe by teaching them how God made each person special. From that special truth parents can use God Made All of Me to teach children what parts of their bodies are private, what is inappropriate touching, and how to respond to unwanted contact from anyone else. God Made All of Me is a simple yet beautiful illustrated story that will be a welcome for families to openly talk about the possibility of sexual abuse, then helping to protect children from "society" other adults might want them to keep and understanding which steps of teaching are right and very wrong, written by Justin and Lindsay Hickomb who counsel victims of childhood sexual abuse and are also the parents of young children. God Made All of Me is an important resource that every family will want to have in their home library.

Release Date: July 27, 2015
Audience: Adult/Children

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Another resource (in your materials)

In the Footsteps of Mary and Joseph: The Role of Adult and Child Education in the Prevention of Abuse

Alison Feigh¹

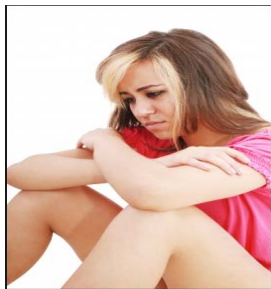
"Safety and security don't just happen, they are the result of collective concern and public investment. We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear."
— Nelson Mandela²

All major religious traditions prioritize the importance of addressing the needs and concerns of marginalized individuals and communities.³ Creating safe spaces for children to grow and question is not just a good idea, it also aligns

When Joseph, Mary, and the Wise Men learned the baby Jesus was in danger, the Bible tells us that each of these adults took concrete steps to prevent abuse (Matt 2:1–21). Years

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Meeting the needs of survivors



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The role of spirituality in coping with abuse

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— Gail, *Spirituality and Coping with Life Stress Among Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*, 30 Child Abuse & Neglect 829 (2006)



More research

- Religious and spiritual forms of coping "contribute to decreased symptoms, greater self esteem, and overall greater life satisfaction."
 - Bryant-Davis (2012)
- Religiousness can moderate posttraumatic symptoms for child abuse survivors
 - Walker (2009)
- In a study of 2,964 female child sexual abuse survivors, researchers noted "significantly more posttraumatic symptoms" in survivors with no current religious practices.
 - Elliott (1994)



Religion and health

International Scholarly Research Network
JMRN Psychiatry
Volume 2012, Article ID 218750, 13 pages
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Review Article

Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications

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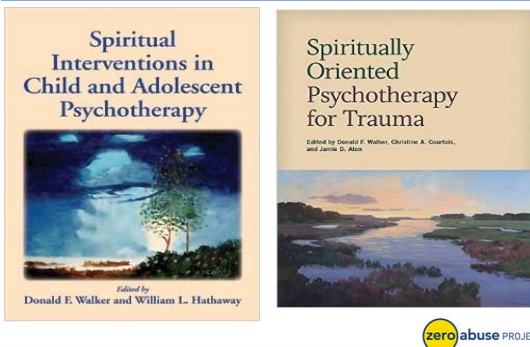
Academic Editors: S. M. Hyman and B. I. Mitrova

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This paper provides a concise but comprehensive review of research on religiosity/spirituality (R/S) and both mental health and physical health. It is based on a systematic review of original data-based quantitative research published in peer-reviewed journals between 1872 and 2010, including a few seminal articles published since 2010. First, I provide a brief historical background to



American Psychological Association publications



Collaboration with mental health (Bilich et al, 2000)

- **Pastor as consultant**
- **Therapist as consultant**
- **Referrals**
- **Limited collaboration**
- **Full collaboration**
 - **Therapy and spiritual guidance offered as integrated whole**



The importance of sacred texts (Walker 2014)

- **Many maltreated children abused or neglected by an offender who used a sacred text**
 - Bottoms, et al (2003)
- **This damage can be “powerfully undone when challenged using other passages from clients’ religious and spiritual tradition.”**
 - Walker, et al, (2014)
- **The case of the minister using Genesis**



The theology of trauma (Monroe 2015)

- Anguish is the norm (40% of the Psalms are laments) and God suffers with us
- Peace happens in the context of chaos (Psalm 23, Jeremiah 29:11)
- God's kingdom in this earth does not promise the protection of bodies
- God and God's people are in the business of trauma prevention, justice & mercy
- Recovery does not eliminate the consequences of violence in this world

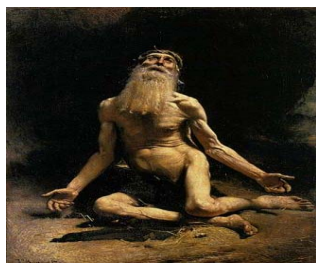


Diane Langberg (2017)

- “One of the other vital functions of the church, and one that I think we’ve forgotten, is the art of lamenting. People who have suffered severe trauma, such as sexual abuse, need to lament. Often, I will send them to the Psalms or to the Prophets, but I help them find words from Scripture to express their pain, their fear, their doubts, and sometimes even their anger at God. We see often in Scripture where the psalmist or the prophets call out to God, ‘Where are you?’ or ‘Why don’t you hear me?’”



Sometimes God doesn't answer the "why" questions (Pargament 2005)



Job by Léon Bonnat (1880)



Recommendations

- Avoid the temptation to focus on victim's "sins"
- Assist the victim in accessing medical and mental health care
- Stay within your field of expertise
- Refrain from platitudes
- Don't require forgiveness
- Cautiously respond when victim wants to confront perpetrator



What survivors want (Clark 2009)

1. Offer an "unequivocal apology"
2. Symbolic gestures (i.e. a memorial or rock garden)
3. Changes in policies (two deep leadership, proper screening, immediate reporting to the authorities—no exceptions)
4. Archive the past (victims want the assurance there will never be a revisionist history)
5. The practical (faith community should help access mental health and medical services)
6. Listen and act (the hymn that hurt)



Nate Frambach

"I don't know what to say or what to do, but I'm going to stick with you until we figure it out."



Faith and CAC collaborations



Religion in child sexual abuse forensic interviews*
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 Introduction
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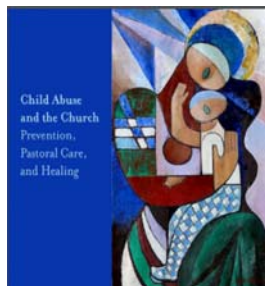
ABSTRACT
 Religion is a central feature of many children's lives and is often intertwined with their understanding of the world. In this paper, we review the literature on the role of religion in child sexual abuse forensic interviews. We discuss the challenges of addressing religious issues in these interviews and provide recommendations for interviewers. We also discuss the importance of religious issues in the forensic interview process and the need for interviewers to be sensitive to the religious beliefs of the child and the family. Finally, we discuss the importance of religious issues in the forensic interview process and the need for interviewers to be sensitive to the religious beliefs of the child and the family.

- **Recommendations:**
 - Foster respectful understanding between CACs and faith communities
 - Provide education to faith leaders
 - Train CAC staff on religious issues
 - Discuss religious issues in MDT case reviews
 - Tishelman & Fontes (2017)



Currents in Mission & Theology (2018)

- **Articles on:**
 - Coordinating spiritual & mental health care
 - Coordinating spiritual and medical care
 - Coordinating with sex offender treatment providers
 - Prevention



Meeting the needs of offenders



Offenders assume you are gullible

“If children can be silenced and the average person is easy to fool, many offenders report that religious people are even easier to fool than most people.”

--Anna Salter



Youth minister w/ over 100 victims (p. 199 Salter)

“(T)here was a great amount of pride. Well, I pulled this one off again. You’re a good one...There were times when little old ladies would pat me on the back and say, ‘You’re one of the best young men that I have ever known.’ I would think back and think ‘If you really knew me, you wouldn’t think that.’”



Understand clergy abusers are just as dangerous

- **Share characteristics of other offenders**
- **More skilled/better educated**
- **Careful selection of victims**
- **More likely to use force**
- **Treatment the same**

— Langevin, et al, *A Study of Clerics Who Commit Sexual Offenses*, 24 Child Abuse & Neglect 535 (2000)



Understand predators will abuse a child with others present

- **54.9% of child molesters offended when another child present**
 - The Tricky Part by Martin Mora)
- **23.9% offended when another adult present**
 - Underwood, et al, *Do sexual offenders Molest when Other Persons are Present?* 11(3) Journal of Research and Treatment (1999)
- **Note—it may be subtle (under the blankets)**
- **Why? Increases power over child, the chance of getting caught enhances arousal, etc.**



Pastoral care for offenders

- **Coordinate with sex offender treatment provider or develop “treatment network”**
 - Mutter (2011)
- **Stay within your field of expertise**
- **Review original investigative records**
- **Confront cognitive distortions**
 - “The child never said no”
- **Don’t allow offender to shift blame**
 - “My wife withheld herself sexually”



When an offender confesses

- **Inform him that sexual abuse contributes to significant health risks and that he should fully disclose his conduct to a medical care provider to ensure the child’s physical well-being (Centers for Disease Control, ACE studies)**
- **Inform him that sexual abuse has a significant impact on a child’s mental health and therefore the victim should be referred to an appropriate mental health provider (CDC, ACE studies)**



More advice

MINISTERING TO ADULT SEX OFFENDERS: TEN LESSONS FROM HENRY GERECKE

Victor J. Vlieth¹

He who covers up his faults will not succeed;
He who confesses and gives them up will find mercy.

Proverbs 28:13

Introduction

Henry Gerecke grew up in rural Missouri where first and second generation immigrants "farmed the land and worshipped God in the Missouri Synod Lutheran tradition." Gerecke himself became a Lutheran Church Missouri Synod pastor, serving in that role from 1925 until his death in 1961. Gerecke was a faithful minister noted for his desire to minister to "people he felt more desperately in need of hearing the Gospel message." This led him to "follow a call" to minis-



Policies for sex offenders seeking to join a church or attend services

- Compliance with the law. Speak to the offender's probation officer and/or the local prosecutor.
- Consultation with the sex offender's treatment provider. This will determine potential dangers and help the church in meeting the offender's needs.
- Review court and investigative records. What charges were dismissed? What did the offender confess to?
- Determine level of supervision necessary. Low risk may require a shadow, high risk separate services.



Policies for sex offenders seeking to join a church or attend services

- Sex offender should not be allowed to attend services with victim. This is true even if low risk.
- If SO goes to different congregation—let them know of risks.
- Be sensitive to the fears of parents and the emotions of all survivors.
- Have a public congregational meeting.

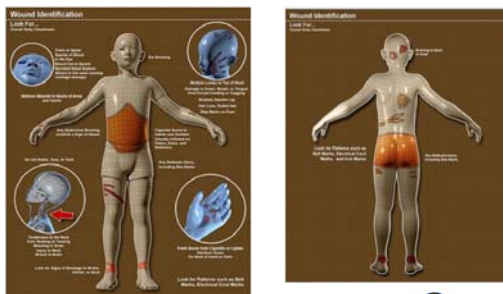


Recognizing physical abuse

- Children are forward moving and frontal explorers, most accidental injuries are to “frontal” locations (forehead, nose, chin, palms, elbows, shins)
- Injuries to buttocks, genitalia, abdomen, back, lateral areas of body more likely to indicate abuse
- Does child’s description make sense? (the coffee table account)



Location of injuries



Suspicious injuries

- Always bruised—particularly in unlikely areas
- “Control” injuries (hair, arms, etc)
- “Patterned” injuries (hand slap—2 or 3 lines)











Hand Print on face



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Faith communities can build resilience



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Religion and well-being

- Even when controlling for age, race, ethnicity, region, socio-economic status, marital and child bearing status, “very religious” people scored higher than “moderately religious” or “non-religious” on Gallup’s “well-being index”
- This index measures life evaluation, physical health, emotional health, healthy behaviors, and work environment
- Why?
 - Religions promote healthy behavior
 - Belief in God provides unique comfort in times of sorrow
 - Religion provides “super-charged” friends (Newport 2012)
- Coping with trauma



Closing thoughts

**The bottom line dilemma:
“You can make sense of sexual abuse and no God, or God and no sexual abuse. But how do you tolerate the two realities together?”**

—Diane Langberg, PhD



“Till the night be passed”

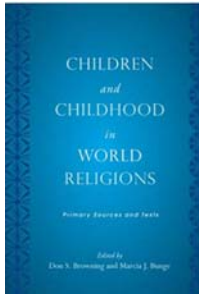


“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. Not to act is to act.”

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer



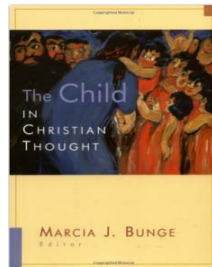
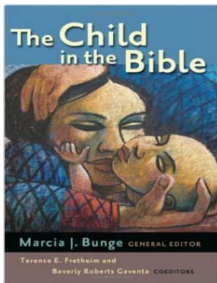
Engaging faith community theologically



- **Addresses sacred texts pertaining to children from six of the world's largest religious traditions.**



Engaging the faith community theologically



God hears the cries of children



- “But God heard the boy (Ishmael) crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from Heaven... ‘Go to him and comfort him, for I will make a great nation from his descendants.’”
— Genesis 21:17-18



God expects all of us to act



- “Suppose the people of the community close their eyes to the fact that the man sacrificed his child to Molech. And suppose they fail to put him to death...”

— Leviticus 20:4



God understands the anguish of victims



- “She (Tamar) put her hands on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went...And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom’s house, a desolate woman.”

— 2 Samuel 13:18-20



God holds offenders accountable

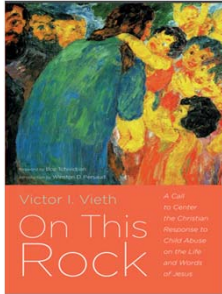


- “Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man!”

—2 Samuel 12:7



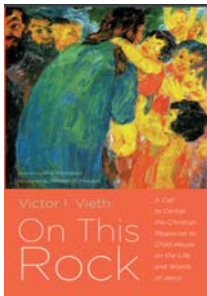
Children as God's messengers



"Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever receives one of these little children in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.'"
--Jesus (Mark 9:36-37)



What did Jesus mean?



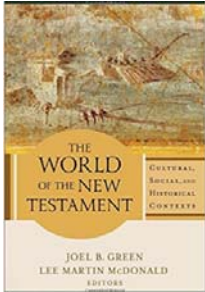
- Jesus is referencing ancient Jewish customs of respect to messengers
 - Strange (2004)
- A true disciple of Jesus must "love and serve children"
 - Gundry-Volf (2001)



The context in which Jesus said this



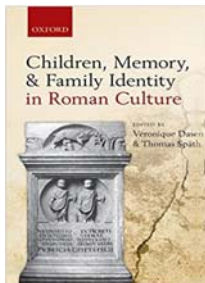
Child physical abuse



- Children had “limited reason” and thus teachers, parents and masters beat them
- Children must be beaten frequently (Sir 30:1)
- Children exposed to torture or “sadistic spectacles”

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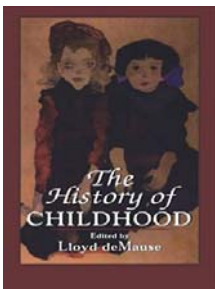
Child neglect



- Legally permissible to expose children
 - Poverty
 - Illegitimate
 - Deformed
- “Rescued” children often became slaves or were prostituted

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Child sexual abuse



- Children “lived in an atmosphere of sexual abuse”
 - Lloyd deMause
- Sexual abuse in gymnasiums
- Pederasty
- Sexual abuse of slaves
- Mishnah had low penalty for sexually abusing child below the age of three

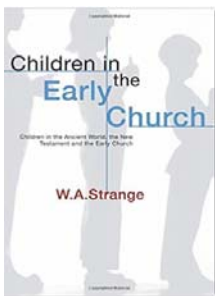
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The impact of the incarnation



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A new dignity for children



“If the incarnate Christ had assumed the experiences of childhood, as well as those of adult life, then childhood took on a new dignity and importance.”

— W.A. Strange

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The DNA of Jesus



- **Mathew’s lineage of Jesus includes the “movers and shakers of Israel”**
 - Betsworth (2016)
- **But this lineage also includes three sexually exploited women (Rahab, Tamar, Bathseeba)**
- **Jesus’ own mother faced “public disgrace”**
 - Mt 1:19

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A near victim of child abuse



Jesus survived a mass infanticide (Mt 2:13; 16) and “would later rise up in defense of children.”

— Dr. Paul Offit (2015)



Jesus and children



- **Knew the games they played**
 - Mt 11:16-18
- **Prayed for them**
 - Mt. 19:13-14
- **Blessed them**
 - Mark 10:13-16
- **Took them in his arms**
 - Mark 9:36-37; 10:13-16
- **Healed them**
 - (e.g. Mark 9:2)
- **Raised them from the dead**
 - (e.g. Mark 5:41-43)



Teachings on children



- **Children should be cared for**
 - Mt 7:9-11
- **Illustration of faith**
 - Mt 18:1-4
- **Given divine wisdom**
 - Mt 11:25
- **Scolds any in the church who keep children away**
 - Mark 10:13-16



Teachings on child abuse



"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea."

— Mark 9:42



What does this mean?

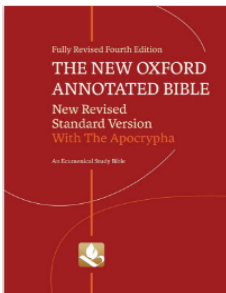


- "Little ones" is Greek adjective *mikros* or "smallest child"
- Stumbling block means damaging someone's faith
- Millstone is stone turned by an animal to grind seed to flour
- Anything that harms a child's faith is viewed harshly by God

— Paavola (2013)



Some Bible commentaries adopt this view



- This conclusion is based on Mark 9:42 combined with subsequent verses pertaining to sins committed by various parts of the body and the Oxford Bible commentators' review of "references in rabbinic literature"



A broader interpretation leads to similar conclusion

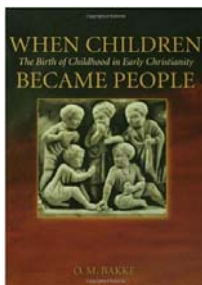
- “Child abuse causes children to stumble in the faith in many ways. Later in life it can trigger sinful behavior to cope with the painful memories. It often confuses the person spiritually and theologically: ‘If there is a God, why didn’t [God] help me? If God promises to answer our prayers, then why didn’t [God] stop my abuse? I prayed about it many times.’”
- “Jesus recognized children were valuable and vulnerable” and thus the “strong warning.”
 - Schuetze (2015)



How did the early church respond?



Influence on child sexual abuse

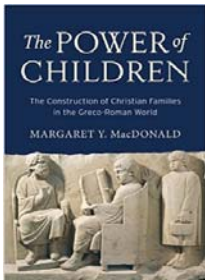


- The “Christian sexual ethic” was a “clear break with the view of sexual relations between adults and children in the Greco-Roman tradition.”

— O.M. Bakke



Influence on sexual exploitation

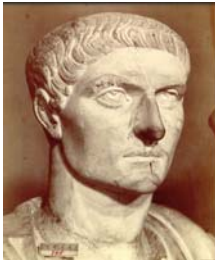


- Christian household codes (e.g. Col 3:20-4:1) “implies an ethical imperative that warns against believing masters making sexual use of slaves in the community.”

— Margaret MacDonald



Influence on public policy

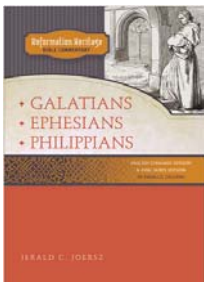


“Let a law be at once promulgated in all the towns of Italy, to turn parents from using a patricidal hand on their newborn children, and to dispose their hearts to the best sentiments.”

— Constantine



Influence on physical abuse



- The only New Testament references to the discipline of children (Eph 6:4; Col 3:21) encourages parents not to exasperate their children—a message that was countercultural to the harsh corporal punishment of the era

— Jerald C. Joersz



Gregory Henry Payne

- “Amid all the differences of opinion and doctrine that we find among the early founders of Christianity, there was one thing on which they were unanimous, and that was the attitude toward children. It was a ceaseless war they waged on behalf of children—those early and oftentimes eloquent founders. From Barnabas, contemporary of the Apostles, to Ambrosius and Augustine, they did not cease to denounce those who, no matter what their reasons, exposed or killed children.”



The new “old” church