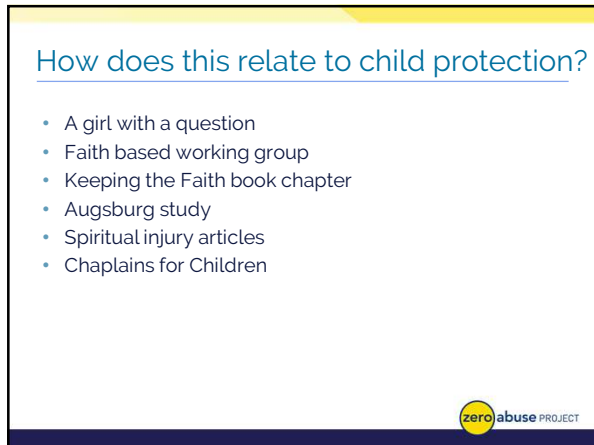


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3

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."¹
- Spirituality has been defined as a "search or quest for the Sacred" or as a "private, personal, affective experience with 'the Divine.'"²

¹ The Oxford American Dictionary (2001)

² Walker (2009)



4

The role of spiritual care

Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy

2009, Vol. 3, No. 2, 139-150

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1943-9817/09/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0015111

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



5

The impact of abuse on spirituality

- 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."¹

¹ Lawson, et al, Child Abuse & Neglect (1998)



6

Spiritual impact of abuse by clergy

- 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)



7

How often do offenders use religious cover?

- 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 ¹
- Hard core offenders maintaining significant involvement with religious institutions "had more sexual offense convictions, more victims, and younger victims." ²
- Why?
- Church provides "cheap Grace", gullible religious people, and easy access to children

¹ Christianity Today 2010

² Eshuis & Smallbone, Religious Affiliations Among Adult Sexual Offenders (2006)



8

“

"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




9

“

"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)



10

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 "Psalms the Shift."



11

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."



12

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



13

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..."



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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..."



15

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..."



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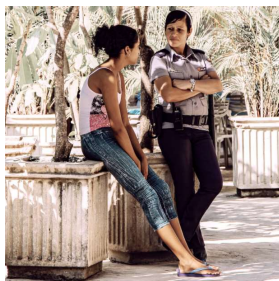
Victim's letter to judge

"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..."



17

What can MDTs do?



- Be aware of potential spiritual injuries that may impair disclosure of abuse


Vieth (2011; 2018)



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Look for clues

- Prior to conducting the interview, look at the intake form for clues about spiritual blocks
- Example: "I think God is mad at me."
- Also look at the setting of abuse (clergy perpetrator, abuse in a religious setting, etc)
- Do we know anything about the child's belief system? (small towns have an advantage here; Missouri case)




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Select an appropriate setting for interview

- CAC or child friendly room for interviews
- If an emergency interview is needed, be cognizant that a spirituality-based block may be harder to overcome if the interview is in a church affiliated school or even a home filled with religious symbols.¹
- Example: "When daddy does sex to me I feel sad..My Mister Jesus he just watched and he didn't make it stop."
- Another example "just focus on the cross."


¹ Christa Brown, [This Little Light](#) (2009); DVD [All God's Children](#)



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Be alert for signs of spiritual block

- Sometimes the child may boldly do or say something suggesting a block or problem (i.e. "Am I still a virgin in God's eyes?")
- The dynamics of abuse may suggest a block (i.e. girl molested after being compelled to say bedtime prayers and father says "You see, God is OK with what are doing—or he would have stopped this.")



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Addressing blocks in the interview



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Offer reassurance

- "You're not in trouble with *me*."
- "*This* is a safe place."
- "You know, I talk to lots of boys (or girls). No matter what happened, it's not your fault."

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Assure the child that someone will help him/her address spiritual questions

- Child: Am I still a virgin in God's eyes?
- Interviewer asks the question back ("How come you ask that?")
- What if the child insists on an answer?

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Addressing spiritual injuries



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Bring Spirituality questions, blocks/problems to the team

- Develop a plan to address the spiritual injuries in the same way we would address physical/emotional damage
- Select a therapist skilled at addressing child abuse and who shares the child's faith or is well-versed in the child's faith tradition and is sensitive to the child's spiritual needs¹
- Have one or more faith members as part of team
- Consider the value of spirituality in helping the child cope (i.e victim witness forms) (works at Mayo)
- Consider a clergy person as a support person
- The value of prayer before trial

¹Gonsiorek, et al 2009

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The potential benefit of spiritual care



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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."¹
- "Comforted by Velvet Paws"

¹Gall, Spirituality and Coping with Life Stress Among Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse, 30 Child Abuse & Neglect 829 (2006)



28

More research

- Religious and spiritual forms of coping "contribute to decreased symptoms, greater self esteem, and overall greater life satisfaction."¹
- Religiousness can moderate posttraumatic symptoms for child abuse survivors.²
- In a study of 2,964 female child sexual abuse survivors, researchers noted "significantly more posttraumatic symptoms" in survivors with no current religious practices.³

¹ Bryant-Davis 2012

² Walker 2009

³ Elliott 1994



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Spirituality and ACEs



Home Profiles Research Units **Research Output**

Enter search terms...

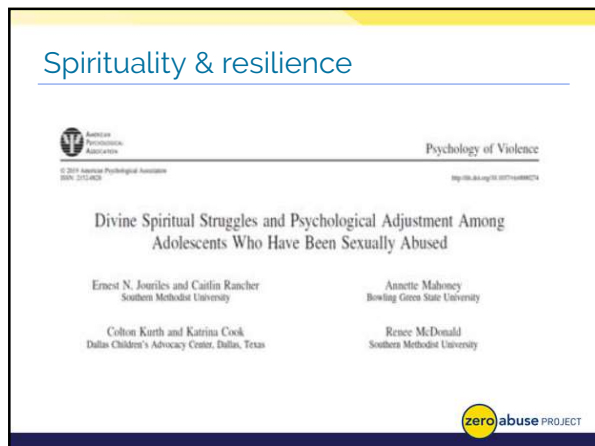
The Role of Religious Involvement in the Relationship Between Early Trauma and Health Outcomes Among Adult Survivors

Karla G. Reiner, Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Karen Bandeen-Roche, Jerry W. Lee, Sarah Scanlon

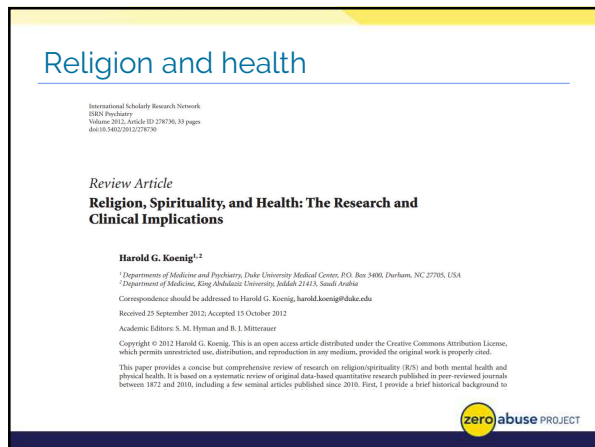
School of Nursing, Bloomberg School of Public Health



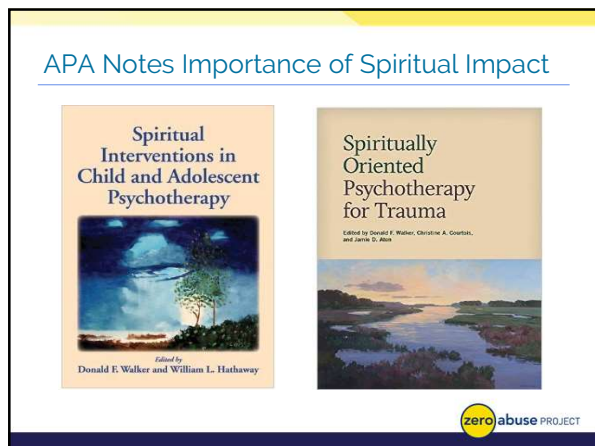
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Collaboration with mental health

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

Billich 2000



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The importance of sacred texts

- Many maltreated children abused or neglected by an offender who used a sacred text¹
- This damage can be "powerfully undone when challenged using other passages from clients' religious and spiritual tradition."²
- The case of the minister using Genesis

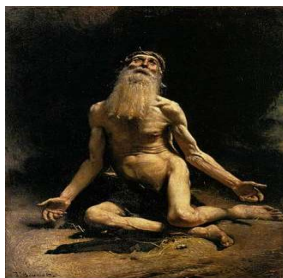
¹Bottoms, et al (2003)

²Walker, et al. (2014)



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God may not answer the "why" questions



Job by Léon Bonnat (1880)

(Pargament 2005)



36

"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?'"

—Diane Langberg, 2017

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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

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What survivors want

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 (church should help access mental health and medical services)
6. Listen and act (the hymn that hurt)

Clark 2009

39

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."



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Meeting the needs of offenders



41

Pastoral care for offenders

- Coordinate with sex offender treatment provider or develop "treatment network"¹
- 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"

¹Mutter (2011)



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Does clergy have to keep offender's confidence?

University at Buffalo School of Law
Digital Commons @ University at Buffalo School of Law

Journal Articles Faculty Scholarship

10-2017

Exorcising the Clergy Privilege

Christine P. Bartholomew
University at Buffalo School of Law

CURRENT FOCUS:
Child Abuse and the Lutheran Confession:
A Call to Examine Church's Teachings on Children
above Church Traditions


Victor J. Vogel
Professor of Law and Director of the Law-Health Rights Program

The Church's long-standing tradition of confidentiality is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it provides a safe space for victims to disclose abuse and seek help. On the other hand, it can prevent the church from taking action to protect children. This article examines the Lutheran Confession's teachings on confidentiality and argues that the church should prioritize the safety of children over its traditions. It calls for a re-examination of the church's teachings on confidentiality and for the development of new policies that prioritize child safety.

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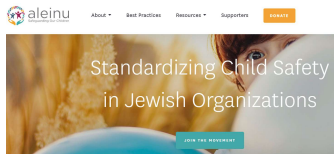
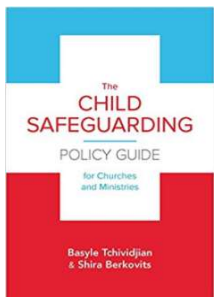
Policies on managing sex offenders



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Policy resources



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South Carolina CAC adds chaplain



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Julie Valentine Center Becomes the First Child Advocacy Center in the US to Add Chaplain to Its Staff

GREENVILLE, S.C. (January 17, 2017) The Julie Valentine Center, a nonprofit organization that provides free, confidential services to sexual assault and child abuse survivors and their families, has become the first child advocacy center in the United States to add a chaplain to their team.

Carrie Nettles, an ordained minister with a master of divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, began her role as a victim services specialist at the Julie Valentine Center in January 2017.

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Julie Valentine Center Chaplain



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Chaplains' training Mississippi



Chaplains for Children - Flowood

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Prevention planning

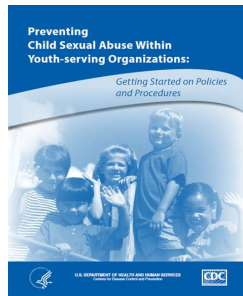


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Follow the CDC standards

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



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Faith & child protection collaborations

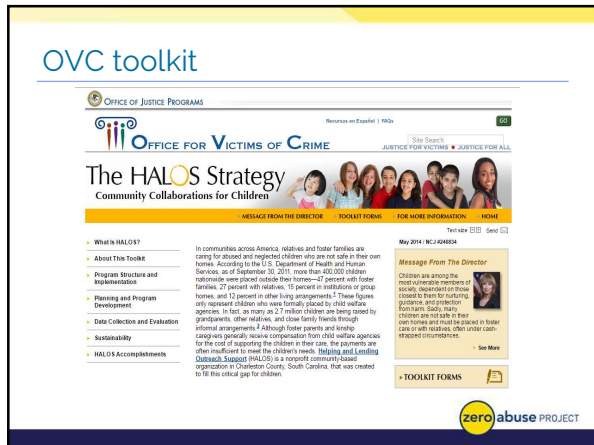


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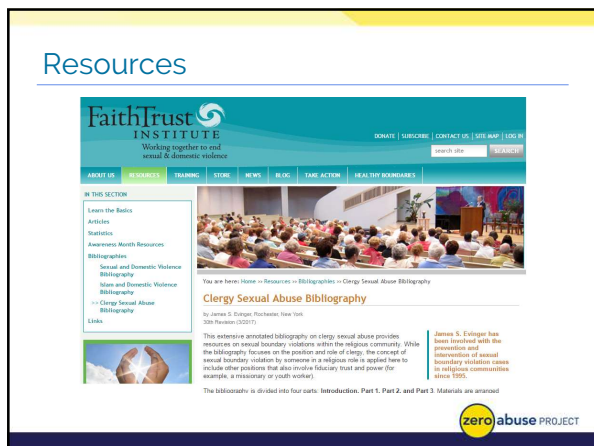
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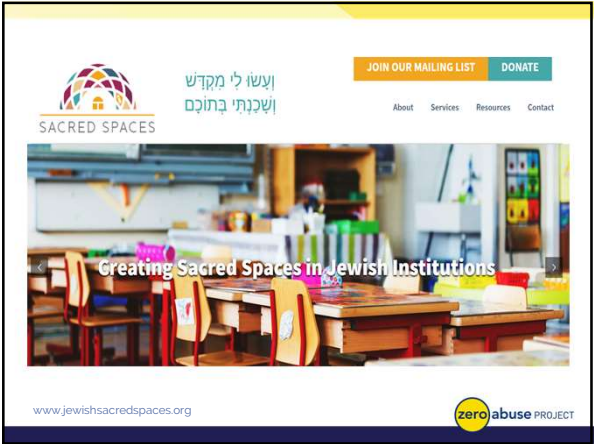
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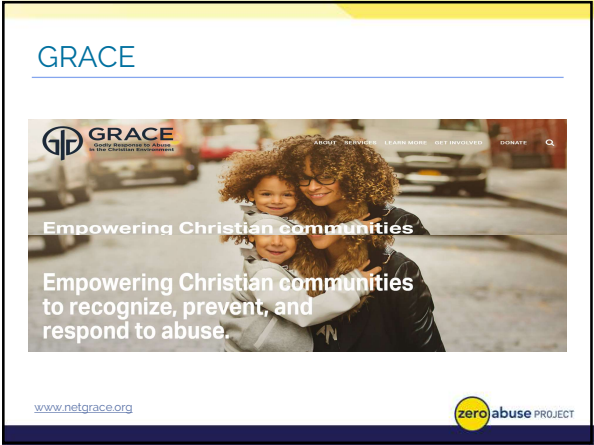
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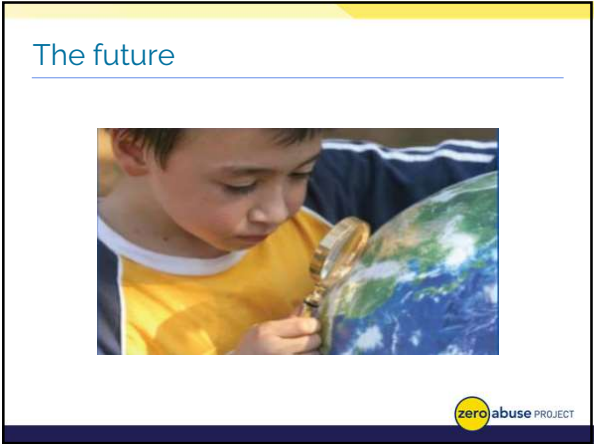
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Why I went to seminary



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Secular writings

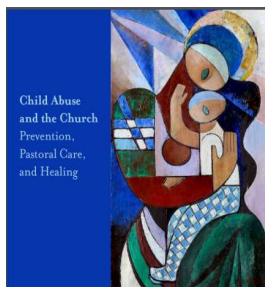


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Currents in Mission & Theology

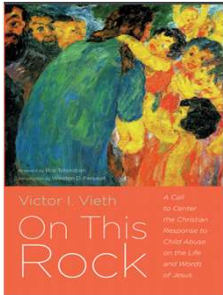
- Articles on:
 - Coordinating spiritual & mental health care
 - Coordinating spiritual and medical care
 - Responding to problematic sexual behaviors in youth
 - Prevention



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Engaging theologically



"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)



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The importance of engaging theologically

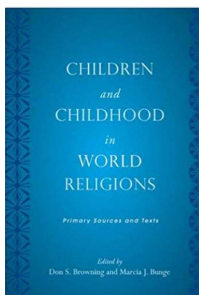


- "Victor Vieth has challenged the church to 'not do anything new but rather something very old...to return to the message of Jesus and center our response on the words and actions of Christ.'
— P. 22



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Another resource

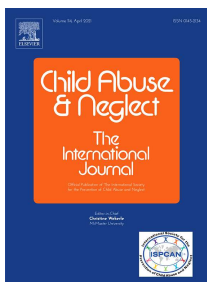


- Addresses sacred texts pertaining to children from six of the world's largest religious traditions.



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Child Abuse & Neglect



V. 38 (4) (2014)



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The Positive Role of Religion and Religious Communities in Child Protection
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 Modern rabbis advocate non-violence
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 The Nurture and Protection of Children in Islam: Perspectives from Islamic Sources
 Islamic texts command affection, care, and education
 Buddhism and Children
 Buddhist struggle with the story of the Buddha's son
 Engaging Religious Communities to Protect Children from Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation
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Common FOCUS

Augustine, Luther and Solomons:
 Providing Pastoral Guidance to Parents
 On the Corporal Punishment of Children

by Victor I. Vieth

Children who abuse are in a dangerous place. But a Christian parent can help.

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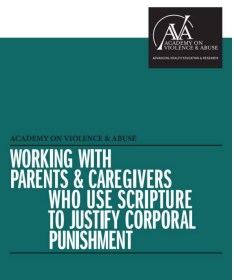
Children who abuse are in a dangerous place. But a Christian parent can help.

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AVA & APSAC publications



Special Section

Working With Molly: A Culturally Sensitive
 Approach to Parents Using Corporal Punishment
 Because of Their Religious Beliefs

Victor I. Vieth, JD, MA

"As for parents, don't provide your children to anger, but raise them with discipline and
 instruction about the Lord." — Apostle Paul (Ephesians 6:4)

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Early research is promising

Child Abuse & Neglect 71 (2017) 69–79

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Child Abuse & Neglect

ELSEVIER

Research article

Changing attitudes about spanking among conservative Christians using interventions that focus on empirical research evidence and progressive biblical interpretations

Cindy Miller-Perrin^a, Robin Perrin^a

^aPepperdine University, United States

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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

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"Till the night be passed"






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


- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

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Everyone has a role in keeping children safe.

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