



Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment

By Janet Heimlich

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Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment By Janet Heimlich

This revealing, disturbing, and thoroughly researched book exposes a dark side of faith that most Americans do not know exists or have ignored for a long time—religious child maltreatment. After speaking with dozens of victims, perpetrators, and experts, and reviewing a myriad of court cases and studies, the author explains how religious child maltreatment happens. She then takes an in-depth look at the many forms of child maltreatment found in religious contexts, including biblically-prescribed corporal punishment and beliefs about the necessity of "breaking the wills" of children; scaring kids into faith and other types of emotional maltreatment such as spurning, isolating, and withholding love; pedophilic abuse by religious authorities and the failure of religious organizations to support the victims and punish the perpetrators; and religiously-motivated medical neglect in cases of serious health problems.

In a concluding chapter, Heimlich raises questions about children's rights and proposes changes in societal attitudes and improved legislation to protect children from harm.

While fully acknowledging that religion can be a source of great comfort, strength, and inspiration to many young people, Heimlich makes a compelling case that, regardless of one's religious or secular orientation, maltreatment of children under the cloak of religion can never be justified and should not be tolerated.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Breaking Their Will* is a **powerful and deeply disturbing book**, wide ranging in its exploration of religiously based physical and mental abuse of children past and present, and richly informed by both personal and scholarly reflections and insights. This book will have a profound impact upon the consciences and actions of readers from a wide range of religious perspectives who surely will be convinced, after finishing this book, that children deserve to be free from all forms of physical violence in the guise of discipline and the other forms of physical and mental abuse explored in Heimlich's book." --**Philip Greven**, author of *Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse*

"**Insightful, provocative**, exposing, and well written, Janet Heimlich casts a bright light on the presence of child abuse in institutional religion, forcing it out of the dark corners of denial and into the arena of honesty and reality. I hope it is widely read." --**Bishop John Shelby Spong**, author, *The Sins of Scripture: Exposing the Bible's Texts of Hate to Reveal the God of Love*

"Child mistreatment, backed by religious tenets, is one of the most disturbing realities, especially when religions also have a unique capacity to cherish and protect children. With courage, compassion, and adept use of interviews and research on a wide range of violations, Janet Heimlich **grapples with causes and constructive solutions**. This is a book that all of us, but especially religious believers among us, should read as a first step to providing children the love and security they deserve. In my own teaching and research, I've looked for a book that focuses explicitly on how religion becomes entangled in harming children and am glad to have a book to recommend." --**Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore**, author of *Let the Children Come: Reimagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective*

"*Breaking Their Will* is both **heartbreaking and motivating**. After rightly noting that religion is most often not harmful to children, Janet Heimlich details the unique ability of religion in its worst manifestations to inflict lasting pain, humiliation, and terror on the most vulnerable members of our society. Perhaps the crowning achievement of the book is its call to action—a chapter devoted to specific ways in which officials, lawmakers, parents, and even faith communities can root out religious child abuse and remove its claims of immunity from challenge." --**Dale McGowan**, author/editor, *Parenting Beyond Belief and Raising Freethinkers*

About the Author

Janet Heimlich, formerly a freelance reporter for National Public Radio and other national radio networks for ten years, is now an independent journalist. In addition to her radio work, she has published investigative journalistic articles, human-interest stories, and book reviews in the *Austin American-Statesman*, *Texas Monthly*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Texas Observer*, and other publications.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Caroline Petrie:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? Guide is very important thing for

us to understand everything in the world. Each book has different aim as well as goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their time and energy to read a book. These are reading whatever they take because their hobby is reading a book. Consider the person who don't like looking at a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book whenever they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you will want this *Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment*.

Christopher Barry:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity this is look different you can read a new book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent the whole day to reading a publication. The book *Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment* it is very good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can more easily to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book possesses high quality.

James Vera:

Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment can be one of your starter books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this e-book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to set every word into enjoyment arrangement in writing *Breaking Their Will: Shedding Light on Religious Child Maltreatment* although doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest and based confirm resource info that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand new stage of crucial pondering.

Johnny Grady:

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