



Shattering the Illusion: Child Sexual Abuse and Canadian Religious Institutions

Tracy J. Trothen

\$32.95 Paper • 212 pp. • 978-1-55458-356-0 • August 2012

The disclosures by victims and survivors of the sexual abuse they have experienced at the hands of faith leaders has shaken the foundations of our faith communities and has given us the opportunity to address this long-standing evil in our midst. Tracy J. Trothen has produced a thorough and thoughtful rendering of the history of Canadian faith communities confronting the sexual abuse of children. Her multi-faith approach adds depth to the discussion, allowing the reader to compare and contrast. We need this historical, multi-faith perspective to inform our current efforts and to learn from the past as we face the future. A very valuable contribution to the field.

– Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune, Founder and Senior Analyst at FaithTrust Institute

This is a wonderfully informative book, a must-read for both religious leaders and volunteers in congregational life. Tracy J. Trothen and her team of research assistants have been doing their homework and the result is a thoroughly documented overview of how Canada's major religions have responded (or failed to respond) to the issue of child sexual abuse. Each chapter is packed with facts, resources, and commentary that will help the religious professional and the committed follower alike, and at the close of the book is an excellent summary table. A great resource.

– Nancy Nason-Clark, Department of Sociology, University of New Brunswick

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Shattering the Illusion is the first book to gather and comparatively analyze policies addressing child sexual abuse complaints in a selection of religious institutions in Canada. Although there is a substantial body of literature regarding Christianity and sexual abuse, very little of it focuses on religious institutions in Canada and their respective policies.

In the foreword, Tracy J. Trothen summarizes the Cornwall Inquiry, out of which this book arose. She then examines the Roman Catholic Church, The United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church, the Mennonite Church, Islam, and the Canadian Unitarian Council/Unitarian Universalist Association, describing in detail the evolution and particular content of policies and procedures that address child sexual abuse complaints directed at paid and volunteer faith community representatives and/or leaders. She identifies differences and common themes among the approaches taken by the institutions and provides a summary table for an accessible comparative overview.

Child sexual abuse is not new, but the emergence of policies to address abuse complaints within religious institutions is. This book identifies significant and shared causal factors behind the emergence of policy and reviews their content carefully. This review will serve as a significant tool for furthering the development of such policies.

Tracy J. Trothen is an associate professor of theology and ethics at Queen's School of Religion, Queen's University, in Kingston, Ontario. She is the author of over twenty scholarly publications, including *Linking Sexuality and Gender: Naming Violence against Women in The United Church of Canada* (WLU Press, 2003). Her more recent publications are concerned with the intersections of sport, technology, and religion.



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