

# **Reflections of a Boy: Growing Up in Nebraska in the 1950's with an Irish Catholic Father**

Charles W Sutherland



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From Reflections of a Boy...

"The nuns constantly told us 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.' They told us to always be busy doing something, and not to think, otherwise the devil would secretly enter our minds and control them."

"He [my father] shouted at me and began slapping me, and would not stop. So I put up my hand to protect my face. When I did that, he grabbed my arms, dragged me into the kitchen, and tied me to a chair with my arms behind my back. Then he slapped me some more, and yelled, 'Now try to stop me.' When he stopped slapping me, he shouted, 'Now God will punish you. When you die your hand is going to stick up in your grave forever for trying to strike your father'!"

"If everyone on earth is going to hell for all eternity because of what Adam and Eve did, why doesn't anyone at least know when they lived?"

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This is a personal story, written from the evolving perspective of a child growing up in the society and culture of the 1950s. It's a continuing 'stream of consciousness' and reflection, passing through different stages of emotional and intellectual growth, from infancy through high school... with religious parents, nuns, and eventually Jesuit priests.

Today such physical and psychological abuse inflicted upon a child by a father would be criminal. In those days it was regarded as 'strict' religious discipline and was even applauded. The constant quote was, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Actually the Biblical quote of Proverbs 13:24 is worse: "Whoever spares the rod hates their children..."

Reflections of a Boy... reveals a child's emerging views on religious teachings, and being punished for asking innocent questions. Apparently I was born with an extra 'Y' chromosome.

The ancient wisdom says, "It's better to light a little candle, than to curse the darkness." Hopefully, these honest and candid memories, many amusing, others painful, provide some flicker of light to whoever might read them – of whatever religion.

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