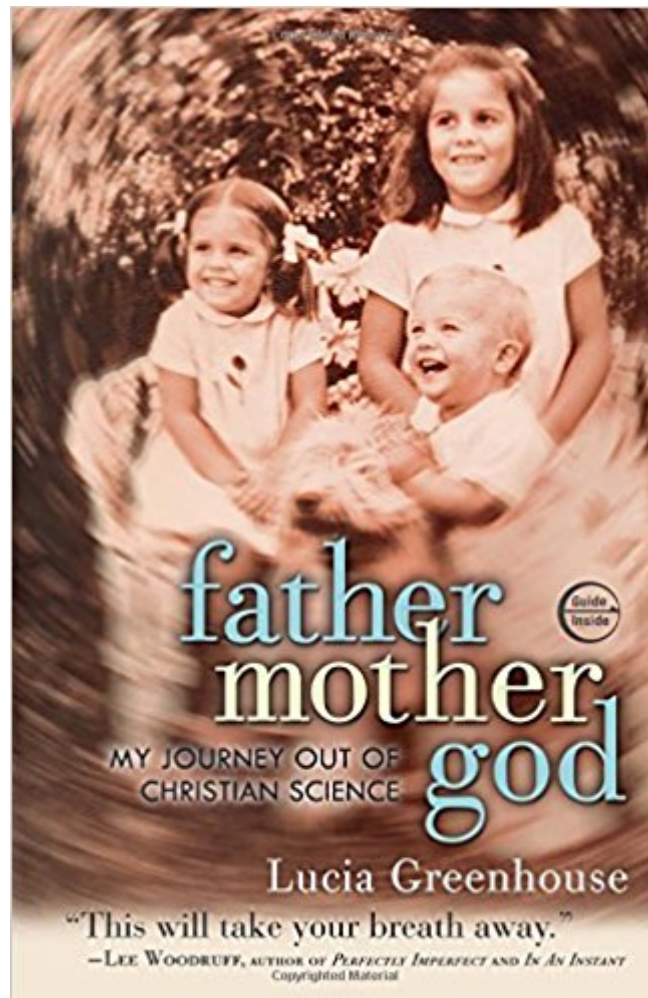




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Fathermothergod: My Journey Out Of Christian Science



Synopsis

Lucia Ewing had what looked like an all-American childhood. She lived with her mother, father, sister, and brother in an affluent suburb of Minneapolis, where they enjoyed private schools, sleep-away camps, a country club membership, and skiing vacations. Surrounded by a tight-knit extended family, and doted upon by her parents, Lucia had no doubt she was loved and cared for. But when it came to accidents and illnesses, Lucia's parents didn't take their kids to the doctor's office--they prayed, and called a Christian Science practitioner. *Fathermothergod* is Lucia Greenhouse's story about growing up in Christian Science, in a house where you could not be sick, because you were perfect; where no medicine, even aspirin, was allowed. As a teenager, her visit to an ophthalmologist created a family crisis. She was a sophomore in college before she had her first annual physical. And in December 1985, when Lucia and her siblings, by then young adults, discovered that their mother was sick, they came face-to-face with the reality that they had few--if any--options to save her. Powerless as they watched their mother's agonizing suffering, Lucia and her siblings struggled with their own grief, anger, and confusion, facing scrutiny from the doctors to whom their parents finally allowed them to turn, and stinging rebuke from relatives who didn't share their parents' religious values. In this haunting, beautifully written book, Lucia pulls back the curtain on the Christian Science faith and chronicles its complicated legacy for her family. At once an essentially American coming-of-age story and a glimpse into the practices of a religion few really understand, *Fathermothergod* is an unflinching exploration of personal loss and the boundaries of family and faith.

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Customer Reviews

Lee Woodruff Reviews *fathermothergod* As co-author of the best-selling *In an Instant*, Lee Woodruff garnered critical acclaim for the compelling chronicle of her family's journey to recovery following her husband Bob's roadside bomb injury in Iraq. She recently published her second book, *Perfectly Imperfect: A Life in Progress*. Her first novel will be published in summer 2012. At present, Woodruff lives in Westchester County, New York, with her husband and four children. Some of the most compelling memoirs make their marks because they allow us access to what we know is the ugly, dysfunctional side of being in a family, no matter how brightly scrubbed and polished its exterior might be. So when someone you know writes a memoir, there is an extra dimension of interest (full disclosure, Greenhouse is a friend). Not only do you become privy to information they might not share in a prison cell, but it's a personal invitation to look inside someone's psyche and under the beds where all the dirty laundry and family secrets are whispering. Ten pages into Lucia Greenhouse's *fathermothergod*, I knew that this book would deliver. It was much more than a person's disillusionment with her religion; it was a soul-searching, sometimes jaw-dropping read about how dogmatic religion can splinter a family. And it is a beautifully written account of how one woman set out to heal after walking away from the wreckage of her childhood. I knew very little about Christian Science, and in fact, more of the religion's history that I wanted came later in the book. Other than the famous news items and a few horror stories I'd heard in childhood about people refusing to go to the hospital, in the sixties the Christian Scientist religion seemed to me to lurk semi-shamefully in the background, its interior rituals shrouded like today's Scientology. A lot of what Greenhouse has to say will, I'm sure, anger the church. And she never presents the tale as anything other than her version of events. But she writes searingly about coming of age at a time when father knew best. Raised by a dominant Christian Scientist "healer" father and a compliant mother, Greenhouse writes absorbingly about her family's inability to take aspirin or even get eyeglasses, due to their beliefs. The reader wants to scoop her up and hug her, scold the parents for their inattention and blind devotion to doctrine at the expense of bloodlines and relationships. Greenhouse aptly sets the stage for her life--the many moves, the well-heeled trust-fund background that presumably supports them, the private schools and lifestyle (although I found myself wanting to know more about this)--so that when her mother becomes ill and is isolated by Lucia's father, you want to rail and weep at such unnecessary waste, the careless

squandering of filial love. What haunted me about *fathermothergod* long after I'd flown through the pages was the thought-provoking conundrum in which religion had bound the children. What if you didn't speak up? What if your age, those precarious years between the teens and adulthood, made you second-guess your loyalties? What if a lifetime of parental obedience was in direct conflict with the horrors that unspooled before your eyes? *Greenhouse* chronicles all of this in engrossing detail and the book reverberates with honesty, regret, pain, love, and then the resilience of a person determined, in the aftermath of tragedy, to write her own life's next chapter. I heartily recommend this read. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"*fathermothergod* is a heart-wrenching coming of age memoir about the implosion of a family when Christian Science dogma encounters a mother's grave illness. It's impossible to read this and not put yourself in the author's shoes—this will take your breath away."—Lee Woodruff, author of *Perfectly Imperfect* and *In an Instant* A riveting and heart-rending memoir, *fathermothergod: My Journey Out of Christian Science* exposes the monstrous feats of neglect fostered by this strange American manifestation of religious fanaticism. Tracing her mother's decline and its lacerating consequences, Lucia Greenhouse knows the truth about Christian Science, and she tells it with passionate, righteous indignation. —Caroline Fraser, author of *God's Perfect Child: Living and Dying in the Christian Science Church* "Lucia Greenhouse's book is a heart-breaking reminder of how nefarious religious zealotry can be. Her story drew me in and blew me away. This is an important addition to the genre of memoirs by children who escaped religious hucksterism and are now bravely exposing it." —Julia Scheeres, author of *Jesus Land* "[A] powerfully affecting memoir . . . Greenhouse's skill in rendering family relationships under the intersecting stresses of illness and conflicting beliefs make the book worthwhile . . . reading. Wrenchingly courageous." —Kirkus Reviews "Through this memoir, readers will see how even those closest to us can remain a mystery." —Library Journal "A touching book that puts a human face on Christian Science." —Booklist "Rather than a journey out of a faith, this is the story of one woman's questioning and anguish over her parents' choices. Teens wondering about their own faith, their parents' expectations, and how to marry the two will find that this book resonates with them. It will also appeal to anyone wanting to know what it's like to grow up in Christian Science." Suggest that readers have tissues close at hand. —School Library Journal

I've been on a book bender lately. Three books in three weeks about women leaving the religion of their childhoods. This one hits especially close to home, as I grew up (and left) the same religion as the author. She tells her family's story with a range of raw emotions. Watching the death of a parent is never easy. Watching them make choices that endanger their lives - and by extension your own, as their child - is nearly impossible.

I found this book interesting and thought provoking. The author, Lucia Greenhouse tells her story well. I had only cursory knowledge of Christian Science and had never even thought about so many things, especially regarding family, that she talks about in the book. It seemed often to be a no win situation for everyone involved. I will and have already recommended this book to several friends. It sheds a lot of light on a religion I think many of us know little about.

I had known a little about Christian Science, but I was surprised and dismayed not only by the attitudes towards illness and prevention of illness, but the attitudes towards those who dare question it, even if the critic is an immediate member of the family. It smacks of being a cult, and reminded me of what former members are saying about Scientology.

As a youth, I had a friend whose family were Christian Scientist. The Mother died in her 40's, in part from her strong beliefs. I have never forgotten that and never truly understood the workings of that faith as well as it is described here. This had to be a very, very difficult story to write and I admire the courageous efforts of the author. I will be thinking about her story for a long while.

Well written, moving story of a woman's first-hand experience growing up in the Christian Science church.

"fathermothergod" by Lucia Greenhouse is a personal account of a conflict between religious beliefs, modern medicine, and adult children who get caught in the squeeze. The author portrays a daughter who loves her parents very much, and who is torn by the guilt, anger, and loss of her mother, who did not have to die such a painful and unattended death. As a medical doctor and the spouse of a Christian Science believer, I can attest to the authenticity of what she writes and the frustration of trying to give personal respect to the person, yet feeling the pain of knowing how much can potentially be done medically. Perhaps our son, raised to attend both belief systems, expressed

it best: "I would go for help and care to a Christian Science Practitioner if I had a mental illness, and to a Christian church if I had a broken leg."

Such a SCARRY mind controlled religion. Author did a good job in showing her frustration and horror of her families religious beliefs to not seek Doctors attention until it was too late for healing her Mother! Who would ever believe this is a good religion? More of a cult. Thank you for telling the truth against all odds.

Enlightening story of a family who was deep into the beliefs of Christian Science. Lucia's struggle to understand her parent's belief system which was in contrast to the terrible sufferings of her mother, was painful to read about.

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