CARING FOR THE ABUSED CHILDREN IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NATION

A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

BY

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This thesis is dedicated to my wife

Elizabeth Netswera,

my two children,

Judy and Tshibalo

and to the

Tower of Grace Church, Pretoria
SUMMARY

Child abuse is a problem that affects Thohoyandou Area, Ha-Tshivhasa in Limpopo Province.

The aim of this research is to add value towards unfolding negative techniques regarding child abuse at the initiation schools, especially of those who suffered the consequences of ritual rites and primitive beliefs. The research documents will formulate guidelines for the church leaders and social workers rendering services concerning child abuse.

In addition to this, the research is aimed at rediscovering a system in which the children can be protected against any element of abuse. The research document will be used as a guiding tool to the investigators attached to the South African Police Service, who investigates cases of child abuse.

The method used in this investigative and evaluative exercise was that of personal interviews with initiates, victims' parents, community leaders, church leaders, christians and the reading of christian education literature.

What came out of this investigation is that, indeed, most of the children are abused at the initiation schools. The findings are that, boys are tracked and hijacked to go to the schools for genital circumcision.

By way of unpacking the findings, it should be said that there is a little concern from relevant roleplayers, namely; churches, social workers, the police and the entire community, regarding the child abuse that takes place at the initiation schools. Incidents that took place at the initiation schools are, however, not investigated in most of the instances.

Over the years, initiation schools were never guided and channelled by the government. This has led to assault, malicious damage to property and kidnapping.

With the implementation of strategies laid down in Chapter 4 and 5 of this research, the situation at Ha-Tshivhasa villages regarding the initiation schools, can be remedied, and effective christian counselling, social worker service and investigation by the police will be embraced.
My special gratitude goes to Professor Masango who has been very helpful in this research. In actual fact, he was a source of encouragement and information. I am thanking him for shaping this research so that it may reach this stage so far.

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CHAPTER 1

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Initiation school is a concern to the residents of Limpopo Province as this subsequently impacting negatively against the health of the children, especially to those staying at rural areas.

It is a concern about the way in which boys were being lured by the schools without knowing where they are being taken. In addition to that they are taken to the schools without their concern or that of their parents or lawful guardians.

Police Stations are updated with the complaints from parents whose children had been forced to go the initiation schools. This is an indication that people are only bent on enriching themselves without considering the welfare of the children.

The controversy regarding circumcision has gripped the province, where children are taken to hospitals for treatment after the circumcision operations have failed.

Doctors confirmed that the youth have been admitted at Siloam Hospital, Tshilidzini Hospital and Donald Fraser Hospital.
Dr Leslie Spivack said he feared that some of the boys could contract AIDS as only one razor blade is used on hundreds of initiates. Given the fact that HIV cases are more than 2.5% in the province and the spreading of the virus is mostly likely” (Sowetan: July 25, 1995).

It is a fact that the problem of initiation schools kidnaping boys is
prevalent there, and the number of schools operating illegally is rising (Sowetan : July 4, 2003).

For the purpose of this research, the focus will be on the initiation schools which are conducted at Ha-Tshivhasa, Thohoyandou Area. This area is mainly composed of the Vhavenda nation who is very deeply concern about the African culture relating to circumcision of boys.

However, the negative impact of this practice is ignored by some members of the community. Therefore, the research must address child abuse within Thohoyandou area, pointing out the responsibility of various organizations, government departments and individuals inclusive.

For the purpose of more understanding, the research will define the boundary and key concepts which are relevant to this research.

– Descriptions of the boundary of the study

As already mentioned, this research is focusing at Ha-Tshivhasa (Thohoyandou Area) due to the fact that I witnessed and experienced the problem that is being addressed in this research.

Thohoyandou area is well known as “far north” which is the northern part of the Limpopo Province. The area comprises of a number of villages and manned by Venda-speaking people.
Care giver refers to a person who is having the care and management of the person during his / her minority (Nkuna 2001 : 32).
Care giver is a person who is responsible for taking care of a child, being a parent or guardian.
According to African context a care giver is a parent or guardian who can provide food and Safety for his own family and provide safety for his or her family.

Child

Child Act (Act 74 of 1993 : 191) defined a child as any individual under the age of 18 years.

For a clear understanding and for the purpose of this study, a child is a gift from God and deserves love, protection and guidelines from his or her parents.
Community is also expected to respect children because each an every child wants to know who to talk to about his or her problems, and who is going to listen to them and who is going to believe.
Child abuse is the infliction or allowing of infliction of physical or emotional harm on a child by a person who is either responsible for that child or not.

“Child abuse is any physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, neglectful treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen by any person whether a parent, guardian or member of society, under circumstances which indicates that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or threatened” (O’Brien 1992:3).

A nation refers to a large community of people living in a particular territory or country under one government. For the purpose of this research, the nation refers to all the inhabitants of this country (South Africa), respective government departments and other organizations inclusive.

Responsibility: being accountable or take reasonable measures to care for everything entrusted to you.

Initiation school is a traditional institution for ritual rites, where boys or males in general are taken for genitals circumcision. In other words, the main objective is to cut off the foreskin of a male person as a traditional or cultural right. The entire process entails harsh treatment.

Culture

Culture refers to the transference of knowledge, experiences, meanings, values, attitudes, religions, concepts of the self, the whole relationship hierarchy of status, role expectation, special relationships and time concepts commanded by a large groups of people from one generation to the next through an individual and groups aspiration (Myburg & Saayman 1999: 160)
Constitution refers to the Constitution for the Republic of South Africa, Act 108, 1996. The Constitution is the Supreme law of the country and it is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

“Midabe” according to African contents, it refers to the boys who had already graduated from the initiation school.

Ethics involves the investigation of what is wrong or right in the society. Therefore it is ethical to act in a socially responsible manner and it is good and right to act in a socially responsible manner.

1.2. MOTIVATION FOR CHOOSING THE SUBJECT

I was born and grew up at Tswera Village, Thohoyandou Area. During my early age, I used to witness young boys, especially those aged between 12 and 18 being tracked and hijacked to go to the initiation schools for genital circumcision. Unfortunately, the perpetrators (midabe) used to patrol the area looking for uncircumcised boys (mashuvhuru).

Their efforts entails visiting houses and other places where young boys used to spent some time enjoying themselves. It was a terrible experience due to the fact that the process involved a lot of bad scenes:

- breaking the doors in order to force entry into the houses, which subsequently result in malicious damage to the property,

- assaulting the victims, with an intention to do grievous bodily harm, trying to overcome any possible resistance or defense by the victims.

This is the violence I am trying to address in this thesis.
The same gang consisted of an organized group of members which had the sense of cohesion, is generally territorially bound, which creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in the community. In addition to that, the parents or guardians of the victims were powerless and defenseless as the perpetrators were armed with sticks and other dangerous objects.

Therefore, victims would remain with no alternatives, but to submit themselves to the perpetrators. It is apparently that the victims lacked protection, either from the community leaders, church leaders, and even from the local South African Police Service, and ultimately ended up at the initiation school. In order to avoid being victimized, the family members could not report the matter at the local Police Station or local tribal council (musanda). The violence of abduction makes boys used to vacate Thohoyandou area during 1973–1983, to stay with their relatives at other areas that were not desperately affected by activities of initiation schools. Boys were forced to come back at their respective places after winter because initiation schools are held in winter (June to July).

Even today, the victims are knowingly or unknowingly, implicitly or explicitly influenced and forced by the “midabe” (initiates already passed out) to enter into an initiation kraal. At a certain point, these boys have to face others who are circumcised which leads to rejection, isolation and stigmatization. I became the preacher of the Word of God in 1996, rendering the services around Ha-Tshivhasa. By ten, I used to travel around the villages, doing house visits and preaching. It enables me to witness some of the ugly scenes pertaining to the treatment of initiates.

During one of my trips in June 1996, I met a group of initiates, naked and wearing only shorts, heading towards Mutale River for bathing. They walking in a single line, bowing their heads down, and without talking to
one another. They were looked very bewildered, their hair disheveled and their eyes fixed off in the distant wilderness.

I felt completely disoriented and puzzled as I was waiting for that flock to cross the road. At the time of heading to the river, they wore nothing at all, which left the initiates vulnerable to cold. During that stage, anyone who is a “shuvhuru” (one who had not yet attended the school) could not walk on the banks of the river, or in that vicinity where the initiates are bathing, otherwise such a person would be caught and forced to join the school.

I discovered that, boys were not attending church services, as well as conferences, crusades and other services, because they were afraid of the possibility of identified by the perpetrators. They rather attend evening services, because it was not easy to notice their presence in the villages.

Till now, I realized that initiation schools are continuing to force boys, and even young men, aged approximately 45 years of age to undergo that severe treatment.

As a pastor and a counselor, the practices of the initiation schools really touched my heart, and drives the feeling of raising my concern to the nation with an intention of having integrated approach in caring for the abused children. I personalize these incidents because I witnessed those horrible treatments applied against our helpless brothers.

I started to witness these incidents from the age of fourteen years. The events were so terrifying to me to such an extent that I need to stay in Pretoria, thinking that it might protect me from these bad treatment. I could no longer feel safe with my parents at home, because the vigilant were very aggressive and energetic to carry out their plans.
I strongly have a feeling that something must be done in order to prevent the continuation of these treatment, which obviously wipes off the privileges of the democratic country of South Africa. It is a fact that there is a great challenge for the churches to be involved in the counseling of those who were physically, psychologically and spiritually abused.

I must say that the people hardened their hearts and completely ignore the image of our God. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27 KJV). The fact is that God created a human being and expected him to be respected and have a free movement in his entire life.

If any person position himself / herself before the Word of God, that particular person can see that God loves them all, irrespective of colour, race or gender.

“And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty” (Leviticus 4:27 KJV).

“And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity” (Leviticus 5:17 KJV).

For example, if a member of community sins unintentionally, and does what is forbidden in any of God’s commands, he / she is guilty. Forcing children to initiation school violates their rights. It is a sinful act because of its violent action.

I am aware of the high rate of child abuse at Ha-Tshivhasa because of lack of guidelines for social workers involved in counseling of victims of child abused and lack of caring for them. I am not aware of any research of this type conducted at Thohoyandou area, and there are also very limited investigations relating to child abuse due to the fact that most of
these incidents are not exposed to the community, and even to the South African Police Service.

Nkuna reminds us that a great demand of the research, therefore, exists to expose the phenomenon (Nkuna: 2001:12).

Being a pastor and an officer in the South African Police Service, it is imperative to conduct a research that will be an eye-opener to the nation and will enable them to take care of abused children.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

“Formulation of the problem is the starting point of a research project” (Dreyer 1995:373). “If there is no problem, there is no research” (Padget 1998:28).

Prof. Kritzinger stated that” research normally starts with the identification of a problem or challenge” (2000:9). All the research originates from a problem, even if it would be the historical problem of the phenomenon. For a theology, this will be often found in an evaluation on one, or other issue according to theological criteria, and the formulation of an own point of view concerning the issue in contention (Kritzinger 2000:10).

It is obvious that the starting point of all the research projects influences all subsequent steps in the research problems result from a critical review of initiation practices and its implications against our children.

The research problem to which this study relates was identified from the treatment directed against human beings, our kids, during winter periods.

I used to ask myself “why the church and its leaders cannot intervene, and raise their arms against these undesirable and unwanted actions”? The other question I asked was that, “do we have councillors who can offer counseling or therapy, one also ask the question to social workers who are concern about the health of young ones?”
The main questions why are these incidents not reported at the local tribal offices, or even at the South African Police Service? It seems as if our kids are abandoned, without anyone raising his or her voice to the nation, in order to address the reoccurrence of the treatment and finally care for the abused ones.

During winter, newspapers report about death of young ones at initiation schools. There is a huge increase of torture, assault and maltreatment against this poor kids at the initiation school. It seems nobody cares for them or show any remorse about the current situation at initiation schools. Ha-Tshivhasa, in Thohoyandou area, the schools are like a place of hell that tormenting young people during winter periods.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aims of the study

The aim of the study is to examine the brutality of initiation school where many children die. In other words, the research must add value towards unfolding counseling techniques pertaining to the child abuse, especially those who suffered the consequences of ritual rites, primitive beliefs and the research documents will formulate guideline for church leaders and social workers rendering services concerning child abuse. It is encouraging that the document is aimed at rediscovering a system in which the children can be protected against any element of abuse. The fact of the matter is that no one is prepared to protect the children being abused during initiation process. There is no system that protect our kids in South Africa, therefore the young ones are vulnerable to these severe treatment.

The research document will be used as a guiding tool to the investigators attached to the South African Police Service, because it will compliment
the guidelines, direction visions, missions and values of SAPS and the constitution of the country.
As a member of South African Police Service, it became apparent to me that, most of the workers of SAPS are not conversant with the harsh treatment directed against the young ones, by the initiation school authorities. Some of them are not aware about the initiation process, which involve the cutting off, of the foreskin of the male genital and other unhealthy practices.

1.4.2 **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1.4.2.1 To gather information concerning child abuse, emerging from initiation school ritual. Such information embodied treatment against boys, criminal activities involved and undermining the existence of human being as creature of God and even the constitution.

1.4.2.2 To analyze the responsibilities of the community in caring for the abused children and even to protect the reoccurrence of the ugly scene.

1.4.2.3 To analyze the involvement of the police and other departments such as social workers who are supposed to intervene against this harsh practices.

1.4.2.4 To highlight the importance of the integrated approach in addressing the problem. The above-mentioned objectives were undertaken to achieve the aim of the research.
2. METHODOLOGY

According to De Vos the direction of the research process and the research methodology are basically determined by the choice of the researcher (De Vos 1998:15).

This study employed the narrative approach to gather data that are principally verbal.

“Narrative therapy proposes that people use certain stories that have effect of filtering a person’s experience and thereby selecting what information gets focused in or focused out” (Sewler 2000:53). This stories shape the people’s perspective of their laws, history and future.

Therefore it is quite demanding to get stories from those whose kids were traumatised even those who treated the injured one as well as people engaged in counseling.

The aim of this interview or interaction is to revisit the intention behind the initiation rites and even negative impact of the initiation. I am intending to instill the idea that people must know that, we have got hope in considering life as our priority concern, and therefore we need to alleviate this incidents of child abuse. There is a desperate need to change the bad situation into a better living environment that can protect those who seemed powerless and ignored.

I discovered that in practical life, to assist the community or the individual to come in terms with reality or problems, and be able to separate their lives or concern with these stories. Therefore, an individual will pioneer toward improvement and future life. Someone can detect the way other people feel, act, respond and think through the process of narrative approach.
I see narrative approach suitably for this study and many aspects will be covered.

Data was gathered by means of an interview with parents of the victims, victims themselves, pastors and hospitals' personnel. In other words, Methodology will be around therapeutic stories.

For the control and direction purpose, the interview was done regarding incidents that took place since 2002 till July 2003.

2.1  Narrative stories

As already indicated in paragraph 1.2 supra, I witnessed most of the incidents pertaining to initiation schools, I am clued up with its negative consequences within the community.

2.1.1  Conversation with Mr Ramatshimbila at Donald Fraser Hospital (2002/06/05)

According to Mr Ramatshimbila of Donald Fraser Hospital, Vhufuli Thohoyandou, most of the initiates are brought to the hospital for the treatment of bruises and laceration on the genitals and body. It was discovered that some of them were brutally assaulted with sticks. He said that unfortunately, the initiates dies because of cold whether which effect them, and they suffer at the bushes and blunt raiser blades that are used, have got rust which subsequently affect the skin.

He added that six initiates that are admitted for treatment, three (3) dies due to loss of blood during the initiation rites.

Out of eight initiates I was able to interview six of the initiates. Due to the fact that they requested their names to be kept secret, their nicknames will be used for this research.
2.1.2 The story of Mashudu - kidnapping

Mashudu (15) of Mukula Village said that he was playing with his friends near Khubvi River when he was approached by a group of young men. They grabbed him and took him to the veld where he discovered that he was forced to the initiation school. Although he did not expressly mention the entire process of the initiation, he revealed that it was a painful experience. According to him, the same razor blade was used for initiation rites up to 20 recruits. This had a danger of exposing them to aids other disease. He was referred to the hospital with the rest of those who were sick, after it was discovered by the principal that he was bleeding profusely. In addition to that, he lamented that, it seems that the principal is not acquainted with the healthy measures of the recruits, because he used to visit them at the school after some couple days. “Even though we were sick, he thought we will get better” Mshudu said.

2.1.3 Interview with Samuel - incident at the initiation school.

Samuel of Khubvi stated that he was taken to the school by his uncle. He initially thought that the process was easy one, due to the fact that his friends passed out and came back. He was naked when he arrived at the school.

I was shocked when I saw young men crying during the initiation rites. I won’t advise any person to go to the initiation school, because the only benefit is the cutting off, of your foreskin which can be done in a hospital. After the rites were performed , I was frighten”.

“Although I was given a certain “muti” to stop bleeding, but to no avail. I ended up being in the hospital bed which is quite embarrassing to me because it was regarded as a sign of weakness”.
Samuel was unable to explain why he was bleeding profusely. He said that the negative part of initiation school is that, it is staged in winter which infiltrate a serious threat to the recruits.

He said that when his family visited him at a hospital, they regretted and apologized to him for having taking him to the initiation school. The trauma stays with you for a long time.

2.1.4 Livhu - kidnapped and taken to the school.

Livhu of Tshidzini Village, seemed very ill, because he was unable to speak properly. His genitals were bandaged because of serious laceration sustained during initiation rites. Livhu was very much concern about his health as he heard that two of the initiates died at the same hospital. He also said that her mother opened a case at Thohoyandou Police Station because he was kidnaped and taken to the school against his will. He was concern about the fact whether his case would be thoroughly and properly investigated. He indicated that the local leaders and the community are willing to see the culprits brought before the criminal court as soon as possible.

2.1.5 Taki - influenced by friends to attend the school

Taki said that he does not see the positive part of attending the initiation school except to suffer through colds and pains. He said that he was influenced by his friends to go to the initiation school without the permission from the parents. He added that his friends are still at the initiation school as they did not experience the problems of bleeding. The harsh treatment is what frightens him.

2.1.6 Pfani interviewed at Donald Fraser Hospital
Pfani of Shadani was found moving around hospital premises. Although he was afraid of what had happened, ultimately he stated that he visited the school under the influence of liquor. “I just wanted to know what was happening there. I blamed myself the following day when I was sober. I was thinking of a simple exercise that takes minutes. I ended up at a hospital, being treated like any other person”.

He asked me who can assist the community to ban the initiation school all over the country.

There is a need for this young boy to recover and proceed with life without other traumatic actions or pressure being laid on his way again.

As a man of God preaching the gospel, counseling the discouraged, there is a need for people to be comforted and the church to take steps in correcting the wrongs experienced by the poor.

2.1.7 The story of Elias

Elias was concern about the fact that his friends from Makonde Village are aware that he is admitted to the hospital for treatment.

“Mr Mfundisi, this is terrible experience because we were not treated like kids, the condition were extremely bad, shortage of blankets and moral support from any relative due to many restriction. We are forced to live a simple life, with less blankets. If we survive, we are called men”.

I realized that initiates can be affected with HIV/AIDS, because the same razor blade was used to cut off the foreskin of others. According to Elias, principal do not use different razor blades for individuals. They use one razor for all of them.

2.1.8 The concern of Watson of Tswera
He indicated that, although to attend the initiation school is aimed at the cutting of the foreskin, however, the initiates suffers unnecessarily. “I think boys should be taken to the hospital for that” Watson has said.

Of course, medical doctors are not allowed to visit initiation school, neither the principal might send the boys to the hospital after he has discovered a serious threat to the life of the recruits. This is seen as a sign of weakness.

2.1.9 Interview with Mr Muhali - his son died at hospital.

Mr Muhali of Mukula Village, the father of the deceased stated that, his son was influenced by “midabe” (those already graduated) from attending the school. He told me that in the initial stage, he thought that everything might go well. He said that he was shocked when he received the information that his son died at a hospital due to cold and of complications that arise from initiation rites. Actually, if the son dies at the school, the family wont know until the day when initiates are graduating. In several instances, the burial would have taken place there. He said, he is unfortunate because his boy was the only chid in his marriage, and due to that experience of trauma, his wife is treated for the depression. He also stated that at some point they were forced by the culture and primitive believes to allow their children to attend initiation school. According to him, when you send your child to initiation school, you are not sure whether he would come back dead or alive. It is a risk that someone can take. I feel that churches need to conduct the counseling service in order to help the family.

Mr Muhali stated that although the case has been reported to the police, no one has been arrested. It seems that the court is dealing with the matter and the possibility is that no one can be held accountable for the death of his son.
2.1.10 The concern of the community leader.

Headman W Netswera of Tswera village has been interviewed. “Nowadays it is unfortunate to send your child to the school because some are dying. I no longer take my kids to that institution, because the principals are no longer clued up with how to protect the kids from dying. I respect our culture and tradition, however, I don’t want to take risks. I will never allow the sangomas to conduct such primitive practice” says Netswera. Netswera indicated that some of the community leaders are no longer in favour of the initiation school, because they prefer to take their children to Donald Fraser Hospital and Makonde Clinic respectively. He also pointed out that, the initiates might be infected by diseases such as HIV / AIDS, because sometimes the same razor blade is used to cut off the foreskin.

2.1.11 Interview with Dr L Spivack of Tshilidzini Hospital

Doctor Leslie Spivack of Tshilidzini hospital was interviewed with an intention to ascertain number of initiates admitted to the hospital. He stated that seven youth has been admitted at Tshilidzini Hospital. He said that he feared that some of the boys could contract Aids as only one razor blade was used on hundreds initiates. “Given that HIV cases are more than 2.5% in the province, the spreading of this virus is most likely” Spivack said. He stressed the fact that he forwarded the same message to the Sowetan newspaper with an idea to deter young boys from going to the initiation school. Doctor Spivack was just shaking his head denoting that he is looking for something to stop the initiation school.

2.1.12 Interview with Pastor S Muthambi of Shadani
Pastor Muthambi stated that, children are dying, because the principals are not guided by any policy pertaining to health measures. He stipulated that the Christians and community should challenge negative actions against the children.

Sowetan reported as follows, “A five-year-old boy was still fighting for his life at a Limpopo hospital yesterday after being rescued by police during a raid on a village initiation school. He was admitted at a hospital in a serious condition. Police said yesterday that they are still trying to trace the boy’s parents to decide whether they decide to press the charges or not”

(Sowetan June 30, 2003 : 4) It was not clear whether the boy had been forced into joining the illegal school or was kidnapped. The boy was among 87 initiates who were treated at the hospital for dehydration and excessive bleeding from their cuts. Unfortunately, our communities, especially those at rural areas believed it is necessary to have initiation schools for different reasons such as discipline, education, to build young boys into manhood, even to ward off the evil spirits, and finally to form a new kind of spirit of manhood with good morals.

According to R Moore, the ritual mark also involves keeping the content and purpose of the ritual secrets. He indicated that any attempt by any participant at disclosing the content of ritual tears the groups apart (Moore 199:61).

To me, the process of initiation comprises of different types of crime, mainly assaults, negligent of a child's rights, kidnaping and contravening the constitution of the country.

To understand this, it is important to know that a ritual is a mark believing in unification, oneness with gods and with each other.
Some of the principals believe that every year they should hold initiation school to unify themselves with grandfathers. They believe that breaking this practice creates complications in the families or relatives.

“It is a believe that whoever gave any kind of duty by ancestors, must then stay in the service to which he is given or created”(Moore 1999:63). He also indicated that the practice generates a force field inside of which one is enslaved.

“It is a fact that those serving the culture doesn’t have the option, except to slow down and address the issue of what to do with their own needs, or how to get in touch with their own unexpressed powers or feelings” (Moore 1999:63).

My understanding is that, people used to force a situation which is no longer practical in our present daily life. They are caught up with time and democracy as sources are so distraught that they figure out a way to take of themselves and the rest, rather than to take care of something that can never be satisfied.

As part of the initiation right, traditional people instil a secret homing device that prevents or guards against revealing or betraying sacred knowledge.

A person becomes incapacitated each time he feels drawn by his ego towards sensationalism in repeating secret information about the sacred (Moore 199:83).

For a practical example, an initiate cannot say or do something that would produce a miraculous effect in front of people who have not participated in the kind of initiation that introduces people to these magical phenomena.

You share the secrets with those who have been on the mountain school.

Moore stated that in the village, the newly initiated person carries in himself something to prevent him from disclosing of sacred knowledge. This is what he calls a homing device.
He indicated that it makes an individual feel like choking if he wants to try to speak of this knowledge. I am reminded of these restrictions and the boys experience. They have to keep the secret of initiation.

Even if someone tries to speak, it activates a certain suspension system within the one causing other person to speak. It is like an electric fence that restricts the space within which a domestic animal can roam. It seems our nation is trapped in the primitive practices.

Bearing in mind the concern of victims of initiation schools, we need to honour, protect and promote the fundamental rights of the children. I personally witnessed young boys who suffered from pains sustained when assaulted by the initiates, forcing them to go to the school.

Therefore I feel very strongly that, there is a need to treat abused children with sensitivity and care. To stop this bad treatment, the police should investigate criminals conduct that endangers the safety and security of children, and bring the perpetrators before the court of law. Where possible, care givers should assist children that were abused during initiation practices, to access medical care, shelter, protection, counseling and even legal action.

I have got a feeling that childhood is a time of innocence, discovery, spontaneity, security and happiness. It is a time when children tie close bonds with family and friends, and learn to trust them. To my understanding, all children, regardless of being an initiates or not, have the right to be treated with respect and dignity.

The primitive life style is outdated, and should not affect the standard of living within the community. The contents of this chapter, reminds all of us that, we should consider the interests of the children, and always takes cases involving children very serious.
Although few victims of the initiation schools have been interviewed, however, it has been shown that boys are abused and some dies as a result of the initiation school.

CHAPTER 3

3. IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE

3.1 An abused child
The impact of abuse on the abused child, involves public call and cry, and substantial pastoral concern. Responses to the impact of child abuse show that it is totally not good for children, as it is detrimental to their optimal growth and development.

According to the research by Engeland “child abuse affects children differently, and such children experience different development problems depending on the type of abuse they suffered” (Engeland 1991:26).

“The impact of physical abuse on the developing child has been excessively studied. It appears to be multidimensional, and the way it represents with psychological components, behavioral patterns, personality characteristics, cognitive aspects and neurological consequences” (Green 1991:11).

Sharing about trauma, Kernberg had this to say “considered the actual or threatened acute physical or psychological assault as equivalent to a traumatic neurosis, often accompanied by ego disorganization, regression, narcissistic injury, a painful affective state, primary defense mechanisms compulsion to repeat the trauma, severe, panic and feeling of helplessness (Kerberg 1994:79).

(In most cases of child abuse or `post traumatic stress disorder is satisfied, namely (Green 1991:15):

– A recognized stressor, ie the short and long-term results of abuse,
– re-experiencing of the trauma is observed, ie recurrent dreams and intrusive recollections of the abusive experience.
– reduced involvement with an external world is noted, i.e detachment.
– traumatic symptoms, consequences of the abuse are clinically evident, eg disturbance of sleep and avoidance of a situation or activities which may lead to exaggeration of symptoms of repetition of the trauma.
Other authors also emphasise the traumatic nature of child abuse. Kris suggested that “the abused child with an overwhelming trauma or a shock trauma night perceive the actual physical assault with the inherit threats of distraction and abandonment” (Kris 1994:91).

According to Green, primitive defense mechanisms can be observed among abused children, avoidance, distaving, raising of memory threshold, denial projection and splitting (Green 1991:21).

These defenses are reinforced by the denial of the abusive episodes by the parents, threats of additional punishment, the child’s effort to protect him and the fear of retaliation, or annihilation if the child would acknowledge the reality of a situation.

The use of denial projection and splitting allows the child to maintain a good parent fantasy in that the parental male violence is projected and displaced on to others or onto the child himself.

The child experiences the splitting of self representation into good and bad parts which seen similar to the adult borderline personality organisation (Kernberg 1994 : 87).

This is what happens to initiates when traumatised by beating and circumcision.

Abused children frequently avoid eye contact, may exhibit frozen watchfulness, i.e. sitting passively, and immobile but alert and hiper vigilant so as to watch for any danger, or avoid their parents. This behaviour may be the sign of denial, projection and splitting observed in some of these children in later childhood (George 1998 : 112).

As you work with traumatised children you need to be gently.

Abused children may show a tendency for repetition in dreams, fantasies, play and object relationships.

They act either as helpless and overwhelmed passive victims, or actively repeat the original traumatic experience by assuming an active
aggressive role in fantasy, or play with peers. Other evidence of this repetition may be seen through self effective behaviour that may provoke attack or accidents power (Green 1991 : 30). This is what I observed to the victims of initiation school that I have interviewed.

According to Sandguard “the impaired self concepts, depressive effect or self-destructive behaviour may be frequently encountered among abused children” (Sandguard 1994:91). These situation may be secondary to the child's scapegoating which induces self-blame, and the feeling that he deserves a punishment. Scapegoated children may manifest projection or externalization. It is also common to observe isolation, denial, gradual constriction and other affects.

Johnson and Morse found that “abused children were unresponsive, negativistic, stubborn and depressed. Goldstone (1995 : 91) noticed that they were apathetic, unappealing, with a poor appetite and a building for a human contact” (Johnson and Morse 1998:133). I witnessed that, children abused at the initiation school do not recover immediately from depression, or unresponsiveness.

Martin reported “that abused children show low frustration tolerance is impulsive, suspicious, mistrust adult, tend to control, manipulate and exploit objects” (Martin 1992:165). This is the experience I have noted about initiates.

These children have a need for immediate gratification, exaggerated aggression, preference to use motor activity for expression, tends to provoke others, violent fantasies, pseudo independence, precious achievement in some areas, fear, feeling of worthlessness, helplessness, depression, bad self image, a sense of guilt anger and low self esteem.
For those who went to hospital, the above describe the life lived by initiates who were finally treated at the hospital.

Sandguard stated that “abused children exhibited problems with impulse control, body image, reality, teaching, thought process, defense, object relation and overall ego competency” (Sandguard 1994:113).

According to Martin “chromic abuse may lead the development of primary identification with the aggressor impaired impulse control and a process forward violence” (Martin 1992:79).

The fear of helplessness and annihilation induced by the traumatic experience is replaced by sense of power and omnipotence when the abused child identifies with the aggressor.

The same mechanism may also represent a displacement of children's rage towards the abusive parent / leader of initiation school as well as means of counteracting painful affects and relieving tension.

Parke and Collwer believed that “children who have grown up in an abusive and violent environment has an increased tendency to become abusive parent and spouses” (Parke and Collmer 1995:219).

One can see how those who have gone through initiation kidnaped others- a sign of violence continues.

Similarly, Sarces argued that “if the child views violence in a house as a method of problem solving, that child may then incorporate this value, and do the same later” Sarles 1996:17).

Also the mechanism of identification with the aggressor, ie the parent who is a model for the child's super ego formation, seems to play a significant role in this context (Steele 1990 : 80).

When abused adolescents become parents, they are likely to continue the vicious cycle of child abuse especially towards their own children by identifying with their own abusive parents, and projecting it towards
their own children by identifying with their own deficiencies, incompetence and unmet needs (Olivier 1991: 109).

Research by Yates (1991: 90) observed three distinct patterns of behaviour shown by physically abused children, namely:

- Destructive behaviour
- Frightened behaviour
- Private behaviour

These patterns of behaviour will be discussed below:

**Destructive behaviour**

“Physically abused children destroyed property, disobeyed rules and assault other children. Their ego’s functions are limited, they reacted to their parents with recriminations, screamed and showed violent affection”.Yates 1991: 90)

The graduates form initiation school assaults initiates, and also kidnap boys and to take them to the initiation school by force.

**Frightened behaviour**

Physically abused children appeared passive, withdrawn, anxious, avoided contact, seemed complaint, remained in bed, were fussy, obstinate, compulsive stealers, picky eaters, showed deficiencies in ego functions, growth, speech, cognition and had underlying identification with the aggressor (Yates 1991: 90).

Some of the initiates who end up in hospital find it difficult to relate to other boys, especially those who were with them at the mountains schools. The above symptoms becomes part of their lifestyle.
Private behaviour

Physically abused children in this group were pleasing, attractive and appeared bright on the other hand, they manipulated and had poor peer relationships. In some areas they exhibited precocious ego functions while in others they exhibited serious defects. The initiates on the other hand show a split in their behaviour, a pleasing personality which has anger on why they have failed while some cognitive skills were very advanced, they do well at school, adapted well in foster homes and showed a good impulse control and attention span. They showed an ability to tolerate frustration, sublimate in autonomous functions, demonstrated lack of separation anxiety, mild behaviour problems had no transitional objects and seemed to be able to predict behaviors of adults towards them. Their reactions to parents were guided by their parents needs as opposed to their own. They will only follow instructions because of authority.

Yates is right by saying that “their precocity and charm masked their internal emptiness. They obey rules and pleasing adults. They either did not value relationship or the latter had no effectual significance for them” (Yates 1991:90).

Rodeheffer argued that “other results of child abuse may be a compromised ability for learning” (Rodeheffer 1996:81). According to Gregg “there is an increased incidence of mental retardation among the abused children” (Gregg 1991:137).

One can detect that there are symptoms in these children who were kidnapped and forced to go to initiation school.

Quite frequently, it is difficult to ascertain whether mental deficits preceded the abuse, whether the abuse was responsible for mental deterioration or whether the impaired mental ability was secondary to the abuse. One need to research the mental capability of the initiates before going to initiation school. I agree with Gregg who stated “that
physically abused children demonstrated above-average or even superior intelligence, explaining this phenomenon as the children’s need to acquire information, to be perceived as capable and to sublimate their aggressive and libidinal drives into learning” (Gregg 1993:141).

Some of the initiates come back very angry, their aggression is suppressed, and they are walking time bomb, ready to exploit.

According to Green “a variety of neurological signs have been noticed among physically abused children, which includes spasticity, paresis, impaired cranial nerve function, focal signs, deficiency in proprioceptive, tactile, blindness, hyperactivity, delay in motor skills and increased muscle tone” (Green 1991:80). One can think of that five year old who was kidnaped. The effects will be for life, unless he attend. Unfortunately, therapy is a practice not luckily to be followed by rural people.

The physically abused children’s inhibitions of speech and mobility may be a consequence of learned avoidance to protect themselves from further abuse or may be an adaptation to the abusive environment (Green 1991 : 93). It will be interesting to observe the young boys as they are in mountains schools, to see how they relate and talk.

According to Monzakitis “the pain of emotional abuse is more damaging than assault against the body” (Monzakitis 1995:71). Emotional abuse exposes children to a number of fears, eg fears of abandonment, injury and loss of love like those initiates who were exposed to lack of blankets during winter, cutting of penis and beating them with sticks.

It also arouses more anxiety and emphasizes the children’s helplessness. Many parents do not allow the young victim to register their distress. They may not question, complain or even verbalize their state of mind. This repeated suppression of feelings is apt to lead to inability to recognize ones own reactions, therefore the normal range of
emotions is compressed and distorted. Hence, they later relate to others through violence action.

I agree with Shengold when he says that “an emotionally abused child’s fragile self-esteem is wilted and he blames himself for the attacks and experience self-hatred. The aggression that rightfully should be aimed at the perpetrator is instead directed inward at himself. One result may be prolonged depression, and another may be self-punitive behaviour, eg an excessive number of accidents or more direct self-mutilation” (Shengold 1195: 70).

Main argued that “emotionally abused children may show the following behaviour:

– fail to thrive
– uncommunicative
– crying a lot
– withdrawn
– low self-concept
– drop out from the school
– passive
– unhappy
– depressed
– consider suicide
– feel hopeless
– fail to acknowledge mistakes
– pessimism
– mistrust
– rebellious
– aggressiveness
– impulsiveness
– unfriendly towards friends
– suspicious and,
– self-destructiveness and hyper activeness
Parental neglect in the form of deprivation (physical or emotional), inadequate care (Psychological, physical, medical, educational, social), separation or malnutrition has been the focus of many studies such as Brenneman (1990:52), Bakwin (1992:49) and Goldfarb (1995:83). These authors agreed on the wide range of implications of neglect on the physical, psychological and social development of children. Brenneman (1990:7) and Bibbie (1992:15) wrote about the child’s needs for maternal stimulation, the loneliness of children deprived from their mothers and the correlation of effects of hospitalization to inadequate mothering. Bakwin stated “that deprivation of mothering in institutions might be related to behaviour problems, neurologic disturbances, mental retardation or even death” (Bakwin 1992:21).

I agree with these authors, because those initiates who do not successfully complete the course, are so discouraged, deprived of palatal care and experiencing complications.

Goldfarb emphasized that, “the crucial importance of deprivation on the mental health of the child. The lack of loving care, warmth, intimacy and a continuous relationship with the mother has ill effects on the child’s development. Partial deprivation leads to anxiety, feelings of revenge, guilt, depression, disturbance of instability of character. Complete deprivation has even a more deteriorating impact on personality to form relationships” (Goldfarb 1995:19). Some of the initiates are anxious and find it difficult to talk and relate to others.

Psychological malnutrition as exemplified by high-strung authoritarian parenting and inadequate approval of children shows a significant correlation with behaviour problems such as later school failure, truancy, stealing and destructiveness (Talbot 1993:7). Food is another problem faced by initiates, showing that food is another aspect that need to be researched. It affects initiates a lot.
3.2 **Human rights**

It must be borne in mind that this study must also educate everyone about human rights, especially those of our children. The process of healing must also include analyses of the issue of justice and human right of the initiates.

It is obvious that there are questions which involve human rights that need to be answered, especially kidnaping, lack of food, lack of shelter etc. The question to ask is:
- Are there certain rights which the law gives to children as part of our community?
- If so, what exactly are they?
- Why do we have these rights?
- Can a person act in any way he or she wants?
- Is this freedom?

Most of south Africans say that everyone must be free, including children, irrespective of age. Our Constitution is one of the best in the world, especially human rights law. These laws that protect people and help to make an orderly society are sometimes seen as restricting human freedom. For an example, people who commit violent acts against others, must be stopped even if it means that their freedom to commit these acts is aligned with their cultural beliefs.

The idea is to operate within the law.

Understanding human rights includes knowing what our are as human, and deciding if these rights should or should not be restricted. If people listen to and understand views with which they do not agree, then human rights have a much better chance of being recognized and encouraged and followed.
Mansion reminds us that “human rights are a generally accepted principles of fairness and justice. It is universal moral rights that belong equally to all people, simply because they are human beings” (Masson & Others 1991 : 8). There is a desperate need for the communities, nations, families, church leaders and counselors to understand human rights. This process will help them develop a ministry of caring for traumatised people.

Social and economic rights sometimes refer to as “security-oriented and provide people with protection against having basic things in life taken away from them, such as food, shelter and health care”. This is a serious issue experienced by initiates

Masson & Others reminds us that “environmental, cultural and developmental rights recognize that, people have the right to live in an environment that is clean and free from pollution and protected from destruction” (Masson & Others 1991 : 17).

3.2.1 Constitution and Bill of Rights

Constitution is the supreme law of the country. Any law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid, and the obligation imposed by it must be fulfilled. Constitution plays a role in promoting awareness and understanding of human rights. Hence, it is important to educate leaders of the initiation school about Bill of Rights. This will help in promoting peace that will respect boys in initiation school (Constitution 1996:7).

According to the constitution, all the citizens of the country are equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship, and equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.
Chapter 2 of the Constitution deals with the “Bill of Rights”, which is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic value of human dignity, equality and freedom.

It is a fact that everyone is equal before the law, and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. It is relevant and ethically to promote the achievement of equality, legislature and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons.

“Everyone has inherent dignity and the rights to have their dignity respected and protected.

All the citizens have got the right to life, freedom and security which include:

– not to be deprived of freedom arbitrarily or without just cause,
– to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources,
– not to be tortured in any way, and
– not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way.

Constitution expressly states that everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right:

– to security in and control over their body,
– to freedom of movement
– to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being.

It is stipulated in the constitution that every child has the right:
– to family care or parental care when removed from the family environment,
– to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services,
– to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation,
– not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that place at risk the child's well being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development" (Constitution 1996:8)

A child’s best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. Human beings in general, have the right to live in a healthy and safe environment. In contrary to this, an individual turn a warm environment to a bitter life. The above rights are violated by initiation every year. Some of the boys dies at the mountains, and nothing is done.

3.3 Child development

According to Evans & Others “development is the process of change in which the child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling interacting with people and objects in the environment. Both physical growth, mental and emotional growth is crucial in a child’s overall development” (Evans and Others 2000:3).

It is a fact that child abuse affects the development process of the growing child because care is a process that results in the creation of an enabling environment which can support the child's development. In simple words, care is the integrated set of actions that ensure for children the synergy of protection and supports for their health, nutrition, psycho social and cognitive aspects of development. The church leaders as well as parents are challenged to care for the young ones. Initiation is an obstacles, especially the way it is run these days.
In the past, no one was forced, but there was discipline. The main reason was to educate the young boys -instructing them into manhood. It was an event of the whole village.

Evans reminds us that “learning is a key of the development process, and the outcome of development is greatly affected by the quality of care that a child receives” (Evans & Others 2000 : 4). The learning process of a child can be interrupted by means of elements of child abuse that are uncounted by the child. We need to embark on teaching our communities about rights of individual, but also the Bill of Rights.

Therefore, the role players in welfare circles must bear in mind that learning is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, habits, experimentation, observation, reflection and study.

We need to understand that health, holistic development is the child’s first and chief right.
We must also understand what constitutes care, and how it occurs in different settings. This understanding will then guide us in creating child friendly, family-focused, and community-based programs that support the child’s development. We need to take into account the health nutrition and psycho social stimulation, while at the same time strengthening the environments in which children live.
CHAPTER 4

4. HEALING PROCESSES

4.1 Pastoral care by the churches

Christians must know that there are individuals around them who need help, especially the leaders and the counsellors. For someone wounded or discouraged need to be healed and comforted from God's points of view, and the aggrieved party. It is expected that, for the Christians to heal the affected ones, there is a need for the counselors / therapists to put their best effort in healing process. They must bear in mind that there is a need for counselling to the ones who were embarrassed after the circumcision at the initiation school did not go in their favour. Those who ended up in hospital are ridiculed by those who were able to hold on.

To enable the initiates to open their minds to personal self-discovery, and new depths of healing love, churches must accept their main functions, which is to heal their brothers and sisters. The saints need to have the hearts for special care, and prayer to those who were treated unfairly, especially in a case where someone had been forced to undergo circumcision. Even the initiates need to find release from
emotional hang-ups into wholeness and of transforming them into healed people.

The memories of what had happened prior to, and after the initiation rites, must be healed. We must remember that in the rings of the thoughts and emotions, the record is there, the memories are recorded, and all are alive. And they deeply and directly affect their concept feelings and their relationship with their friends. They affect the way they look at life and God, at others and themselves.

In the Bible, Jesus is regarded as a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6 KJV). According to my understanding, in the Kingdom of God there is peace which needs to be shared with those experiencing the pain of insecurity and loneliness. It is very important to notice that the Lord is the everlasting God who created heaven and earth. He will not grow weary or tired, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. The statement that stipulates that those who put their hope in the Lord will renew their strength and they will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:28-31 KJV). The above quotation strengthen us for ministry.

It is clear that the saints have got authority to proclaim the scriptures with understanding. Therefore God is able to use the Christians as godly counselors for His people.

Jesus Christ mandated the Christians through the Book of Matthew that,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).
In other words, we are responsible for changing the behaviour of our fellow brothers and sisters. The wounded ones must know that God needs them, and He is available to answer to any uncertainty we face in life. There is no need for the Christians to fear anything because God is always with them. God will strengthen you, uphold you with his righteous right hand. Apart from the Lord, there is no savior.

I am convinced that certain problems or difficulties in life need special healing, through the Holy Spirit, because they are not subject to ordinary prayer, discipline and willpower. A special kind of understanding, and a relearning and reprogramming transformation by the renewal of our minds comes from the Word of God. This is not done overnight by a crises experience. The Holy Spirit is, indeed, the divine counselor, the divine psychiatrist who gets hold of our problems on the other hand. But only careful, prayerful, mature, spirit-filled Christians can pray for the injured ones and they will recover. Therapy and dialogue is at the heart of healing.

For practical example, I spend a lot of time in my office, counseling people who have been initially counseled by immature Christians. I am not in favour of “simplistic pass-answer syndrome” which says “pray always, read the Bible and have faith”. God will heal in time to come. The counselor gives several scripture verses, without dialoguing with the helper.

What I had witnessed at Donald Fraser Hospital challenged my heart to healing therapy very serious. I will prefer the matured Christians to conduct counseling because we should avoid piling more problems on a person who is in pain and unsuccessfully struggling with an emotionally rooted problem. Some of the boys feels guilt if they don’t attend initiation rites, while people make him feel worse for even having the problem, they double the weight of his guilt and despair.
Most of the initiates have sense of unworthiness, continuous feeling of anxiety, inadequacy and inferiority, an inner nagging that says “I am no longer good, everything I do is wrong, no one is comforting me and no one could ever possibly love me” (Seamands 2002:14).

Those initiates that I interviewed at Donald Fraser Hospital also uttered almost the same words because they were blaming themselves and their parents.

Some of them indicated that they were grabbed by the graduates to the initiation school, therefore, they are occasionally coping, striving and feeling very disappointed.

The aggrieved young boys sometimes feels that there is no one who is ready to listen to them, no one really cares, no one to relieve them from anxiety and no one to love them. They go through difficult times without support.

When a person devaluate himself, he become overly absorbed in and with himself, and he does not have anything left over to give to others.

It is our responsibility as Christians to see it that the gospel has penetrated down into his damaged inner self, which also needs to be evangelized or healed. His deep inner scars must be touched and healed by the voice of the Lord.

I am convinced that God has good plans for his people, the plans to heal us and not to harm us, plan to give us hope and a future that is bright.

God declared that we will call upon His Name and pray to Him, and He listen to us. Prayer in therapy plays an important part.

True Gospel will be displayed by the Christians who have burden to rescue their fellow bothers and sisters. God intends us to set the right pace to both the mourning ones and the lost. In the Book of Mark 16: 16-18 Jesus Christ said that whoever believes and is baptized will be
saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Those who believe in healing, will finally be healed through therapy.

The signs that will accompany those who believe: in His Name they will drive out demons, they will speak in tongues, they will pick up the snakes with their hands, and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all, they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.

This is the confirmation that those who believe will do extraordinary miracles, because God is always on their side. God gives us the authority to approach any difficult situation with boldness because His presence is not in vain. According to Luke 10:19, Jesus has given us the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, and to overcome all the power of the enemy, nothing will harm us.

If God is with us, no one can harm us, because the Kingdom of God prevails in any situation.

We need to approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

It is very important for the leaders of initiation school to forgiveness from the Lord, for anything they have done wrong.

All the Christians must acknowledge that God is just, He will not forget your work, and the love you have shown Him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. God is expecting each of us to show the same diligence to the very end, in order to make our hope sure. The Christians must never become lazy, but to imitate those whom through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

The truth is that Jesus Christ is able to save completely His people, those who come to Him, because, He always lives to intercede for them.

The nation need to understand that without Jesus, there is no peace, healing, comfort and mutual understanding amongst ourselves. Jesus was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us to peace was upon Him, and by His
wounds we are healed. The counselors need to emphasize the fact that the discouraged ones must cast their anxiety on Him because He cares for you.

The important role of the church is to help the tormented ones to keep stability and steady Christian life in the country by maintaining a high spiritual level. The church is empowered to deliver the nation from the bondage of sin. Children are abused by the people who normally ignore the voice of the Lord and bluntly kept aside the fact that God created man in His own image. It shows to God, that person is a special creature whose life must never be full of miserable, wretched with pains and sorrow.

Christian counseling takes place when a Christian brings information and assurance that facilitate healing process and decision making on the part of the abused ones. Our role in therapy is to journey with the abused, so that they may share the pain they have experienced at the school. As they share, the journey of healing has began.

Therefore counseling is a relationship between two or more persons whereby one of these persons (counselor) seeks to journey, encourage and assist the other person (counseled / troubled) to deal more effectively with the problems in his or her life. The main purpose of counseling / therapy is to render any treatment designed to relieve or cure an illness or disability to a person affected. The idea behind this exercise is to comfort the grieved through facilitating wise choices and decisions as well as to promote adjustments and mental health. We must avoid overshadowing people or rather take over therapy. As therapist, we must follow and guide the help seekers.

Boys who suffered from brutal treatment during the initiation schools practices, need the reliable people to heal them physically, psychologically and spiritually.
It seems there are a lot of people who do not avail themselves for this ministry, especially in dealing with matters related to initiation schools. We must never fear anything because God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

The Bible says that “For whatsoever is born of God over cometh the world: and this is the victory that over cometh the word, even our faith” (1 John 5:4 KJV).
In other words, we must face the reality in front of us and make difference.
Children of God possess many armaments such as prayer, the power and strength of the Word of God. In other words, the power of prayer should be used during therapy.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28 KJV). On practical level, this scripture needs to be forwarded to those who are suffering because some members of our community traumatised them without any apparent reason. Therefore the love and grace of the Lord must be seen by the nonbelievers and those having some burdens.

The following aspects must be taken into consideration during therapy sessions:

Motivation

Motivation means to act in a particular way which inspires or stimulate the interest of a person to achieve the desired goals or objectives.

There are four basic needs that bring a person back to a normal position (Clinebell & Others 1996 : 15):

– need for response,
– need for recognition,
– need for safety,
– need for new experience.

I personally realized that those boys who were brutally assaulted by the “midabe” become so frustrated to an extent that it is visible to the public. Frustration also results from the circumstances that blocked motivation or by situation beyond a person’s control. Frustration is the concept of ego-involvement defined as a “real or imaginary threat to self concept”. Therefore motivation must focus on relieving anxiety, discouragement; stress and other effects.

A Christian therapist must help the abused children to achieve and maintain, spiritual, mental and physical wholeness. Good adjustment is necessary to the reduction of problems. An unpleasant experience with someone or something, irrespective of being a child or adult person, can damage his wholeness. The goal of Jesus Christ in His ministry, was to make person whole, because from His personality God gave wisdom to human beings, and from His mouth came knowledge and understanding. Even today, He holds victory in store for the upright, He is a shield to those who need protection and guards the course of the just and protects the way of the faithful ones.

The Bible stipulates that “when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountain and sat down and began to teach them saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted, because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:1-12 KJV).

The above-mentioned words of Our Lord Jesus Christ lay the foundation of healing and confidence. We are the salt of the earth and we are also the light of the world. I think it is a demand to the saints to tune the right position for the community. We must never hide our potential and gifts that can change the life of our brothers and sisters. If we set the right pace to the nation, the people will see our good deeds and praise the Father in heaven.

King David testified in the Book of Psalm that “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quite waters, He restores my soul. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:1-6 KJV).

The words of David still motivate a lot of saints and nonbelievers that through God, everything is possible. The passage has got a strong motivational message to those who feels loneliness.

We need to take a serious note that children are occasionally broken by being used by others in order to achieve their own purposes. Therefore, there are frustrations and stresses experienced by children. It is significant that good adjustment to a severe problem decreases stress, but poor adjustments to any problem increases stress.

This is a call-up instruction to the church to rely on prayer, because Jesus Christ said that everyone who has faith in Him will do whatever asked in His Name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. We can ask anything in His Name, He will do it (John 12:14 KJV).
same words can be borne in mind when counseling those who suffered at the initiation school, especially when praying for them.

Reduction of problems

Problems can be reducted by means of replacing them with warming words to the horribly aggrieved.
Problems can result from human fault or failure. The perception of some individuals who believes in primitive and traditional or cultural practices instill psychological and physical affections.

In order to address problems, direct therapy / counseling is needed with injured ones.
Direct counseling is counseling the counselee in a direct manner as to how he can overcome the problem he is suffering from, ie depression, anxiety and helplessness.
Direct counseling is suitable for children counseling (Rozel 1997 : 82)

Reduction of problems involves the following (Rozel 1997 : 86):

– healing sense of humor,
– Joy of life itself,
– Creativeness, originality and inventiveness, and
– Ability to accept self
– Setting goals for happiness, unity, motivation and sociability.

**Happiness** : Happy persons are nearly always healthy and know how to handle sadness.

**Unity** : A unified person has a goal or set of goals which tends to unite his will and actions.

**Motivation** : Properly motivated persons have goals which are real and achievable and strive towards achievement.
**Sociability**: Social persons get along with others, like others, and are sensitive to the needs of others as well.

Relationship, rapport, empathy and sincerity

- **Therapeutic / counseling as relationship**

  Christian therapy to be successful as healing process depends mainly on the relationship between the counselor and counselee. According to Collins, “Christian therapy is a relationship in which one person seeks the advice, healing process, encourage and assist him to deal more effectively with the healing of broken heart.

  It is a fact that the counselee must see the agape love which is the devine power to love the unlovable” (Collins 1972:43).

  The association between the two persons or more, must be based upon a Christ-given relationships.

- **Establishing rapport**

  “Rapport” comes from the french word “rapporteer” which means to bring back.

  Collins states that a rapport is a confidence between two or more persons.

  It is a relationship marked by harmony, conformity, accord and affinity.

  For a practical example from the Word of God, Jesus established rapport with a woman by talking about water, which was something she interested in.

- **Sustaining empathy**
Rozell sees empathy as meaning “feeling into” or as “being a deep and strong feeling akin to suffering. In empathy, understanding, influence and other significant relationship take place” (Rozell 1997:36). A therapist must be full of grace and well-adjusted psychologically in order to achieve rapport and empathy.

– Sincerity

Sincerity is defined as “without deceit or hypocrisy” as “honesty and genuineness. The counselee should be able to see “right through you” and know that you are genuinely interested in him. The Bible and the work of the Holly spirit are available to help you to be what God wants you to be.

– Supportive therapy

In supportive therapy, the counselor uses those counseling methods which stabilize, guide, nurture, motivate the broken ones or can be able to handle their own problems. Supportive therapy helps the troubled person to cope with the problems of the here and now, and seeks to help him avoid self damaging.

The above kinds of therapy will be able to help initiates who have been abused.

The church must realize that it is their responsibility to do the following (Clinebell 1996:23):

– Gratifying dependency needs

This method entails informing parents about parenting functions. This consists of comforting, sustaining, feeding, inspiring, guidance, protecting instructing and setting limits.
– Emotional catharsis

The counselor should form a relationship with the troubled person to the extent that the person can talk out his / her problem in safety.

– Objective review of the stress situation.

The therapist is there to help the troubled see the facts in a clear, open, and a reliable manner.

– Aiding the ego’s defenses.

Defense mechanisms are in adequate as long term solutions, but some defenses are needed for immediate problems. It needs time to keep on listening to counselee.

– Changing the life situation

It is possible for the Christian to bring about changes in the actual physical economic and interpersonal circumstances of a distressed person.

– Action therapy

Persons who have feeling of defeat, fear of failure, damaged self-esteem or tragic loss, needs to be given meaningful activity so that they will keep functioning.

These therapy is applicable to the initiates who fails to complete the course.

– Christian resources

Therapy needs the Christian to use prayer, scriptures and devotional literature as well as participation in the commission service. This is
an excellent place in which to bring God's resources to bear on the real needs of life.

Everyone has crisis in his / her life, irrespective of his age, which subsequently lead to considerable discomfort and physical illness.

Accidental crises are precipitated by abnormal and usually unexpected loss of what the person believed to be essential sources of need-satisfaction, e.g., loss of respect or infringing his human dignity.

Therefore, the aim of the therapist must be to:

- to eliminate his / her loneliness,
- to enabling the abused child to use his coping abilities in a threat-free situation.
- to provide practice for his coping skills with persons with whom he has established relationships.

According to my understanding, all things that dehumanize another person or in any way harm another is against the teachings stipulated in the Bible.

A loving, gracious God accepts us as we are, offers Himself to each and every person. God also loves the initiates unconditionally. God is as pleased with us when we are in this healing process as loving Christians. Therefore, there is a need for us to heal the abused ones.

4.2 Investigation by the South African Police Service

According to the Constitution of our country, “the State must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights”.
“Constitution states that the powers and functions of the South African Police Service shall be:

– prevention of crime,
– investigation of any offence or alleged offenses
– maintenance of law and order”.

The Constitution of South Africa reads that “The objects of the South African Police Service are to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, and to uphold and enforce the law” (Constitution 1996:89)

The South African Police Service Act, the preamble reads: “ and whereas there is a need to provide the police service throughout the national territory:

– ensure the safety and security of all persons and property,
– uphold and safeguard the fundamental rights of every person as guaranteed by the Constitution,
– reflect the respect for victims of crime and an understanding of their needs” (South African Police Service Act, Act 68 of 1995:1).

Servamus (Police Magazine) : November 2002 indicate that the children have the same rights as those adults people have, and we ought to treat them as though they were human beings, with kindness, with tenderness, and not with brutality.

Ingersoll, states that “child abuse is one of the most commonly overlooked crimes, but everyday more and more children are abused in one way or another. There are children praying for someone to help them when they can’t help them. And what do we do we close our eyes and pretend to be a deaf.
Children are always vulnerable to victimization. Due to a child trusting nature and naivete it is a perfect target for perpetrators. Perpetrators could be people they know as well as unknown persons. Because of their innate curiosity and eagerness to try new things, children remain vulnerable to victimization as they grew into adolescents. Certain children are more physically and emotionally vulnerable than others. This is what happens to the initiates.

Crimes against children are unacceptable, inhuman, cruel, inexcusable and destroy the future of any country, because the children are the future, therefore the police must play a vital role in terms of investigation of abused children, especially those who were abused at the initiation school. It is obvious that child abuse occurs in all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic and justifiable infliction of pain and suffering of children.

Ingersoll pointed out that the types of crime committed against children and emphasized that police action is needed:

Physical abuse which includes:

- a child is beaten or hit with a fist, belt, a stick or any object,
- a child is kicked,
- a child is tied up,
- a child is strangled,
- a child is stuck with a sharp instrument,
- a child suffered from unnecessary medical intervention,
- a child suffers frequent injuries.

In order to address crimes against children, the South African Police Service established Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit. This must has to deal with abuse experienced by the youth at the initiation school.
The Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit Policy document were formulated and its objectives entail:

– to ensure the effective prevention of Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences related crimes,
– to ensure the effective investigation of Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences related crimes, and
– to ensure excellence in service delivery to victims of family violence crimes against children and sexual offences.

The policy document embodied the functions and responsibilities of the Unit as follows:

– effectively preventing Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences related crimes,
– Effectively apprehend suspects involved in cases committed against children.

It is clear from the provision of this policy that members of South African Police Service have a duty to uphold and safeguard the fundamental rights of every person as guaranteed in the Constitution.

One of the fundamental rights in Section 12 of the Constitution is the right to freedom and security of the person that reads:

– everyone has the right to freedom and security of a person, which includes the right to be free from all the forms of violence from either the public or private sources, and further,
– everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity in and control over their body.

In a recent case, Carmichele V Minister of Safety, 2001 (4) SA 938, it was argued that the South African police Service has a legal duty to act
and protect these rights, to curb crime, to protect the inhabitants of the country, specifically children against violent crimes.

In another incident, Kadir v Minister of Law and Order, 1992 (3) SA 737 (C), the judge concluded that “communities expect the police to perform certain duties and that the principal of public expectation is based on a conviction held by the community, that the police will act in a particular way”

The Constitution of Republic of South Africa 1996, compels the police to have legal duty to act positively in protecting and investigating cases against children (Section 12 (1) 8) and 205 (3).

As a member of South African Police attached to National Evaluation, responsible for evaluation of police production, performance and daily activities, I realized that Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit are actively operating around the urban areas. The unit is not effectively operating at deep rural areas, eg Ha-Makuya, Tswera or other villages neighbouring these villages. Children are physically abused and tortured without intervention of any state department. Every winter, initiation school produce people who died or are abused. Every child has the right to be protected from neglect, abuse or maltreatment. Therefore, the police are empowered by the Child Care Act which states that, “any police official, social worker or authorized officer may remove a child from any place to a place of safety without a warrant if they have reason that the child referred to in Section14 (4), and that the delay in obtaining a warrant will be prejudicial to the safety of that child: (Child Care Act, Act 74 of 1983: 3). Sometimes the initiates are living in, or exposed to, circumstances which may seriously harm the physical, mental or social well-being of the initiates.
I must affirm that it is the legal duty of the police to protect and secure any inhabitant of the country because we are leaving in a free democratic country.

“In order to minimise the occurrence of the cases against children, the police should:

– honour, protect and promote the fundamental rights of the children,
– treat children with sensitivity and care,
– protect a child at the scene of an incident and, if necessary, take the perpetrator into the custody,
– be patient and give special attention to the protection of children who are the victims of any crime
– if possible, assist children to access medical care, shelter, protection, counseling and legal assistance” (Policing & Children’s Rights 2004:1)
– treat children with the respect and dignity, and to ensure that their rights are not violated.
– work hand-in-hand with the community, through Community Policing Forum.

The South African Police Act, stipulates that, “the service shall, in order to achieve the objects contemplated in Section 215 of the Constitution, liaise with the community through Community Policing Forum with a view to:

– establishing and maintaining a partnership between the community and South African Police Service,
– promoting communication between the community and South African Police Service,
– promoting cooperation between the community and South African Police Service in fulfilling the needs of the community regarding policing.
– improving the rendering of police services to the community at
national, provincial area and local levels.
– improving transparency in the Service and accountability of the
service to the community,
– promoting joint problem identification and problem-solving by the
South African Police Service and community” (South African Police
Act, Act 68 of 1995: 2)

It is advisable for the police to establish Community Policing Forums or
Sub-Forums at Police Stations situated at rural areas in order to
address the crime of child abuse, especially that happening at the
mountain schools.
It is the responsibility of the Station Commissioners to initiate the
establishment of these forums.
To my understanding, Community Policing Forums are not aimed for
only those communities around Gauteng Province. However, rural
areas need professional service and effective communication with
police.

There is a need for the police to attend Tribal Council Meeting, School
Board Meeting and other Social or community gatherings with an
intention to identify the concern of the community and other
suggestions.

In order to deter the occurrence of child abuse, cases involving children
must be effectively investigated and discussed with the Senior Public
Prosecutors.

For an example, after the Area Head: Detective Service, Area North
Rand has discovered that there is a high rate of cases against children,
he established a forum called “Justice Meeting”.
The forum consists of prosecutors, police and other role players to
discuss investigation of cases against children and contributes in the
detention and conviction of criminals connected with these types of cases.

It is imperative for the police to highly consider cases committed against children. Violence against children is internationally recognised as a major human right violation. It has severe physical, mental health and mental health consequences on those involved. If not properly addressed, it can teach children that violence against them is acceptable and might even contribute to broader violence in society. As such, there is a demand that cases of this nature, be dealt by those members who have the heart to heal, comfort and strengthen the weak. These cases must be given priorities at rural areas. This was also emphasised by both the President of South Africa and Minister of Safety and Security respectively.

Unfortunately, Limpopo SAPS do not have the capacity to address violence crime against children due to the fact that the province has got limited Police Stations.

This situation makes it difficult to police those areas around Ha-Tshivhasa. However, the identified suspects may continue to conduct further crimes as they walk freely.

Bearing in mind the fact that, it is not the desire or plan of the Lord, that life must be full of abuse, or move form worse to worse situation full of pains, troubles and sorrow. To Jesus, a child is very important, and He said let the children come to me for theirs is the kingdom of God. We are challenged to protect children from abusive type of experience.
It is utmost important for the police to oversee that violence against children are thoroughly, effectively, efficiently and professionally addressed.

4.3 **Social work service**

Social Work Service rendering service to child abused.

For more clarity, comments from various authors will be dealt with in this aspect.

Child abuse can be life threatening, and is regarded as society’s most critical area of concern. This is due to its high rate and devastating effects. It therefore creates an urgency that is unparalleled in our society. A wide range of families is in need of social work services regarding the problematic area of life, especially to those children who were abused at the initiation school.

It seems the aspect of child abuse emanating from the initiation schools are not taken seriously and some follow-ups are not done.

This chapter will therefore focus on the social work functions concerning child abuse. This includes service rendering concerning child abuse because this problem does not only need the intervention of the churches and police.

4.3.1 **Social workers functions in child abuse**

Richard argued that, “social work has developed specific functions for managing the problem of child abuse.

The functions are as follows:

- Identification.
- Investigation.
- Intervention.

A discussion of the above functions and service rendering concerning child abuse follows below:

Identification

Child abuse must be identified before intervention of any kind can be rendered. The report of abuse must therefore reach the appropriate person or police officer attached to Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit. These people must then act in order to protect young people.

The reporting phase is dependent on the following:

– public awareness of what constitutes child abuse;
– public awareness of reporting procedures;
– the willingness and ability of the person or agency that has identified the incident of child abuse to initiate a report; and
– the availability of a qualified person to receive a report, i.e., a person who can obtain necessary information and initiate an appropriate response (Richard 1991:156).

In other words, the social worker must refer this report to the police who will continue with the investigation.

When the report is finally made, the social worker then face the first action to be taken in a reported case of suspected child abuse, to give the case a priority based on two criteria namely, the allegations in the report and the seriousness of the incidents.

Richard argued that, “the priority of reports could be classified into three:
Priority one includes death, brain damage, wounds, abandonment, and other injuries.

Priority two includes cuts, bruises, human bites, dislocations, tying, substance abuse and medical defect.

Priority three includes mental injury, inadequate shelter, inadequate clothing, educational neglect and inadequate supervision” (Richard 1991:157).

I concur with Richard because most of the initiates suffer cold and being neglected.

As indicated in page 1 of this report, some of the injuries are very serious and they might lead to death. This kind of abuse need to be addressed.

The Social Worker involved in the examination of abused child must weigh seriousness of the incident and risk of harm to the child. Priority two and three allegations may actually be moved to priority one, based on the seriousness or potential risk of the child.

When any priority one or two allegations of harm is listed on the report, the report is priority one or two respectively. When the incident is serious or a child has been taken into temporary protective custody, the report is a priority one report regardless of the allegations. Allegations are considered to be priority three only when the social worker has determined that there is no risk of injury to the children, there is no need for temporary protective custody and there are no priority one or two allegations in the report.

The identification function of social work concerning child abuse includes interviewing, as discussed below:
Interviewing

To acquire the necessary information for a report, the social worker should interview many people involved in the child’s situation, eg. the child’s parents and other adults in the vicinity where the child stays. Those who witnessed the incident, e.g. when the child was kidnapped by the graduates, the initial reporter, teachers and nurses must be thoroughly interviewed in order to verify the merit of the incident. The information received from the abovementioned people can substantiate the case against the culprits and secure the conviction thereof, for an example, how the boy had been kidnapped or assaulted.

The resistance of the victim need to be analised.

Cases of these nature are not prevailed during the court trial because of lack of evidence and ineffective cooperation amongst Social Work Services, South African Police Service and churches (pastors and counselling teams).

The two interviews, which are most demanding of the Social Worker’s sensitively insight and withheld judgement are with parents and the child.

Broadhurst gave the following suggestions to assist in conducting such delicate interviewing:

- “What the social worker must do when talking with the parents?
- Select interviews appropriate to the situation.
- Conduct the interview in private.
- Tell the parents why the interview is taking place.
- Be direct, honest and professional.
- Tell the parents that the interview is confidential.
- Reassure the parents of the support, e.g guidance.
- How to report to the police” (Broadhurst 1989”17).
What the Social Worker must not do when talking with the parents, he/she must not:

- Try to prove abuse or neglect by accusations or demands.
- Display horror, anger, disapproval of parents, child or situation.
- Focus on family matters unrelated to the specific situation.
- Place blame on the parents or child.

In most instances, boys are taken without proper knowledge where are they being taken to.

When talking with the child, who can understand the interview, the social worker must do the following:

- Make sure the interviewer is someone the child trust.
- Conduct the interview in private.
- Sit next to the child, not across the table or desk.
- Tell the child that the interview is confidential.
- Conduct the interview in the language that the child understands.
- Ask the child to clarify words or terms that are not understood.
- Tell the child of any future action that will be required.

When talking to the child, the social worker must not do the following:

- Allow the child to feel in trouble or at fault.
- Criticise the child's choice of words or language.
- Suggest answers to the child.
- Probe or press for answers which the child is not willing to give.
- Display horror, shock or disapproval of parents, child or situation.
- Force a child to remove clothing.
- Conduct the interview in a group of interviewers.
- Leave the child with a stranger.
Boys who were rescued from the initiation schools are living in fear because they think that they might be taken back to the school. Therapy can help it working on this issue.

Investigation

Investigation of a suspected child abuse case is carried out through assessment of the child, parent and the family circumstances (Richard (1991:160). Assessment contributes towards effective planning or intervention to resolve the case.

I agree with Richard because social workers need to have a knowledge of family dynamics, human development and environmental factors for making decisions regarding intervention, and of each type of abuse, i.e, physical, emotional and neglect in terms of having its own different character and dynamic patterns.

Parental Assessment

Some parents are very keen to force their kids to attend the initiation school.

In assessing the abusive parent, the social worker must try to determine what degree of risk lies in allowing the child to remain with the parents or even to remain in the same vicinity.

Certain special considerations must be taken into account to make decisions, eg. in the case of physically abusive parents, the major emphasis is on the parents reaction to the injuries incurred.

I have seen a lot of parents who forces their children to undergo the circumcision at the initiation schools.

The family's attitude towards initiation rites, corporal punishment and the role this may have played in the injury, the case with which the
parents lose control of their behaviour, and the amount of stress required to trigger this and the role of the non-abusive spouse in abuse must be determined.

In case of neglecting the child, influencing him / her to go to the initiation school, the social worker first needs to know what caused the parents to neglect their child. He/she must try to discover why the parents neglected their child, influencing the child to go to the initiation school.

Professionals also agree that in cases of emotional abuse, there must be an action or series of actions or omissions by the parents/culprits that can be shown to have caused emotional harm or injury.

It is obvious that qualified mental health such as psychologist, physician can determine the cause and effect of injury.

Child Assessment

According to Finkelstein, “questions which are most commonly asked in assessing an abused child focus on the child’s role in the parent/child interaction that resulted in abusive or neglected actions and on the effect of harm to the child” (Finkelstein 1992:70).

There are issues that need to be deal with:

– Relationships with the parents.
– Childhood depression as another prevalent result of abuse and neglect.

Intervention
The New Dictionary of Social Work is defining the intervention as “professional behaviour of a social worker to bring about change in the person - environment situation to achieve the objectives of the agreement of cooperation, which has been entered into with the client” (The New Dictionary of Social Work 1995:77).

Hawing argues that, “the focus of intervention in child abuse has been the primary caregiver, usually the parents and churches” (Hawing 1999:330).

The goal of intervention with such parents and churches is to assist them to deal with a range of problems associated with child abuse i.e. abuse emanating from initiation rites.

Goldstein examined intervention methods that can be used in child abuse and agreed on the following methods:

- “Social work with the individual.
- Social work with the family.
- Social work with the community.
- Social work research.
- An integrated application of these methods” (Goldstein 1994:271).

The intervention methods are discussed below with special focus on child abused at the initiation school:

- Social work with the individual.

The New Dictionary of Social Work define social work with the individual as “a method of social work aiming primarily at helping individuals on a person-by-person basis to attain the fullest degree of social functioning” (The New Dictionary of Social Work 1995:8).
Social work with the individual in child abuse cases encompasses a broad range of intervention aimed at restoring, maintaining and enhancing the individual's personal and social functioning.

It is mostly employed with parents/caregivers of abused children and can help such parents to:

- Acquire better coping skills.
- Develop the self-esteem and empathy that are so essential to good parenting.
- Improve role functioning and interpersonal relationships.
- Learn better child management techniques.
- Develop more realistic and age-appropriate expectations of children.
- Modify long-standing behavior patterns.
- Gain greater self-awareness.
- Improve relationships with the community.

Social workers involved with individuals concerning abuse can employ various intervention approaches.

Goldstein agrees that, “five main types of approaches are mostly employed in intervening concerning child abuse, namely:

- Problem solving.
- Behaviour modification.
- Cognitive restructuring.
- Ego psychology.
- Crisis intervention” (Goldstein 1994:4).

These approaches overlap and must be used flexibly with the individuals involved. The main aim is to help parents and all who help abused children, to be equipped with skill that will educate others.

A discussion of the above given approaches follows below:
Problem Solving

The basic assumption of this approach is that human existence is a continued problem-solving process. This approach is aimed at helping the person to solve whatever problems he cannot solve at the present moment, however, he will solve future problems.

The problem solving approach emphasises training in the development of problem solving skills. According to Durlack “problem solving skill training has received much attention to date, and many have wide applicability in case of child abuse whereby parents, caregivers/therapists can be trained to develop skills in problem solving” (Durlack 1993:35).

This training involves providing them with the necessary skills to accurately identify a difficult situation and to effectively managed it, thereby preventing or avoiding an abuse.

The problem solving approach have been used effectively to help parents negotiate intra family conflicts which could have resulted in child abuse i.e isn’t necessary to take the child to the initiation school.

Durlack states that, “the major emphasis of the problem solving approach is the training of parents and the community in problem solving skills following specific steps, namely:

- Identifying the problem of child abuse.
- Generating alternative solutions to solve the problem.
- Exploring the consequences of each proposed alternative.
- Choosing the best plan and implementing it.
- Evaluating the outcomes of the plan and its relevance with similar future situations of child abuse” (Durlack 1993:35).
Behaviour Modification

Initiation rites is something learnt from the previous generation, while child abuse is argued to be the result of inadequately or inappropriately learned parenting behaviour.

Such intervention with parents/caregivers or abused children had led to the contemporary approaches to training parents/caregivers in developing more effective parenting strategies which will help in addressing abuse.

There is consensus among social workers employing this approach concerning child abuse that, child abuse can be accounted for in terms of special social interactive variables such as:

- Lack of non-violent child management skills.
- Inadequate knowledge concerning child behaviour, anger control defects, over arousal to uses of child misbehaviour.

Intervention focus on observable behaviour, the context in which these behaviour occur, with the objective of modifying the behavioural interchanges among persons in the target system.

Focus is on the individual child who has been abused, the identification of child abuse and the consequences that followed the occurrence of child abuse.

An assessment of the child’s behaviour in its context relative to the parent’s directives and responses to that behaviour is done. Intervention therefore focuses on the training of parents to modify the manner in which they gave instructions to their children, and the enhancement of the parent’s skills in child management.
This intervention can effect the parent’s attitudes towards their children positively.

Different techniques of intervention may be employed for various behaviours, namely:

- Direct instruction, role playing or modelling which can be used to train parents in parenting skills.
- Relaxation training or communication exercises can be used for the development of social skills, reduction of stress, assertiveness training or anger control training (Scott et al 1994:330).

Behaviour changes achieved are maintained after termination through strategies such as cognitive testing regarding the level of understanding which the individuals have concerning the processes by which they have acquired their new skills.

Cognitive Restructuring

Fennal stated that, “the cognitive restructuring approach focuses on changing the incorrect thought patterns, beliefs and attitudes of the clients which is believed to lead to lasting behaviour change” (Fennal 1992:129).

The vhavenda believes that initiation rites is something connected to their beliefs and culture. It is also important in helping boys because they are neglected in the process. That behaviour or morality of abuse need to be wiped off from their minds in order to secure the safety and health of our children.

I witnessed some parents who forced their children to undergo initiation school, and this practice features the acts of abuse which is accompanied by anger. Anger is therefore the most evident parental response to what is seen as the child’s provocative behaviour. The aims of the cognitive restructuring approach is therefore to alleviate
parental anger in the face of perceived provocation by children and to improve child management skills.

Ego Psychology

Goldstein agree that, “ego psychology deals with the relationship of personality to reality with the basic goal of supporting and strengthening the client's ego so that they can function and cope more effectively with their problem areas.

The aims of ego psychology regarding parents of child abuse cases as follows:

- Helping parents function more comfortably in their role as parents.
- Better control of behaviour and feelings.
- Improving parent-child and other interpersonal relationships.
- Developing better coping skills when problems arises.
- Acquiring greater understanding of the children’s needs.
- Learning better ways of managing the children’s needs.

Ego psychology can be provided through the provision of information, advice and direction and can focus on the following aspects:

- Child development.
- Special problems
- Parents’ needs” (Goldstein 1995:42).

The above will help initiates who have been abused at the initiation school.

Crisis Intervention

Crisis intervention is defined by the New Dictionary of Social Work as an “approach in social work which is directed towards the restoration and promotion of the social functioning of individuals who experience
crisis as a result of an unexpected and disruptive event and who do not have the problem solving abilities and resources to cope with the increased level of tension and anxiety” (The New Dictionary of Social Work 1995:16).

Baos argues that, “child abuse is a crisis to many individuals and requires the intervention of a social worker through the employment of crisis intervention” (Baos 1994:4).

The employment of crisis intervention in child abuse cases is aimed at the following:

– Ending the abuse through the removal of the abuser or the victim of abuse from the abusive situation, children can be taken to the hospital.
– Helping the victim to deal with his/her emotions.
– Strengthening the parent’s ability to protect the child (reporting to the police).
– Assisting the abuser, victim and other family members to establish appropriate role boundaries.

Social Work with the Family

The New Dictionary of Social Work define social work with the family or the treatment of a client as “involving and the members of the family in interaction in an effort to change the problem behaviours with a view of promoting the client’s and the family’s normal functioning” (The New Dictionary of Social Work 1995:25).

Social work with the family is based on the assumption that a family is a system which consists of interrelated and interdependent subsystems
(members) whereby change in one subsystem will lead to change or changes in the other subsystems, e.g. child sustained injuries (Goldstein 1995:63).

In child abuse cases, the entire family system including the abused child, non-abused siblings and parents are affected by the abuse of a child and is seen together by the social worker.

The family is thus seen as a unit of attention and intervention will address the family as a whole.

There are advantages of seeing the family as a unit:

- The social worker can assess family interactions and the roles family members take with one another.
- The family’s interaction can help the parents to learn to communicate more directly, to solve problems jointly and to empathise with other family members including the abused child.
- The family can learn and experiment with more effective child management techniques.

Social work with the family focuses on two goals regarding child abuse, namely:

- Support of adoptive functioning, whereby the social worker can support instances of good child rearing practices on the part of parents that could help prevent or modify the abuse of the child, e.g. helping the child to forget what has been done against him.
- Helps in problem solving in which parents are taught to solve problems.

In an abusive families members are often not able to solve problems, but instead become frustrated, angry and abusive. Parents usually attack the child when he/she made a mistake or denied their instructions, i.e to be aligned with cultural traits.
The social worker can help the family to listen to one another instead of attacking each other.

The family is helped to solve the problem together by following the steps of the problem solving model which are as follows:

– Identifying the problem, eg. child abuse.
– Generating alternative solutions to solve the problem.
– Exploring the consequences of the proposed alternatives.
– Choosing the best plan and implementing it, and evaluating the outcomes of the plan as well as its relevance to similar future situations of child abuse. Behavioural change whereby the social worker intervenes directly when abuse parental behaviour occurs, eg. father who forced a child to go to initiation school, or hits his / her child in frustration might be helped to remove himself from the child’s presence when he began to feel angry. The parent might be advised not to force his child to undergo circumcision. Therefore the father might be helped to talk to the child rather than forcing him to go to initiation school.
– Modification of systematic family processes, eg. communication, interpersonal relationships and structure.
– In some instances the fathers used to undermine their boys who did not attend the initiation school. The children feels very uncomfortable and in other circumstances they are influenced to go to initiation school with an intention to avoid family disputes.

Social work with the group

Social work with the group refers to one of the primary methods of social work through which a trained social group worker provides aid in a professional way, to these boys who suffered some terrible pains by managing and applying the group processes, the underlying
relationships and the programme media in a purposeful and skilful way (Du Preez 1998:25).

Goldstein adds to this definition by arguing that, “social work with the group involves an alliance of people who are brought together to work on a common task, to use the group experience for support and mutual aid for educational purpose or the effect personality change. Social work with the group of boys, therapeutic is an effective approach in working with child abuse cases. It has been shown to be effective in its ability to provide the following:

- The opportunity for nurturance, re-socialization and relative to others.
- Powerful experiences is being accepted.
- The development of better communication and other interpersonal skills.
- The atmosphere in which to develop increased empathy for others, new values, attitudes and behaviour.
- Support networks that diminish the individual's sense of isolation and enhance their ability to take or offer help.

It is obvious that the elders who are keen to force children to attend the initiation school need to respect others and re-socialize with the rest. They need to develop a sense of humour and instill networks that build community” (Goldstein 1997:89).

- “The social work with the group focussing on child abuse cases employ both supportive and educational goals to focus on issues such as:

  _ Isolation.
  - Feelings of hopelessness.
  - Interpersonal problems.
  - Poor socialization skills.
  - Poor parenting.
– Poor child management skills.
– Low self-esteem.
– Poor ego functioning in key areas such as impulsive control” (Billy 1996:193).

Howing argue that, “social work in the group can also use self-help groups to assist abusive parents. The program of such groups involves group sessions where parents can talk about their behaviour towards their children, their values, anger, hurt feelings and any other issue that may result from a parent abusing a child.

Self-help groups for abusive parents can focus on parent education or parenting skills. Self-help groups that aim at improving parenting skills for abusive parents often focus on improving verbal communication as an alternative to physical discipline, on enhancing impulsive control and social skills. Parents are taught the following skills:

– To discipline through reasonable punishment.
– Setting the limits of disciplining their children.
– To know the particular needs of their children.
– To give approval and attention to their children.

That self-help groups for abusive parents is a component of effective intervention” (Howing 1993:331).

This view is supported by Cohn who states that, “self-help groups are increasingly used for abusive parents and are proved to be a success.

Structured, time limited parent training programs are used for educational purposes. These programmes present information on the following aspects:

– Child development.
– Child management.
– Stress reduction.
– Anger management.
– Parents will benefit from the mutual sharing of copying strategies, peer feedback, support, initiating a successful learner, ie. a parent who has overcome the same problem of child abuse, and in regaining their self-esteem as they see that they are not the only persons with the problem of child abuse” (Cohn 199:516).

Social work with the community

Lombard define social work with community as “a method of social work based on a scientific process which is directed towards achieving one or more of the following objectives:

– To satisfy the broad need of the community and to create and maintain a balance between the needs and the resources in the community.
– To provide the community with the opportunity to exploit its strengths and potential knowledge and skills and to develop these in order not only to be able to deal with social problems, and needs but also to present them.
– To effect change in the community, in groups and the distribution of decision making power” (Lombard 1991:72).

I concur with Lombard on the definition of social work with the community, because social work with the community is a conscious process of social interaction and a method of social work concerned with:

– The meeting of needs, bringing about and maintaining of adjustments of resources to needs in community.
– Helping people to deal effectively with their problems and objectives by assisting them to develop, strengthen and maintain qualities of participation, self-direction and cooperation.
– The bringing about of changes in groups and intergroup relationships and in the distribution of decision making power.

The fact of the matter is that social work with the community may be carried out specifically by welfare agencies and preachers of the Word of God.

To my understanding, an agency can be many different approaches to offer services to abused children, especially those abused during initiation rites or abusive families and increasingly rely on a broad range of community services to render services to these families.

For practical example, agencies develop community based services rendering programmes such as:

– Mutual aid program.
– Public awareness campaigns on child abuse.
– Education for parents.
– Early and periodic childhood screening.
– Social skills training such as coping skills in times of problems, ie. child’s complications.
– Neighbourhood support groups.
– Family support services focussing on child care or crisis care.

For what I have observed in Ha-Tshivhasa villages, the communities do not have crisis help lines. Therefore, communities should have crisis help lines and coordinating persons from where people can gain information on the most accessible and appropriate time.

Such crisis help lines will have a major impact in the community as they provide non judgmental listening and emergency counselling for the overwhelmed abused child. It can also provide referral to community resources when necessary.
It must be borne in mind that social workers rendering community services concerning child abuse during initiation rites should perform the following functions:

– Establish linkages between the people and community resources concerned with child abuse. This occurs when people are not aware of resources available to them, eg. child crisis centres.
– Facilitating interactions between the people with resources. This is applicable in cases where the existing resources cannot be used by the people because of problems with regard to these resources, eg. unavailability of funds for clients. It is therefore the social worker's function to improve interaction between the clients and the resources.

Social Work Research

There is a need for social workers to conduct scientific inquiry about children who are abused through exercises of initiation rites. This terrible exercise may be effected to the young boys, either by the parents, guardians or members of the community.

My greatest concern is that the initiates are not highly looked after by the social workers of or Department of Social Welfare and Development. Social workers need answers pertaining to consequences of initiation in order to increase knowledge about what is happening around their community. There is a need for social workers to investigates this primitive practice with an intention to address the problem in conjunction with the police and other relevant role players.

The research of the social workers must be aimed at developing, implementing and evaluating intervention strategies to stop young boys from being tormented.

This practice should thus focus on research which yields results that can further develop their practice and wisdom necessary for
intervention, and problem solving of children abused at the initiation schools or within the community. As the functions of the social workers demand that social workers should follow the process which is largely circular in configuration, beginning with a problem and ending up with a resolved problem, i.e. loneliness, complications, fear, pains and abandoned.

If the social workers do have a heart to heal the wounded ones, they should conduct the research in order to address the negative consequences of initiation rites, namely:

- Research the problems of initiation rites particularly.
- Formulating questions to be directed to the victims and relatives of the victims especially parents and guardians.
- Collecting data by means of interviews scheduled, e.g. interviewing initiates.
- Analyse the data with an intention to verify the concern of the community, negative consequences and healing strategy.

The application of social work methods by means of an integrated approach.

Goldstein states that, “an integrated approach of social work methods refers to unit. The various methods of practice from which social work is made up, e.g. social work with the individual, family, groups, community and research” (Goldstein 1994:22).

I agree with Goldstein, because the purpose of an integrated approach is to be helpful to people as individuals, families, groups or communities.

It is important for a social worker always to begins with individuals or families who have a problem or need and formulates a plan to meet the need or resolve the problem based on an assessment of the client’s
situations. Intervention may be directed to the injured ones, their families or close friends with intention to resolve problems.

Prevention

If our community is prepared to resolve negative consequences of initiation schools, prevention strategies need to be implemented aiming at minimising and eliminating the impact of conditions that may lead to child abuse, especially at mountain school.

“Prevention is aimed at the re-arrangement of the forces in the society against those negative factors in the life of the children. In other words, it is the responsibility of the nation to alleviate pressure against our children” (Gough 1993:17).

Davies indicated that, “prevention can be offered at three levels, namely:

– Primary prevention of child abuse

Primary prevention seeks to effect factors that contribute to the appearance of child abuse” (Davies 1994:23).

The above refers to efforts aimed at positively influencing parents/caregivers before abuse burns, i.e., before the children can be forced to initiation schools, assaulted or traumatised.

I agree with Davies because primary prevention concerns itself with reducing the incidence of new cases regarding initiates before ugly scenes can surface.

It is obvious that these practice operate at the societal level through public
awareness campaigns aimed at addressing violation of rights of our children.

The following actions may be implemented for the primary prevention of child from abused during initiation rites:

– Elimination of the norms that seems legitimate and approve initiation rites in the society, and as such the use of violence to overcome any resistance by the culprits will be minimised.
– Reducing violence against powerless children.
– Incorporation of families into a network of kin and community, to reduce isolation.
– Changing primitive practices by the society through educational development.
– Breaking the cycle of child abuse at the initiation schools by teaching alternative methods to child abuse as a way of controlling children.

The main idea is to call for fundamental changes in the community as a whole. My concern is that Ha-Tshivhasa is a high risk area to our young children because they are exposed to maltreatment because of traditional beliefs and primitive concerns of their culture.

– Secondary prevention of child abuse is needed.

Secondary prevention of child abuse involves the identification of potential abusers and treating them before child abuse can take place.

I support the abovementioned fact, as known suspects are just left unattended, because of ignorance of the relevant role players and community.

An attempt must be made to identify known suspects who inflicts pain to the our children.
It is noticed that the parents occasionally ignores and turn blind eye on these aspects of abuse. Therefore, the real problem is not addressed.

Our parents needs education pertaining to improve quality of child upbringing and prevent the development of child abuse.

Parents should avoid the tendencies of referring their children to initiation schools. They should instill good parenting skills, respond to their children’s needs, good health, personal growth and love.

Tertiary Prevention of Child Abuse

“Tertiary prevention of child abuse refers to the services offered to families after child abuse has occurred” (Tzeng 1992:104). This is a reactive intervention aimed at preventing an abused child from being further abused. Prevention here focuses on keeping the community from developing abusive cycles in which children are repeatedly abused.

Tertiary prevention is rendered by the provision of treatment to the abusive person.

The social worker must help in the client’s problem situation which is aimed at guiding the client towards a better understanding of their problems of child abuse with a view of solving them and improving their social functioning.

It is obvious that tertiary prevention of child abuse will focus on the following treatment goals:

– Stopping the abuse.
– Improving parental functioning.
– Reducing frustration, stress and conflict within the family and the environment.
– Developing conflict management skills.

Through the study and interviews, I have learnt that people should not be forced to do anything with their permission, e.g Constitution protects the people with the Bill of Rights. This process of initiation school violate that clause.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Why the nation must carry the abused child?

There is a growing awareness of the serious problem of child abuse throughout the country. A big problem in the fight against child abuse, especially those who are treated badly at the initiation school, need a serious attention from the community.

Another challenging issue is the fact that, not all cases of initiation rites are reported due to the community’s ignorance.

In 1996 study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HRSRC) it was revealed that a quarter (25%) of all child abuse cases were not
reported to the police. Some of the information was gained from the research showed that the South African public did not have a clear idea of what child abuse was. Some members of the community turn a blind eye to child abuse during the initiation rites, simply because they don’t want to become involved in court cases etc.

However, community with this attitude must remember that innocent child victim cannot protect himself from the abuse he suffers. Sometimes the initiates are too young to talk about the abuse, and sometimes they are afraid to talk about it (SAPS Servamus, October 2003 :44).

If the community does not do something about the abuse, it could be too late, and the children are dying from injuries sustained during initiation rites.

At a National Men’s March on 22 November 1997 in Pretoria, former President Nelson Mandela said “Our children are our greatest treasure. They are our future and those who abuse them in any form, are weakening our nation”.

The Provincial Ministry of Health of the Limpopo Province said in a media release on 27 November 2001"Our children are the building blocks of the future of this country.

This symbolises that the community must pay attention to the children.

5.2 How the church may refocus on abused child.

Christians must refocus on their responsibility to deal with this problem of child abuse. Jesus Christ commanded us to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. This implies that, it is basic to Christian ethics and to interpersonal relationships for every creature of God to have a healthy self-image.
You can be able to give to others only when you have proper and healthy opinion of yourself. In other words, you have to understand the fact that Christians must understand the importance of life, and the purpose of God about a human being. The abused initiates must have a sense of belonging and of being loved.

I know that everyone need a sense of worthy and value. This is the inner belief and feeling: “I am of value and I have something to offer”.

Christians must bear in mind that we are not fighting against flesh and blood, but against the evil spirit which is intending to damage the image of God, for example, initiation school kills children. Kidnaping destroys the image of God because boys are forced to go to the initiation school and they don’t go willingly.

I know of the fact that Christians has got the devine power to eradicate all the evil spirits that comes to their ways.

“The Holy Spirit is the spiritual power that can be used by Christians when dealing with challenges and difficulties” (Meade 1999:60). Christians has got power to meet every challenge that come to their way.

What is happening at the initiation schools, according to my knowledge and experiences, comprises of primitive conduct which is against the Word of God, for an example, “muti” that is given to the initiates so that they should not reveal the processes at the initiation school.

I believe that a person who lives in constant touch with the Holy Spirit is always in a good temperament, and very understanding of people and situations. He does not fall prey to retaliatory invitations.

I personally feels that this kind of balance in a person makes people to recognize that the presence of God is within a person. This hiddenness of power in a person is valued in many villages, because it speaks to life through its invisibility, for an example, by means of teaching, counseling and praying.
This presence of power is not presence to the physical eyes, but presence to the psyche.

It is obvious that our people are hooked by means of primitive matters, and therefore they need churches to intervene. Whatever bad treatment happens against our children needs people who knows their destiny to face the reality and challenge the doers. Some of our people are caught up in the initiation rites which they believe it must be practiced against their children, which is not. I do have an understanding that if the main purpose is to circumcise, therefore, the exercise can be executed at the hospitals and other institutions where any possible harm can be avoided.

I observed and discovered that the most primitive community used to regard initiation rites as a legal right which must be forced to each and every boy as a passage of making them men..

Therefore, the church should wrestle against this unwarranted spirit because she is the servanthood for the flock of God.

The Bible also teach us that the Creator set a crown upon His work by making man in His own image and likeness. No science is true science that deals with God's work while ignoring God, and no philosophy is sound philosophy that fails to take into account man's spiritual origin. For this reason, all man's problems and sufferings are at bottom theological and all their solutions spiritual.

The society must bear in mind the man's moral and social responsibilities. Although the world might not consider this, nor know it, but I am afraid that the church herself does not always remember it, but the most important thing is that the nation should sets forth most clearly the truths of ethical life full of joy.

The failure of the Christians to understand the vital importance of life has greatly weakened and demoralised the life of individuals in general.
The church must also challenge the police to actively participate in addressing the difficulties experienced by the abused children. There is a need to restore the dignity of a human being.

We must remember that the church mean the assembly or gathering of those whom God has called out of the world to belong to Him. The church is not the building but the people who gather together with the purpose to bring the message of life and healing to the nations. It is indeed God’s purpose for the church in the world’s today.

We know that people’s needs do not change, thus the ministry of the church is much the same today as it was at the beginning. There is a need for encouragement and comfort, so the church offers times for sharing and fellowship. Many people need healing, guidance or advice. The Christians are there, appointed by God, to be of help in all these ways. It seems life to other communities is that man is a victim of anxiety, frustration and despair. Life seems ultimately meaningless, absurd, just a rat race, there is no exit from its fixed maze.

I observed the deeds done at the villages of Ha-Tshivhasa, and saw our young boys treated like abandoned children. To us as Christians, signs of man’s desperateness continually scream at us from the press, radio and television.

If we are to meet today’s challenges, we must study the forms in which man expresses his interpretation of existence. These forms would includes torture, limitation of movement and practices of primitive unethical believes.

5.3 How the community may help the police in fighting child abuse.

I have already pointed out that the media plays an important role in revealing these incidents of initiation. The majority of the inhabitants of
Ha-Tshivhasa had noticed this kind of abuse through what they have witnessed and what they had read in the newspapers (SAPS Servamus October 2003:45).

In a media release by the Human Science Research Council Me Schurink said “Because of its major influence on public perception, the media plays a vital role in informing and educating the public. This implies that the media has a clear responsibility to portray child abuse as accurately and honestly as possible and according to the principle of the best interests of the children concerned.

The question that I’m asking as a Christian and preacher of the Word of God is that “what are we doing after we have discovered this information over the media? Are we prepared to take our stand against this treatment?


The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) is considered to be the most powerful legal instrument for the recognition and protection of children’s rights. It is the basis on which countries plan their programmes regarding children’s rights.

“The best interests of the child will be a primary consideration in all actions concerning child” is the fundamental guiding principle that need to be considered by the government and its community.

The CRC guarantees the rights of children in terms of exploitation, healthcare, social security and freedom of participation in all matters concerning children.

The four principles of the CRC are non-discrimination, the best interest of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child .
The South African Children’s Rights outlined in the CRC are enshrined in Section 28 of the Bill of Rights of the Constitution 1996. The Bill is premised on the understanding that a child’s best interests are paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. The community must take into consideration that children have the right to protection fro being maltreated, neglected, abused or degraded.

For an example, nowadays, to force a child to go to initiation school is against our Constitution, which is the Supreme Law of our country. Therefore, it must be borne in our minds that, children are the most assets that the Creator gave to mankind. Parents as members of the community must ascertain themselves with the fact that when a child is born, they have got biggest responsibility to take care of them and to love them unconditionally. Children must see their parents and their care givers as people with whom they belong and home must be a place where a family shares in harmony, the most precious moments. To take children to initiation schools, knowing that most of the boys died at the same place, do not show love to the child. The most critical point is that, without reservation, keeping Children safe is a parent’s most important job and a sign of love. Instead of allowing their children to suffer in cold winter, they must teach them some ways to keep them safe. Children will have more power on their side to escape these bad treatment and dangerous situations if they know how to react. It is a fact that our children will not easily influenced to go to the initiation schools.

Because of lack of knowledge regarding the legal aspects which protects our children, child abuse at the initiation schools have reached pandemic proportions. There is a lack of compassion, understanding the needs of children and safe childhood.

Both the community and the police must know that crime against children are unacceptable, inhuman, cruel, inexcusable and destroy the future of any country because our Children are the future.
Crimes against children are not something that only happens to other people, it is everybody’s business and this includes parents, grandparents, teachers, friends, neighbours and the entire community.

I substantiate the fact that persons who abuse children by taking them to the initiation schools, are not necessarily strangers, they could be a trusted parent, relative or trusted figure at that specific village. We know that child abuse affects the whole community in general, not just the child and family involved.

Therefore everyone must be part of the solution in child abuse.

Child abuse that took place at the initiation school is a complex problem which no single organisation (SAPS) or profession (social worker) can prevent on its own.

The community must accept joint responsibility for the protection of our children in the society.

Children are vulnerable to bitter situation in winter where they are forced, beaten, tortured, terrorised and dehumanised so that they should be taken to initiation school.

Culture plays an important role with regard to which actions are seen as typical crimes against children, within a specific culture. A crime will never be justified because of traditional believes and systems. Child abuse at the initiation schools is not new because it has been prevalent throughout society as people are satisfying their cultural needs.

Human rights affect us in our daily lives, and we must provide a better understanding of which human rights issues concern all of us, and what government and people can do to prevent abuses from taking place.

One must remember that in spite of the cultural differences that exist, there seems to be general agreement about certain basic values. These values include respect for human life and human dignity because the right to life is the most basic human right of all, and without it, all other rights are meaningless.
Baier stated that “our prevailing treatment of nature and life is wrong, and that we need important changes in actions, laws, practices, and yet argue that, what is wrong is not due to our ethics but to our failure to live by it” (Baier 1979:3).

I also noticed that some of our people acts out of thoughtlessness, mutual interest, disregard the requirements or ideas of morality, and the current status of life.

I have got a concern that the moral of a good society must cover everyone regardless of age or status. The fact of the matter is that, it is not a new morality, but only a new devotion to the One already have, Jesus Christ, who can unite people and freed the one on captivity. Our people will never change the wrong mentality and believes, except through Jesus Christ.

“The point is that, in every ethics whatsoever, there are certain sorts of facts about certain sorts of things that are the ultimate considerations in determining what is morally good or bad, right or wrong” (Baier 1979:5). I personally think that, in the case of a community of interrelated minds, it is our responsibility to create a better environment for all, and distinguish between total goodness in the community and the total negativity in the community. It rings a bell in me as I do believe that we shape our values in great measure by our conception of the Word of God.

The community must know that the community is where we draw the strength needed to effect changes inside us. The community is formed each time more than one person meets for a purpose. The development of community depends on what the people involved consent to.

What one acknowledges is the formation of the community, the possibility of doing together what is impossible to do alone. This
acknowledgment is also an objection against the isolation of individuals and individualism by the society. Therefore, what the community must do, however, is to create community that meets the intrinsic need of every individual. This will force other people not to treat others as if they are not part of that specific community.

I understand that the true community does not need the police to protect them from any harm that may be incurred by fellow resident, because the very presence of the law enforcement system in a community is an indication that something is not working in a right way. I am emphasizing the fact that the community must be a place where there is consensus, not where there are violent activities.

A functioning community does not need to peer at its members to make sure that they comply with the law. A functioning community is one that is own protection. It is real that one cannot form a community whose goal is to tear the rest of the society apart.

I learnt that a true community begins in the heart of the people involved and it is not a place of distraction, but a place of being. It is possible for the community to restore a supportive presence for one another, rather than distrust of one another. Our children should feel very protected even during the initiation period. A boy who has not graduated at the initiation school must enjoy life as other persons and enjoy the rights outlined in the Constitution. A young boy will never feel secured if there is no elder whose presence gives hope in life. In most instances, this interdependence is what I call supportive idea.

What is so good about being together with each other is that we can be the starting point for the possibility of building a larger community which is free from unfair treatment.
The community should practice the following in order to build the responsible community:

- trust
- openness
- love and caring
- respect

Through this research, yet I am drawing a conclusion that I ought to help avoid the recurrence of these unwarranted behaviour against children, and comfort those who are troubled. I have to maintain a better standard of living, promote stability and integrity of the Word of God. Every member of Ha-Tshivhasa should be creative and innovative about life.

According to Baier moral reasons are not reasons for self-interest. They derive from an intrinsic concern or respect for others as well as yourself. Self-love is its guiding tool, therefore value is tied to the interests of the persons and moralized by being tied to the interests of all or most persons (Baier 1997:25).

I agree with Baier because our goal should be to create a South Africa in which all can experience an improving quality of life, enjoying equal human rights, with access to opportunities that freedom has brought us, and bound together as a nation by our humanity.

The community must join hands with the police and social workers in improving lives of the citizens and alleviation of child abuse in order to build a better South Africa. There is a need for all the South Africans to be able to exercise their constitutional rights and enjoy lives of dignity and freedom. Every child who comes into this world should feel special. Securing this vision depends on a community that doesn’t just talk about family
values, but acts in ways that value families. When talking of communities, we think of families, teachers, business people, community leaders, social workers, police, doctors, nurses and etc. All of us can play an important role in the life of a child. It takes a village to protect and raise a child.

“A National framework of guidelines and regulations on circumcision will be initiated in the next year, the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) Said. The National framework document will be forwarded to Parliament. NHTL chairperson Mzimela said discussion documents will look into ways of preventing deaths among the initiates, as well as the licensing of initiation schools and surgeons. Many initiates, especially in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, die during June season. He said delegates had agreed that, the death of initiates is unacceptable and need to be addressed” (Sowetan, 2004-06-21:3). I think this will be one of the practical ways to stop this scourge. Even those operate illegal schools will be dealt with. The Health Department should be consulted with regard to improving health standards of the initiation schools. It is a fact that, some initiates dies because no pre-circumcision health tests were conducted on them.

It is our responsibility to turn the tides against child abuse of this nature. It is cardinal importance for us to be united and create a peaceful country, free from fear, cruelty and ignorance.
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