Corporeal punishment and child abuse: 
A pastoral perspective 
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DECLARATION
I hereby do declare that this is both my original and unaided work which has not been submitted to any other university for any degree

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DEDICATION

I will like to dedicate this research study in memory of my late mother, Mrs. Ime Brown Udobang, whom God called to glory in my childhood. It is painful, though, that she did not live long enough to see her children in their adulthood, nor did she really enjoy the fruit of her labor in our lives. But my comfort and joy has been in the assurance that we have in God’s Word, that: “God works in all things together for good to them that love Him and are called according to His purposes” (Romans 8:28). In that, I do rejoice although, still missing her. Memories of how much she loved and cared for us as her children and for her husband (my father); and many others that had a close loving relationship with her, still linger in my heart. Mum, we do still miss you, and believe that we will meet again on the Lord’s Return, and will part no more. I love you mum.
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Clarification of key words or terms as they are used in the dissertation.

**Aggressive (also excessive or abusive) spanking:** This refers to the beating that is experienced by children at the hands of their parents or guardians; which is harsh enough to cause physical injury or bruises, or harm the child’s psychological well-being.

**Child abuse:** This can be considered as an unfair, cruel or violent treatment of a child by parents or guardians; which may be physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritually.

**Corporal punishment (CP):** the use of physical medium (e.g., bare hand, stick, belt) to punish or discipline a child for misbehavior, etc. In other words, the physical punishment or discipline that is administered to a child with the use of a bare hand, belt or stick.

**Co-researcher:** an individual who has been consulted by the researcher to work, voluntarily, with him during the qualitative survey of this research study. For instance, the parents and pastoral caregivers from in the researcher’s church, whom he interviewed during this research study.

**Psychological trauma:** This concept, in the context of this research study, focuses on mental (psychological) distress or disturbance (trauma) that a child experiences as a result of repeated or frequent aggressive spanking.

**Researcher:** The investigator and writer of this research work.

**Pastoral caregivers:** Ministers of the local church; who are not specially trained in pastoral care, and yet offer care within the worshiping community

**Phenomenon:** This term refers to the incident under study- aggressive spanking or any other related aggressive method of corporal punishment.
**Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** The term post traumatic stress refers to certain enduring or continuing psychological symptoms that reliably occur in reaction to a highly distressing, and psychically disruptive event (e.g., low self-esteem, depression, etc).

**Spanking:** A slap or smack on the bottom. It can be a series of slaps on the bottom with the open hand that is administered to punish a child. In this study, spanking may include any aggressive beating of children on any other part of the body, beside the bottom (e.g., on the back, body, head, etc).

**Survivor:** An individual (a parent or guardian) who was formerly in an abusive relationship (or home); where he or she was harshly punished, repeatedly, by a way of aggressive spanking or beating, but who is no longer in such an abusive relationship.

**Theodicy:** The accepted term used for the whole subject comprising the problem of evil and its attempted resolution. For instance, the question such as: how an All-Good, All-Powerful, All-Present God would allow so much evil in the world? etc. This is, particularly so, where, for an example, the righteous suffer unduly by the hands of the wicked or for our purposes, when innocent children struggle for the rest of their life as a result of the harm that was caused to them by their parents or well meaning adults; while the parents and adults, themselves, seem to have moved on in life unaffected, etc.

**Victim:** A child who is still experiencing aggressive spanking (corporal punishment) by the hands of his or her parents, guardians or anyone else.
SUMMARY

For many decades, violence that is perpetuated by parents and loved ones against children in the name of physical child discipline or corporal punishment, has been a major concern for various governments and church leaders among most nations of the world. This does not only take into account hitting or beating a child with a stick, belt, slapping, or choking, but also spanking; especially when it is aggressive or excessive (Bradshaw 2009; Straus 1994; Kanyandago in Waruta & Kinoti 2005, Wolfe 1991; Carl 1985). A very prominent and highly respected religious figure, here in South Africa, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, made the following notable assertion to show his support towards the elimination of the practice of corporal punishment in the home:

I support the Global Initiative to eliminate all corporal punishment at home, at school, in institutions and community. … Progress towards abolishing corporal punishment is being made, but millions of the world’s children still suffer from humiliating acts of violence and these violations …can have serious lifelong effects. Violence begets violence and we shall reap whirlwind. Children can be disciplined without violence that instills fear and misery, and I look forward to church communities working with other organizations to… make progress towards ending all forms of violence against children. If we really want a peaceful and compassionate world, we need to build communities of trust where all children are respected, where home and school are safe places to be and where discipline is taught by example” (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2013).

However, in spite of the various voices and movements against corporal punishment of children; especially the aggressive form of this practice (as will be analyzed later on in this study), the practice is still a common phenomenon in many African countries, including South Africa. Furthermore, as some research studies have shown, a literalistic view of certain texts of Scriptures in the OT (which are mostly from the Book of Proverbs) do not only seem to influence the widespread of corporal punishment of children, but also the abuse of this form of physical discipline (e.g., Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14, 22:15) (Bradshaw 2009; Capps 1995; Straus 1994; Greven 1991). This assumption seems plausible, seeing that as Tripp T & Tripp M (2008:138) rightly allude to, as Christians, “God’s Word is our rule for faith and practice.” The authors, also expressed that, “the Biblical laws and standards sound oppressive and strict in our
lawless, arrogant, twenty-first century culture.” However, it is important to also acknowledge that we, as Christians, can be wrong in our interpretation and application of certain Scriptures; thereby, leading to flawed practices (Pohlmann 2007; Pollard 1997).

As Pollard (1997:91) has rightly observed, “Clearly, both personal experience and church history teach us that we can be wrong. It is vital, then, that we have a genuine humility as Christians. We must recognize our fallibility, and constantly reassess what we believe.” In other words, there are many well-meaning Christian parents who have put their children in harm’s way by frequently administering spanking to them in ways that are, evidently, excessive or aggressive: while claiming that they are obeying scriptural injunction on child discipline, and are also doing it for the moral and ethical good of their children (Bradshaw 2009; Greven 1991).

The researcher, himself, was brought up in a Christian home; where the use and abuse of both high violence (e.g., beating a child with belt, stick, etc) and low violence (e.g., forcefully beating a child with bear hand) methods of physical child discipline were the order of the day (or a frequent occurrence). Furthermore, his well-meaning father often seemed to find justification for his actions based on scriptural grounds. Incidentally, the researcher noticed that this form of child discipline also seems to be widely used by many parents in his local church and many other Christian parents, whom he has come in contact with. And many of these parents seem not to be aware of the immediate and long term negative effects that aggressive corporeal punishment has on their children.

The widespread of this phenomenon (corporeal punishment of children) and the traumatic impact it has on children, has led the researcher to do this research study in his local church context (a Pentecostal church), and to develop/propose a biblically sound or balanced model of pastoral care that can help pastors in rendering effective care, to those faced with this problem situation within the church.
The theoretical framework of this research study is based on Pollard’s model of positive deconstruction, as well as some contributions from Straus’ book *Beating the Devil out of Them; Corporal Punishment in American Families*. The purpose for choosing Pollard’s model of positive deconstruction was to help the researcher in: 1) Identifying the underlying worldview. 2) Analyzing the worldview. 3) Affirming the elements of truth in it (as every world view has some truth in it that needs to be recognizes and affirmed, which makes the process positive and 4) discovering the error in the worldview. These are the four elements in the process of positive deconstruction, as proposed by Pollard. Straus explores the phenomenon of corporal punishment and the traumatic effects of this method of child discipline both in term of its immediate and long term harm (later in life or in adulthood) psychological harm to children.

The research methodology that was employed by the researcher in carrying out this research study is qualitative. Consequently, questionnaires were given out to 50 parents in the researcher’s church to fill. Also, one-on-one interviews were arranged with four parents, two children, and also with two pastoral caregivers in the church, on the issues of corporal punishment and child abuse within the Christian home.
Research design/ Chapters Outline

This research study is designed in the form of chapters. The following is the proposed chapter design/outline:

Chapter one: in this chapter, the researcher delineates the following: introduction and the background to the study, the research problem statement, the research aims and objectives, the significance of the research, the research hypothesis, the research scope (or limit), the research gap and, ethical consideration.

Chapter two: This chapter is concerned with the methodology of this research study. Qualitative research design was used in this study, which involved the use of questionnaires and setting up of interviews with co-researcher. Concepts and theories that guided theoretical frame work of this research are based on Nick Pollard’s model of positive deconstruction, as lineated in his book Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult (1997), and from a book by Murray Straus, Beating the Devil Out of Them: Corporal Punishment in American Families.

The aim of using Pollards’ model was to use the four elements that are involved in the process of deconstruction, in an effort to help the researcher to deconstruct the elements of error contained in the underlying worldview that motivates the use of aggressive spanking of children by Pentecostal, fundamentalist Christians, while they claim to obey God’s command, as contained in Scriptures. In other words, it is to help parents see the inadequacies of the worldview that they have absorbed, and to want to replace it with something better- with an approach to child discipline that is biblically sound or balanced (Pollard 2007).

Although Pollard constructed the model, mainly, to help make evangelism or reaching non Christians for Christ, slightly less difficult, the author points out, rightly, that, Christians also have worldviews that contains errors and need positive deconstruction (1997:89-93). Therefore, the researcher is particularly concerned with concepts and
theories in the model as they apply to Christian or theological views that may contain elements error, and need to be deconstructed or challenged. The four elements in the process are: 1) Identifying the underlying worldview. 2) Analyzing the worldview. 3) Affirming the elements of truth in it (as every world view has some truth in it that needs to be recognizes and affirmed, which makes the process positive. 4) The fourth element in the process, is discovering the error in the worldview, which is the aim of the process. This model also helped the researcher in constructing a model of pastoral care for caring for parents that are struggling with the issue of abusive (or aggressive) spanking.

*Beating the Devil Out of Them* by Murray Straus, was also very helpful, as it gives a detailed exploration on the issue of corporal punishment and its negative effects on children. The author is one of America's foremost researchers on corporal punishment. Also useful in terms of helping the researcher to gather (or accumulate) the necessary information on the harmful effects of the practice of corporal punishment, were contributions from Capps' book *The Child's Song: The Religious Abuse of Children*, and an article by John Bradshaw titled *Where You There When Jesus Spanked The Children? Family, Fatherhood, and Corporal Punishment*. Both authors wrote, effectively, on the rampant use and abuse of corporal punishment of children amongst Christian parents, and the traumatic impact on children and in their adulthood. They also argue that religion, especially biblical literalism on the issue or practice of corporal punishment, serves as one major strong motivation for the widespread of the practice and its abuse by many Christians; particularly, the fundamentalist Christians. In addition to above mentioned literature sources, other literatures that that were helpful in this study include the following:

*Instructing a Child’s Heart* by Tedd and Margy Tripp was also very useful to the researcher. It helps in bring a balance between corrective discipline (the use of physical punishment and formative instruction in child discipline. According Tripp, we need solid biblical truth as solid parenting skills are built on solid biblical truth. Focusing only on methods that promise to change the child’s behavior (e.g., through behaviorist
modifications) may only lead to more frustration. Genuine behavioral is inside-out and not out-side. In other words, it begins from the heart.

Also, a book, which was edited by Waruta and Kinoti, called ‘Pastoral Care in African Christian’ (with several articles from other African authors) was also used. The book was helpful by providing the African perspective to pastoral care that may be lacking in the other books. However, it suffices to mention that although most of the literature that is used in this research study, were written from a Western context, the principles in the books are universal and adaptable, accordingly, in our context in South Africa. For instance, many children in African context react negatively to childhood traumatic experiences; including aggressive spanking just as children in American context (Straus 1994; Wasike in Waruta & Kinoti: 2005:131; (http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/research/children/south-africa.htm: Clacherty et al 2005. Retrieved 4th February 2011).

In other words, just as there is the likelihood of an American child who grew up in home, where he or she experienced abusive spanking while growing up, there is a tendency for that child to adopt the same style of disciple (Straus 1994). That, also, is likely to be the case of a child in an African or South African context who had a similar childhood traumatic experience (http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/research/children/south-africa.htm: Clacherty et al 2005. Retrieved 4th February 2011).

The qualitative research design of this research study was based, on the use of questionnaires and one-on-one interviews with co-researchers in order for the researcher to accumulate the necessary data for this research. Qualitative research study is non-numerical and is concerned with quality rather than quantity. It is a non-mathematical process of interpretation, and is carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data (Merriam: 1998: 5-6; Saunders et al 2007:472, 606). Therefore, the methodology of this research involved the use of questionnaires, which were designed by the researcher, for the respective respondents or co-
researchers, and the setting up of interviews with them, in order to hear their feelings and experiences on the subject matter. Co-researchers were parents, children, and pastors in the researcher’s church; (see Appendixes A, B & C for samples of the consent letter and for questionnaires).

**Chapter Three:** This chapter explores and analyzes the subject of violence and childhood trauma as it relates to corporeal punishment and child abuse, by consulting various relevant literature sources. Some reactions and responses on the phenomenon are discussed, as well as, different theological positions on the subject. Alternative approaches to spanking, that are effective and yet non-violent, are also discussed. The current South African Law or constitution on the issue of corporal punishment of children is also examined.

**Chapter Four:** In this chapter, stories of co-researchers are related and the researcher’s analysis on each story is presented. The researcher selected one case study from the data, which he gathered from the interviews with parents on the issue of corporal punishment. One case study was also selected from the data that the researcher gathered from the interviews with children. In order to ensure the safety of the child’s identity, the name used in this research study is pseudonymous. The last case study emerged from the interviews the researcher had with pastoral caregivers in the church. The last case study emerged from one of the interviews with two pastoral caregivers in the church. It should be noted that every co-researcher’s name as used in this study is pseudonymous, for confidentially and safety purpose.

**Chapter five:** This chapter explores a pastoral care perspective to the challenge of corporeal punishment and child abuse. A pastoral care model for caring, effectively, for parents and guardians that are faced with this problem situation, within the church, is proposed. The model delineates the role of the pastoral caregivers in this therapeutic process; the role of the survivor parents in the therapeutic process; the role of the community of faith (church) in their struggle with the phenomenon, the need to re-examine or deconstruct certain paradigms, which may be a worldview or a flawed
theological assumption, and to construct or build new ones that are positive. The significance of using an integrated approach to pastoral care (theology and psychology), within the researcher’s church, is briefly discussed, as this approach to pastoral care is still foreign in the researcher’s church.

Chapter six: In this chapter, the researcher concludes with a recap on the findings that were made during the study, he also indicates whether the findings affirm the hypothesis of this research or not. He reflects on the challenges or conflicts that may have been encountered during this research work, and proposes possible related areas that need further research studies. Also presented at the end of this chapter are: the Bibliography of this research study; appendix A (the consent letter for the co-researchers; appendix B (the questionnaire that was given-out to 50 parents within the church); appendix C (the questionnaire that was used in the interviews with pastoral care givers).
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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction/Background

The issue of violence against children by their Christian parents or guardians in the name of child discipline/rearing, whether it be the more obvious violent ones (e.g., aggressively hitting a child with hard object) or the so called low-violent type (e.g., using bare hand to aggressively spank a child), is a major concern for many countries and churches around the world (Kanyandago in Waruta & Kinoti 2005:41; Straus 1994:7-10; Carl 1991:8-9). Sadly, many Christian parents do not seem to see anything wrong with aggressive, unreasonable or excessive spanking of children, but consider it as method of child discipline that is, sometimes, necessary and effective for correcting the child’s misbehavior, and for developing morality (Bradshaw 2009:405-497; Tripp 2008:20-21; Carl 1985:19). In fact, Longman 111 (2006:426), in his commentary on Proverbs 23:13-14 points out that, “To withhold discipline, even physical discipline, is a matter of neglect. Coercing them to instruction is a lifesaving act.”

Some research studies also submit that the widespread of this phenomenon (or style of child discipline) seems to be higher amongst fundamentalist Christians (Bradshaw 2009; Capps 1995; Straus 1994). Furthermore, it is suggested that this high rate seems to owe to a literalistic view of Scriptures on child physical discipline that is held by these parents. In other words, fundamentalist Christians believe that it is clearly instructed or commanded in Scriptures, that parents should use the rod as a means of correcting children for behavioral change (e.g. see Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 23:13-14) (Bradshaw 2009:405-406; Greven in Straus 1994; Rodriguez et al 2010, Pais 1991).

The researcher’s motivation for choosing to carry out a research study in this area of pastoral care challenge, is, precisely, twofold. Firstly, it is as a result of his personal experience and struggle with the issue of the aggressive spanking of children (or abuse
of corporal punishment) by many well meaning parents and guardians; and the traumatic impact this form of child discipline has on many children. Secondly, the researcher is also faced with a situation in his local church context, where there seems to be a growing number of parents, within the church, who frequently apply this form of physical discipline on their children. Sometimes, out of anger or frustration, objects like stick or belt have been used by some parents in perpetuating this form of discipline on their children. Ironically, many parents did this while claiming it is for their children’s moral and spiritual benefits, and they often made reference to the popular adage: “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” Some parents even assume that this popular expression is taken from the Bible. Moreover, parents often claimed that they spanked as a result of love for their children and not for their damage. But sadly, even with such claims, injuries (e.g. bruises or wounds) are sometimes inflicted on children in the process of spanking a child aggressively; either consciously or unconsciously.

The spanking of children is no doubt, one of the controversial issues that the Christian church has been faced with for many centuries, and even, in our present time. Parents have employed spanking as a disciplinary method for quite some time - for several thousands of years. Corporal punishment was recorded as early as c. 10th century BC in the Book of Proverbs, which is attributed to Solomon (e.g. Prov. 13; 24, 23:13-14) (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 209). While there are those who maintain that this form of child discipline is biblically instructed or commanded, there are also those Christians who oppose this position; arguing that these instructions, in Proverbs, are not to be read, literally, as the fundamentalist Christians do (Rodriguez, Christina & Henderson, Ryan 2010: 84-94; ElLison, Christopher & Bradshaw, Matt 2009:320-340; Wiersbe 1984:409-411; MacDonald 1984:411-414; Capps 1995; Straus 1994).

Scriptural texts that are used in support of the practice of physical child discipline (which are mostly in the Book of Proverbs) include the following: “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.” (Prov. 13:24) “Folly (foolishnesses) is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline (correction) will drive it from him (Prov. 22:15).” “Do not withhold discipline from the child; if you
punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death (23:13, 14 NIV) (also see Heb. 12:9-11).

While there are some elements of truth in the theological view that seem to legitimate corporal punishment, as every worldview contains an element of truth, according to Pollard (2007:44, 55), what is, particularly, disturbing to the researcher is the situation where many Christian parents and guardians seem to hide under the cloak of scriptural validation or grounds to unreasonably administer physical punishment on their children.

And, as it will be explored in this research study, it is seems that often, the impact may not only be physically harmful or traumatic for the child victim (e.g., causing bruises or wounds) but harmful psychologically. Moreover, it may also affect some children spiritually, as it can cause them to have a distorted view of God; either during their childhood or in the long run during their adulthood. For instance, frequent aggressive child discipline can lead to the child perceiving God as a harsh, unloving, and unforgiving Father; especially, if such an abuse is perpetuated by the father (Pais 1991; Bradshaw 2009; Capps 2005; Larzerele 1986). More is discussed on this in chapter three.

Heitritter and Vought (1989:7), in their observations on the traumatic impact of childhood abuse on the survivor’s adult life, note that, “Many people in our churches secretly bear the scar of childhood abuse and desperately struggle with hidden trauma that interferes with spiritual growth and relationships with others.” This, also, seems to be typical of the impact that child abuse has within the researcher’s church context. Donald Capps in his book, The Child’s Song: The Religious Abuse of Children also argues that theological concepts and biblical injunctions have often been used to legitimate or justify the psychological abuse of children (Capps 1995: 37, 38, & back page). Capps (1995: 37, 38, & back page) also points out that there are hidden abuses of children by well-intended adults, and adds that religion plays a fundamental role in the legitimation or substantiation of these abuses. The author also observes, that there is a vast number parents and other adults who abuse children under the guise of

However, it seems to the researcher that the problem, here, seems to be that of poor theological assumptions or Scriptural interpretation of the verses that seem to support this abuse; rather than the Bible, itself. For instance, the research work that was carried out by Rodriguez and Henderson (2010: 84-94), as observed in their article, indicate that physical child abuse is associated, a lot, with people that are extrinsically religious than those who are intrinsically religious; and also that those who hold a literal interpretation of the Bible and attend church more habitually, seem to evidence increased abuse risk. More is discussed on this aspect in chapter three.

Furthermore, it seems that while it is easier to identify when there is physical harm that is inflicted to on the child as noted above, it is not so easy to define the psychological harm that is inflicted on the child in the process of abusive physical punishment imposed on the child; especially where this abuse is inflicted, frequently, on the child. Briere (1992: 9, 10) observes that, “one of the most common forms of child maltreatment, and yet often difficult to define is psychological abuse…” The author (1992: 10) also points out that psychological abuse seems to be an inherent core part of all forms of child maltreatment, giving that, most of the enduring effects of such behavior are on the child’s psyche, and arise from one or more of the above behaviors. Straus (1994:151) states, notably, that because the negative effects of spanking (on the child psychology) usually emerges later in life, many parents are oblivion to its harm.

The researcher assumes that an awareness of this complexity surrounding what may lead to psychological trauma among children, should encourage parents to refrain from the habit of spanking their children in a violent manner, be it with bear hands or with an object. There are some who seem to be having similar traumatic experiences in the researcher’s church but are ashamed or afraid of opening up to their pastor; as that may be perceived as a sign of spiritual immaturity or lethargy on the part of the individual member.
Apostle Paul’s warning to parents in his letter to the Ephesians church, and similarly, in his letter to the Colossians, seems to indicate that it is not only right for parents to expect respect and total obedience from their children, but that it is also expected of them to be cautious on how they treat their children: “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph 6:4 NKJV). “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged (Col. 3:21 NKJV). It therefore seems that Apostle Paul saw that it was not enough to exhort children to obey their parents (see Eph 6:2-3), but that, parents also needed to be warned regarding how they relate to their children.

The researcher thinks that also involves how parents discipline their children, especially the fathers, as they are more prone to aggressive and uncontrolled application of physical child discipline (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009). It would be agreed that many Christian parents provoke their children to anger or wrath through the use of violent disciplinary measures; especially through the use of corporal punishment. And some children live day-in, day-out, in such homes with the traumatic impact that such provocation has on them. This ought not to be, especially among Christian parents, who know that children are made in the image of God; as they are also made in God’s image. Moreover, children have rights as human beings, and those rights should be respected or upheld by their parents; as good and caring parents (Capps 1995:63,86; Pais 1992:71,72).

The question we should, therefore, ask ourselves as parents is: whether aggressive spanking of our children, for whatever reason, is truly a good example of bringing them up in the training (nurture) and admonition of the Lord? Do we truly discipline, which can result in their maturity, or do we punish, which can do more harm than good to their self development?’ according to Bradshaw (2009:410), “Punishment is destructive. True discipline is not.” Therefore, we must acknowledge that children need a large measure of emotional and physical support from their parents; support that includes: respect for
the child’s right, tolerance for the child’s feelings, and willingness to learn from the children’s behavior (see Capps 1995:3; Pais 1992; Bradshaw 2009).

1.3 The Problem Statement

The problem faced with in this research study, as alluded to in the Introduction/background to the study, is with regard to the abuse of corporal punishment of children (aggressive spanking and its negative effects on a children) by parents within the researcher’s church context, in Johannesburg, as well as other Pentecostal churches with similar problem situations (or where this is also the case). There are research findings (or studies) in some other Christian circles (or churches) that suggest that biblical literalism, or to be more specific, a literalistic view of Scriptural texts on corporal punishment (mostly from the Book of Proverbs), seem to be the major motivating factor for this practice by many Christian parents (Straus 1994: Bradshaw 2009; Rodriguez et al 2010). In view of this, the researcher is faced with the following problem questions in this research study:

What is it that makes many Pentecostal Christian parents and guardians (especially those in the researcher’s church) perpetuate the practice of aggressively spanking children? Is it, actually, as a result of religious influence as some scholars have argued? And if it is religious, could it be justifiably said that the Bible is to blame for the widespread of the practice and its abuse; as some research studies have suggested, or could it be as a result of poor interpretation of Scriptures on corporal punishment of children? How can pastoral caregivers and Christian parents, who hold to this theological view, be helped to correct this theological assumption that seems to encourage this abuse of children? How can pastoral caregivers, within the researcher’s church and other Pentecostal churches with similar problem situation, be equipped to render the necessary help to parents who are struggling in this area? How many of these parents can be made to see the traumatic impact associated with this form of punishment or so called discipline on children? How many parents can be helped to
bring to an end this cycle of violence so that their children may not grow up to continue in the same cycle of physical child abuse-violent spanking? These and a few other problem questions will be explored in this research study.

1.4 Research Scope

The scope of this research study is limited to the subject of violence and trauma that is associated with the excessive or aggressive spanking of children (corporal punishment). It is also focused on creating awareness among parents, especially those within the researcher’s church, on the negative effects or traumatic impact of the abuse of spanking on children.

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Research Study

The aims and objectives of this research study, as already mentioned in various ways, are outlined below as follows:

* To explore the issue of corporeal punishment, and its traumatic impact on children, especially, in the researcher’s local church context (a Pentecostal church).

* To create the necessary awareness, within the church and other Pentecostal churches, on the influence of the prevailing theological views on corporal punishment of children, which seems to motivate the wide spread of aggressive forms of corporal punishment, amongst members. This is with the hope that such awareness will motivate parents towards adopting a biblically sound approach to physical child discipline.

* To propose a model of pastoral care that can be used by pastors in the church to care for parents who are struggling with the issue of corporal punishment of children.

1.6 The significance of the Research
This research study is significant because it will help equip pastoral caregivers, within the researcher’s church and other interested readers, for a more effective ministry to parents and guardians who are faced with the issues of abusing corporal punishment (excessive spanking of children), and thereby, possibly bring to an end the cycle of this form of abuse in respective Christian homes. It will also create awareness among parents and other respective adults, within and outside the church, on the negative impact of the abuse of this form of child discipline; acquaint parents with non-violent methods of child discipline that are effective; and help correct the errors in theological views that are held by parents, that serve as religious justification for the abusive form of the practice.

1.7 Research Hypothesis

It is the assumption of this research study that repeated, aggressive spanking of children or any aggressive forms of corporal punishment of children, do not only cause physical harm to a child, but, even worse than physical harm, it can have negative psychological effects on a child. It is also the assumption of this research study that there are many parents, within in the researcher’s church and other Pentecostal churches, that are prone to spanking their children, aggressively and habitually. Most parents seem not to be aware of the possible traumatic impact that the practice has on children. Furthermore, the literalistic view of scriptures on child discipline (based on certain texts in the Book of Proverbs), which is the theological position that is held by most parents in the church and many other Pentecostal churches that maintain the same theological views on the use of child discipline, seem to have strong bearing on the use and abuse of this form of child discipline. The interconnection between theology and practice cannot be underestimated; as one’s theological views or approach to Scriptures, impacts greatly on their faith and practice.

Furthermore, some parents in the church, have rightly expressed that their allegiance is, primarily, based on Scriptural views or instructions regarding child discipline. In other words, while the prevailing cultural views and social norms seem to form the bases of
the wide spread and abuse of corporal punishment among non-Christians, is not necessarily, the same basis for the use and abuse of the practice among devout or fundamentalist Christians. The researcher does acknowledge the possible influence of other factors that may, partly, impact on the use of this form of child discipline by parents in the church. These may be: cultural, social, biological, past history of similar abuse in the family, financial stress, or poor health (see Straus 1994; Bradshaw 209; Briere 1992). However, the researcher is more concerned, in this research study, with the influence of religion or literalistic view of scriptures on the use and abuse of this method of child discipline (corporal punishment), as delving into the possibility of the impact of other factors on the rampant use and abuse of the practice in the church, is beyond the scope of this research study.

1.8 Research Gap

There has not been any major academic research study done in this problem area from the point of view of the researcher’s church denomination (or the Pentecostal wing of the Christian church in Johannesburg), that explores and challenges the use of violence or aggressiveness in physical child discipline as being common among parents within the church, and the literalistic theological view that seems to legitimate this practice among Christian parents and guardians. There is also no study that creates awareness among members, on the traumatic (especially psychological) impact of this form of violence (abuse) on children; and that creates or proposes a model of pastoral care for pastoral care givers and parents in the church to help pastors render care effectively for those faced with this problem situation within the church. However, some scholars have done some work on the issue of corporal punishment and its abusive application by Christian parents. To mention just a few here, Beating The Devil Out of Them: Corporal Punishment in American Families by Murray Straus, The Child’s Song: The Religious Abuse of Children, by Donald Capps. Another good work in this line of study, among others, is an article written by Rodriguez, Christina M and Henderson, Ryan C, in a book called Who Spares the Rod?
1.9 Ethical Consideration

The researcher’s loyalty to academic research ethical requirements is very critical in this research study. For example, it is required that the researcher respect his co-researchers’ privacy or confidentiality, and their protection from harm (Merriam 1998:213). Therefore, the researcher is committed to adhering to the ethical requirements of the college, duly. He pledges to protect the co-researchers’ interest by maintaining a sense of privacy, trust, confidentiality. The researcher believes that his adherence to the ethical rules governing this research study, will determine to a large extent the success of his data collection, which evolves largely around the co-researchers co-operation with him during the interviews, or the information provided by co-researchers on the questionnaires given out to them.
CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology which describes, the qualitative method of the research study that was used by the researcher, when accumulating data which was needed for the research. As mentioned earlier on in the study, this involved the use of questionnaires given out to parents in the church, and interviews with co-researchers. The procedure will be explained further in this chapter. Merriam (1998:45) observed, rightly, that it would be hard to imagine a study without a theoretical or conceptual framework, even in qualitative research work. Hence, there is a need for literature reviews; even in qualitative research study. The theoretical frame work of this research study is based on Pollard’s model of positive deconstruction, as well as contributions from Straus’ book, Beating the Devil out of Them; Corporal Punishment in American Families. An overview of Pollard’s model of positive deconstruction, as it applies to Christians, is presented, briefly, in this chapter. A brief literature review of relevant contributions from Straus’ book, Beating the Devil out of Them, also presented. In addition, contributions from a few other relevant literature sources also informed the development of the methodology of this research study.

2.2 Qualitative Research Design

There are two main types of research design in social sciences, and these are the quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative approaches to literature represent elements or characteristics of literary texts numerically, applying the powerful, accurate, and widely accepted methods of mathematics to measurement, classification, and analysis”
(Schreibman & Siemens 2008). On the other hand, a qualitative research study is non-mathematical process of interpretation which is carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data. It is non-numerical and is concerned with quality rather than quantity. In qualitative research study, reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social world. In other words, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning that people have constructed; and how they make sense of their world and the experience they have in the world.

2.3 Major Types of Qualitative Research

There are various types of qualitative research studies (in the field of education). Furthermore, qualitative research has been classified differently by different authors. For instance, Merriam points out that Patton identifies ten perspectives of this classification, their disciplinary roots, and what the focus of a research study in each perspective would be (Merriam 1998: 11). The ten traditions that Patton lists, are: ethnography, phenomenology, heuristics, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, economical psychology, systems theory, chaos theory, hermeneutic, and orientational inquiry. While examples of qualitative studies in education can be framed from the different perspectives or disciplinary orientations, as suggested by various authors, certain types of qualitative studies are much more prevalent in education than others (Merriam 1998:12). These are: a basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. While these types of studies can be distinguished from each other, they can be interrelated in that, a phenomenology research study can have aspects of other types of qualitative research, evident in it.

In view of the above observation, the qualitative research type that is used in this study may be considered as the Basic or Generic Qualitative study type of method. Here, the researcher will examine what basic or generic qualitative study entails, a bit further.

2.4 Basic or Generic Qualitative Study
Basic or generic qualitative studies are, probably, the most common form of qualitative research in education. Researchers that conduct these studies simply seek to discover and understand a phenomenon; a process or the perceptive; and worldviews or viewpoint of the people involved. This research type usually draws from concepts, models, and theories in educational psychology, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, and sociology. Data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis. Findings are a mixture of descriptions and analysis; an analysis that uses concepts from the theoretical framework of the study. In these studies, the analysis does not extend to building a substantive theory as it does in grounded theory studies. There is no bounded system or functioning unit that circumscribes the investigation. In a nutshell, this type of research study includes description, interpretation, and understanding. It identifies recurrent patterns in the form of themes or categories. It may explain or describe a process (Merriam 1998:11, 12).

2.5 Characteristics of Qualitative Research:

Here, the researcher provides an overview of the characteristics of the qualitative research study (Merriam 1998: 6-8; Saunders et al 2007:117-119, 472).

* The key concern is to understand the phenomenon of interaction from the participants’ perspective, not the researcher’s, which is sometimes referred to as the *emic*, or insider’s perspectives, versus the *etic*, or outsider’s view.

* The researcher is the primary instrument for data collation and analyses.

* It usually involves fieldwork. The researcher must, physically, go to the people, settings, sites, and institutions (the field) in order to observe behavior in its natural setting. Most investigations that describe and interpret a social unit or process necessitate becoming, intimately, familiar with the phenomenon being studied.
The product of qualitative study is richly descriptive since qualitative research focuses on process, meaning, and understanding. Words and pictures rather than numbers (as is the case in quantitative study) are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon. There are likely to be the researcher’s descriptions of the context, the players involved, and the activities of interest. In addition, data in the form of participants’ own words, direct citations from documents, excerpts of videotapes, and so on, are likely to be included to support the findings of the study. Although insisting on a clear cut distinction between the quantitative and qualitative methods of research study, these can be problematic. Nonetheless, there are some reasonable (or significant) lines of differences that can be drawn between the two; when we look at the data:

**Quantitative data:** 1) Based on meanings derived from numbers. 2) Collection results in numerical and standardized data. 3) Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics.

**Quantitative data:** 1) Based on meanings expressed through words. 2) Collection results in non-standardized data requiring classification into categories 3) Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualization (Saunders et al 2007:472).

The following observation by Sarantakos (2013:31) further helps us to understand the difference between quantitative methodology and qualitative methodology:

The theoretical background of quantitative research: The theoretical underpinnings or keystones of quantitative methodology are those of positivism, as guided by realist and objective ontology, and by an empiricist epistemology. On the other hand, the theoretical foundations of qualitative methodology are which people create meanings in interaction with objects. :

**a) Constructionism:** (the firm belief that practically, there is neither objective reality nor objective truth. Rather, reality is constructed. Furthermore, constructivism is about reality and relationships (Sarantakos 2013:37).
b) Individual and collective generation of meanings: The extent to which people create meanings in interacting with objects varies. This position is more apparent in social constructivism, where the contribution of suspects to construction of meaning is highly emphasized (Sarantakos 2013:37). The author goes on to note that: “This is justified by the fact that culture and society are thought to play an important role in constructing meanings, through the process of socialization” (Sarantakos 2013:37).

c) Interpretivism: interpretivism is the “epistemological position that advocates the necessity to understand differences between humans in their role as social actors” (Saunders et al 2007:600). As Sarantako (2013:40) points out: The processes of construction and reconstruction are burdened with personal input. Life in the social world makes it essential for objectivity and rationality to become rather relative concepts.

However, there are some concerns with this constructionist epistemological position. Some critics doubt the credibility of constructionism following “the proposition that subjects construct meanings every time they come across objects, and the failure to acknowledge the contribution of social and cultural mechanism to this process. (Sarantako 2013:40). Besides, it has been pointed out that the accuracy and correctness of people’s constructions and of their representativeness cannot be test (Schutz 1971 in Sarantako 2013:40). Lastly, too much emphasis on the subjective impressions seems to be as dangerous and counterproductive as too much emphasis on objectivism. Hence, interpretivism is not seen as a full proof approach to reality (Blaike 1993 in Sarantako 2013:40). Lastly, it is worth noting the following theoretical foundations of social research, as alluded to by Sarantakos (2013: 29):

Ontology: Ontology deals with the nature of reality. It asks: What is the nature of reality? Is it objective (out there), constructed, subjective? Or better: What does the research focus on?
Epistemology: Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge. It asks: How do we know what we know? What is the way in which reality is known to us? Or better: What kind of knowledge is research looking for?

Methodology: Methodology deals with the nature of research design and methods. It asks: How do we gain knowledge about the world? Or better: How is research constructed and conducted?

Research design: Research is the execution of research designs as constructed and guided by ontological, epistemological and methodological prescriptions. The author goes on to note that, “Ontological, epistemological and methodological prescriptions of social research are ‘packaged’ in paradigms which guide everyday research…” As a result:

...The positivist paradigm, which contains realist/objectivist ontology and an empiricist epistemology, guides the strategy of quantitative methodology, and therefore prescribes fixed designs and quantitative designs. Likewise, the paradigms of symbolic interactionism and phenomenology, which are based on constructionist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, guide the strategies of quantitative methodology and prescribe mostly flexible designs and qualitative methods (Sarantakos 2013:29).

Also worth mentioning is that, methodology occupies a central place in the research process. It can be said to be a research strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that show how research is to be conducted. On the other hand, methods are instruments employed in the collection and analysis of data (Sarantakos 2013:299).

Methods of Construction: There are two types of method of construction or research approach in social science, which are deduction and induction.

Deduction is the process of starting with general principles, then constructing an argument showing that the evidence supports that general principle. The general principles need not be a formal theory from which tests are deduced; they can also be a scheme, model, or an ideological position (Potter 1996:143).
In other words, deductive research approach involves “the testing of a theoretical proposition by the employment of a research strategy specifically designed for the purpose of its testing (Saunders et al 2007:596)

On the other hand, inductive research approach involves “the development of a theory resulting from the observation of empirical data” (Saunders 2007:599).

The research approach of this study is deductive. As a result, Pollards model of positive deconstruction and certain concepts from *Beating the Devil Out of Them* by Straus, formed the theoretical framework of this study. In other words, the method of construction of this study was not towards the development of theory, but testing of the theory or model that formed the basis of this research study

2.6 Research Survey Method

The survey method simply refers to the method of data collection which is used in carrying out the qualitative research study. In this research study, primary data was collected through the use of a self-designed questionnaire survey (paper written), which contained closed-ended questions in combination with open-ended questions. Three sets of questionnaires were used. Firstly, a questionnaire was distributed to fifty (50) parents within the researcher’s church, to fill and return to the researcher within one week, which served as a pre-test method.

With the help of the information that was gathered from the questionnaires that were distributed to about fifty (50) parents in the church, four (4) parents were selected for a one-on-one interviews with the researcher; another questionnaire which reflects some of the questions asked in the first questionnaire that was given out to parents in the church was also used during one-on-one interviews with the selected parents. However, room for flexibility and spontaneity as warranted by the direction each interview session took, was made to allow them to freely express their feelings and experiences on the subject matter.
Two children between the age of eight (8) and eighteen (18) were also interviewed by the researcher, in order to hear their feelings and opinions concerning the issue of abusive spanking.

The reason that the researcher chose to interview children between the age bracket of eight (8) and eighteen (18) is because he assumes that children within this age bracket, who have been spanked for a considerable number of years, will be able to express their feelings and experiences better than if the researcher was to include children below the chosen age bracket. Moreover, it is assumed that older children who are within the above-mentioned age bracket, tend to experience more aggressive spanking or beating than the ones below age 8 and above age 15 (Straus 1994:54, http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012).

Two pastoral caregivers from the church were also contacted for one-on-one interviews with the researcher. The aim of also interviewing pastoral caregivers, was to help the researcher ascertain the theological view that is held by the church leadership on corporal punishment; and to ascertain if there were any focused programs or teachings with the aim of dealing with this problem situation/pastoral care challenge within the church. Interviews with every co-researcher were only set-up after each respondent had given his or her consent, and volunteered availability as a co-researcher for this research study.

The purpose of the interview as well as the research study was clearly explained to each co-researcher, and they were free to ask any questions that they were not very clear about. Co-researchers were notified, at least a week prior to the actual interview date, in order to afford them enough time to be well prepared (Merriam 1998). The researcher was flexible when asking co-researchers questions, as certain helpful questions often arise (or emerge), naturally, during interviews; depending on the flow of the conversation. As such, in addition to certain key pre-designed questions, the
researcher was sensitive to important, spontaneous questions that might arise during an interview with the co-researcher.

The following are some of the questions that individual parents were asked during a one-on-one interview with them: What is your opinion about the spanking of children or use of corporal (physical) punishment as a form of child discipline; especially for those between the ages of 8 and 18? What is your opinion about the spanking of children in a manner that is repeatedly aggressive, and sometimes causing physical injury to a child? Do you think that this style of child discipline is really effective or produces the desired result that parents would want to see in their children? What is your view or response concerning the observation by some experts or psychologists that, frequent, aggressive spanking of children, can have negative psychological (mental) impact on some children and also in their adult life (e.g. poor learning ability at school, low self esteem, interpersonal relationship issues, etc)? Do you think this actually happens? Did you grow up being repeatedly spanked by your parents in an aggressive manner? If yes, would you say it did boost or help your self-esteem as a child or not? What alternatives to child discipline can you think of that are non-violent and yet may be effective? The design or constructions of the questionnaire was guided (or informed) by contributions from Murray Straus’ book *Beating the Devil out of them*, and the book *The Child Song: The Religious Abuse of Children* by Donald Capps (See Appendix B for a detailed design of the questionnaire for parents).

Because of the focus of this research study, the criteria that the researcher used for selecting the four parents for a one-on-one interview include the following: 1) Parents who indicated in the questionnaire that was given out to the fifty parents, that they spanked their children frequently 2) Parents that acknowledged (or indicated) that they also were spanked (or beaten) by their parents or guardians frequently and aggressively.

One-on-one interviews with two pastoral caregivers in the church reflect questions concerning their prevailing theologically view which is held by many parents within the
church, which seem to encourage the aggressive spanking by parents; their position regarding the idea of integrating psychology with theology in caring for the members in the church, as this integrative approach is still yet to be adopted by pastoral care givers within the church; what is their say concerning the position of some pastoral caregivers within the church that maintain or believe that the integration of psychology and theology in Christian ministry is not necessary, that psychology is anti-Scripture- a competing faith to Christianity or worldly (see Carter and Narramore 1979:12,14). The pastoral caregivers were also carefully probed regarding their conviction that spiritual direction is sufficient in caring for members within the church who are faced with issues that are not only spiritual but psychological. For an example, members that are faced with issues of domestic violence like the aggressive spanking of children, wife battering, and sexual abuse (see Appendix C for the questionnaire used in the interview with pastoral caregivers).

Forty one (41) questionnaires were returned out of the fifty (50) that were given out to parents. Six (6) questionnaires out of the forty (41) that were returned by parents were not completely filled or answered. For an example, some never answered questions like, how often do you spank your child? Did you have a similar experience with abuse of corporal punishment growing up under your parents? The researcher did follow-up on the six (6) parents. Four (4) of them were not willing to give the researcher an audience for further probing. Two of the parents never responded to the follow-up.

Recruiting or enrolling of participants (co-researchers) was only done after the researcher had consulted with the senior pastor of the church and had gotten his approval, since participants are all members of the same church. They were all informed that participation was voluntary. The researcher also explained the purpose of the research study to co-researchers, and the benefit it might bring to the church and to participants. The researcher had planned to use an interpreter where that was necessary, as co-researchers or interviewees are South Africans. However, this was, eventually, not necessary, as co-researchers said they could express themselves well in the English language. Each interview session lasted for one hour.
2.7 Data Collection

Data are, “Facts, opinions and statistics that have been collected together and recorded for reference for analysis” (Saunders et al 2007: 610). They are ordinary bits and pieces of information that are found in an environment. They can be concrete and measurable, as in class attendance, or invisible and difficult to measure, as in feelings. It is the interest and perspective of the researcher that determines whether or not a bit of information becomes data in research study (Merriam 1998: 69). As noted earlier, data communicated through words have been labeled as: qualitative, while data presented in number form, is labeled: quantitative.

Moreover, qualitative data consists of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge which is obtained through interviews; detailed descriptions of people’s activities, behaviors, actions recorded in observations; excerpts, quotes, etc, from various types of documents. Merriam stresses significantly that, ‘Collecting’ data always involves selecting data, and that the techniques of data collection will affect what finally constitutes ‘data’ for the purposes of the research. Also, the data collection techniques that are used, as well as, the specific information considered to be “data” in a study, are determined by the researcher’s theoretical orientation, by the problem and purposes of the study, and the sample selected (Merriam 1998:69, 70).

In order to retain accuracy of data collected from the co-researcher (and also direct quotes from respondents where necessary), audio recording of the interviews were necessary. This was done with the permission of co-researchers. Where the use of this device was made, and a co-researcher felt uncomfortable to freely relay stories about their childhood abusive corporal punishment, the researcher refrained from recording that aspect of the interview.

2.8 Target Population Sample
A population is the total collection of elements that is utilized to make some inferences (Cooper and Schindler, 201:215). Zikmund also notes that a population should have some shared characteristics (2003:58). The target population of this research study consists of parents and other respective guardians within the researcher’s local church in Johannesburg (a Pentecostal church); that had about one hundred and fifty (150) members, with a larger percentage of the church comprising of unmarried adults, youths and children. The sampling fraction of this population is represented by the first fifty (50) parents and guardians; who were given a questionnaire to fill. Later, four (4) parents were selected for personal interviews, and two pastoral caregivers, as respondents. The age bracket of co-researchers is between twenty (20) and fifty five (55). A sampling fraction is the proportion of the total population that is selected for a probability sample (Saunders et al 2007: 610). Most respondents seem to have a strong literalistic view on (certain) scriptural teachings or themes (including those passages related to corporal punishment); as it seems to be the case with many Pentecostal churches. They also strongly believe in the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is for every believer, e.g. speaking in tongues; which we will not go into as that falls outside the scope of this research study.

2.9 Interviews

The most common form of interview is the person-to-person encounter: where one person elicits or obtains information from another. In every form of qualitative research, some data, and occasionally all of the data are collected through interviews (Merriam 1998:69). Here, the researcher will, briefly, examine the three types of interviews (see Merriam 1998:72-75):

2.9.1 Highly Structured/Standardized Interview

In this type of interview, wordings and the order of questions are pre-determined. It is an oral form of survey. The problem of using a highly structured interview, in qualitative research, is that by, rigidly, adhering to pre-determined questions, one may not be able
to access the participants’ perspectives and understandings of the world. Instead, one would get reactions to the investigator’s preconceived notions of the world. The use of this, highly, structured format in qualitative research, is to gather common socio-demographic data from respondents (Merriam 1998:72, 74).

2.9.2 Semi Structured Interview

This is a mix of more-structured and less-structured questions. However, interviewing in qualitative investigations, is more open-ended and less structured for the most part. Less structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways. Thus; questions need to be open-ended. A less structured alternative is the semi structured interview. In this type of interview, either all the questions are more flexibly worded, or that the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions. Usually, specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case, there is a highly structured section to the interview. But the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the question is determined ahead of time. This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondents, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam 1998: 74-75), (See also Saunders (2007:612). This was the method that was used by the researcher in this research study. Questions that were asked and interviews that were held during this research study were semi-structured. In other words, some questions were predetermined or planned; while room was also made for relevant questions that may arise in the spur-of-the-moment; during an interview.

2.9.3 Unstructured (informal) Interview

This involves asking open ended questions. It is flexible, exploratory, and it is more like a conversation. Unstructured or informal interviews are, particularly, useful when the researcher does not know enough about a phenomenon, him/her to ask relevant questions. Thus: there is no pre-determined set of questions, and the interview is,
essentially, exploratory. Insights and an understanding can be obtained in this approach. However, at the same time, the interviewer may feel lost in a sea of divergent viewpoints and, seemingly, unconnected pieces of information. Totally unstructured interviewing, is rarely used as the sole means of collecting data in qualitative research (Merriam 1998:73, 75).

2.10 The Researcher and Effective Qualitative Research Study

As mentioned earlier, in qualitative study, the researcher is the main medium of data collection. Therefore, how effective the research emerges, depends largely on how effective or skilled the researcher is, in doing this. Hence; he or she plays a very crucial role in qualitative research study. There are many crucial factors that come into play regarding this fact. For instance, Merriam points out three aspects, namely: the need for the researcher to tolerate ambiguity (it takes time and patience to search for clues, find the missing pieces, as collection of data can be overwhelming initially); being a sensitive observer and analysts (sensitive to the context and all the variables, the information being gathered); and a good communicator (one that empathizes with the respondents, listens well, knows when to speak) (1998:23).

2.10.1 Asking Good question

It suffices to stress that the success of an interview depends on the nature of the interaction between the interviewer and the respondent. It also depends on the interviewer’s skill in asking the right questions (Merriam 1998: xiii). Hence, the key to getting usable information (data) from interviewing, is for the researcher to ask relevant good-questions; and this takes practice. Moreover, different types of questions will yield different information (Merriam 1998: 75). The question that one asks should, certainly, depend on the focus of one’s study. The way in which questions are worded, is also a crucial and consideration in extracting the type of information desired.

Furthermore, it is also important that words that make sense, to the interviewee, are used. Words that mirror the respondent’s world view are more likely to improve the
quality of data obtained during the interview. The author stresses that, technical jargon or terminology and terms and ideas (concepts) from one's particular disciplinary orientation, should be strongly avoided (Merriam 1998: 76).

2.10.2 Guarding against the researcher’s to personal biases

In producing a qualitative study, the researcher must also be sensitive to the inherent bias in this type of research (Merriam 1998:22). The author also stresses, in concurrence with LeCompte and Preissle, that qualitative research “is distinguished partly by its admission of subjective perception and biases of both participants and researcher into the research frame.” Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human, all observations and analyses are sieved through that person’s world view, values, and perspective. However, making constant comparisons and asking questions, assist the researcher in guarding against bias and achieving precision, as much as possible (Merriam 1998:21).

It suffices to indicate also that the researcher, during this research study, was careful to let respondents know that he respects their personal opinion or perspective to the subject of discussion. For instance, the view of those parents that seem not to see any wrong or negative effect in spanking or beating their children aggressively but rather see it as working for their children’s good, was respected by the researcher. This is very crucial because, as noted earlier, one of the philosophical assumptions underlying qualitative research is that, “reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality” (Merriam 1998:22).

2.11 Validity and reliability

As Merriam (1998: xiv) rightly affirms, “All researchers are concerned with producing valid and reliable findings” The validity of the research is determined by the internal and external validity of the research. Internal validity deals with the question of how the
research findings match reality. In other words, how congruent or harmonious are the findings with reality? External validity is the extent in which the findings or results can be applied to other situations. In other words, how generalizable are the results of a research study? Reliability refers to the extent in which research findings can be replicated. In other words, if the study is repeated, will it yield the same result? (Merriam 1998: 201, 205-207, Saunders et al 2007:609). Reliability, however, is problematic in social sciences simply because human behavior is not static. And since an audit must, nonetheless, take place, the most important thing is that, “the investigator must describe how data was collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (Merriam 1998:207).

2.12 Case study

There is a general notion that, those with little or no preparation in qualitative research often choose the case study as “a sort of catch-all category for research that is not a survey or an experimental, and is not statistical in nature” (Merriam 1998:18). However, as the author (1998:19) further observes, “A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved…” The latter observation is a pointer to the reason that the researcher chose to use a case study in this research study. He believes that the inclusion of some of the case studies in this research study, will help him, as well as readers, to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation, and also to help drive home the impact of childhood abuse on children to parents in his local church, forcefully.

According to Merriam (1998:29), there are three types of case studies in the qualitative research study in education. They are particularistic (the case study focuses on a particular situation), descriptive (this in a nutshell implies that the end product of a case study is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study) and, the heuristic (this means that case studies illuminate the readers understanding of the phenomenon under study. A particularistic case study method of qualitative research was used in this research study.
In view of this, two case studies are selected from the stories of two parents, who are from the researcher’s church and whom in their childhood, had a traumatic experience of corporal punishment; in the hands of their parents or immediate caregivers. One case study is taken from the story of a teenager, who, presently, is still in a home where this form of abuse is perpetuated. The impact that this has on him, the impact on his personality, learning ability at school, interpersonal relationship, and other aspects of his psychological developmental stages. The real names of co-researchers are reserved for the sake of confidentiality. In other words, the names used in these case studies are pseudonymous or fictitious names, but the stories are true and accurately relayed by the researcher as communicated by the respondents.

2.13 A Brief Literature Review on Pollard’s model of Positive Deconstruction

Pollard’s model of positive deconstruction, as lineated in his book *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*, is a model that was developed by the author, mainly, in the context of making the difficult work of evangelism less difficult for those who are involved in evangelism, in reaching non-Christians for Christ. However, as the author points out, positive deconstruction (changing a wrong paradigm or world view, or taking apart what is erroneous in a worldview and replacing it with something better) is not only necessarily for non-Christians but also for Christians; as we can also be wrong in some of our views (Pollard 1997:89). Flawed worldviews may be expressed through their theological views or doctrinal issues. For instance, the most popular underlying worldviews that seem to drive the use and abuse of corporal punishment of children by many fundamentalist Christian parents is, “spare the rod and spoil the child (Bradshaw 2009:406; Straus 1994; Pais 1991). Furthermore, it has been observed that a literal reading of Bible passages in the Book of Proverbs on corporal punishment seems to be the underlying reason for why the rate of abuse of corporal punishment is highest amongst fundamentalist Christians (Capps 1995; Greven in Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009). Therefore, the researcher will be concerned, mainly, with aspects of positive deconstruction as they apply to Christians.
According to Pollard (1997:44), the process is called “deconstruction” because the author is helping people to deconstruct (that is, take apart) what they believe in order to look carefully at the belief and analyze it. Furthermore, “The process is positive because this deconstruction is done in a positive way-in order to replace it with something better” (Pollard 1997:44). The author (1997:43) also stresses or claims that, “There are no connotations that are sometimes associated with the branch of literary criticism known as deconstructionism, but rather a positive search for truth.” This is because, “The process of positive deconstruction recognizes and affirms the elements of truth to which individuals already hold, but also helps them to discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying world view they have absorbed” (Pollard 1997:44). The process of positive deconstruction involves four elements, and these are: identifying the underlying worldview, analyzing it, affirming the elements of truth which it contains, and, lastly, discovering the error in the worldview.

i. Identifying the underlying worldview: Pollard (1997:48) points out that, most people seem to be unaware of the worldviews they have absorbed, which underlie their beliefs and values at present. Usually, they will simply communicate “a belief or live in a certain way, without knowing or even thinking about the worldview from which their belief or behavior derives”

The author also notes that most Christians are not usually aware of the worldviews underlying the ideas of people that they are trying to reach or render care to. As a result, they often work at a surface level; reacting to individual statements or behavior instead of endeavoring to respond to an underlying philosophy (Pollard 2007: 49). Therefore, it is very important that pastoral caregivers should first set out to understand what it is that the people they want to reach or render care to, believe. According to Pollard, we must do everything we can to understand their worldview. Only then, shall we know what kind of questions to raise with them (Pollard 2007:47).
i. **Analyzing the worldview:** “Once we have identified a particular worldview, we can now move on to the next process, which is to analyze it. Essentially, we have to ask, ‘Is it true?’ (Pollard 2007:52). To do this, Pollard finds it best to employ the three standard philosophical tests of truth namely – the coherence, correspondence and pragmatic tests. This implies that one, basically, asks three questions. Does it cohere? (That is, does it make sense?) Does it correspond with reality? Does it work? (Pollard 1997:53).

Pollard (1997:54) stresses that, “It is important that we use all three of them, because each one on its own is not sufficient. If a statement fails one of these tests, we know that it cannot be true. If it passes just one or two, it is not true. It needs to pass all three” As the author (1997:54) rightly argues, not everything that coheres is true, not everything that corresponds with the reality that we see is necessarily true, and not everything that works is true. For instance, he recalls that, “For thousands of years people believed that the Sun orbits the earth. That is what they saw. It corresponded with their perception of reality. But it was not true.” As pastoral caregivers ask the following three questions, they can look for elements of truth that they may affirm, as well as, an error that they can discover (Pollard 1997: 55).

iii. **Affirming the truth:** “The process of deconstruction recognizes and affirms the elements of truth to which the individuals already hold, but also help them to discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying world views they have absorbed” (Pollard 1997: 44). For our purposes, the idea of this element in the process of positive deconstruction is for the pastoral caregiver to affirm the truth that they have identified in the worldview that we seek to deconstruct. In other words, it would be unreasonable to claim, as some ant-spankers do, that corporal punishment is completely bad, and completely unnecessary, seeing that there are other forms of child discipline that are non-violent, and yet effective (Straus 1994). Such an approach can make it difficult for the people we are trying to help or reach to listen to us, or want to consider our proposal. Pollard (1997:55) observed, rightly, that we are uncomfortable to admit that the views or beliefs that other people hold, that are at variant with what we hold to be the truth, may contain some truth or measure of truth.
It is important to stress also, that, “If we are not going to push ourselves into error, we must affirm truth wherever it is; knowing that ultimately all truth is God truth and all worldview contain elements of this truth” (Pollard 1997:56). Pollard (1997: 55) went on to cite, as an example that, around the beginning of the twentieth century, the church temporary lost its social consciences. This, according to him, was, “partly due to her reaction against the theological liberalism, which reduced the value of the Bible and increased the importance of social actions.” Pollard goes on to make the following remarkable observation that instead of just rejecting part of the theological liberalism (the devaluation of the Bible), many Christians rejected all its insights and consequently rejected social action. If only we had affirmed the elements of truth that liberalism maintained, we should not have thrown out the social action baby with the biblical-criticism bathwater (Pollard 1997:55, 56).

iv. Discovering the error in the worldview: This is the aim in the process, which is helping them to discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying world views they have absorbed (Pollard 1997:56). Pollard (1997:56) points out that when we analyze or investigate a worldview through using the three criteria of truth, we are not only attempting to affirm truth but also to discover those errors. We may find that a particular worldview is not coherent, or that it doesn’t correspond with reality, or that it will not work, in fact, any combination of these. According to the author (1997:56), “It is a prerequisite that we identify; it is necessary that for us to analyze it; it is valuable for us to affirm the truth that it contains; but it is vital that we discover its error...”

Therefore, the researcher finds the theory or model of positive deconstruction by Pollard very helpful in the context of deconstructing the underlying worldview on corporal punishment of children “spare the rod and spiritual the child.” This is because the researcher assumes that this worldview, which is held by many Christians and certain theological views, contain elements of errors, and therefore contributes to the wrong or excessive use of physical child discipline. This includes the aggressive spanking of children and other forms of corporal punishment that are applied aggressively or
excessively. The aim of this process is to be able to help parents see the error contained in the worldview, and desire a better one, which for our purposes is, a biblically balanced worldview on the use of physical child discipline. The four elements of positive deconstruction are further analyzed, adapted, and integrated in the construction of the pastoral care model of this study, in chapter 5.

2.14 A Brief Literature Review on Straus’ Book, *Beating the Devil Out of Them*

In this book, Straus explored the phenomenon of corporal punishment and the traumatic effects of this method of physical discipline on children. Straus (1994:153), who is noted for his stance against corporal punishment, argues that spanking is not necessary at all, because it does not work better than other methods of child discipline, and inappropriate because of the harmful effects that accompany the practice. According to the author (1994:10), corporal punishment can be traumatic, if the most loved and trusted figure in the child’s life suddenly carries out a painful attack on the child. Straus (1994; 10) also notes that the consequence can be a post traumatic stress that creates deep, lifelong psychological problems, such as depression and suicidal thinking. Furthermore, this form of physical abuse can lower the IQ in some children. This owes to the fact that being spanked or hit is linked with fright and stress; hence some kids who have experienced that kind of trauma, have difficulty focusing and learning. Other side effects include low self esteem, indecision, obsessive fear, hostility, guilt, shame, and self-reproach. Spanking during childhood has also been linked to higher levels of adult depression, psychiatric problems, sexual problems, addictions, and suicidal tendencies (1994; 10, 99; Doyle 1990:111; Capps 1995:26; Bradshaw 2009:408).

In addition, various research studies indicate that children who experience an abuse of physical punishment like spanking and other forms of corporal punishment over a prolonged period of time are likely to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) refers to certain enduring psychological symptoms that reliably occur in reaction to a highly distressing, psychically disruptive event. The event is frequently re-experienced via nightmares, intrusive thoughts, or
flashbacks—sudden sensory memories— that seem immediately real even though the event may be long past (Straus 1994:10; Briere 1992:20). Detailed exploration of corporal punishment and the traumatic effects that accompany the phenomenon is presented in chapter three.

Straus (1994:157) believes that the best alternative to corporal punishment is to take a firm action to correct the misbehavior without hitting children. He also believes that condemning what the child has done wrong and explaining why it is wrong is usually enough. When these are not, there are a host of other nonviolent methods of discipline that can be employed, which do not involve hitting. Furthermore, Straus (1994:10) contends strongly that, “We no longer permit the hitting of servants, apprentices, prisoners, and members of the armed forces,” adding that, “From the standpoint of humanitarian values, hitting children is simply wrong... that corporal punishment has remarkable implications for preventing problems such as criminal violence, depression, and poor performance on the job.” Therefore, for Straus (1994:10), “putting an end to corporal punishment is an important approach to preventing these problems.” Bradshaw (2009:410) also supports this position, stressing that “there are many ways of disciplining, setting limits and experiencing consequences for inappropriate behavior without spanking. The author (2009:412) also suggests that, with all that is now known about the moral nature of the child, corporal punishment should equally become unthinkable as slave-trade is now morally unthinkable.

To assume that corporal punishment is completely bad, and unnecessary in child discipline or child rearing, seems unreasonable to the researcher. In other words, it can be inferred that for Straus, there is no element of truth in the view that supports corporal punishment. Finding a reasonable balance between one extreme in which corporal punishment is abused and the other extreme where it is totally ignored, seems to be more reasonable. While the researcher agrees with Straus’ contribution on the violence associated with corporal punishment, and the negative effects of the phenomenon on children, he disagrees with the author’s position, that corporal punishment is altogether bad. As mentioned earlier, the researcher agrees with Pollard in his model of positive
deconstruction, that we need to affirm the element of truth contained in a world view. More is discussed on this later in three and in chapter 5.

2.15 Preliminary Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology that is used in this study. It gave an overview of the theory of this research, and how this research followed these accepted methods in order to ensure reliability and validly. This will be achieved by employing both the qualitative and quantitative methods of research studies. The next chapter will focus on examining the terms: Spanking, Violence and Children Abuse, with special focus on the traumatic impact of this form of violence or physical child abuse has on the child’s psychological well being or developmental stages in life, etc. Some selected reactions and responses on the subject (corporal punishment of children) will be discussed, as well as, some of the different theological positions on the subject.
CHAPTER THREE

Exploring Corporal Punishment, Violence, Physical Abuse, and Trauma

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores and analyzes the subject of aggressive or excessive corporeal punishment, and the traumatic impact this style of child discipline has on children. The chapter also examines various views on corporal punishment, views in favor of corporal punishment or spanking and those against this phenomenon, and the impact of certain theological views on the widespread of the phenomenon amongst Christian parents. Alternative methods of child discipline that are non-violent and yet effective are also discussed.

3.2 Corporal Punishment of Children

There are various attempts in defining corporal punishment. We will only consider two definitions here. Straus (1994:4) defines corporal punishment as the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior. Giardino defines it as a discipline method that uses physical force as a behavioral modifier (2011:Online). Corporal punishment of children includes pinching, spanking, paddling, pushing, slapping, hair pulling, choking, excessive exercise, confinement in closed spaces, denial of going to the toilet, etc (Straus 1994:5; Wolfe 1991:11, 12). But our primary focus, as mentioned in chapter one, is on spanking, especially abusive spanking. This is because spanking is still widely accepted and applied in most societies, and moreover, there are many
adults in South Africa that are ignorant of the traumatic effects this form of child
discipline has on children (Straus 1994:9; Bradshaw 2009:95,401; http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/research/children/south-africa.htm:

However, the practice of corporal punishment is experiencing an appreciable decrease
in some countries of the world, as more and more people are becoming aware of its
negative effects on children. For example, as mentioned in chapter one, some states in
North America, e.g., Delaware, Canada (where it has been abolished both in public and
private). Many countries in Europe also have a ban on the use of corporal punishment
(e.g., Sweden, Norway, Australia, Denmark). There are a few non European countries
that have banned CP, e.g., Israel, New Zealand (Straus 1994:115-116;
July 2010).

Furthermore, corporal punishment of children is regarded as a normal part of children
upbringing in most Christian homes especially in most African countries. This is more
rampant among the blacks or in black communities, especially among low income
earners. The implication of this is that there is still much work to be done in terms of
creating the necessary awareness on the traumatic impact that this method of child
discipline- spanking- has on children, especially in cases where its application on the
child is unreasonable or violent (Straus 1994:115-116; Waterhouse 2012: Online).

According to a recent South African National survey on corporal punishment, 57% of
parents are reported smacking or spanking their children with a hand while 33%
reported beating their children with a belt or other object). Methods used by parents
range from smacking and spanking or kicking punching and beating with objects. It has
also been observed that corporal punishment was made popular in South Africa as a
method of controlling people by missionaries and through the processes of colonialism
and systems of slavery. Furthermore, apartheid policies and practice further entrenched
However, it is worth acknowledging that the practice of corporal punishment is experiencing an appreciable decrease in some countries of the world, as more and more people are becoming aware of its negative effects on children. For example, as mentioned in chapter one, some states in North America, e.g., Delaware, Canada (where it has been abolished both in public and private). Many countries in Europe also have a ban on the use of corporal punishment (e.g., Sweden, Norway, Australia, Denmark, etc). There are a few non European countries that have banned CP, e.g., Israel, New Zealand (http://www.religious.tolerance.org/spankin2.htm. Robinson, BA 2010. Retrieved 22nd July 2010; Straus 1994:115-116).

### 3.2.1 Spanking defined

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, to spank, means to hit somebody, especially a child, several times on their bottom as punishment. But for our purposes, we will adopt the definition suggested by Straus for corporal punishment, as our working definition for spanking. In other words, spanking in this research study may be defined as the application of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, for the purpose of correction or control of the child’s behavior, but without causing injury (1994:4).

It is important to note that, to some people (or in some settings), spanking means slapping a child on the buttocks (and traditionally, the bare buttocks). For others, especially to the middle-class or low income earners, it tends to be a common term for slapping or hitting any part of the child (Straus 1994:5; Bradshaw 2009:400). In whatever case, the position (or assumption) of this research study is that, an abuse of spanking or corporal punishment has occurred when such an application of physical aggression causes physical injury or psychological harm to the child (abusive spanking was discussed in more details in chapter one of this research study).
It is also important to acknowledge here that, there are communities or societies that consider the application of physical force of any intensity on a child as acceptable as long as the aim is to correct misbehavior, even when the child is injured in the process. This is especially true after they may have tried mild spanking repeatedly and it seems not to yield the desired behavioral change in the child. In this research study, such would be considered as a case of physical child abuse (see Straus 1994:184, 52; Wolfe 1991:11). It suffices to also mention that spanking is one of the most often applied forms of corporal punishment. Other common modes of this practice include slapping, grabbing, shoving a child roughly. Some children still experience this form of harsh discipline even in their late teens (ages 15-17). This is more rampant in homes where parents themselves were also disciplined in similar ways as children, hence they find it normal continue in the same cycle of abuse (Straus 1994:5; Wolfe 1991:10).

Furthermore, boys are more likely to be spanked or beaten by parents than girls (Straus 1994). One common reason for this is because they it believed that boy are generally more stubborn than girls (Straus 1994). Another theory is expressed in the principle that boys should be toughened. This is also assumed to form part of the process of training boys for expected adult roles, like fatherhood, leadership in the home and in the society, measuring up to the task of difficult task of providing for their families. On the contrary, girls are believed to be more easily injured, and more fragile or weak when it comes to the application of corporal punishment on them (Straus 1994:30; Bradshaw 2009).

3.2.2 Spanking and Violence

Oxford Dictionary defines violence as unlawful exercise of physical force. According to Straus (1994:7), violence is an act carried out with the intention, or perceived intention of causing pain or injury to another person. In a broader sense it includes behaviors by people or against people liable to cause physical or psychological harm, or hamper the normal development of an individual or a group of people. It therefore goes to indicate the proximity between violence and abuse (Straus 1994:7, xi,
 Violence can also be verbal or physical abuse which takes place at home in a family atmosphere (Nasimiyu-Wasike in Waruta & Kinoti 2005:121).

Bradshaw (2009:4000) considers corporal punishment as “the enemy of moral intelligence and also the cause of a great deal of cruelty and violence in the world.” Therefore, it seems right to uphold that any method of corporal punishment of children that is abusive, including aggressive or unreasonable spanking, is an act of violence, as it has the tendency to hamper a child’s normal development—cause physical or psychological harm.

3.2.3 Spanking and Physical Child Abuse

Spanking is the most frequently applied forms of corporal punishment. Other common modes of this practice (corporal punishment) include slapping, grabbing, shoving a child roughly (Straus 1994:5; Wolfe1991:10). As alluded to earlier in chapter one, there are controversies over spanking that may be generally considered as child abuse by the law, as the definition varies from one society, culture, or country to another. This sometimes impacts on efforts to deal with the problem, “including how often it happens and when a parent is wrong…” (Christenson 1984: 426). However, despite this obvious challenge or controversy, some reasonable and convincing working definitions have been proposed (or observed) by some authors and expects. For instance, Wolfe (1991:8) observes that, from socialization, child abuse can be viewed in terms of the extent to which parents uses negative, inappropriate control strategies with their child, including psychological as well as physical strategies.

In an article, When Is Spanking Children Abuse?, it is suggested that, spanking may be considered unreasonable or as child abuse, “when discipline is excessive or is enough to cause physical or mental harm to a child” (http://www.nospank.net/n-h21.htm. Hodson 2010. Retrieved 22nd July 2010). It is also noted that physical harm is also considered to occur when, for example, “there is bruising, sustained soft tissue swelling
or fractures of bone or skull” (Hodson 2010:2) (also see Carl 1991: 19; Straus 1994:7-8). In other words, spanking that may be considered reasonable is that which is not excessive, or does not cause physical or mental harm to a child.

However, in some countries or states, what may be considered as reasonable or moderate corporal punishment of children is clearly defined in their legislation. For example under California law, this is based on a third party, e.g., a Child Protective Services representative, especially where are doubts. Such a clause seems to also resolve the question of doubts as to how when one can truly say that the spanking is excessive (Wolfe 1991:8). Common to all definitions seem to be the presence of an injury that the child sustains at the hands of his or her caregiver. These injuries are also referred to as inflicted or nonaccidental injuries (Carl 1985:19; Straus 1994:8).

According to Carl (1985:19), Physical abuse is the, “none accidental injuries or acts that create a substantial risk of serious injury that are inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by a child’s caretaker” The author (1985:19) goes on to note or contend that: ‘Reasonable’ corporal punishment is not considered child abuse, as physical discipline is considered part of parent’s right in rearing children. However, it is important to note that the line between corporal punishment-spanking and physical child abuse is so thin that consciously or unconsciously, parents often find themselves going overboard or sliding over that line to apply physical force beyond reasonable measure to the child, resulting in physical abuse. As a result, the relationship between the application of corporal punishment and the risk for maltreatment remains one area of concern (Carl 1985:20; Straus 1994:9).

Furthermore, the line between corporal punishment and physical abuse also depends on “whether the child is psychologically damaged. If parents beat a child recurrently and the child reveals psychological problems such as severe lack of self esteem, severe aggression to other children, anxiety or withdrawal, it is called “abuse.” Nevertheless the method may be considered as permissible corporal punishment if the child shows no sign of psychological problems. When physical force is used as a discipline method (as
in corporal punishment), the concern arises that the caregiver may become more angry and frustrated and intensify the physical force if the misconduct continues even after the corporal punishment is applied. If this persists, there is the likelihood that the caregiver loses control and injures the child, whether intentionally or unintentionally (Straus 1994:8-9, 84-85; Tripp T & Tripp M 2008:21, 33).

Therefore, it seems right to agree with the suggestion that from the standpoint of human rights violation, it is wrong to consider as an “assault” when an adult is struck in order to change their behavior or “domestic violence” or when a partner is hit, but when a child is hit it is considered as ‘spanking’ and acceptable, irrespective of its severity. It is important to note that as human beings, children also have rights (Bradshaw 2009:403; Straus 1994:85; Pais 191:73, 74). As such, in societies, parents are charged with physical abuse if the beating is more recurrent and severe than allowed by cultural norms for child discipline (Straus 1994:8; Wolfe 1991:11; Nasimiyu-Wasike 2005:121, 130-131).

3.2.4 Spanking and Trauma

According to McCann and Pearlman (1990:10), an experience is traumatic if it is: sudden, unexpected and none-normative, exceeds the individual’s perceived ability to meet its demands, disrupts the individual’s frame of references and other central psychological needs and related schemas.

The following is also a note worthy definition of trauma, which considers trauma as physical or psychological wound: Trauma means “wound” and it is “a term used freely for physical injury caused by some direct external force or for psychological injury caused by some extreme emotional assault” (Reber in Du Toit 2000:90). However, the researcher finds the definition proposed by Means seems more helpful for our purposes as it is more encompassing in its implication. The author observes that the Word trauma is from the Greek word for wound, and goes on to suggest that a wound here can be physical, psychological, emotional, relational and spiritual (Means in Chemvum
In other words, this also points to the idea that these various aspects or levels are interconnected, as man is a complex being. Further, it suggests that physical trauma can impact on an individual psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, etc, depending on the trauma type, the intensity of the trauma, etc (Means in Chemvum 2011:31; McCann & Pearlman 1990:10; Briere 1992; Doyle 1991, etc).

As also mentioned earlier, Straus (1994:10) observed rightly, that corporal punishment can be traumatic, if the most loved and trusted figure in the child’s life suddenly carries out a painful attack on the child. The author also notes that the consequence can be a post traumatic stress that creates deep, lifelong psychological problems, such as depression and suicidal thinking. Furthermore, it has been suggested that this form of physical abuse can lower the IQ in some children. This owes to the fact that being spanked or hit is linked with fright and stress; hence some kids who have experienced that kind of trauma, have difficulty focusing and learning. Other side effects include low self esteem, indecision, obsessive fear, hostility, guilt, shame, self-reproach. Spanking during childhood has also been linked to higher levels of adult depression, psychiatric problems, sexual problems, addictions, and suicidal tendencies (e.g., see Straus 1994; 10, 99; Doyle 1990:111; Capps 1995:26; Bradshaw 2009:408).

In addition, various research studies indicates that children who experience an abuse of physical punishment like spanking and other forms of corporal punishment over a prolonged period of time are likely to suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) refers to certain enduring psychological symptoms that reliably occur in reaction to a highly distressing, psychically disruptive event. The event is frequently re-experienced via nightmares, intrusive thoughts, or flashbacks-sudden sensory memories- that seem immediately real even though the event may be long past (Briere 1992:20; Straus 1994:10). According to an observation that is made by McCann and Pearlman (1990:30), “Flash backs are common and frightening part of the trauma survivor’s experience.” The authors also note that, “Flash back and other re-experiencing phenomena (such as nightmares and hallucinations) are also frequently accompanied by physiological responses such as sweating, and
autonomic nervous system arousal” (1990:30). Posttraumatic stress disorder is more frequent in situations where victims of the abuse did not receive the necessary therapeutic help or trauma counseling following such a traumatic experience (e.g., see Du Toit 2000:90; Kleper & Brom 191-199).

Walker in his master’s thesis made reference to the four categories or types of trauma as proposed by Lewis, which is worth noting here briefly. They are: 1) single trauma 2) multiple trauma 3) continuous traumatic stress 4) complex trauma (Lewis in Walker 2002:40, 41):

**Single traumas**: This is one sudden, unexpected traumatic event, such as an armed robber. After the single incident the trauma is over. Single traumas can differ in intensity, from being knocked down by an attacker to being shot in a robbery. Straus comment notably on the danger of resolving to spanking as the last resort, as out of anger it can escalate to serious injurious beating (1994:)

**Multiple traumas**: This is when a child is exposed to more than one trauma. For instance, if a child is injured (let’s say in the process of receiving violent spanking/beating by a parent) and then is hospitalizes and then confined to wheel chair it would be considered as multiple trauma (traumatization).

**Continuous traumatic stress**: This refers to a situation where one is exposed to ongoing levels of trauma. This for our purpose can occur in an event where a parents continues to increase the aggression applied to spanking and the a child that is not res positively to moderate spanking, and graduates to the use of objects like sticks, and sometimes even punching the child on the face and any other parts of the body, etc (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; Wolf 1991; Capps 1995). Such an experience can instill serious fear in the hold whenever the child is at home and feels he has something wrong. It can also lead to depression and other symptoms of forms of post traumatic disorder syndrome (Greven in Straus 1994; Briere 1992; Capps 1995).
**Complex traumas:** This also refers to prolonged, repeated trauma, however in this case there is a relationship between the victim and the abuser. The victim is usually under the control of the perpetrator and cannot escape. Examples of these situations are hostage situations, concentration camps and domestic violence. Although the first trauma is unexpected, after time the victim who is exposed to complex trauma usually begins to expect it. In the case of abusive spanking, the child may be afraid to report the case to police or free himself from his parents as his means of survival depends on his parents, etc). Hence the child cannot escape. Often their means of coping is by dissociation or detachment (Capps 1995; Bradshaw 2009; Straus 1994); while they still remain attached to their parents (dissociation is discussed a bit later in this chapter).

However, it is important to acknowledge also that, undoubtedly, not all children who experience one form of violence or the other encounter negative consequences as a result of the experience. Kleber and Brom (1992:160) point out, notably that, “Each person reacts differently to a traumatic situation”. Some individuals manage to get over the event without difficulty; while others experience complaints for some time. Yet; there are those that suffer from psychological problems, which make their lives, a nightmare for many years ahead. Personal characteristics and idiosyncrasies add to these differences (Kleber and Brom 1992:160). We will not delve more into reasons why each child or individual reacts differently to a traumatic situation, as that is beyond the scope of this study. Because this research study acknowledges the important role that the government plays in the fight against abuse of corporal punishment of children by parents and loved ones, in the next section, the present law on corporal punishment in South Africa is briefly discussed.

### 3.3 The Current Situation with Corporal Punishment Law in South Africa

According to the present law in South Africa, corporal punishment of children is lawful in the home, in the sense that parents have the power under common law, “to inflict moderate and reasonable chastisement on a child for misconduct provided that this was not done in a manner offensive to good morals or for objects other than correction and

It suffices to also mention that there are campaigns by some people (some “anti-spankers”) for a clause to be included in the constitution that prohibits all forms of corporal punishment or children. In other words, they demand that the current common law defense of Moderate and Reasonable Chastisement should be eliminated, which as they claim, would “ensure equal protection to children from violence and equal access to the law (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012).

They (the “anti-spankers”) further argue that, the constitution provides that everyone (including children) has the right to equality. This includes equal right protection and benefit of the law, full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms and that the state may not unfairly discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age (amongst others). In view of this, children, it is believed that children, being full human beings as adults are, the defense provided to parents who use corporal punishment through the common law defense of Moderate and Reasonable Chastisement denies children who are physically and socially the most vulnerable members of our society such rights (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012).
The researcher is of the opinion that the clause provided by law that allows for moderate and reasonable child discipline is appropriate. Of course, putting a ban on the practice of corporal punishment in the home is not the only necessary step needed to be taken towards ending the practice of abusive or excessive child discipline by parents. Therefore, besides the current law on corporal punishment of children, it is important to use various effective forums to create the necessary awareness on the negative effects of corporal punishment of children; to educate parents, guardians, etc, on the use of other forms of child discipline that are non violent (e.g., time out, withdrawal of privileges, grounding, etc); to put in place early intervention programs for parents who practice this form of child discipline (Straus 1994:10, Bradshaw 2009:4010-411; (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012).

In addition, it is also important for Christian parents to be aware of sound biblical approach to child discipline, seeing that most Christian parents that misuse this practice seem to be largely influenced by poor theology of the practice (see Bradshaw 2009; Capps 2005). See chapter five for an exploration of a biblically balanced approach to child discipline. Having considered the law in South Africa on corporal punishment of children, the researcher will now go on to briefly explore some arguments/views against the practice of corporal punishment of children and those in favor of the phenomenon.

3.4 Arguments against Corporal Punishment of Children

The arguments against spanking (especially, its abuse) are also pointers to its negative effects (i.e., its short term and long term effects). One of the arguments against physical punishment is that it does not facilitate learning. In other words, it does not teach children why their behavior was wrong or what they should do instead; rather, it seems to teach children that the only reason to behave appropriately is to avoid being punished. The more children are spanked the less likely they are to be compliant and well-behaved in the long term. The ones that are chronically spanked become sneaky and learn to lie as a way of escape from punishment. It is argued that spanking does not
succeed with defiant children; in fact they look forward to it without any remorse. Some learn to see violence as an acceptable way to solve problems, seeing that children learn by example.

Moreover, it is assumed that the more a person was spanked as a child, the greater the likelihood of that person later hitting his or her spouse, children, etc, as violence is learned behavior-and violence is likely to beget violence. Also, spanking can be physically dangerous if parents or guardians get carried away and hit their children harder than intended. Parents who spank their children risk causing long-term harm that outweighs the short-term benefit of instant obedience. For instance, some children become aggressive, delinquent, and have mental health problems, both in childhood and adulthood. It may also lead to illnesses like headaches, bedwetting, stomach complaints, asthma, etc (Straus 1994:9, 84-85; Nasimiyu-Wasike 2005:130-131; Bradshaw 2007:402,409,410).

Furthermore, some people contend that spanking is not an effective child discipline method. For instance, it has been suggested that spanking an older child seems indicate that this form of child discipline is not working. Spanking can become a compulsive behavior with increased aggression for some adults as the years go by. This seems to be one of the underlying reasons why some adults find themselves spanking for no good reason, except that they just cannot help but spank children (Campel in Wolfe 1991:9; Straus 1994: 149-160; Bradshaw 2009:406-410). In addition, as mentioned earlier, Straus (1994:153) argues that spanking (corporal punishment) does not work better than other methods of child discipline, and is inappropriate because of the harmful effects that go the practice. The author (1994:157) is convinced that condemning what the child has done wrong and explaining why it is wrong is usually sufficient. When these are not, there are a host of other non violent methods of discipline that can be employed, which do not involve hitting.

3.5 Arguments in Favor of Corporal Punishment of children
Those who argue in favor of the use of spanking-corporal punishment seem to be the majority, and are mostly fundamentalist Christians. Advocates of spanking often argue that spanking is a necessary and unavoidable part of child discipline for the child’s moral good. They maintain that God commands the application of corporal punishment of children for misbehavior, correction, etc; therefore to say otherwise is to fight against God’s will or His counsel concerning child discipline (e.g., see Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14).

In addition, those in favor of spanking believe that often children who are not disciplined this way grow up to become ill-mannered, disrespectful, and a problem in the society, disobedient to God. They disagree with the position that corporal punishment or spanking has negative effects on children. Some of them contend that according to the social sciences research findings, today’s kids are noticeably more prone to violent behavior, directed toward themselves and others than generations past kids were, yet today’s kids are not being spanked nearly as much. Hence they insist that increase in violence amongst children cannot be said to occur as a result of corporal punishment, as some research studies, psychologists and sociologists propose (e.g., see Straus 1994:149-162; Bradshaw 2009:401-407; Capps 1995).

3.6 Proposed Alternatives to Aggressive Spanking of Children

Various alternatives to spanking and other forms of physical child discipline have been proposed by some scholars, children educationists, pediatricians, child psychologist, social workers, and pastoral caregivers:

Parents should communicate clear guidelines and expectations for children’s behavior; show children accurately what is wrong and what is right; let them know the implications of doing what is right or wrong from God’s word, and from general wise counsel; help children learn from their mistakes. Furthermore, alternatives to spanking also involve verbal corrections, time out, grounding, etc. It also involves rewarding and praising children for appropriate behavior.
Also, it is suggested that parents should avoid sending mixed messages to their children. In other words, they should not say one thing and do another. This is important because children tend to learn faster or more by what they see their parents and loved ones do than just by what their parents and loved ones say—they learn more by example (Kalb 2011:2-3; Straus 1994:150,156; Bradshaw 2009:410). It has also been suggested that if the spanking is spontaneous or impulsive, parents should later apologize to their children, explain to their children the specific behavior that provoked it, and how angry they felt (Bradshaw 2009:409).

It is noted also that children seem to learn effectively through reasoning, co-operation and rewards than through conflict or violence-force. Therefore, parents should try as much as possible to avoid creating an atmosphere of conflict, tenseness, fear, and mistrust as a result of unreasonable or repeated use of aggression in administering physical child discipline (Bradshaw 2009; Straus 1994; (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012). Furthermore, it has been proposed that if moderate or mild spanking does not seem to be effective (which is the case with some kids), as well as other disciplinary techniques, a parent should never increase the severity of spanking. Professional help should be sought (see; Kalb 2011:3; Bradshaw 2009:410-11).

3.7 Theological Views and the Issue of Corporal Punishment

Bradshaw has rightly noted that, “Christians often justify spanking by citing the authority of the Bible.” The author goes on to suggest that, “By this they mean the Old Testament, because nothing in the New Testament supports spanking or other forms of corporal punishment” (2009:404). The author made reference to Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:14; 29:15. These passages in the Book of Proverbs are believed to depict Solomon’s parenting style. However, many Christians believe that since the Bible is inerrant, that Solomon’s parenting recommendations reflects God’s expectations (or inspired by the Holy Spirit, and therefore valid and applicable for all times (Bradshaw

It has also been argued that the New Testament passage in Hebrews 12:6-7, which many Christians use as one common New Testament support for corporal punishment (which is a citation from Proverbs 3:11-12) cannot be convincingly used as referring to the use of physical rod as a method of child discipline. This is because it is not clear whether the sentiment or charge here is by implication referring to corporal punishment of children or to some other form of correction. For an example, none violent disciplinary methods like removal of privileges, grounding (Bradshaw 2009; http://www.religious tolerance.org/spankin2.htm. Robinson, BA 2010. Retrieved 22\textsuperscript{nd} July 2010).

Bradshaw points out, rightly, that, “It is primarily the fundamentalist sects who believe in the divine revelation of every word of the Bible and who therefore accepts a literal reading of the Book of Proverbs as divine truth. Consequently, much physical abuse does occur in fundamentalist congregation.” Biblical literalism (simply put) is about the belief or argument that “The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word” (Ellison and Sherkat in Capps 1995:60). See chapter six for a further examination of biblical literalism and corporal punishment of children.

However, as alluded to earlier in the study, there may be other factors that impact on Christian parents who use or abuse physical child discipline methods. For instance, factors like personality traits, social influence, prevalent cultural views on physical child discipline, poverty or financial pressure, stress, and sickness, which we will not delve into as that is be beyond the scope of this research study (see Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009, Wolfe 1991). However, it seems sufficient for our purposes to say that as Christians, our theology plays a stronger role in influencing our method of physical child discipline as it is with other aspects of our practices. This is because our allegiance is first to God or His will, which is based on our understanding of what God commands us to do, in other words, what we think He instructs us to do (Tripps 2008; Pohlmann
2007). Consequently, sound biblical theology or good understanding of Scriptures is crucial for us as believer in every aspect of faith and practice.

There are various theological models or views that seem to contribute to the high rate of corporal punishment among Christians, which space will not permit us discuss in this study. However, we will briefly examine two (2) of such theological views that have negative impact on the use of spanking, as a common method of child discipline: 1) the wrathful “Father” image of God, and 2) The concept of evil ingrained in children. We will also discuss briefly the challenge of reconciling God’s omnipotence and goodness in the light of helpless, maltreated children by their parents or guardians, in the name of child discipline.

3.7.1 The Theological Concept of a Wrathful “Father”

As Christian parents, there are certain theological views or religious ideologies, that we need to guard against, which help make some Christian parents can feel justified in expressing their wrath towards children, through aggressive spanking, and other forms of physical child discipline. One of such models or ideologies is the wrathful “Father” model. Pais observes, notably, that, “Our most striking attitudes about God, and those that are often most obstructive of true relationship, attach to our ideas about “God the Father.” She comments also that, we often assume that our attitudes reflect the Father’s nature, and hence, what we take to be the Father’s nature in turn is for us a model of human fatherhood (1991:57).

The danger with this theological concept, as Pais points out, is that, “If our experience of human fatherhood has been authoritarian and punitive, we tend to have the attitude that the Father too is authoritarian and punitive…. ” (1991:57). A mindset such as that often serves as rationalization and religious justification for child abuse. It is important for believers to understand that as Pais goes on to rightly points out:

God is not only Father; God is also Child. In God’s wrath, God identifies not with the powerful fathers but with the powerless children. As other liberation
theologies asset, God is the God of the powerless. God is on the side of the oppressed. The wrathful “Father” model is an idol (1991:74).

Although some believers may not have known or heard about the above mentioned model, some nonetheless affirm this model in the way they relate to their children, consciously or unconsciously. It has been rightly observed that as human beings, we would generally require a rationale to justify our actions, whether it is good or bad actions. For Christians, such a justification is generally expressed in terms of “God’s will” or “God’s purpose” (see Capps 1995:12; Bradshaw 2009: 404-407). This suggests why some believers do not hesitate to quote certain Bible texts to validate their actions as justification for their abusive child discipline method (e.g. see Heb 12:6-11). But in doing so they tend to forget or ignore the fact that in the New Testament, the Scripture also warns against maltreatment of children by parents and other adults (e.g., see Eph 6:4; Col 3:21, Mat. 19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-16).

Bradshaw (2009:404), expressing his deep concerns with the issue of corporal punishment amongst Christians comments rightly, that Jesus loved children, and that he would therefore not in his wildest imagination visualize Jesus spanking children (see Mk 10:13-16). Furthermore, the researcher agrees with Bradshaw (2009: 407) that, “If we no longer stone people to death for adultery, we should probably read these passages in a different way” (e.g., Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15).

One of the terms in the Bible mostly misread and misapplied to support the physical abuse of children by adult Christians is the word “rod.” It has been observed by some Bible scholars that the word "rod" is used throughout the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament), both as a metaphor (Bradshaw 2009; Capps 1995; Gill 2005: Esword-Electronic book). For instance, Proverbs.14:3 reads says: “in the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride…” Psalm 74:2: “Remember your congregation which you have purchased of old; the rod of your inheritance, which you have redeemed; this mount Zion, in which you live.”Ps. 23:4 “thy rod and thy staff thy comfort me”) and in reference to concrete objects. Proverbs 23:13: “foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will chase it far away.” Knowing whether it is used as a metaphor or it refers
to an object is crucial, and can be easily discerned when the word is considered in its context.

For instance, some scholars have suggested that the rod as used in Proverbs 23:13, 14 symbolizes parental authority over children. Others insist that its literal use is evidently implied here. For instance, Prov. 23:14 says, “You shall beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell”), thus validating the beating of children (See Bradshaw 2009:405,407; Capps 1995:39; MacDonald 1984:11, 12; Gill 2005: Esword-Electronic book). Furthermore, even in instances where the rod is meant in its literal sense in these biblical texts, as it seems clearly so in some passages in the Book of Proverbs (e.g., Prov. 23:13-14), still, that does not validate an unrestrained use of the “rod” on children or spanking a child in a way that can harm them physically or psychologically. John Gill’s commentary on Proverbs 23:13, 14 rightly points to the “moderateness” that is expected by parents in their attempt to discipline a child with a rod: “For, if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall no die; if he be beaten moderately, there is no danger of his dying under the rod, (or with stripes given him) (Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible- Esword 2005). Longman 111 (2006:506) also observes correctly that: Physical punishment in the service of wisdom education is a common theme in Proverbs. However, as the author goes on to rightly remark, with the strong emphasis on emotional moderation throughout the book, this teaching certainly does not encourage parental abuse.

3.7.2 The Theological Concept of Inherent Evil/foolishness in Children

This theological position is similar to the one previously examined, and is often used also as justification for expression of parental wrath towards children. It is the belief that there is an inherent evil in every child; and that it is only the rod of correction that chases it out (see Pr. 22:15; Ps 51:5). Some have even taken this to also imply that the more stubborn a child is the stronger the evil in the child, hence the hotter the wrath of the father (and sometimes the mother) should be in applying the rod of correction on the child in order to chase the evil away. Others have taken this to imply also that the more
stubborn a child is, the stronger the evil in the child, hence the hotter the wrath of the father (and sometimes the mother) in using the rod of correction on the child in order to chase the evil away (see Bradshaw 2009: 406; Capps 2005:41, 42).

In other words, the rod here is taken literally or understood to mean using a hard object (e.g., stick, belt, hair brush, etc) to beat “morality” into the child at all cost. Pais (1991:57) observes correctly that, “Thinking that there is evil in a child or in a child’s feelings or behavior enables us to believe that we are justified in punishing the child, often brutally and in molding the child to our idea of goodness.” As a result, there is the tendency to see the child as our property, which we feel free to use as we please, or as an object, not as a human being (created) in God’s image with whom we are in mutual, respectful relationship (Pais 1991:57). The challenge that certain theological views presents in pastoral care is discussed further in chapter six.

3.9 Preliminary Conclusion

This chapter examined the issue of corporal punishment, the violence associated with this phenomenon, and the traumatic impact of this style of child discipline on children, especially, as it concerns their psychologically development or well being. Some views that support this phenomenon were discussed as well as those that oppose it. Some scholars and child care experts argue that corporal punishment is altogether an abuse, and completely unnecessary, and therefore refute any form of corporal punishment be it the reasonable and moderate style or aggressive form of corporal punishment. Others contend that reasonable and moderate spanking of children is necessary in child rearing, and does not have any traumatic effect on children. The present law on corporal punishment in South Africa allows for moderate and reasonable chastisement of children by parents at home. However, there are those who still campaign for the government of South Africa to eliminate the clause in the constitution that allows for moderate and reasonable chastisement of children by parents.
Research on corporal punishment of children can result in the information that may speed up the process of bringing children the same protection employers, servants, and wives now have (Straus 1994:10). Moreover, more awareness on the negative effects of corporal punishment can help decrease the incidence of this abuse, as many people are ignorant of its negative effects; as well as the non violent, effective methods of child discipline. It is important that in this nature of study to carry out a survey that allows the researcher to sample the opinion of selected number of parents and children that are presently faced with this problem situation. Hence, the next chapter provides readers with the stories gathered from the interviews that the researcher had with co-researchers during this research study, in order to hear their feelings and experiences on the issue. The chapter presents the researcher’s analyses of the data collected, in conjunction with the relevant contributions made by various authors along the line of this research study are also indicated.
CHAPTER FOUR

Relaying and Analyzing Data from Interviews with Co-researchers

4.1 Introduction

Interviews were arranged with co-researchers in order to gather the relevant information needed from them in relation to the issue of aggressive spanking, that is prevalent among parents in the church, etc. The purpose was to hear their experiences and feelings on the issue, etc. Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher relays and analyzes the following: 1) Excerpts from the interview with one of the parents in the researcher’s church, and an analysis of relevant data collected from the interview. 2) Excerpts from one of the interviews with two children in the church will also be relayed, followed by an analysis. 3) Excerpts from one of the interviews with two pastoral caregivers in the church will also be relayed and analyzed (see chapter 2 for more details on the methodology of this research study).

It is important to note that the age bracket of children selected for interview by the researcher was between 8 and 18. The researcher chose this age bracket because, children within this age bracket, who have experienced this phenomenon for a considerable number of years, are able to express their feelings and opinion much better than children below the chosen age bracket. Moreover, the researcher assumes that older children within the mentioned age bracket tend to experience more aggressive spanking or beating than the ones below age 8 and above age 15 (Straus 1994). However, the researcher is aware that there are cases where some children below the age of 8 are roughly spanked or beaten by parents (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; http://www.religious tolerance.org/spankin2.htm.Robinson, BA 2010. Retrieved 22nd July 2010).
Furthermore, it is also important to mention that, as indicated in the methodology (see chapter two), the researcher had initially planned to relay two selected stories from the interviews that he carried out with four (4) parents and two stories from the interviews he had with two (2) children in the church. However, the researcher will here relay only one of the interviews with parents, and also relay only one of the interviews that he had with children, for the following reasons:

i) Much of the data collected from the four different parents in the church have many similarities. This is also the case with the data that was gathered from the two children that were interviewed. Therefore, the researcher assumes that it would appear unnecessarily repetitive relaying all their stories. Moreover, many research studies have been done in a similar context, although in other Christian denominations; and much of data collated in the interviews with co-researchers agrees with the results of past research submission, as delineated in previous chapters (e.g., Straus 1994; Greven 1991; Bradshaw 2009, etc). In research study, such outcome is referred to internal validity. As mentioned in chapter two, internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality; how the findings are compatible or in harmony with reality, etc. it is concerned with the question of whether investigators are observing or measuring what they think they are measuring, etc. It hinges on the meaning of reality (Merriam 1998:201-203).

ii) Besides, the stories or data collected during the interviews with co-researchers are quite lengthy. As such, researcher thinks it is necessary for him to include only aspects of the stories told by co-researchers during the interviews that are relevant to this research study (Merriam 1998). In other words, aspects of the stories told by co-researchers that do not really buttress the purpose or objective of this research study have been omitted. However, the excerpts taken from the interviews are related verbatim by the researcher in this chapter, in order to retain the originality of the stories as they have been told during the interviews (Merriam 1998, Saunders et al 2007; Straus 1994).
4.2 Case studies

In chapter two, what case study in education implies, and the reason that the researcher felt it would be necessary to use case study as one of the methods of gathering the needed data in this study, was briefly explained. As was mentioned, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed - how they make sense of their world and the experience they have in the world. Moreover, the approach used in this qualitative study is inductive. In inductive research approach the purpose would be to get a feel of what is going on, so as to understand better the nature of the problem (see Merriam 1998: 5-7,202; Saunders et al 2007:119). For that reason, case studies of four (4) parents and two (2) teenagers in the researcher’s church (which involved a one-on-one interview with each co-researcher) was done. This helped the researcher to get to know co-researchers' feelings and experiences concerning the physical discipline method of aggressive spanking (or corporal punishment). The interviews were arranged or designed in a way that helped the researcher extract the relevant information from his co-researchers. In view of this, some questions were pre-designed. However, room was also allowed for flexibility and spontaneous questions during the interviews where necessary. In other words, a semi structured method of interview was used by the researcher (Merriam 1998; Saunders et al 2007).

4.3 Interview with Tebogo who Practices Aggressive Spanking of Children

Tebogo (age 42) is a father of four children (ages 17, 14, 11, and 8. He is married to Mpho, who is the mother of his four children. Tebogo is a South African, and lives in Orange Farm (the actual name and place of their residence). He is one of South Africans who are members in the same church as the researcher, but the Orange Farm branch of the church. Tebogo grew up in a family where himself and his siblings experienced aggressive spanking and other forms of corporal punishment frequently at
the hands of his parents (especially by his father). Tebogo in his adult life also strongly believes that corporal punishment is absolutely necessary and unavoidable in child discipline/child rearing if the child is to grow up to become morally good or well behaved, etc. Tebogo was already a devoted Christian before he got married to Mpho who also was a Christian before they both got married. Both are still devout Pentecostal Christians. The following are some excerpts from the interview that the researcher had with Tebogo.

Researcher: From the first questionnaire that I distributed to parents in our church to fill and return to me (see appendix B for details on the questionnaire that was designed by the researcher parents), in one of the questions that I asked which was: “What is your view about spanking of children or the use of corporal or physical punishment as a form of child discipline? A) It is always necessary for children’s upbringing. B) It is partially necessary for children’s upbringing. C) It is not really necessary for children’s upbringing,” you indicated that spanking is always necessary for children’s upbringing. Please can you throw more light on that answer?

Tebogo: I want to start by saying that it’s really unfortunate that in this present day spanking of children has become a thing of debate…. Now even the government tries to tell you how to beat or discipline your child, which I think is not right….. Growing up as a small boy, spanking or beating a child when they misbehaved or proved stubborn was considered as a crucial part of childrearing. This was the case, be it culturally, religiously, socially... I think even natural instinct also informs us that beating a child is necessary for the child’s good-moral well being. But more importantly, I believe the Bible is clear about this matter… For us as Christian parents, that should be final… and not what different people are trying to say about how to discipline a child these days… There are many passages in the Bible that tell us that beating a child when he misbehave is a crucial part of training up a child … If my parents did not discipline me severely the way they did, I would have been a wayward child today because I was a very stubborn boy…. I believe if I allow my children to do as they like and I don’t beat
them, they can become very stubborn and badly behaved, as it is with many children of these days…

Researcher; Do you think doing that is effective for every child and for every situation, or that sometimes other methods may be more effective, like grounding or withdrawing some privileges from a child?

Tebogo: Well, for me, I believe spanking is completely necessary and not partially. There have been times that my children refused to do what they are told to do, especially my second son, but after getting some hard beatings on his buttock or on his back, it seems to work wonders… I don’t really discipline my children by grounding them or keeping back what I am supposed to give them... that sounds to me like trying to manipulate the child. The truth is that sometimes the child needs to feel the pain of using a strict or something that can make him feel some pain for them to lean their lesson or behave as required…"

Researcher: But don’t you think that often times your children may have pretended to be obeying you or behaved well mainly out of fear that he might be get beaten by you, but would behave differently in your absence, which can make him to live a pretentious life?

Tebogo: Of course, it is possible for children to behave that way sometimes... But that should not stop parents from doing the right thing or beating them with the rod when they need to be disciplined….

Researcher: It is believed that the aim of discipline is to help a child learn, grow or mature. This may take various forms even without the use of physical force or spanking. In other words, could be achieved by using other means of child discipline like, grounding, timeouts, loss of privileges, and of course may sometimes include spanking that is not abusive or excessive. What do you have to say about that?
Tebogo: Well, I am not claiming to know everything... What you are saying actually makes sense... But you must know also that for some children, sometimes it will take spanking or beating aggressively enough for them to know how seriously their wrong behavior is, and to see the need to change their bad behavior, especially the ones that frequently show disrespect for their parents....

Researcher: Many research findings show that although the use of aggressive spanking or any other form of corporal punishment by parents as a discipline method may succeed in making some children obey their parents' instruction promptly, but the negative effects of such practice on some children far outweigh the child's prompt compliance to parental instructions. Short term negative effects of the practice on the child may include poor learning ability at school, because they become frightened and stressed up when beaten repeatedly. The method may also cause the child to become violent towards his or her siblings or even other children, as violence is also a learned behavior... Do you think these finding may be true?

Tebogo: I think it makes sense to say that some children can learn to become violent because of being beaten frequently by their parents as they learn by example. But I must say that it really bothers me to hear you say that beating a child can affect the child’s level of intelligence or cause depression. I stand to be corrected; I believe nowhere in the Bible is there an indication that by disciplining a child with physical punishment there will also be negative consequences.... I personally have some doubts about some of the negative effects of spanking that you have mentioned...

Researcher: Bro. Teboho, I assume you may have been aware that many parents in the church see spanking or other forms of physical punishment of children as effective for them, which seems to be one of the strong reasons they consider it as their main method of child discipline. However, we have heard of and also seen some cases where children (and some pastors’ children) who were brought up by parents who used corporal punishment frequently to discipline them when they did wrong and yet they still turned out as rebellious people. What would you about such a case outcome? Tebogo:
Tebogo: (Tebogo smiles!) That is quite true! I can’t say I have an accurate answer for that. But as you know, there are always exceptions to the rule in life....

Researcher: You indicated in the questionnaire that I sent to many parents in the church including you, that you are aware of some alternative methods of child discipline to spanking that can be effective and yet non-violent. For instance, grounding the child, depriving the child of his privileges temporarily, giving the child timeouts, patiently explaining to the child what he or she did wrong, what is expected of the child.... How well familiar are you with such methods, and how often have you applied them in disciplining your children when they did wrong?

Tebogo: I am aware of some... for instance, grounding the child, withdrawing certain privileges a child.... But I can’t say I have really tried those methods...

Researcher: If I may also ask, do you take the instructions given in the Book of Proverbs about child discipline literally? In other words, do you think that they must be observed or practiced just as instructed even in our contemporary age?

Tebogo: ... I take every aspect of God’s Word literally... I take the instructions in the Book of Proverbs on physical punishment of children literally...

Researcher: mmmm! Well, I believe there are certain things we need to consider when interpreting some scriptures. For instance, as you know, today we do not stone people for committing adultery as it was done in the Old Testament times. Yet it was a law given by God at that time, which we in New Testament era consider differently or as unnecessary... Moreover, it seems right to point out that we cannot use the instructions in the Book of Proverbs on physical punishment of children as excuse to beat or spank children abusively, to the point of harming them physically or psychologically. I don’t think that the Book of Proverbs advocates that parents should administer excessive physical discipline to children...
Tebogo: (Tebogo gives a sigh, and struggled to make a few comments' in response to what the researcher has just pointed out to him, which the researcher feels is not necessary to be relayed here).

Researcher: …Many research findings show that most parents that spank or beat their children harshly were similarly beaten by their own parents or guardian in their childhood. As a result, they see it as a normal thing to do. Moreover, they sometimes find themselves acting out towards their children in the same way their parents use to treat them in their childhood, especially when parents find themselves beating their children out of annoyance or frustration. Have you had a similar experience?

Tebogo: …That might be true… There have been times I found myself reacted violently towards my children like my father use to do when he disciplined us. But that only happens when I have been pushed to the wall by my children’s misbehaviors or stubbornness…. But personally, I don’t believe in blaming others in my past or my parents for my present actions. I like taking responsibility for my actions. So even if I think my parents did abuse me physically by the way they disciplined me, that shouldn’t be an excuse for me to do the same to my children…. I believe it is good to discipline children well or hard enough, because it is for their own good...

Researcher: Where you sometimes traumatized or disturbed psychologically, as a result of the spankings or beatings you experienced by the hands of your parents, in your childhood?

Tebogo: I don’t think anyone really enjoys or likes being beaten or disciplined when they do wrong… I can’t really recall exactly what the experience was like for me or my emotionally reaction then… It may have been traumatic for me sometimes, or may be not...
4.4 Analyzing Data From the Interview with Tebogo

As the interview with Tebogo reveals that, the co-researcher believes that spanking is completely necessary in child discipline, and that aggressive spanking cannot be completely avoided. According to Tebogo, it takes some children feeling the pain of the rod for there to be a change of behavior.

The researcher believes that there is a place for spanking. However, he disagrees with the view that spanking is completely necessary in child rearing, and that aggressive spanking cannot be avoided completely. As mentioned in chapter three, some research studies have shown that, there are other methods of child discipline that are non-violent and yet effective in child discipline, like grounding, time out, loss of privileges. Furthermore, it has been rightly argued that there are people that grew up morally well behaved and yet were not spanked by their parents (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012).

It also seems right to disagree with Tebogo that, the more a child is ill-behaved the more the aggression that needs to be applied, and by so doing the pain will result in a change of behavior. Rather, according to some research findings, such an approach to child discipline can make some children become more rebellious (Capps 1995; Bradshaw 2009). In addition, the fact that some children are being spanked even up to ages 15 and 18, points to the fact that spanking does not work effectively for some children (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; Greven 1991).

From the data collated during the interview that the researcher had with Tebogo (as well as the data from the questionnaires that were filled and returned by 41 parents in the church), most of the parents are aware of some alternatives to spanking, that are non-violent. This is contrary to the researcher’s initial assumption that most parents may not be aware of the non-violent alternatives to spanking, which he assumed may have been one of the reasons many parents in the church used spanking as the main method of
child discipline. This is typical of error that sometimes can be made in research studies, by wrongly coming to the decision that something is true when in reality it is not, referred to as Type 1 Error (e.g., see Saunders et al 2007:612).

Tebogo, as well as many other parents (as revealed by the response on the questionnaires) indicated that they were often spanked, aggressively, by the their parents, in their childhood. And according to many reliable research findings, it often seems natural for adults who were spanked in their childhood to continue the cycle of hard spanking since they were raised that way- Straus 1994; Briere 1992; Doyle 1991).

Tebogo seemed to show signs of living in denial of the fact that his repeated use of physical force to discipline their children may be a sign that they are trapped in the cycle of this form of abuse because he himself was often being disciplined in similar ways by his own parents. He argued that, he doesn’t “believe in blaming others in my past or my parents for my present actions, adding that, “I like taking responsibility for my actions. So even if I think my parents did abuse me physically by the way they disciplined me, that shouldn’t be an excuse for me to do the same to my children…” Also, Tebogo did not think there could be any connection between his choice of this method of discipline and their past physical abuse experience in childhood. Doyle (1990:111) points out importantly that, one consequence of abuse which gives rise to considerable concern is the evidence of a cycle of abuse from one generation to the next. The author (1990:111) also notes that sometimes abuse victims interpret parental behavior as strong, courageous and justified, a model which they grow up to emulate. In addition, different research findings also suggest that, with the passage of time abuse can be seen as a minor problem or justifiable chastisement, sometimes adults simply forget what happened (or the severity of the harsh beatings they use to endure from their parents, etc); in all these instances they will deny having been abused (Doyle 1990:109, 111; Straus 1994).

Furthermore, Greven (Greven in Capps 1995:47) also observes that, “Traumas, both physical and emotional, are often coped with by denial and repression of the feelings
they generate” (Greven in Capps 1995:47). Remarking on the observation made by Greven, Capps mentions also that, “the ability to disconnect feelings from their contexts and to disconnect one’s sense of self from the external world are at the heart of dissociation. It is one of the most basic means of survival for many children, as they learn early in life to distance themselves or part of themselves, from experiences to painful or frightening to bear (Capps 2005:47). Greven (2005:47) goes on to express concern that, such repressed experiences can be reacted in adult life, with the child victim now taking the role of the parent abuser. Alice Miller in her book Thou Shall Not Be Aware writes as well that, parents who beat their children very often see the picture of their parents in the infant they are beating (Miller in Bradshaw 2009:402), which may imply that (consciously or unconsciously) parents are taking revenge on their own child for the hurt they suffered (Bradshaw 2009:402). Therefore it is important for adult users or abusers of corporal punishment of children to be made aware of such negative effects or reaction that may occur in children and later in adult life (more is discussed on denial, repression, dissociation/ detachment, depression, etc, in the pastoral care model in chapter five).

The interview with Tebogo also reveals that Tebogo’s main justification for spanking his children is on biblical basis, as he repeatedly made reference to certain Bible passages that teaches the use of parental physical discipline in child rearing (e.g., see Prov. 13:24; 22:15). This further strengthens the assumption that the issue or abuse of physical punishment among Christians is primarily influenced or motivated by ones theological view than it is by culturally or socially influence (Greven in Straus 1994:69; Bradshaw 2009:404-407).

Furthermore, as evident on the questionnaires given out to parents to fill, they unanimously disagreed with the argument put forward by some scholars that a misinterpretation of some scriptural texts often used by many Christian parents to justify the use of corporal punishment, may serve as a motivation for the abuse of corporal punishment by some parents, and not the Bible itself. This also goes to show the high
regard most parents in the church have for God’s Word and as the final authority for the believer in matters of faith and practice (Bradshaw 2009; Tripps 2008; Pohlmann 2007).

However, many of the parents seem to be oblivion to the fact that the concern here seems to lie with how they interpret what the Bible says about physical punishment of children rather than with God’s Word itself. This also points to the need for parents in the church and other Christian parents to be well educated on the importance of sound or balanced biblical approach to the issue of physical child discipline (Bradshaw 2009; Capps 1995; Pais 1991). Kitchen observed rightly that: discipline as mentioned in Proverbs 13:24 certainly includes corporal punishment, but Proverbs also demands other forms of discipline, which include verbal instruction, reproof, and correction (Prov. 15:5; 29:15), as well as action (2006:297). The author goes on to observe, notably, that:

Our heavenly Father disciplines His children (Prov. 3:12; Deut. 8:5; Heb. earth12:5-11). Earthly fathers reflect His perfect love when they follow His lead and lovingly discipline their children. Such administration of physical discipline is always measured and controlled (Eph.6:4).

The above observation seems to point to the importance of sound or biblically balanced approach to physical child discipline. For our purposes, the key phrase in the above observation by Kitchen is that “Such administration of physical discipline is always measured and controlled (Eph.6:4). This seems to suggest that there is a check and balance that is needed when one is reading the instructions or laws on physical child discipline in the Book of Proverbs that has been provided in the NT, as it is with other moral issues and laws contained the OT. For instance, the law on stoning those caught in adultery to death, injunctions on how to relate with those that have leprosy. Where such check and balance is lacking in the reading of certain texts in the OT, there is a tendency for abuse to occur in relations to certain OT injunctions or laws.

As such, a biblically balanced or sound approach to child discipline is very important for every parent or guardian. In other words, it is important that we learn to interpret OT instructions on corporal punishment of children in the light of NT understanding on the subject or issue. For instance, reading the Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 23:13-14, in the light
of Jesus’ attitude towards children in Matthew 19: 13-15; Mark 10:13-16, and also in the light of Paul’s exhortation to fathers or parents in Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21. It seems right to suggest that applying this principle (as entailed in Scripture) will greatly reduce the incidences of abuse of this style of child discipline. The researcher feels that applying this principle (as entailed in Scripture) will greatly reduce the incidences of abuse of this style of child discipline. More is explored on the concept of balancing OT injunctions on child discipline with NT teaching on the subject in chapter five.

4.5 Interview with Thulani who Experienced Aggressive Spanking

The researcher was more concerned with interviewing male children (boys) in this research. However, the researcher is well aware that girls are also faced with the problem of abusive spanking although in lesser frequency and intensity as boys (male children) (Straus 1994:29-31, 54-55; (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012 ).

Thulani, now age 16, told the researcher that as much as he could remember, he was often beaten by his parents in an aggressive, from when he was about age 6 to age 14. From age 14, his father would only beat him occasionally, but when that happened, it is very hard slaps on his face or knocks on his head. This was mostly from his father. His father feels since that Thulani is now older; he has to be harder on him.

Researcher: you mentioned that you are now 16 years old, and as much as you can remember, you were beaten often by your parents from when you were quite small up to about age 13, after which he would only beat you once in a while, with severe slaps on your face, and hard knocks, on your face. How often were you spanked or beaten when you were between age 7 and 13?

Thulani: I can’t remember exactly, but there was hardly a week that I was not beaten by my dad...
Researcher: Did you sometimes feel like telling lies about what you might have done wrong in order to escape being beaten by your parents?

Thulani: (Thulani gives a big smile) …Because of fear the being beaten when I do something wrong, I sometimes lied about what I have done wrong.... Sometimes that made my father angrier when he discovered that I was lying to him...

Researcher: Would you say then, that sometimes when you also obeyed your parents you did it out of fear, because you didn’t want to be beaten?

Thulani: Yes. Many times I obeyed my parents, especially my father, out of fear, because I know that if I don’t, I would be punished… But sometimes I also obeyed my parents genuinely...

Researcher: Have you sometimes found yourself beating or hitting your siblings when they wrong you?

Thulani: Yes, sometimes I beat my younger brother when he does something wrong to me, that really annoys me....

Researcher: Have you ever felt some kind of anger or hatred towards your father by reason of how repeatedly he beat or spanked you in a way you don’t like?

Thulani: When I am beaten by my dad in a way that I feel is too harsh or painful for what I did wrong, I normally feel very annoyed and not happy... Sometimes I feel like my parents don’t really love me, although they say that they love me...
Researcher: Besides feeling angry towards your dad, and feeling unhappy with yourself, are there any other negative feelings that you experience as a result of how frequent and aggressive your dad spanks or beats you?

Thulani: Yes! Sometimes I feel very depressed, and feel like committing suicide, because I am not happy with the way I am being spanked when I did something wrong…

Researcher: from your response, it seems it is mostly your father that beats you in a way that you feel is too hard or abusive. What about your mother?

Thulani: My mum also beats me sometimes, but not the way my dad does. Sometimes she even argues and quarrels with my father for beating me roughly, especially when he uses a stick or his belt to beat me. But my mum likes shouting at us a lot, and using abusive words. My sisters don’t like it at all …

4.6 Analyzing Data from the Interview with Thulani

The interviews that the researcher had with his co-researchers-Thulani and a few other children in his local church reinforce the validity of the research findings that suggest that frequent aggressive spanking can have negative effects on children (e.g., low self-image, poor learning ability, depression. For instance, Thulani mentioned that, there were times he could not concentrate on his studies and during lectures in the class as a result of the aggressive spanking he received from his father, especially when he was spanked in the morning before going to school: “Sometimes when I had to go to school after being beaten by my parents, I wouldn’t be able to concentrate during lectures, because of how bad I was feeling inside me…” He also expressed that sometimes when he was spanked aggressively, he felt very angry at his father, and sometimes felt depressed by reason of frequency of the experience.
According to an observation made by Briere (1992:123), “Child abuse almost inevitably distorts perception of self, other people, the future, and the world,” adding that, “As a result, many survivors are prone to some combination of guilt, low self-esteem, pessimism and fearful exceptions of the interpersonal environment.” Furthermore, Doyle also observes that, “Physically abused and neglected children often show developmental and intellectual delay especially in relation to language and verbal performance” (1990:111). The author also notes by quoting Lynch and Robert (1982) that, “Emotional and behavioral difficulties which have been recorded in follow-up studies of abused children included lack of confidence, depression, and hostility…” (1990:111).

Thulani mentioned that he felt humiliated most times that he was being spanked. He goes on to add: “especially when I am being spanked in the presence of my friends…” He mentioned also that sometimes he felt as though he was causing his parents much headache, which may have been why he was often spanked, aggressively. In addition, Thulani also said, the experience made him feel that he must be a bad child to be spanked more often than his other siblings were spanked. Thulani’s experience goes to buttress the research findings that suggest that, victims of physical abuse, including excessive spanking may often believe and maintain the belief that their parents were right in hurting them, and that their parents are worth loving despite the maltreatment they frequently experienced by the hand of their parents (Greven in Capps 1995; Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; Pais 1991).

Furthermore, according to ample research studies most children would prefer to be spoken to in a proper way about their offenses or misbehaviors, or to be punished in other ways rather than being beaten and humiliated by their parents. This was also the case with Thulani, who also expressed concerns spanking being the method that his parents often used to discipline of punish him, adding that, he would prefer if he parents used any other method of discipline on him, for instance, scolding, grounding or temporary withdrawal of privileges, rather than being spanked. This goes to support the observations that have been made by various authors that spanking and other forms of
corporal punishment can lead to the child experiencing a feeling of shame, guilt, badness, bitterness. Such an experience over time can also lead to the child repressing his feeling (technically known as detachment or dissociation) as a coping mechanism, or living in denial of the reality of the traumatic experience as a defense mechanism (see Capps 1995:34-36,40, 47-48; Bradshaw 1998:3-10). More will be explored on shame and guilt in chapter five). In view of Thulani’s relayed experiences on the impact of aggressive corporal punishment administration by one’s parents, Straus points out, rightly that, “It is not too farfetched to believe that when a child is hit by someone he or she loves and depends on, it can be traumatizing” (Straus 1994). It is worth noting that, by reason of how attached a child is to his or her parents, he or she may become passive and withdrawn as a way of adapting “to punishment they are unable to run away from” (which is technically referred to as learned helplessness) (Straus 1994; Doyle 1990).

Thulani saw the Bible as instructing parents ‘not to spare the rod’ in child discipline. Capps (1995:xii) in his exploration of the religious roots of child abuse argues that religion is abusive in two fundamental ways: It supports the abuse of children by providing theological legitimation for physical punishment of children, and it more directly abuses children by promoting beliefs and ideas that are inherently tormenting to children. Philip Greven also mentioned in his book Spare The Child: The Religious Roots of Physical Punishment and Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse, examines the religious legitimation that supports parents and other adults’ physical abuse of children, focusing especially on the widely held conviction that children enter this world with a distorted or wayward will (Greven in Capps 1995: 37). Consequently, it is therefore the responsibility of parents to break, or at least, so successfully to challenge and frustrate children’s natural will that they will be able to respond to parental and live in conformity with the superior will of God (Greven in Capps 1995: 38).

Capps (1995:38) goes on to add that, “parents have taken the injunction to break the child’s will as a mandate inflict severe physical punishment, usually with a belt or a hickory stick…” According to Thulani, sometimes his father used belt and other times...
stick to hit him aggressively, adding that, his father claimed he would make sure he chases whatever kind of demon of stubbornness was operating in Thualni, which made Thulani disobedient to him, repeatedly. In his commentary on Proverbs 13:24, Kitchen (2006:296) argued that spanking and other forms of corporal punishment “is a clear part of God’s program for parenting a child to maturity. Therefore, the researcher believes that religious beliefs play a very strong role in the widespread of the practice among fundamentalist Christian adults more than any other influence (e.g. cultural or social influence) (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009). However, as alluded to earlier, it seems right to argue against the proposition that, Bible is be blamed for the widespread and abuse of corporal punishment (Tripps 2008; Longman 111 2006). When there is flawed or poor interpretation of Scriptures in any given area of faith, it has often led to flawed practice or abuse in that area, which as is the case with physical child discipline also. That is why sound theology or sound understanding of what the Bible teaches on child discipline is very crucial for Christian parents, and guardians.

Also, for some children and teenagers whose parents are Christians, using the Bible as justification for spanking them can result in them having a perverted or twisted understanding of God’s “Father” Image as a harsh and unforgiving Father (see Pais 1991:57; Capps 2005:41). For instance, Thulani expressed concerns over his father’s habit of spanking him aggressively, adding, “and yet he would often preach to us that God is a loving and forgiving Father”. This paradox has the tendency to affect how some children respond to spiritual issues. For instance, some can lose interest in going to church, become involved in church actives, participating in family devotion, reading the Bible. Wimberly (2003:28) observes notably that, ‘There is a long standing psychological principle that our relationships with others color our relationship with God.” In other words, there is the likelihood that over time, Thulani could develop a poor understanding of God, as a harsh disciplinarian, if he continues to experience this kind of aggressive spanking by the hand of his Christian parent.
Apostle Paul’s warning to parents Ephesians 6:4, and also in Colossians 3:21, as mentioned earlier in the study, seem as a strong indication that it is not only right for parents to expect respect and total obedience from their children, but that it is also expected of them to be cautious on how they treat their children. There is no doubt that many Christian parents provoke their children to anger or wrath through the use of violent disciplinary measures; especially through the use of corporal punishment. And that some children live day-in, day-out, in such homes with the traumatic impact that such provocation has on them. Parents need to know that children are made in the image of God; as they are also made in God’s image, and that they have rights as human beings, and those rights should be respected or upheld by their parents; as good and caring parents (Capps 1995:63, 86; Pais 1992:71, 72).

4.7 Similarities in the Findings Made During the Qualitative Survey that was Carried out with Co-researchers in the Church

Most of the findings made by the researcher (through the use of questionnaire and interviews) during this study affirm the various existing research findings that have been made regarding the negative effects of corporal punishment, the influence of the literalistic view of Bible passages on corporal punishment from the Book of Proverbs, and the need for there to be good awareness regarding the negative effects of corporal punishment (its excessive form) on children. Some of the similarities are as follows:

Parents that were interviewed have a history of having experienced abusive spanking in their childhood. As a result, it seems normal for them to carry on in the same cycle or with the same method of child discipline, even though many of them acknowledged the fact that such an experience may have been traumatic for them when they were children. Parents also admitted to the fact that the intensity with which they spanked or
hit their children got worse as they grow older. In other words, there is generally the tendency of becoming more and more aggressive as parents keep spanking their children, which seems to affirm the plausibility of the escalation theory on corporal punishment. Escalation theory “assumes that the more parents were themselves hit as children, the more likely they are to be heavy users of corporal punishment on their children, increasing the risk that it will escalate into physical abuse” (Kemp in Straus 1994:84).

Most parents (25 in number) that filled and returned the questionnaires that were given out by the researcher (who spank or hit their children) indicated that aggressive spanking is sometimes necessary. However, Straus contends that spanking is not necessary at all, as it does not work better than other methods of child discipline, and inappropriate because of the harmful effects that accompany the practice (1994:15). The author insists that since there are other alternative methods of child discipline that are as effective as the spanking and yet non-violent (e.g., grounding, time-out), it makes spanking of no relevance. Furthermore, it has been argued that this method of child discipline may get some children comply with parents instruction or will, but in the long run, much harm is done to their self esteem (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; Pais 1991).

Most parents interviewed referred to the Bible as support for the practice and also as an attempt to defend that spanking in part of God’s program for child rearing (Capp 1995; Bradshaw 2009; Pais 1992). The researcher will now go on to also mention some of the similarities noted from the interviews with children:

The two children that were interviewed expressed sadness over the idea of their parents spanking or hitting them violently (aggressively), especially when they felt that the spanking or punishment they received was too much for the offense they committed. Other negative reactions common to most of them includes feeling of guilt and shame, and self condemnation. They also indicated that this method of discipline (aggressive spanking) sometimes arouses feelings of resentment or anger towards their parents, which sometimes made them to behave more unruly towards their parents’ instructions
(Doyle 1990; Wolfe1992, etc). Also common to the experiences of the two children interviewed is the tendency to carry out their anger on their siblings (younger ones) and also the tendency to continue with similar child discipline method as adult (carrying on the same cycle of abuse). As alluded to earlier, in chapter three, children learn most by example (or by what they see their parents or other adults do). In other words, aggressive spanking can teach children become violent towards others also (see Straus 1994:9, 149-160; Briere1992:17-21; http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012).

Interview with Thulani affirmed the research findings that show that, the frequency of spanking decreases as children grew older (the older children become, the lesser they become spanked. But in some homes, although they may be spanked lesser as they grow older in terms of frequency, the spanking that they receive by the hand of their parents as older children becomes more aggressive (see Straus 1994: 160, 161). For instance, Thulani mentioned that, although his father beats him occasionally since he clocked 16 last year, when his father does that, he sometimes used the head of his belt to hit Thulani vigorously.

4.8 Differences in the Findings made during the Qualitative Survey that was carried out with Co-researchers in the Church

There were no notable dissimilarities observed by the researcher in his findings or any observations that seem to disagree with the various suggestions made in the ample literatures that the researcher consulted for the purpose of this research study. Nonetheless, one observation that seems to be different is in relation to the assumption that the percentage of mothers who spank their children is generally known to be higher than the percentage of fathers that spank, as mothers tend to spend more time with their children than their fathers do (Straus 1994:55). According to the data gathered by the researcher, it appears that although the percentage of mothers who spank their children is considerably higher than the percentage of fathers that spank, the percentage of fathers who abusively spank their children is higher. In other words, in the
context of the researcher’s local church, fathers appear to be more abusers of spanking and other forms of corporal punishment.

4.9. Data Accumulated from the Questionnaires that were given out to Fifty (50) Parents in the Church

The purpose of the questionnaires, as mentioned in chapter two, was mainly as a pre-testing method. The answers provided on the questionnaires helped the researcher to effectively select a few parents in the church for a one-on-one interview on the issue of corporeal punishment and its abuse. However, analyses on parents’ responses to the questions on the questionnaire were integrated with the researcher’s analyses on the data collated from the interview with Tebogo (one of the parents that were interviewed). The researcher will not be making analyses on the responses or data gathered by way of the questionnaires, but only present a summary of the responses on the questionnaires (see Appendix B for the questionnaire).

Feedback on question 1: Most of the parents (25 in number) indicated on the questionnaire that spanking is sometimes necessary for children’s upbringing. Some of the parents (9 in number) claimed that it is necessary most times. Four of the parents (4 in number) claimed that it is always necessary. And three of the parents (3 in number) claimed that it is not necessary at all.

Feedback on question 2: Most of the parents (34 in number) indicated that they are fairly aware of the negative effects of aggressive or abusive spanking on some children. Only a few (6 in number) indicated that they are not aware. (In other words, most are not well aware, and hence, educating parents and creating more awareness on the negative effects of aggressive spanking and other aggressive forms of corporal punishment will help in reducing the rate of use or abuse of this phenomenon).
Feedback on question 3: Most of the parents (29 in number) indicated that they had an experience of aggressive spanking in their childhood. Some of them claimed that it didn’t have negative impact on their self esteem. A few parents (9 in number) indicated that they are not sure if it did have any serious negative impact on them. Very few parents (3 in number) indicated that it did affect negatively—affect their self-esteem.

Feedback on question 4: All the parents (41 in number) strongly disagreed with the assumption made by some scholars or authors that the Bible may have in a way motivated the legalizing of the use of corporal punishment.

Feedback on question 5: Most of the parents (21 in number) indicated that they spanked frequently. Few (16 in number) indicated that they sometimes spank their children. Very few (5 in number) indicated that they rarely spanked their children.

Feedback on question 6: Most of the parents (29 in number) indicated that spanking is sometimes effective. Three (3) of the parents indicate that it is always effective. A few of the parents (9 in number) indicated that it is not effective at all.

Feedback on question 7: Most of the parents (34) indicated that they were fairly aware of other alternatives to spanking that are non-violent. A few of the parents (7 in number) indicated that they were not aware. None indicated that he or she was ‘well aware.’

Feedback on question 8: Most of the parents (33 in number) indicated that the researcher could approach them for a one-on-one interview on the subject. Others said “no” (8 parents) (see Appendix B for the questionnaire that was given out to fifty (50) parents in the researcher’s church).

4.10 Interview with a Pastoral Caregiver on the Issue of Aggressive Spanking Practiced by Parents in the Church
The aim was to hear from the caregiver regarding his theological views on the use of corporal punishment by Christian parents and the dominant view that the church represents or supports. It was also aimed at finding out what method of pastoral care has been put in place to deal with the widespread of parents who use or abusive this practice, and also the church’s position regarding the integration of theology and psychology in the church’s approach to pastoral care. While the interview session was flexible, some questions were also pre-designed to help the researcher extract the needed data from the co-researcher; to make the co-researcher see the influence of the literalist view of Scripture on the practice of spanking and its abuse, etc (see the methodology in chapter two for more information on this). The following are excerpts from the data collated from the interview:

Researcher: Sir, please what is your position or view concerning the use of corporal punishment by Christians parents as a method of child discipline?

Pastoral caregiver: I believe corporal punishment has a crucial place in child rearing or discipline, as long as it is for the purpose of correction.... Moreover, Scriptures instructs that parents should discipline their children with the rod when they do wrong…

Researcher: Do you think the Bible passages in the Book of Proverbs on corporal punishment should be taken literally? In other words, do you support the use of physical force in child discipline?

Pastoral caregiver: Of course, I do take every command or instruction in the Bible seriously or just the way it is... I believe that although many of the passages on corporal punishment of children are in the Book of Proverbs...that doesn’t mean they meant to be regarded as proverbial statements. I believe they are clear instructions that must be obeyed just as those given in other books of the Bible. As you know, we in this church believe in the inerrancy of every Scripture or Word of God as written in the Bible, and we do not discriminate between one Book of the Bible and the other as it is with some
Christina churches…. We believe that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that includes both the OT and the NT…

Researcher: Sir, some scholars argue that the Bible in a way seems to motivate physical abuse of children by many Christian parents, by or “legalize” corporal punishment of children. Do you think it is true that some parents have become very aggressive in the way they spank their children as a result of interpreting such passages of Scripture literally? (Other passages in the Book of Proverbs that the researcher quotes/makes references to include Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 29:15).

Pastoral caregiver: I personally do not agree with that assumption.... When the Bible says that children should be physically disciplined for misbehavior, disobedience, etcetera, I believe it does not in any way imply that parents can injure their children or that the more stubborn they are they harder the application of the rod. The problem certainly is not with scriptures but the individual parents that engage in such an abuse... There is no aspect of human behavior or relationship in which there is no abuse of some sort, be it in marriage, ministry, business, etcetera! Even when there are clear instructions in God’s Word on how as Christians should conduct ourselves in any given situation or matter of life, sometimes we still mess up… However, as I tried to explain earlier, for me, which is also the stance for many of our pastors in this church, it doesn’t matter if the biblical instructions on corporal punishment of children are mostly in the Old Testament…. We believe that God’s Word is God’s Word, whether it is in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. We believe in the inerrancy of the entire Word of God, and that takes into account both the Old and the New Testaments Scriptures…

Researcher: Sir, do you think that frequent, aggressive spanking of children can cause some children to develop a distorted perception of God as a Father, for instance, that some might see God as a Father that is very harsh or unforgiving?

Pastoral caregiver: I think it would be wrong to assume that by spanking a child for correction that might impact on the child’s perception of God as a harsh Father… I think
the problems lies with parents not helping their children to understand the role of physical punishment towards helping them to become morally and spiritually developed as taught in Scriptures… When children understand that discipline is actually for their own good and not a sign that their parents hate them, it would be difficult for them to have a wrong perception of God as a harsh or hard Father when they are punished by their parents… Besides, they also need to know that although God is a loving Father, He also does punish sin or wrong doing, and sometimes in a very harsh way…

Researcher: mmmm! Sir, Please I would like to know if the church has a program that has been put in place towards educating parents on how to discipline their children properly and not abusively, for instance, educating them on the negative effects of abusive spanking or beating of children, other methods of child discipline that are not necessarily violent but are proven to be effective method of child discipline.

Pastoral caregiver: Actually, there hasn’t been any program in the church that focuses on dealing with the issue of corporal punishment or its abuse… But we have sometimes taught and charged parents from the pulpit on the need to discipline their children diligently and effectively, just as we try to teach our members on how to live as good Christians, from God’s Word...

Researcher: What is the view of church’s leadership regarding the idea of integration of some relevant contributions from the field of psychology with theology/spirituality in caring for members with problems, like victims of violence, rape, etc?

Pastoral caregiver: I have heard that in some churches it is believed that combining the two together helps the pastors in the church to be able to minister well enough to members with various needs and problems of life… But I am personally not in agreement with that belief, because I have not come across an idea of such integrative pastoral approach in Scriptures…. Of course, we would not stop members that really want to see a psychologist regarding certain kinds of problems that they feel a psychologist might really be of help… I think one of the problems the Church universal
is facing is that many of us are not exercising ourselves enough in using the spiritual resources that we have in Christ to deal with the problems that we face in life as Christians. We feel more comfortable running to the doctor, or the lawyer, or the psychologist for help. In other words, we have more faith in them than in what God’s Word tells us…

4.11 Analyzing the Data from the Interview with Pastoral Caregivers in the Church

The interview with the pastoral caregiver informs (or discloses) that pastoral caregivers in the church read the Scriptures (or Bible passages) on corporal punishment in the Book of Proverbs literally. They believe that even though most of the scriptural texts are found in the Old Testament, they are nevertheless God’s Word, and still valid and applicable today (see Capps 2005; Bradshaw 2009; Greven 1991). Although the researcher only interviewed two pastors, the expression or statement from made by one of the caregivers depicts this proposition, as related earlier:

…For me, which is also the stance for many of our pastors in this church, it doesn’t matter if the biblical instructions on corporal punishment of children are mostly in the Old Testament…. We believe that God’s Word is God’s Word, whether it is in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. We believe in the inerrancy of the entire Word of God, and that takes into account both the Old and the New Testaments Scriptures.

According to the Pastoral caregiver’s responses as also relayed earlier, in the researcher’s church claim that there have been some measures taken towards creating awareness among parents in the church, on the negative effects of aggressive or excessive corporal punishment of children. This is basically through the general proclamation or preaching of the Word from the pulpit on the need for parents to love and care for their children, and to also discipline their children physically when they misbehave. However, it seem right to comment that, dealing with the issue of rampant use and abuse of corporal punishment by parents requires more than preaching only but counseling and pastoral care also. Wimberly (1999:18) observes notably that, although preaching and counseling or pastoral care are interrelated, in the sense of
undermining the negative stories that hinder people from the wholeness that is promised by the gospel, each is different in its approach to achieving this goal. While preaching achieves this goal by focusing on the historical faith and proclaiming it through the sermon and through teaching, pastoral counseling does it through developing depth relationships using psychology and counseling.

Also, Gerkin (1997:88) points out that, “Good pastoral care is not simply talking about the gospel or some general statement of its applicability to life. Rather, good pastoral care embodies the gospel in relationships by speaking to the inner beings of individuals.” Hence, it seems as a logical conclusion to say that, a one-on-one involvement of the pastors with parishioners or members in the context of pastoral care giving and counseling will help pastors in the church to be more effective in solving people’s deeply rooted issues or problems, than proclamation the gospel from the pulpit alone. More will is discussed on pastoral care to parents and children who are faced with this problem in chapter five.

The interview also shows the attitude of pastors in the church to the concept of integration of theology and psychology in the church’s approach to pastoral care. It has been suggested that this attitude or unwillingness to adopt the integrative method of pastoral care arises from fear or belief that psychology is altogether anti-Scripture and anti-Christian faith; therefore the two (psychology and theology) should be incorporated or integrated in the ministry of the church (see Carter and Narromore 1079:11, 12; McMinn 1996:98). As Miles (1999:9) rightly suggests, “Pastors can serve as resources, drawing on the wisdom from Christian tradition and from other fields such as medical ethic or psychology. The pastor is an attentive, active presence with the parishioner in crisis.

Moreover, in dealing effectively with this kind of problem in the church, a more organized and focused approach to caring for parents and children in this kind of problem situation is required. This is because members look up to the pastor as an expert in his field, which is one strong reason they would come to the pastor after they
might have struggled with the problem for some time and find no solution (see Payne 2000:49; Egan 2002:5). Therefore, this interaction with wisdom from Christian tradition and from other fields of social science is essential to help the pastor render effective care to members that are in various kinds of problems.

4.12 Preliminary Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher did relay and analyze the remaining data collated from the interviews with his co-researchers. His interviews with co-researchers helped him to enter their world, and to hear their experiences and views on the issue of spanking or corporal punishment. The researcher was also able to examine the experiences of his co-researchers in the light relevant literature sources that were consulted on the issue of spanking or corporal punishment, its abuse, its negative effects, and the influence of religion or literalist view of Scriptures on corporal punishment has made on the widespread of this practice.

Most of the findings made by the researcher during this research study (the qualitative research survey, by way of giving out of questionnaires and conducting of interviews with co-researchers, agree with the various existing research findings that have been made regarding the negative effects of corporal punishment, the influence of the literalistic view of Bible passages on corporal punishment from the Book of Proverbs. It points to the need for there to be good awareness regarding the negative effects of corporal punishment (its excessive or excessive form) on children.

In the next chapter, the researcher will be examining a pastoral care perspective (or response) for caring for children (victims of this form of abuse or violence) and parents (perpetrators or adult survivors of this form of abuse) who are faced with this problem situation in the local church and beyond the local church. He draws from the wealth of quantitative data gathered (or written) by various well accredited and acclaimed authors,
especially, in the fields of pastoral care, child rearing, psychology, etc, to inform the construction of the pastoral care model that he proposes in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Pastoral Response to the Challenge of Corporeal Punishment and Child Abuse

5.1 Introduction

Constructing a pastoral care model in this research study that is effective towards caring for parents within the church, that struggle with the issue of aggressive (or abusive) spanking is very significant.

As mentioned in the chapter 2, the researcher will be using Pollard’s model of positive deconstruction as the primary model in the construction of this model of pastoral care. Contributions from a few other literature sources are used by the researcher in constructing this model (e.g., Instructing a Child’s Heart by Tedd & Margy Tripp). See chapter two for more details.

5.2 Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is somewhat broad in its implication such that one strict definition can be limiting. As such there are various attempts in defining pastoral care, and none is exhaustive. For our purposes, we will consider a few proposed definitions as to what pastoral care implies or involves. Pastoral care may be defined as “a broad category including many sorts of action, healing, sustaining and guiding individuals, reconciling people to one another, enabling people to co-operate for the well being of human
communities” (Deeks 1987:1). According to Clebsch and Jackle (1967), Pastoral care is said to be that aspect of ministry which is concerned with the well being of individuals and communities. It is care directed towards hearing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose trouble arise in the context of ultimate means and concerns. And according to the Dictionary of pastoral Care and Counseling, it also involves acts of discipline, support, comfort, and celebration, etc.

Heuer has observed that the term ‘pastoral’ has always held special meaning in the ministry of the Christian Church. It is concerned with caring for people, essentially, and classically expressed as: the care of souls; also referred to as ‘the cure of souls’. The term used by the Church was *cura animarum*. This embraced in its understanding of the term *cura* the comprehensive sense which means caring about the wholeness of people (1988:4). Pastoral care has also been described as applied theology or the practical aspect of pastoral theology (Mwaura in Waruta & kinoti 2005: 72). Wimberly (1999:18), in his attempt to point out the relationship as well as the difference between preaching and pastoral counseling or pastoral care observed remarkably that, “They both aim at undermining the negative stories that hinder people from the wholeness that is promised by the gospel.”

However, the approach or method to achieving this is different, in that, while preaching achieves this goal by focusing on the historical faith and proclaiming it through the sermon and through teaching, pastoral counseling does it through developing depth relationships using psychology and counseling. But as the author goes on suggest further, while it is true that communicating the gospel and caring are intricately related from a pastoral and theological perspective, indeed, preaching and pastoral counseling (or pastoral care) are different dimensions and perspectives in practical ministry (Wimberly 1999:18).

Similarly, Gerkin notes that “good pastoral care is not simply talk about the gospel or some general statement of its applicability to people’s lives. Rather, good pastoral care
embodies the gospel in relationships by speaking to the inner being of individuals” (1997:88, 89). The author goes on to stress:

In order that pastoral relationships at every level may open up and invite this level of connection, pastoral leaders need both the skills and the discerning sensitivity to relate to peoples’ inner lives. A well-appropriated knowledge of psychodynamics greatly facilitates the pastor’s success in this area (Gerkin 1997: 89).

The above observation by Gerkin also points to the difference between the pastor as a preacher and the pastor as a pastoral caregiver. However, it is suffices to mention that pastoral care is, of course, not restricted to pastors or church leaders only. It involves the whole church (Mwaura in Waruta & Kinoti 2005: 72-77; Tripps 2008:133-144). In a nutshell, pastoral care can be said to involve shepherding the flock; which takes into account protecting, providing, refreshing, restoring, strengthening the week, guiding, discipline, comforting, and so on.

5.3 Pastoral Care and the Fight against Aggressive Spanking of Children

As mentioned earlier in chapter 3, spanking, which is the most common form of corporal punishment of children, is considered abusive when discipline is excessive or is enough to cause physical or mental harm to a child (Carl 1991: 19; http://www.nospank.net/n-h21.htm. Hodson 2010. Retrieved 22nd July 2010)

In other words, abusive spanking can occur as a result of physical discipline or punishment that is severe and is inappropriate to the child’s age or physical condition, and may cause physical harm or injury to the child. For example, using a belt to hit or bear hand to spank or beat a child (Carl 1991; Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2008).

As Gerkin (1997:25) points out, “Care for the people of God involves care that confronts issues of justice and moral integrity in the life of the people.” The author (1997) also points out notably that: “Our Lord and Savior Jesus hath left us a commandment, which concerns all Christian alike, - that we should render the duties of humanity, or (as the Scriptures call them) the works of mercy, to such as are afflicted and under calamity;
that we should visit the sick, endeavor to set free the prisoner…” It seems right to say that a child that experiences frequent aggressive physical discipline by his or her parent is in some kind of prison condition. Therefore, it is also the role of the pastor to protect children from violence associated with parental physical discipline.

In other words, the pastoral caregiver plays a crucial role in addressing the issue of abusive spanking by warning his members that engage in it to refrain from such practice. Furthermore, it requires more than preaching against such parental abuse of child discipline from the pulpit. It requires making extra practical efforts, like getting involved in the lives and families of those that are faced with this challenge and journeying with them in order to help them overcome the problem.

There are several possible negative effects (as was mentioned in chapter three) that a child might experience as a result of being subject to the traumatic experience of repeated aggressive spanking, and other forms of physical punishment by loved ones. However, the researcher would like to now briefly delineate a few of them that are of utmost concern to the researcher in this chapter: shame, learned helplessness, depression, and disassociation.

5.3.1 Shame and Aggressive Spanking

It has been observed that shame is one of the enduring feelings of abused children. Firstly, there is the shame associated with being bad and in need of punishment. Beating, scolding and sending to bed without supper are all common ways of punishing misbehavior (Doyle 1990:12). According to the straightforward logic of children, if they are severely beaten, berated or locked in a room without food it must be because they are very wicked (Doyle 1990:12). Wimberly (1999:11) defines shame as “feeling unlovable or feeling that one’s life has a basic flaw in it. The author (1991:71) also suggests effectively elsewhere, that people with shame “need considerable time in caring relationships before they are able to respond to any idea that God might care for them.”
Ramsay makes a note worthy observation to buttresses this point, which further indicates how devastating shame can be to an individual psychological well being than even guilt: “Shame is more primitive and punitive than guilt. In guilt, one’s behavior, not one’s identity, is questioned and repair seems possible. With shame the sense is not ‘I have acted badly, but ‘I am bad.’ The wound of shame is not external but internal…” (Ramsay in Glaz & Mossner 1991: 112). Therefore, pastoral care givers need to make parents understand this, that there is toxic or harmful feeling of shame that some children internalize when they experience frequent aggressive spanking, which can affect their psychological well being negatively.

5.3.2 Learned Helplessness and Aggressive Spanking

‘Learned helplessness’ is associated with despair. It is a term coined by psychologist, Martin Seligman. He demonstrated by laboratory experiments on rats and dogs that if animals are prevented from escaping they will eventually remain immobile even when given a real opportunity to escape. In further tests with human beings Seligman showed that when people believe that they have no control over the outcome of a response they will behave helplessly even when they do in fact have control (Seligman 1975 in Straus 1994). Also see Doyle (1990:14). Regaining a sense of control over one’s own life will be difficult when someone has, in the past, learned that he can exercise no or very little influence over his life (Wolfenstein Kebler and Brom 1992:168). Some people become passive and withdrawn as a way of adapting “to punishment they can’t escape from (Garbor in Straus 1994).

As Straus (1994:182) has rightly observed, “it is not too farfetched to believe that when a child is hit by someone he or she loves and depends on, it can be traumatizing.” However, by reason of the attachment the child has for his or her parents, even for some children in their teenage years, many of them might have become passive and withdrawn as a way of adapting “to punishment they can’t escape from (technically referred to as learned helplessness). In other words, they resolve to repressal and denial as coping mechanisms.
5.3.3 Depression and Aggressive Spanking

Straus (1994:68) argued that, social scientists have paid little attention to the possibility that hitting children causes depression in them as adults. The author goes on to stress that, actually, until recently, there has been no theory explaining why such a relationship is even possible. Straus also made reference to Greven’s theory, which holds that “depression often is delayed response to the suppression of childhood… from being physically hit and hurt…by adults…whom the child loves and on whom he or she depends for nurturance and life itself” (Greven in Straus 1994: 69).

According to Straus (Straus 1994: 69), Greven’s theory and his most compelling evidence involve the religious tradition of Calvinism and evangelical Protestantism. The author also made mention of the considerable evidence provided by Greven that “Melancholy and depression have been persistent themes in the family history, religious experience, and emotional lives of Puritans, evangelicals, fundamentalists and Pentecostals for centuries” (Straus 1994: 69), Further, Greven also provides extensive historical proof on the regularity and severity of corporal punishment among these devout Protestants (Greven in Straus 1994: 69). The researcher agrees with Straus (1994:10), who notes that, the application of spanking on children is common among many Christians so much so that even when a victim or an adult survivor of this phenomenon is suffering from its negative effects (e.g., depression, compulsive aggression, and so on) spanking may not be considered as possible factor.

5.3.4 Disassociation and Aggressive Spanking

Another prominent psychological effect of physical abuse on children that is worth noting is dissociation. According to Briere (1992:36), disassociation may be defined as a defensive disruption in the normally occurring connections among feelings, thoughts, behavior, and memories, consciously invoked in order to reduce psychological distress. Greven (Greven in Capps 1995:47) also points out that: The ability to disconnect
feelings from their contexts and to disconnect one’s sense of self from external world is at the heart of the process of dissociation. It is of the most basic means of survival for many children, as they learn early in life to distance themselves, or parts of themselves, from experiences too painful or frightening to bear.

It has also been pointed out that, traumas, both physical and emotional, are often coped with by denial and repression of the feelings they create. Such repressed experiences can be reacted in adult life, with the child victim now taking the role of the parent abuser (Greven in Capps 1995:47-48). Kebler and Brom (1992:167) made similar observations, and went to add that, traumatic experiences in childhood are supposed to remain a part of the individual personality. They result in defenses that guard against anxiety and aggression, but at the same time they are harmful to the individual’s well-being under and after severe stress (also see Bradshaw 2009:403).

And lastly, it is important to note that although the traumatic impact of violence on children by parents and loved ones in the name of physical child discipline is often psychologically; it can also have negative impact on a child spiritually. The following observation by Bradshaw is noteworthy: The majority neglected and traumatized children will never become physically violent. However, without help from concerned adult, their wounds will result in the death of their spirit rather than bodies. They will be vulnerable to and set up for another kind of violence-ideological violence (Bradshaw 2009:95).

5.4 Scripture Abuse and Abuse of Corporal Punishment of Children

As alluded to earlier in this research study, Bradshaw observed that, “It is primarily the fundamentalist sects who believe in the divine revelation of every word of the Bible and who therefore accepts a literal reading of the book of Proverbs as divine truth. Consequently, much physical abuse does occur in fundamentalist congregations” (2009; Greven in Straus 1994). The researcher believes that every aspect of the Bible including the book of Proverbs is divine truth. Nonetheless, Scriptures, though divine
truth and inerrant, is subject to wrong interpretation (or misreading) and application. This has led to abuses such as racial and skin color discrimination - as was the case during slave trade movement, and also during apartheid in South Africa. Other areas of abuse that may arise from abuse of Scriptures include husband-wife relationship, parent-child relationship (e.g. the aspect explored in this research study), pastor-laity relationship, etc (Pohlmann 2009; Waruta & Kinoti 2005; Wimberly 1999; Capps 1995).

Certain factors come into play where the problem of misinterpretation and application of a given bible text, concepts, or doctrine, is concerned, as was mentioned briefly in chapter 1. For instance, wrongly translated text of Scripture from the original language or twisted translation (as it is the case with some English Bibles); taking a text of Scripture out of context-not taking its immediate context; collapsing contexts (that is, when two or more unrelated texts are treated as if they belong together); misquoting of Scriptures; ascribing literal meaning to figurative textual assertions, etc (e.g., see Sire 1980: 32-74; Pohlmann 2007: 19-13, 104-112).

In their book The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse, Johnson and VanVonderen (1991) stressed that one of the factors prevalent in spiritually abusive system is that, “Scripture is employed to prove or to bolster the agenda of the person using it. This is called “proof-texting.” Proof-texting occurs when someone has a point he wants to prove. So he finds a verse to do so, even if it means stretching or ignoring the original issue about which the verse was written or the context in which the verse is found. The authors went on to observe that in order to minimize the possibility of misusing Scripture; it is helpful to ask several questions, which include the following:

To whom was it written? What kinds of problems or issues were facing the people being addressed? What did it mean to the original readers? Is this a timeless truth, or a specific situation for a specific situation? (Johnson & VanVonderen 1991:83).

Pohlmann (2007:105) also alerts his readers not to forget that Scripture can also be abused. The author (2007:105) stressed that “Satan quoted Scripture in order to get Jesus put His life at risk and act irresponsibly. He even quoted correctly from the
messianic Psalm 91….” Polhmann (2007:105) goes on to note that, “Jesus counters the incorrect use of Scripture with the correct use of Scripture….”

One of the Bible texts that has led to wrong theological or worldview within the Pentecostal circle is Isaiah 45:11, which is largely due to translation error on the part of King James Version of the English Bible, and failure to examine the immediate context of a text of Scripture. The researcher has heard many of his Pentecostal brethren and pastors quote Isaiah 45:11 as rendered in King James Version, a version most Pentecostals claim is the authentic and most reliable translation.

In other words, through prayer, we can command God concerning what we want Him to do for us, if we just have enough faith and live a life that is pleasing to Him. The text reads thus: “Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and His maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the works of my hand command ye me” (Isaiah 45:11). As mentioned earlier, this seems to be one of the clear cases of translation error in the KJV, and this in turn has led many Christians into faulty doctrines or theological views. NIV seems to present a better and closer translation to the original Hebrew text of Isaiah 45:11, and which seems to make more sense: “This is what the LORD says—the Holy one of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hand?”

As Johnson and VanVonderen (1991:83) have observed, “…Even a brief look at the context of the passage being studied would reveal that the point someone is trying to “prove” by the text is completely different than the original intention of the writer.” The difference between the two transliterations seems obvious. The rendition in NIV seems to the researcher as an interrogatory expression, while the KJV rendition seems to portray an authorization to command or order God concerning the works of His hand. And of course, both renditions would impact on readers differently.

Polhmann (2007:106) also made useful observation on one of the Bible passages in KJV where due to translation error, the rendition seems to suggest that Scriptures
promote or advocate promote fatalism. KJV renders Romans 8:28 as follows: For all things work together for good to them that loved Him and are called according to His purpose. The author points out that, the text, as has been corrected in most translations actually reads: “For God works in all things together for good to them that love Him and are called according to His purposes.” Pohlmann (2007:106) contends that: “The first translation is an expression of fatalism!” He went on to observe that:

We know that ‘all things ‘do not necessarily work together for good. We are not expected to surrender our lives to the fate of event and hope that it all ‘pans out’ well… The first verb in verse 28 is in the third person singular. It is God who is to take all the knock of life and curved balls of Satan, and in His sovereign plan, still keeps the plans and purposes of the ages intact (Pohlmann 2007:106).

In addition, it seems to the researcher that KJV the focus on things happening of their own accord together for our good without God being the one orchestrating or working them out of our good. However, the second translation puts God in the center of the event, as the one working all things together for our good, that is, for the good of His children-those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. As Pohlmann (2007:104) rightly points, sometimes the conclusions Christians make from reading or understanding the Bible can affect lifelong practices in a serious way. In other words, our theological viewpoints or beliefs greatly impact on our practice or way of life. Therefore, it is very important that, “The text of Scripture in its original language needs to be established in a translation that we can understand (Pohlmann 2007:107). However, we will not delve into the subject of hermeneutics as that would be beyond the scope of this research study. There are sufficient materials on the subject (e.g., concordances, word studies, Bible dictionaries) to help with most textual problems that may be encountered (by Bible readers).

Furthermore, Pohlmann (2007:19) identifies three critical issues that the researcher will like to also mention, when it comes to the subject of interpretation and application of Scriptures. The first concerns what the Bible says. Here, there is very little difficulty reading what the Bible as to say. Secondly, the more tricky issue is why these statements were made. This is far more difficult. Thirdly, the expected behavior pattern of the reader today. This is by far the more difficult and complex question crucial to
these three important questions that we need to ask when it comes to hermeneutics, we also have to decide or discern what is prescriptive, what is normative and what is illustrative in Scriptures. In other words, besides the more clear normative or injunctions, for instance, the timeless and universal command to believers: ‘do not commit murder’, ‘do not commit adultery’, ‘love the Lord your God with all heart, with all your soul, and with all your might’, it is important to always seek to interpret scriptural injunctions correctly, as it does impact on what we practice as Christians.

Therefore, following from above observations, it can be inferred that, the common attitude or argument by many fundamentalist Christians to use some selected Bible passages as justification for rampant use or abuse of physical child discipline may also arise from poor hermeneutical approach to certain scriptural injunctions. For instance, reading certain passages in the Book of Proverbs as normative or prescriptive when they are actually illustrative or figurative (e.g., see Prov. 13; 24; 19: 18; 23:13-14).

**Biblical Literalism and Abuse of Physical Child Discipline:**

It would be useful to make a few important remarks here about the influence of biblical literalism on the use and abuse of physical child discipline. Biblical literalism, simply put, is about the belief that “The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word” (Ellison and Sherkat in Capps 1995:60) (see also Bradshaw 2009:405; Capps 2005:59-61). It is also important to reiterate that, “It is primarily the fundamentalist sects who believe in the divine revelation of every word of the Bible and who therefore accepts a literal reading of the book of Proverbs as divine truth,” as such, “much physical abuse does occur in fundamentalist congregation” (Bradshaw 2009:405). Greven made a similar observation also (Greven in Straus 1994).

**Stoning a Stubborn and Rebellious Child to Death Publicly:**

Deuteronomy 21:18-21 reveals what seems as a very frightening moral law regarding parental discipline. It stipulates very clearly how to deal with a child or a son that is persistently stubborn and rebellious and would not listen to or obey his parents (father or mother) despite repeated chastisement. The passage reads as follows:
(18) If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, who, and who when they have chastened him, will not heed them, (19) then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city....(21) Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; (a) so shall you put away evil form among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear (Deut 21:18-21 NKJV).

The researcher is yet to come across a Christian parent that has literarily obeyed the moral law given in the above quoted Bible passage. which stipulates that a rebellious son should be stoned to death publicly. This seems to suggest to the researcher that even those that claim they take every text of Scripture literally and practice it fully as written are actually selective in their claims. It seems right, then, to infer that, if many parents who maintain a literalistic view of every text of Scripture do not see the need read to the above passage literally or apply it literally, then their worldview or theological position on physical child discipline based on some passages in the Book of Proverb is questionable. It seems to suggest to the researcher that their view on physical child discipline contains an element of error and needs to be positively deconstructed, and a new concept of child discipline that is biblically balanced is constructed.

5.5 A Call to Positive Deconstruction

As mentioned earlier in the study, the process of positive deconstruction involves four elements: identifying the underlying worldview, analyzing it, affirming the elements of truth which it contains, and, lastly, discovering the error in the worldview. For our purposes, the researcher would like to define positive deconstruction as follows:

The science and art of identifying the underlying (philosophy) of a given worldview/theological view, by thoroughly analyzing it in the light of balanced or sound approach to interpretation of Scriptures on the subject; affirming the truth contained in the worldview but more importantly; discovering the errors in it, and helping parents and guardians discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying worldview they have absorbed concerning physical child discipline (aggressive spanking), and the need
to adopt a better view. Having said that, the researcher will now go on to review and adapt relevant concepts from the four elements involved in the process of positive deconstruction.

i. Identifying the underlying worldview

Pollard (1997:48) points out that, most people seem oblivious of the worldviews they have absorbed, which underlie their beliefs and values at present. That is the reason it is so uncommon for people to articulate or express a worldview. The author observes that usually they will simply communicate “a belief or live in a certain way, without knowing or even thinking about the worldview from which their belief or behavior derives.” In other words, there are those parents that do not have a good understanding of why they adopt the style of aggressively spanking their children. Many do it because it is the prevailing culture or theological view regarding child discipline, and others because they may have heard other Christians or preachers say that God commands and expect parents to spank their children in order to correct their wrong doing, etc.

Pollard (2007: 49) goes on to also observe that most Christians are not usually aware of the worldviews underlying the ideas of people we are trying to reach or render care to. As a result we often work at a surface level, reacting to individual statements or behavior instead of endeavoring to respond to an underlying philosophy. The author (2007:47) stresses that, it is very important that we first set about understanding what it is that the people we want to reach or render care to believe. We must do everything we can to understand their worldview. Only then shall we know what kinds of questions to raise with them.

Following from the above observation by Pollard, it is important for a pastoral caregiver who seeks to help parents that are struggling with the use and abuse of spanking and other forms of corporal punishment as well, to have enough information regarding the various views on the phenomenon-both the views that favor (or support) corporal
punishment of children and those that disfavor (or oppose) it. (see chapter three for the various views on corporal punishments of children). In addition, the pastoral caregiver needs to be theologically balanced concerning the subject. In other words, having a good knowledge and understanding of what the Bible teaches on the subject, both in the OT and NT; and being able to help parents see why they need to look at the subject in the lenses of the NT rather than make their conclusion based on the OT only.

Jesus in most scenarios when confronted with issues relating to certain laws or stipulations contained in the OT often saw or interpreted them differently. He often brought new light or deeper and better understanding to issues or subject in ways that were not considered before. For instance, in the account where a woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus to see what His judgment on the matter would be, Jesus gave the woman’s accusers what the researcher would consider as “a shocker of their life” when he handled the situation totally different to what they expected of Him (Jn. 8:3-11). So also, when Jesus was approached (or questioned) regarding the keeping of Sabbath, He brought a new light to the subject (e.g., see Mat. 12:1-8, 9-13; Mk. 3:15). Similarly, NT writers, as they were moved or inspired by the Holy Spirit, saw many of the OT events, prophesies, writings, etc, differently (e.g., see Mat. 1:22,23/Isa.7:14). Therefore Longman 111 (2006:64) seems to be correct when he remarked: “It seems like the appearance of Jesus led to a deeper understanding of the message of the OT. In the light of Jesus’ death and resurrection, his followers read the OT in a new way.

This, of course, does not imply that Jesus or any NT writers questioned the authority or authenticity of OT Scriptures or utterances as contained in the OT, as was mentioned in chapter one. As Pentecostals, we believe that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as Apostle Paul asserts or points, and by that he was referring OT Scriptures (see 2 Tim 3:16). As it has been observed, our Lord Jesus did not set aside the commandments of the OT. Rather, He engaged in a searching investigation of the scriptural meaning and its original intent, and from this vantage point aplied it in a
deeper and broader way than has been done before him (e.g., see Mat 5:21-43 and 9:3-9) (Longman 111 2006; Pohlmann 2007; Pollard 1997).

Coming back to the Pollards description of the process of positive deconstruction, the author (1997:50) emphasized that the first task of positive deconstruction therefore is identifying the underlying worldview. As also alluded to earlier, the underlying worldview behind the rampant use and abuse of corporal punishment of children seems to be the popular proverbial expression ‘spare the rod and spoil the child.’ This in turn seems to be based on certain selected Bible texts from the book of Proverbs (e.g., Prov. 13:24; 19; 18; 23:13, 14). It was also mentioned that use of this form of child discipline is prevalent amongst fundamentalist Christians, and that this owes largely to their literal view of scriptures on CP as mostly found in the Book of Proverbs (Bradshaw 2009; Greven in Straus 1994; Capps 1995).

ii. Analyzing the worldview

Once we have identified a particular worldview, we now can go on to the next process, which is to analyze it. In essence, we have to ask, ‘Is it true? (Pollard 2007:52). To do this Pollard (1997:53) employs the three standard philosophical tests of truth namely-the coherence, correspondence and pragmatic tests. This implies that one basically asks three questions. Does it cohere? (That is, does it make sense?) Does it correspond with reality? Does it work?

According to the Pollard (1997:54), “It is important that we use all three of them, because each one on its own is not sufficient. If a statement fails one of these tests, we know that it cannot be true. If it passes just one or two, it is not true. It needs to pass all three.” As the author (1997:54) rightly argues, not everything that coheres is true, not everything that corresponds with the reality that we see is necessarily true, and not everything that works is true. For instance, “For thousands of years people believed that the Sun orbits the earth. That is what they saw. It corresponded with their perception of reality. But it was not true” (Pollard 1997: 55). As we ask these three questions, we can
look for elements of truth that we may affirm as well as error that we can discover (1997: 55).

**The question, does it cohere?**

This question derives or obtains from the theory that maintains that, if a statement is true, it will cohere. In other words, truth will make sense (Pollard 1997:53).

One would ask, does the worldview ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’ cohere or make sense? Some parents argue that it makes sense, especially those that are in favor of the use of corporal punishment of children or have the culture of spanking of children. This was also the position of some of the parents that the researcher interviewed in the course of this research study from his local church. Others, of course, argue that it doesn’t make sense. In the researcher's opinion the view seems to make sense, especially when considered only in the context of certain selected texts of the Bible-from the Book of Proverbs (e.g., see Prov. 13:24).

But when we consider this worldview in the context of certain other Scriptures that reveal that it is actually formative instructions that informs and transforms a child's heart, and lead to behavioral changes, we see that spanking on its own is the solution to behavioral change in children. In other words, instructing them daily and consistently from God's Word, rather than focusing mainly on the use of physical force or corrective discipline, leads to good morals or change of behavior (e.g., Prov. 4:1-13, 23; Prov. 5:1- Eph 6:4, 2 Tim 3:15) (Tripp 2008; Bradshaw 2007; Pais 1991).

**The question, does it correspond with reality?**

This question originates from the theory that says that if a statement is true, it will correspond with reality (Pollard 1997:53).
As delineated in chapter 3 of this study, it seems evident that the negative effects of aggressive corporal punishment of children far outweigh that the positive outcomes of the phenomenon, especially when we consider its long term impact on the psychological well being of the child (Straus 1994; Capps 1995; Bradshaw 2009). Also, many who grew up in homes were very strict disciplines home and yet grew up rebellious, and displayed certain maladaptive behaviors.

Furthermore, it has been observed that even in instances that children who were brought up under harsh physical punishment grew up to be morally upright, it was not so much the beating and spanking that did the work but other factors like love, good communication (see Straus 1994; Larzelere 1986; Bradshaw 2009). In other words, it seems right to argue that a view that encourages aggressive corporal punish of children failed this correspond test, and therefore does not cohere with reality.

The question, does it work?
This is a statement that derives from the theory that says that, if a statement is true, it will work. That is to say, truth enables us to function, whereas error does not (Pollard 1997. 53).

The point here is, that aggressive spanking seems to work according to the claims made by many parents that administer it to their children, that does not necessary make the worldview view, ‘spare the rod spoils the child’, true. In fact, in many cases, it may seem to yield the immediate result that parents desired, but in the long run can cause harm to the child in various ways. For instance, some have argued that spanking their children aggressively sometimes works for them, as it makes children obey their instructions instantly. But that is sometimes achieved at the expense of the child’s well

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being psychologically. Moreover, such coerced or forced obedience might develop fear in a child, falsehood, low self esteem (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009) (see chapter 3 for more data on negative effects of aggressive spanking).

iii. Affirming the truth

“The process of deconstruction recognizes and affirms the elements of truth to which the individuals already hold, but also helps them to discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying world views they have absorbed” (Pollard 1997: 44).

The idea of this element in the process, as alluded to earlier, is for us to affirm the truth we have identified in the worldview that we seek to deconstruct. Pollard (1997:55) observed rightly that: “we are uncomfortable to admit that the views or beliefs other people hold that are at variant with what we hold to be the truth might contain some truth or measure of truth.” The author (1997:56) points out importantly that, “If we are not going to push ourselves into error, we must affirm truth wherever it is knowing that ultimately all truth is God truth and all worldview contain elements of this truth.”

Pollard (1997: 55) went on to cite as an example that, around the beginning of the twentieth century, the church temporary lost its social consciences. This, according to him, was “partly due to her reaction against the theological liberalism, which reduced the value of the Bible and increased the importance of social actions. The author goes on to make the following notable observation:

Instead of just rejecting part of the theological liberalism (the devaluation of the Bible), many Christians rejected all its insights and consequently rejected social action. If only we had affirmed the elements of truth that liberalism maintained, we should not have thrown out the social action baby with the biblical-criticism bathwater (Pollard1997:55-56).

Following from the above principle or rule of positive deconstruction (affirming the truth in the worldview), the researcher recognizes and affirms that the worldview “spare the
rod and spoil the child” (which seems to push many Pentecostal-fundamentalist Christian parents into the use of aggressive spanking of children) is not all-together erroneous. After all, many of the parents that the researcher interviewed argued their point based on what they believe certain Bible texts teach on physical discipline. For instance, they argued that the Bible says that, if a parent beats a child with the rod he will not die (see Prov. 23:13-14). As such, aggressive spanking does not kill a child, but helps the child become better morally and spiritually. Some parents that were interviewed based their argument, unknowingly, on the Bible text in the Book of Proverbs that says “The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward belly” (Prov. 20:30KJV) (e.g., Mr Tebogo). The Contemporary English version (CEV) of the text reads: A severe beating can knock out all the evil in you.

Longman 111 (2006:386), commenting on the same Bible text argues that, “The proverb claims that physical punishment does more than produce outward conformity; it also helps transform the heart. Furthermore, some parents that were interviewed by the researcher (e.g., Mr Tebogo) referred the researcher to their own personal experiences growing up, how the use of aggressive spanking and other forms of physical child discipline by their parents helped them to them to become better people in life, well disciplined, and God fearing.

That is why the researcher disagrees with assumption that spanking is altogether bad, (Straus 1994). In other words, that position seems to assume that there is no element of truth in what the Bible says about the use of physical child discipline in child rearing. He seems not to recognize or affirm that there is an element of truth in the practice of corporal punishment of children. Furthermore, as mentioned in chapter 3, Straus (1994) condemns the use of any form of corporal punishment, including what may be considered as moderate and reasonable physical child discipline, and advocates the use of non-violent methods of child discipline only, like timeout, loss or withdrawal of privileges, grounding, or reasoning. Bradshaw (2009) hold a similar position.
By condemning the use of any form of physical child discipline completely, it very difficult and sometimes impossible for some parents that spank their children to want to give a listening ear to their critics, let alone wanting to desist from the practice. Therefore, it is important to affirm the truth in a worldview, as Pollard has suggested. In other words, for an example, since the Bible seems to advocate the use corporeal punishment as a necessary and effective method of child discipline for corrective purposes (e.g., Prov. 20:23; 23:13-14), corporal punishment cannot be said to be completely bad. Rather, it is its abuse that is bad (Dobson in Bradshaw 2009:406; Longman 111: 2006:291-292; Kitchen 2006).

But very importantly, we must also discover or ascertain the errors contained in this worldview (or theological view). For instance, the assumption that beating will chase out the devil or evil in the child; that the more stubborn the child is the more he or she needs to be beaten; the assumption that the use of the rod alone is sufficient for teaching a child morality or righteousness; or the assumption that aggressive use of the rod or spanking does not have any negative effects on the child (Bradshaw 2009; Straus 1994; Pais 1992) (see Chapter three for more details on the negative effects of this phenomenon). The errors contained in this worldview on child discipline also becomes evident when the view is scrutinized in the light of NT teachings or views on child discipline, as we will be further discussed in the next section.

iv. Discovering the error in the worldview

According to Pollard (1997:56), this is the aim in the process of positive deconstruction, which is, helping them to discover for themselves the inadequacies of the underlying world views they have absorbed. It is, “Only then shall we be able to help people see the error for themselves so they become uncomfortable and begin looking at Jesus” (Pollard 1997:56). When we analyze or investigate a worldview using the three criteria of truth, we are not only attempting to affirm truth, but also to discover those errors. We may find that a particular worldview is not coherent, or that it doesn’t correspond with reality, or that it will not work, in fact, any combination of these (Pollard 1997:56).
Therefore, in this section, the researcher will discuss the error contained in the theology or biblical interpretation that supports or advocates the use of aggressive spanking or other aggressive forms of corporeal punishment by Christian parents. This will be done by scrutinizing the view in the light of a balanced approach to Scriptures on the issue. In other words, the researcher will examine what the OT says about the use of the rod in physical child discipline in the light of a NT understanding of the subject.

In the course of the interviews that the researcher had with parents and pastoral caregivers in the church, it seems that from the responses he got that many parents in the church who admit to spanking their children repeatedly and aggressively are driven by the worldview that says ‘spare the rod and spoil the child.’ As Bradshaw (2009:405) points out, the saying “spare the rod and spoil the child” is so commonly used amongst Christian parents that some actually think it is a quote from the Book of Proverbs. The author (2009:405) also went on to mentioned that, this best known saying used by many parents in support of the use of corporal punishment of children “Is not from the Bible at all, although it has familiar proverbial ring” but from “from Samuel Butler’s long poem Hudibras, written in 1664.”

It is worth noting further that what the Bible actually says in the Book of Proverbs is “He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him early (Prov. 13:24 KJV). It also says: “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15) (Bradshaw 2009:405). However, many Christian parents seem to interpret these passages in the Book of Proverbs’ as implying that if you not use the rod (spank or beat the child) a child will be spoiled.

It would be noted that Jesus’ attitude to children was that of kindness, care, and love (Mat. 19:13-15; Mk.10: 13-16). By this, Jesus seemed to have set a new course for parents-child relationship, just as He did regarding many other aspects of the moral law or regarding what was understood to be the stipulations in the Law of Moses (e.g., working or doing acts of mercy like healing on Sabbath Day, the stoning of those caught
in adultery, how to treat those that are unclean or leprous). Therefore, the researcher agrees with Bradshaw (2009:405) that: “Nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus approve of the infliction of pain upon children by the rod or any other such implement, nor is he ever reported to have recommended any kind of physical discipline of children to any parents.

As alluded to earlier in the study, Pollard has rightly observed that we too can be wrong, as both personal experience and church history teach us, which calls for genuine humility as Christians. It also implies that we must recognize our fallibility, and constantly reassess what we believe (Pollard 1997:91) Dr. Martin Pohlmann in his book *Equally Good News: The Gospel I Never Knew*, makes an observation that buttresses this point:

> We, in South Africa, still live with the very real memory of how several Christian denominations and congregations were entrenched in racism in their faith and practice. They claimed to build this doctrine and practice on the Scriptures. We can now openly talk of how Jesus Christ condemned this in His own Church. Many people have publicly and privately confessed their wrong in this and have sought forgiveness (Pohlmann 2007:9).

Therefore, the researcher thinks that it is important that we as Pentecostal parents, despite our experiences of Holy Ghost baptism, infilling of the Holy Spirit, tongue speaking, “fire baptized”, and our claims of having all our doctrines right and straight from God through the fresh unction of the Holy Ghost, can also be guilty of abuse of the practice corporal punishment. Having established that there is the need for parents and guardians who hold to this view to deconstruct (take apart) the error that the worldview contains, and to replace it with something better, there is also a clarion call for a biblically balanced approach/attitude to child discipline within the researcher’s church and other Pentecostal churches in South Africa where there is this similar problem situation.

### 5.6 A Call to a Biblically Balanced Approach to Physical Child Discipline
As analyzed in the previous section, although there are some elements of truth in the worldview that seems to greatly influence the use and abuse of corporal punishment of children including spanking, it also contains error. The error contained in it seems to be the driving force the abuse of this form of physical child discipline. This abuse also owes to an imbalance or poor view of Scriptures in the OT that are used to support this phenomenon. This has resulted in some critics claiming that corporal punishment of child is altogether bad, and must be banned completely due to the alarming negative effects associated with its application. Therefore, it is important for pastoral care givers, Christian parents and guardians in the church to be well aware of or be acquainted with an approach to child discipline that is holistic, and biblically balanced.

One of the several Bible text or verses that we identified in the Book of Proverbs, that seems to be mostly misconstrued (misinterpreted) and misapplied to advance the use of aggressive spanking by parents and other adults on children in the name of child discipline is Proverbs 23:13, 14: Don’t withhold discipline from young people, if you strike them with the rod, they will not die. (14) Strike them with a rod, and you will extricate their lives from Sheol (Prov. 23: 13, 14). Many parents refer to this text as scriptural support for the use of the rod and force in administering physical discipline. On the contrary, Longman 111 (2006:426), argues rightly that the passage “is not talking about rigorous beating, but rather something equivalent to a spanking.” The author (2006:291) also stressed elsewhere (in his commentary on Proverbs. 13:24), that although physical discipline is implied or in mind since the rod is mentioned, however, “One should not think of severe beatings”

Furthermore, Longman 111 (2006:506), in his commentary on Proverbs 29:15, stress that, although “Physical punishment in the service of wisdom education is a common theme in Proverbs,” however, “With the strong emphasis on emotional moderation throughout the book, this teaching certainly does not encourage parental abuse” (2006:506). Nonetheless, it is also important to note that the other extreme is to assume the position of withholding every form of physical discipline from a child. This fact expressed so well in the following observation:
In this day of appropriate concern for destructive and hateful physical abuse of children, there is an understandable hesitation about proverbs like this one that advocate physical discipline. Nonetheless, as is typical in such instances, there has been an unequally harmful countertendency to refrain from any kind of verbal or physical correction to behavior, which is arguably not helping children either (Longman 111 2006: 292).

The author suggest correctly that the writer of Proverbs “would understand reluctance to apply discipline, whether physical or verbal, to be child neglect and child abuse” (Longman 111 2006:291) (see Prov.13:24). The author in the above observation has raised a very salient point. As rightly remarked, because of the prevalent of abuse of physical discipline (corporal punishment) of children by their parents and loved ones, there is such strong and wide resistance to the subject of physical discipline of children that some people, including parents see it even moderate or reasonable spanking as a form of abuse of children, and old-fashioned (Longman 111 2006:291).

However, for the parent that abuses a child in the name of physical child discipline, It seems right to infer or, in fact, warn that God Himself hates violence (see Ps. 11:5). He is a God of justice. He cares about the defenseless and about the helpless (e.g., see Deut. 10; 18; Ps 82:3). This, of course takes children into account; children who are being maltreated in the name of physical discipline. For instance, we seem to see Jesus defending children to their advantage when His disciples were trying to prevent children from being brought to Jesus for Him to pray for, and blessed them. In addition, the negative impact of the practice is also another good reason that ought to motivate every Christian parent to desist from this manner of parental discipline - aggressive spanking.

Moreover, as parents we must understand or remember that God has given us our children to take of as caretakers. We are accountable to God for how we take care of our children, which of course, also including how we discipline them physically. Therefore, it is also the role of the pastoral caregiver to help Christian parents to see and know the difference between physical discipline that is abusive and that which is moderate, to understand the implication (its harmful effects) of excessive spanking or child discipline. But, of course, at the same time, those who are completely against the
use of every form of physical child discipline should be made to see that total withdrawal of every kind physical discipline of children is also an extreme reaction, and unhealthy for children morally.

5.7 Beyond Behaviorism to the Issue of the Child’s Heart

It would be agreed that the challenge we are faced with concerning physical child discipline is more than just behavioral change or modification through natural means, as genuine or real change begins is from the heart. In other words, it is inside out and not outside in as some parents assume. In their book, *Instructing a Child’s Heart*, Tedd and Margy Tripp point out, rightly, that one needs more than tips and ideas from the secular world for successful parenting (Tripp 2008:10). According to Tripp (2008:10), we need solid biblical truth as solid parenting skills are built on solid biblical truth. Focusing only on methods that promise to change the child’s behavior (e.g., through behaviorist modifications) may only lead to more frustration, (until there is first a change of the state of the child’s heart). The researcher agrees with the authors (Tripp 2008:16), that the secular culture we live in understands the need to saturate or soak us with its message. “Experts” instruct us about how to love, irrespective of our interest, need, preference, or religious convictions. They went on to make the following notable observation in that regard:

> Our central objective in discipline is to reach the heart of our child. We don’t want to use consequences only to shape behavior. Behaviorism (behavior modification) is constraining and controlling behavior through a system of rewards and punishments… Behavioristic consequences may be authoritarian (Gestapo-like) and threatening, or simply manipulative, promising material or emotional reward. They may offer external incentives and disincentives to change behavior, or they may appeal to a child’s sense of guilt and fear of approval. These methods are powerful tools to change behavior, but they abandon the child’s heart. In contrast, biblical correction, discipline and motivation use enduring truth of Scripture to instruct the heart and direct behavior (Tripps 2008:63, 64)
The researcher agrees with the authors (Tripp 2008:64), that since God is concerned with our hearts as the source or basis of our behavior, it follows that heart change is (or should be) our most important concern as Christian parents; as we instruct and discipline our children, encouraging them to live consistently with God’s law. Longman 111 (2006) also made allusion to this sentiment.

5.8 Formative Instruction and Corrective Discipline

Tripps (2008:18, 31) define formative instruction as, teaching that “forms” our children. It enables them to root life in God’s revelation in the Bible. It provides a culture for our children, a culture that is distinctively Christian; that shows our children the glory and excellence of God; that helps them understand the dignity of mankind as God’s image bearers. The authors (2008:20, 21) warn that formative instruction should not be confused with corrective discipline. Formative instruction should be occurring at all times. Discipline should be administered only when behavior needs to be corrected. If the only time we instruct our children is when our children need discipline, they will not listen to our instruction for fear of the discipline. Moreover, children will also interpret or understand discipline “through the culture’s views of discipline-as abusive, dictatorial, violation of personal rights, archaic and fanatic” (Tripp 2008:21). The authors went on to observe notably that:

Our formative instruction must teach children that discipline is part of God’s essential way for parents to provide protection, direction, safety blessings to children and blessing to children. Discipline alone is not adequate in instruction. Corrective discipline is understood when it is founded on effective biblical formative instruction. Corrective discipline without adequate formative instruction sows seed of confusion and rebellion in children (Tripp 2008:21).

Moreover, it has been argued that, when physical force or power is used as a discipline technique (as in corporal punishment), the concern arises that if the misconduct continues even after the corporal punishment is applied, the caregiver may become more angry and frustrated and might reapply the physical force. As the physical force is reapplied while the caregiver is becoming angrier; there is possibility for the caregiver to
lose control and injure the child. Regardless of whether injuring the child was the intended outcome of the corporal punishment, the end result experienced by the injured child is that he or she has been hurt (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009).

Therefore considering that it is often very difficult for parents who are given to the use of physical discipline techniques in correcting children not to cross the line into violent or abusive use of such techniques out of anger and frustration if a child proves persistently rebellious or stubborn, there is therefore the need for parents to pay premium to formative instructions above corrective discipline. It is therefore the duty of the pastoral care giver to educate parents and other adults who have charge over children this importance (Tripp (2008:33, 34).

5.6.3 Discipline versus Punishment of Children

It is worth noting also that many Christian parents in their application of the “rod” of correction on their children do not seem to know that there is difference between discipline and punishment. As a result, sometimes parents administer physical punishment to children in ways that cause serious harm to a child’s self development while some claim to be disciplining or correcting the child in love, and for the child’s moral and spiritual well-being. Firestone (1997:32) observes correctly that, “Many parents equate discipline with punishment and feel prideful and righteous in using forceful measure.” MacDonald (1984:411), in an article titled The Difference between Discipline and Punishment defines discipline as, “the deliberate creation of stress in a relationship with your children in order to help them grow and learn... Punishment is a matter of justice…”

Similarly, Wiersbe (1984:409) stresses noting that: “Both in Hebrew and Greek, the words we translate “discipline” actually means training or education. The author (1984:409) explains further by adding that “Discipline may come through words, deeds, or circumstances, but the purpose is always to develop maturity. Furthermore, the researcher finds Bradshaw’ understanding of discipline also very helpful. According to
the author, discipline is, “Providing a rich environment in which a person can develop her moral character and her own unique life” (Bradshaw 2009:411). The author (2009:410) also suggests that, physical punishment can be destructive, but true punishment is not destructive.

The question then is, does the aggressive method of physical child discipline used by many parents really lead to a child’s maturity? Or do parents, instead of administering physical discipline that can lead to a child’s maturity provoke them to anger or discourage them by spanking their children in ways that are evidently violent? (see Eph 6:4; Col. 3:21). Therefore, parents should be made to understand that the purpose of discipline should always be to help children towards maturity, rather than administering it in ways that might cause harm to their psychological or spiritual development (MacDonald 1984:11; Wiersbe 1984:409; Bradshaw 2009:410; Pais 1991:73).

5.7. Counselor and Counselee as Partners

The significance of good and healthy relationship between the pastoral caregiver (or counselor) and the care receiver (or counselee) in pastoral care/therapy cannot be overestimate. A situation where the pastor often assumes the position of knowing it all or having all the answer and hence, dictating and imposing on the members what they must do and does not help in pastoral care. This approach to caring for members’ problem is very common in many Pentecostal churches. As a result, many parishioners in the church are not comfortable in approaching some pastors for counseling or are ready to truly open up regarding deep sited issues and struggles in their lives for fear of being misunderstood or judged wrongly by the pastors who often portray themselves as all knowing, faultless. This attitude also contributes in creating a barricade between the clergy and the laity in the church (McMinn 1996).

McMinn (1996:13) notes importantly that, “Most people seeking for counseling are not looking for a specific set of techniques, but for a relationship with someone who has values they respect (or/and values them also). The author (McMinn 1996:13) goes on to
add that, “They seek this relationship because they are wounded driven to sorrow by the natural consequences of living in a fallen world. In the midst of a Christian counseling relationship they often move from brokenness and sorrow to hope and restoration (walking the road with them).

Church leaders who are involved in pastoral care and counseling need to come to the understanding that counselors and counselees are partners. The counselee is the one with local expertise. The counselor helps unearth the knowledge which may remain hidden because of various reasons. Together they figure out how to resist the power of problematic ways of understanding life and to re-story into more positive meanings (Neuger 2001:43 or 51). Egan also reinforce this position by stressing that: “The job of the counselor is neither to tell clients what to do nor merely to leave them to their own devices. The counselor should act as a catalyst for the kind of problem-management dialogue that helps clients find their own answers” (2002:65). This also points to the importance of counselors or pastoral caregivers in the church undergoing the necessary training and acquiring the skills that make rendering care to members or care seekers very effective.

5.7.1 Creating a Safe Space for Venting out of Bottled Emotions

There is urgent need for leaders in the church to begin to allow more room for troubled members to vent out their emotions freely without fear of being wrongly judged or condemned cannot be overemphasized. Sadly, in many of our Pentecostal churches, there is hardly room or place in their approach pastoral care for members who have been traumatized (or abused in one way or the other) to vent out their feelings without care seekers being afraid that they would be judged as being unspiritual or carnal. What happens often is that members are told to learn to just forget or let go of any past hurts that might still be disturbing or distressing them, and to just allow the healing power of God to touch them.
Venting out certain sensitive emotions that have been internalized by members or talking about the hurt of the past is considered as dwelling on the past or still harboring un-forgiveness against those that hurt us in the past. The care seeker is expected to just learn to forgive all those who wrong or hurt them, no matter the extent of the hurt of maltreatment. They are expected to just forget about the past, and move on with your life. Allowing feelings of past hurts or painful experiences to interfere effect with your present or expressing such feelings is often judged by many pastors as a sign of spiritual immaturity (as being carnal) (Pohlmann 2007; McMinn 1996).

Moreover, members are expected to just pray, study the Word of God, meditate on it, and by so doing the problem will be taken care of all-the hurt, etc. As a result, there are many abused persons (in the pews) congregants or members of the church who, having studied the Word of God, prayed, etc, and still found themselves struggling with the trauma of past hurts. The pastoral caregiver now assumed that the problem is with them- that they are not spiritual enough, lack the needed faith to deal with their problem, etc (Hietirtter & Vought 1989; McMinn 1996; Pohlmann 2007). Therefore pastoral caregivers in the church and other Pentecostal churches need to learn the skills of making care seekers feel comfortable or safe to open up to them regarding their inner struggles (Hietirtter & Vought 1989; McMinn 1996).

**Where is God in all this?**

It is important for pastor caregivers in the church to note that, when faced with overwhelming problems and God seems to be silent or unconcerned about their situation, it is not uncommon for most believers to question God’s goodness or certain of His other attributes like His All-powerfulness, or All-mercyfulness. For example, the righteous that suffers unduly in the hands of the wicked or when an innocent children struggle for the rest of their life as a result of the harm caused to them by their parents or well meaning adults, while the parents or adults responsible for it seem to have
moved on in life unaffected. This may cause some children to wonder if God really exist or if He is really as powerful as He says He is. This challenge is universal. This fact or reality is not different in our context in South Africa. Marietjie Du Toit alludes to this reality when she observed that: “Majority of traumatized people in South African context questioned their religious relationships. They ask for example: Why did God allow this to happen to me?” (Du Toit in Roos et al 2002:103).

Du Toit (Du Toit in Roos et al 2002:103) goes on to note, symptoms of traumatic experience in the believer may include the following: Difficulty in praying/medicating, feeling of disconnection with God, difficulty in reading the Bible, compulsive feeling of the absence of God, struggle with the belief that God truly exists, regular questioning of God’s love, guilt for being angry with God, etc (Du Toit in Roos et al 2002:104). McCann and Pearlman observe similarly, adding that, many survivors (of one form of tragedy or the other) re-examine their spiritual beliefs in light of their traumatic experiences as part of their search for meaning. According to the authors, “these beliefs are basic to frame of reference and are particularly vulnerable to disruption after dramatization in religious persons. As a result some survivors may feel that God failed them, or may even doubt God’s existence. Others may feel that life no longer makes sense. Some that struggle with survivor guilt may feel their sins are beyond God’s forgiveness (1990:276). It suffices to note that these symptoms are also true of victims of childhood trauma arising from abusive spanking (Straus 1994; Capps 1995).
It is important to note that, as a pastoral caregiver, this is not the time to condemn, or to speak about the individual’s spiritual immaturity or sinfulness, as many pastors do. Instead, it is a time to show empathy, to encourage, and to give hope (Wimberly 1999; Egan 2002; McMinn 1996). However, pastoral caregivers must guard against giving false hope. They must acknowledge that they do not have all the answer to every question or problem of life that care seekers may be faced with (Pollard 1997 140-148).

5.7.2 Emphatic Listening and Effective Pastoral Care

According to Neethling (2002:23) empathetic listening is the ability to see and experience things from the perspective of another, and consequently we do not only understand how others feel, we share those feelings, we also feel for them with our very being. Similarly, Egan considers empathy as, understanding clients or people as they are (2002:49). Two skills that are basic to (effective) interpersonal communication has been identified as, attending and listening. Attending refers to a way in which client’s helpers can be with their clients both physically and psychologically. And listening refers to, “the ability of helpers to capture and understand the messages clients communicate verbally…as they tell their stories, whether those messages are transmitted verbally or nonverbally, clear or vaguely” (Egan in Elia 2009). The author continues by adding that, “effective attending puts helpers in a position to listen carefully to what clients are saying both verbally and non-verbally” (Egan in Elia 2009).

Many pastoral caregivers in the researcher’s church seem to be lacking in these basic skills, hence the need to pay attention to these basic but very important skills that make for interpersonal communication. The researcher believes that where this is the case, it is difficult for the pastoral caregiver to become judgmental of the care receiver. Wimberly (1999:7) put it so well when he pointed out that, Pastoral counseling
embraces a more nonjudgmental and accepting attitude while preaching embraces a more moral perspective in which people are challenged to change their attitude.

Furthermore, the researchers believe that empathy or empathetic listening here also points to the caregiver not only seeing the care receivers or seekers are they are, but willingness to identify with them, and being compassionate rather than judgmental. It therefore seems obvious that one mark of distinction between preaching and pastoral care is that while preaching can or may be confrontational, pastoral care is more sympathetic or empathetic. It is about giving hope, encouragement, and journeying with those who are in various problem situation, and needing help. By so doing, pastoral caregivers in the church would become more effective in rendering help or care to care seekers pertaining to their specific problem situations.

5.7.3 Trauma Counseling for Parents that Struggle with Abuse of Physical Child Discipline

As noted earlier in chapter 3, adults who grew up in homes where they were often beaten by their parents have the tendency to carry on in the cycle as parents also, as violence often begets violence (Doyle 1990; Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009). It has also been suggested that, adult anger at children, which the adult may deem justified by the supposed evil or bad behavior of the child, is often an anger displaced from the adult’s own childhood, when the adult’s own relative powerlessness made it impossible to express or sometimes even to feel the anger (Pais 1991:72). Similarly, Alice Miller in her book Thou Shall Not Be Aware, writes that, parents who beat their child very often see the image of their parents in the infant they are beating (Miller in Bradshaw 2009:402). In other words, while some parents try to justify their abusive use of physical child discipline on Scriptural grounds, in reality it is a cover up for their deeply seated psychological problems.

Furthermore, there is the possibility that some parents may be living in denial of having unresolved psychological issues from their childhood, as a result of how they were
being equally spanked or beaten by their parents, which experience may unconsciously influence the way they also now spank or beat their children (Straus 1994; Pais 1991; Capps 1995).

By skillfully and carefully probing parents during counseling, the pastoral caregiver may be able to help some parents see the possibility that some of them who were abusively spanked or beaten by their parents or guardians in their childhood may have succeeded in repressing the feeling of anger, bitterness, and hatred towards their parents, and because it was not dealt with, could now influence how they discipline or spank their children. Where this is the case, the pastoral caregiver may need to help the person see the need for the healing of the inner child in the adult that is still wounded, and to be set free from those hidden injuries and scars that they may have suffered in their childhood (Capps 1995). Pais captures the above-mentioned concept prolifically, with the following words:

When the real reason for intense feeling from the past is hidden from consciousness, our minds search for reasons in the present…. Beneath such rationalizations is fear of knowing the truth from the past, the child-self’s reality… Until we are true to our inner reality, we cannot be real and authentic in our relationship with others, including our children (Pais 1991:132)

As delineated in chapter 3, these are symptoms of post traumatic disorder, and it is crucial that people who display such symptoms not only receive pastoral counseling, but that referral should be made where necessary to an expert in trauma counseling (Neuger 2001:108; Du Toit in Roos et al 2002: 101, 104). Symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) include compulsive depression, disassociation, sleep disturbance, poor self esteem (Straus 1994; Capps 1994; Bradshaw 2009).

It was necessary to mention the importance of trauma counseling in this model of pastoral care. This is due to our strong belief in divine healing as Pentecostals and the assumption that spiritual direction is sufficient in dealing with any kind of problem or situation faced by members within the church, if only we have enough faith in God. As
such, most pastoral caregivers and members in the church do not really see the need for trauma counseling for believers.

The researcher is not in any way doubting the divine power available to the Church of Christ to deal with any kind of human problem or challenge. However, he believes that embracing trauma counseling methods or skills from the field of psychology, where and when necessary, can help the pastoral caregiver to be more effective in dealing with certain problem situations that members face in the local church. Therefore, trauma counseling needs to be considered as a vital part of the therapeutic process in caring for children or parents with this nature of traumatic experience.

5.8 The Pastoral Care and the Ministry of Reconciliation

It is important to stress that despite the negative impact of the violence of physical child discipline that may have occurred, reconciliation between parents and children is very important.

It is important to stress that reconciliation between a parent and a child, whose relationship may have destroyed or hampered as an outcome of violence perpetrated by the parent, is very important. Kanyandago (Kanyandago in Waruta & Kinoti 2005:59) observed rightly observed that: “Reconciliation as proposed by Christ and effected by the Holy Spirit as a Christian’s principle, seems to be the most reasonable solution to all types of violence. The pastoral caregiver as a priest has the duty of serving as a mediator between the parent (perpetrator) and the child (victim of physical child abuse) to bridge the gap between the two (between the parent and the child) that may be existing by reason of the phenomenon or experience. It suffices to say that children know when their parents are wrong. They have feelings as human beings. They deserve an apology from their parents when their parents are at fault. Such an act can be therapeutic for a child, who may have felt bad towards his or her parent’s repeated maltreatment or actions in the name of child discipline (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009).
Often, some children internalized their hurt or pain, because their parents occupy the position of the powerful while they are powerless and voiceless (Straus 1994; Capps 1995). Therefore, seeing that there cannot be true reconciliation without an acknowledgment of wrong or a plea for forgiveness by the offender or perpetrator; and acceptance of the plea for forgiveness by the offended (Kanyandago in Waruta & Kinoti 2005:59), parents need to admit their wrong to their children, and also ask for forgiveness. Children must be made to see that their parents are truly sorry. In some cases, the process of reconciliation might involve allowing a child victim to vent out his or her anger at the parent (perpetrator) (Greven in Straus 1994; Capps 1994).

As noted earlier, in some cases, depression in adulthood may owe to anger suppressed in childhood that was not let out (Greven in Straus 1994; Capps 1994). Therefore, children, in the process of reconciliation should be allowed to express their feeling, whatever that might be including anger, fear, shame. To buttress this point, Doyle (1990:119) makes the following important observation towards helping abused children:

Anger needs to be dealt with. Often in the wake of recall comes long-suppressed anger. Frequently it is directed towards the survivor, him or herself. Sometimes it is targeted at society in general or a particular group in society such as authority figures… Survivors need to be helped to express anger against the perpetrators of the abuse and those who failed to protect them (Doyle 1990:119).

Furthermore, for an appropriate approach to reconciliation, past theologies (or theological views) which tend to drive the violence or abuse in the first place must be addressed or challenged, as Kanyandago also alludes to (Kanyandago in Waruta & Kinoti 2005:59). This also points to the place or importance of discovering the error in a worldview or theological view, with the aim of replacing it with sound biblical or theological view. In other words, reconciliation in this context will involve the parent or perpetrator adopting a better worldview on child discipline that is biblically balanced or sound, which in turn translates into a new approach to child discipline that is not harmful to the child’s psychological and spiritual well being.

5.9 The Family and the Fight against Aggressive Spanking
The family plays a vital role in the well-being of a child as well as in helping a hurting child experience substantial healing from any kind of traumatic experience. Doyle (1990:51) points out that, “child abuse occurs in the family context and therefore it would seem logical that helping the child should, in many cases, take place within the family context…” The author (1990:51) observes, furthermore, that: A family is called ‘functional’ when it is providing a safe, nurturing environment in which the children can develop appropriately. When the family system endangers the life and well-being of its members it is termed ‘dysfunctional.’

Children who endure repeated abusive spanking by the hands of their loved ones do not feel that their home is a safe place for them, and are likely to grow up dysfunctional in one way or the other. For instance, as mentioned earlier, violence is a learnt behavior. Consequently, some children might see violence as an accepted way of solving problems or manipulating others to obey them. Further, it has also been observed that children seem to feel mostly angered when they feel betrayed by the one they love or their loved ones, and this can spill over to their relationships in adulthood, for instance, could be their spouses (Straus 1994:10; Pais 1991; Briere 1992; Capps 1995).

In other words, in a situation where a child feels unsafe at home because of fear of being spanked, such environment may be considered also as a dysfunctional home, seeing that the child’s well-being is in danger, be it physically, psychologically, relationally, or spiritually. Therefore, parents need to understand that the environment they provide for their children can make or damage them for life. When they make their home a hostile environment for their children, it builds fear, lack of trust, disharmony, or secrecy. Of course, as mentioned in chapter 3, it is not every child who experienced one form of violence or the other (traumatic experiences) that is affected negatively. Each person reacts differently to a traumatic situation or condition. Some individuals or children manage to get over the event without difficulty, while others experience complaints for some time. Yet still, there are those that suffer from psychological problems that make their life a nightmare for many years to come (Kleber and Brom 1992:160). However, since it is difficult to determine or sense which child might or might
not be affected by such actions, the pastoral caregiver should advice parents to discipline their children with caution, or only practice reason and moderate chastisement of children, as stipulated by the law in South Africa (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012 ). Therefore, aggressive or excessive corporal punishment of children should be discouraged.

5.10 The Church and the Fight against Aggressive (abusive) Spanking

It seems right to say that this model will be inadequate without making mention of the important role the community of faith (the church) plays in the fight against violent spanking of children, and in helping to bring to an end the cycle of this form of abuse. As Mwaura (in Waruta & Kinoti 2005:73, 74) has rightly noted: One of the imageries or definitions of the church is “the people of God.” Therefore, though the hierarchical nature of the church in terms of the clergy and the laity is not (or cannot be) denied, pastoral concerns and policies are not the responsibility of bishops and clergy alone, but of the whole body of Christ including the laity. The author also points that, “The world we live in does not foster a climate in which love can exist for it is sick with wars alienating hardships, deprivation in every sense, despair, displacement and other woes…” (Mwaura in Waruta & Kinoti 2005:92). The researcher strongly agrees with Mwaura that: “In operating within this framework the Church is expected to administer healing by bringing sanity, giving meaning to the illusioned, life to the spiritually dead and sense of belonging and identity to the displaced and the lost” (Mwaura in Waruta & Kinoti 2005:92).

In an address given by The Arch Bishop, Emeritus Desmond Tutu, on the important role the church has to play in the fight against domestic violence, the Arch Bishop made the following heartfelt assertion:

Millions of the world’s children still suffer from humiliating acts of violence and these violations…can have serious lifelong effects. Violence begets violence and we shall reap whirlwind. Children can be disciplined without violence that instills fear and misery, and I look forward to church communities
working with other organizations to... make progress towards ending all forms of violence against children. If we really want a peaceful and compassionate world, we need to build communities of trust where all children are respected, where home and school are safe places to be and where discipline is taught by example (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012).

The researcher is similarly appealing to the church, and particularly pastors and parents within the Pentecostal church to join in the fight towards ending any form of violence or physical abuse against children. For instance, the church should take a firm stand and consistently speak against the use of any abusive or violent form of corporeal punishment by parents, to correct or train their children. Perhaps, there should be some kind of disciplinary measures put in place by churches for parents that clearly break this rule. Parents should also be educated on the harmful effects of abusive spanking and other forms of aggressive child discipline. Church leaders should expose parents and other adults to balanced biblical teachings on corporal punishment.

5.11 Embracing Integrative Approach to Pastoral care in Pentecostal Churches

Undoubtedly, Christians have reacted in various ways to the rise of modern psychology. Some have welcomed it with outstretched arms. For them, the insights of psychology are a great ally for the church as it carries out its mission in the world. Others reject psychology out of hand. They see it as an implicit threat to the Church and to the authority of Scripture (Carter and Narramore 1979:12; McMinn 1996). It is sad to know that many Pentecostals still see psychology as anti faith or Scripture and therefore, resist anything that has to do with integration of concepts and therapeutic techniques from the field of psychology. But far from that being the whole truth, concepts from the field of psychology are not altogether anti-scripture or anti Christian faith, as many assume.

It has been observed that a pastoral caregiver who is acquainted with certain contributions from the field of psychology would be more armed to render effective care to his or her members, especially those human problem situations with psychological
undertone (e.g., victims of child abuse like rape, addiction) (Browning 1984; Wimberly 1998; Gerkin 1997). Browning (1984:7) puts it succinctly when he observed that, “psychological ideas help us to understand some of the developmental factors which incline human to act and feel the way they do.” This seems like an area that would need further research within the Pentecostal church.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to delve deeply into theories, concepts, and techniques from the field of psychology, it seems helpful to mention briefly that one of such helpful psychological ideas is Object Relations Theory. Object relations, is a psychodynamic approach to understanding behavior, development, relationships, psychopathology and psychotherapy. The theory derives from psychoanalytic principles of listening, responding to unconscious material, interpreting, developing insight and working in the area of the transference and counter transference towards understanding and growth, etc (Scharff & Scharff 1989; McCann and Pearlman 1990; Wimberly 2003; Wimberly 1999, Gerkin 1999).

As it has been rightly suggested, Biblical or psychological counseling can certainly add greatly to a person’s well being. However, the integrated approach recognizes that special revelation does not deal with every problem that the counselor or pastoral caregiver faces in practice (McAllister in Elia 2009). Wimberly stressed also that, “The nature of the dialogue between psychology and theology is especially critical in the field of pastoral theology, because, frankly, psychology has been so helpful with the everyday tasks of counseling” (2003:36).

However, the pastoral caregiver needs to be aware of the temptation of “psychologizing” issues or things that fundamentally spiritual. Wimberly (2003:35) points out that, “…there is always a concern of how to relate the truth claims of each discipline.” The author (2003:35) stresses that, “As pastoral theologians, we are not obliged to accept wisdom that comes to us from the secular literature. Our task is to evaluate all wisdom using criteria from our faith tradition and from our experience as pastoral counselors.” It seems right to mention that Pollard’s process of positive deconstruction is one of the
effective methods that can help us in searching for the truth in other disciplines that can be helpful to us in pastoral care or counseling. By subjecting wisdom our claims from other disciplines (e.g., from psychology) to the process of positive deconstruction, elements of errors in such contributions can be deconstructed (taken apart) and truth can be used (Pollard 1997:43-59).

As it has been rightly argued, God is the source of all truth, irrespective of the avenue by which we obtained it (Pollard 1997:56; McMinn 1989; Carter & Narramore 1979). Therefore, the researcher believes that God does not only communicate truth that we need for solving human problems via special revelation or scriptures only but through other avenues or fields of knowledge (e.g., through science, social science, and so on).

5.12 Preliminary Conclusion

Constructing a pastoral care model that integrates concepts from the fields of social sciences in an attempt to care for parents that are struggle with abusive spanking of children is of great importance in the fight against rampant use and abuse of corporal punishment by Christian parents. While it is good to pay attention to behaviorism, which is often the goal when parents use aggressive physical children on their children (corrective discipline), it is more effective when parents attend to the issue of the heart of children; through formative instructions (that is, instructing them in the way and admonition of the Lord continually).

The use and abuse of corporal punishment is high amongst the fundamentalists Christian. This seems to owe largely to a literalistic view of certain texts in the OT that seem to advocate such violence against child in the name of parental discipline and morality formation. This approach to Scripture reading has the tendency to plunge some Christian parents into abusive application of corporal punishment of children. Therefore, it is helpful for such sensitive OT Bible texts (e.g., Prov. 13: 24; 22:15; 23:13-14) to be read in the light of the NT teachings on the issue of physical child discipline. Although in the NT there seems to be no clear pointers as to whether parents should use the ‘rod’ in
child discipline, or not, there are some allusions that help us to infer that the violent use or abuse of physical child discipline is disapproved in the NT (e.g., see Eph 6:4; Col 3:21).

Lastly, the aim of this chapter was to construct an effective pastoral care model for caring for parents who are struggling with the issue of aggressive spanking of children and other related forms corporal punishment of children. The model integrates some relevant contributions from the field of psychology and other social sciences disciplines that are adaptable for our purposes. In the next chapter, the researcher will be bringing the research study to a close.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING CHAPTER OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

7.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, the researcher will be presenting a summary of what this research study was about, by recapping on the key aspects that have been addressed in this study: the findings that were made, both from literature review and from data gathered from questionnaires and interviews with co-researchers, some challenges that were faced during the study, the limitation of the study, some aspects that may need further research in relation to this research study and lastly; the researcher will outline his recommendations.

The purpose of this research study was to explore the issue of corporeal punishment; the traumatic effects of the abuse of corporal punishment, especially, aggressive spanking; and the role that a literalistic view of Scriptures in the OT on corporal punishment (mostly from the Book of Proverbs) seems to play in the rampant use and abuse of this practice by many fundamentalist Pentecostal Christians (e.g., see Prov.
13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15). The study was also aimed at creating necessary awareness amongst parents, in the church, on the negative effects of aggressive or excessive spanking and other forms of physical child discipline. The study was also aimed at creating awareness amongst parents in the church and other readers on the influence of a literalistic view of certain Scriptures in the OT has on corporal punishment of children; on the rampant use and abuse of this practice (e.g., Prov. 22:15; 29:15, etc); and to propose a sound biblical approach to child discipline.

The aims and objectives of this research study was to explore the issue of corporeal punishment, and its traumatic impact on children, especially, in the researcher’s local church context (a Pentecostal church). It was also aimed at creating the necessary awareness within the church, on the influence of the prevailing theological views on corporal punishment of children, which seems to motivate the wide spread of the phenomenon amongst members; and to motivate parents towards adopting a biblically sound approach to physical child discipline. And lastly, it was also the aim of the study, to propose a model of pastoral care that can be used by pastors in the church to care for parents who are struggling with the issue of corporal punishment of children.

The theoretical framework of this study was based on Pollard’s model of positive deconstruction and on relevant contributions from Straus’ book on corporal punishment Beating the Devil Out of them. The four elements in the process of deconstruction were thereby employed, which helped the researcher to identify the underlying worldview on corporal punishment, and the theological views on the issue; to analyze the worldview; to affirm the truth that the worldview contains, but most importantly; to discover the error the worldview contains (Pollard 1997:43-58).

The aim of using Pollard was to help parents see the inadequacies of the worldview that they have absorbed regarding corporal punishment of children, the influence of poor theology on the practice, and the need to replace such theological orientation on corporal punishment of children with sound biblical concept of understanding on physical child discipline. Fundamental to this biblical approach to physical child
discipline was, the emphasis on the need to read or interpret the OT concept of physical child discipline in the light of the NT understanding on the subject, in order to gain a balanced or sound understanding on the subject. Pohlmann (2007:104) points out, rightly, that sometimes conclusions which are made from a reading of Scripture “can affect lifelong practice in a serious way. Therefore, a sound biblical knowledge or theology in any aspect of our Christian’s faith and practice, is very essential to every believer. Contributions from Straus' book, as well as other related literature sources that were used in the study, helped the researcher in gathering he needed data on the issue of corporal punishment and the traumatic impact on children.

7.2 Summary of the Research Study Findings

The research study was concerned with corporal punishment and child abuse (excessive or aggressive spanking of children), and the immediate and long term traumatic impact of this method of discipline on children. It was discovered and acknowledged that arriving at a generally accepted definition of what may be considered as excessive or abusive spanking, is controversial and does present a challenge to a research study of this nature. However, we did come to a reasonable conclusion that spanking or any other method of physical child discipline is considered abusive when it is excessive or unreasonably or aggressive enough to cause physical or mental harm to a child. For instance, spanking may be seen as physically harmful to a child when there is bruising, sustained soft tissue swelling or fractures of bone, etc (Carl 1991:19; Straus 1994:7-8; http://www.nospank.net/n-h21.htm.Hodson 2010. Retrieved 22nd July 2010).

However, what is more detrimental to a child's well being, is the psychological harm that this form of violence or physical abuse can cause to a child. And because the psychological harm or traumatic effects that the abuse of this practice causes to children are often not easily detected until in the long run, many parents tend to take for
granted the harmful effects that engaging in aggressive spanking have on some children (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; Briere 1992; Wolf 1991, etc). Therefore, parents were made to understand that although the psychological harm of abusive or aggressive spanking is not often easily detected or obvious, it is, nonetheless, more detrimental to a child’s psychological well being than the obvious physical harm, like sustaining bruises or serious injuries, etc (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009, Wasike in Waruta & Kinoti 2005, Capps 1994).

As analyzed in this research study, corporal punishment of children is one of the most controversial issues both in the church and in the secular world. People have reacted differently to the issue. The various reactions or arguments on the issue of corporal punishment of children were delineated in chapter three. Some arguments and theological views are strongly in favor of the practice, which seems to be the conventional position that is held by majority of people in many countries, both within and outside the church (Straus 1994; Wasike in Waruta & Kinoti 2005; Robinson 2010: Online).

It was also observed that, although this position is entrenched in various cultures- both Western and African, with the popular worldview on the practice being identified as, “spare the rod as and spoil the child,” it is nonetheless believed that the strongest motivation for this position among Christians, is the Bible. This seems to account for the reason that the widespread of the practice (both moderate and excessive) is higher among fundamentalist Christians; and because of their literalistic interpretation of passages of the Bible on physical child discipline, mostly from the Book of Proverbs (e.g., Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14) (Bradshaw 2009; Greven in Straus 1994; Capps 1995).

Of course, there are also those arguments that strongly oppose the practice altogether, including what may be considered as moderate and reasonable spanking of children. This radical position against the use physical force in child discipline has gained more popularity in recent decades. Proponents of this position believe that there are positive
and non-violent method of child discipline that are effective, and therefore, corporal punishment is not necessary; specially, because of its negative effects on children (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; Pais 1991) (see chapter three and five for more details on various views on corporal punishment of children).

For example, it has been argued that spanking works as deterrent for conforming children that fear the rod. Therefore, their compliance is out of fear and not responsibility or cooperation. Children that are chronically spanked become sneaky and learn to lie. Further, it hampers on the bond between the parent and the child, leads to lack of trust and falsehood or pretence in children. The home becomes a war zone for children. Children follow their parents’ example by learning to also become violent. Therefore, chronic spanking opens the floodgates of traumatic abuse and traumatic reactions of effect to children (Bradshaw 2009:409-410).

Similarly, Straus (1994:10) contends strongly that, “We no longer permit the hitting of servants, apprentices, prisoners, and members of the armed forces,” therefore, “From the standpoint of humanitarian values, hitting children is simply wrong.” The author believes that corporal punishment has tremendous or remarkable implications for preventing problems such as criminal violence, depression, and poor performance on the job. Therefore, putting an end to corporal punishment is an important approach to preventing these problems. Furthermore, for the author, spanking is not necessary at all because it does not work better than other methods of child discipline, and is not appropriate because of the harmful effects that accompany the practice (Straus 1994:153). Bradshaw (2009:410) also supports this position by maintaining that “there are many ways of disciplining, setting limits and experiencing consequences for inappropriate behavior without spanking.

However, as pointed out in this study, the researcher believes that advocating a complete ban on the practice is going to the other extreme, and is neither a good nor an effective solution to the problem. In other words, none of the extremes are healthy for the child’s welfare morally, psychologically, spiritually, etc (Longman 111 2006; Tripps
Finding a reasonable balance between one extreme, where corporal punishment of children is abused, to the other extreme, where corporal punishment of children is totally ignored, seems to be a more reasonable proposal. Therefore, in the context of this research study, a reasonable balance is considered when spanking or physical discipline is administered to a child moderately and reasonably, in the atmosphere of love, care, good communication, and other necessary virtues that can contribute to making the application of child physical discipline effective and harmless to the child’s psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, it requires paying more attention to formative instruction (i.e., nurturing and admonishing children in the way of Lord) consistently, and by only using corrective discipline (e.g., moderate spanking) when it is very necessary.

Tripps (2008:21) observe precisely that: “Corrective discipline without adequate formative instructions sows seed of rebellion in children.” The authors also note that, “Moreover, ‘Corrective discipline’ is understood when it founded on effective biblical formative instruction.” In a nutshell, a balanced or sound approach to physical child discipline is an approach that is based on sound biblical teachings on child discipline. Crucial to achieving this balance, is the concept of interpreting OT instructions on corporal punishment of children (e.g., see Prov. 13: 24; 20:30; 23:13-14, etc) in the light of the NT understanding of child discipline (e.g., see Mat. 19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-16; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). In other words, reading these passages in the Book of Proverbs side by side with the NT account on how Jesus related with children, Paul’s warning to fathers or parents to guard against provoking their children to wrath, etc, can help keep in check a parent who has the tendency see passages in the Book of Proverbs as a license to spank a child, aggressively. Where this check and balance is lacking in the reading of the OT passages on corporal punishment, there is strong tendency to abuse the practice of corporal punishment of children, which in turn, can have adverse side effects or traumatic impact on a child.

However, one question that arises in relation to this position is, what then happens in the event where a child does not respond positively even after moderate spanking, in the context of love, has been the approach, and other methods of child discipline that
are non-violent have been administered? In response to this question, some have suggested that increasing the intensity or aggression is not the best solution, but seeing a professional or an expert in the area, for help, side by side consultations with pastoral counseling or spiritual direction, should be sought (Straus 1994; McMinn 1996; Du Toit 2006; Egan 2002). The researcher supports this position, but goes further to recommend that in such cases, it might be helpful to, first of all, try to discipline the child a bit firmer and a bit more aggressively. This may be done when, necessary, for an observable period, say between six months to one year. If this still does not help, then as suggested earlier, a professional should be consulted rather than increasing the intensity of the aggression more and more. The researcher also believes that, applying more and more aggression when spanking a child; can push the child into becoming more and more rebellious or more stubborn. It also has the risk of having serious harmful effects on the child, psychologically, emotionally, relationally or spiritually, as we saw in chapter three of this research study (Straus 1994; Capps 1995; Bradshaw 2009).

This also implies that we cannot really say that the application of physical discipline or punishment on children is a general principle or rule that is effective for every child. For some children, corrective disciplinary method that involves mild or moderate spanking may be effective in the context of love and good communication. Others may require a little bit or more aggression for the discipline to be effective or yield the desired result. Of course, applying more aggression, here, is not referring to aggressive spanking that goes beyond a reasonable sense of judgment for children at their respective ages. Other children respond better to the application of formative instruction and use of non-violent methods of discipline than the application of any form of physical force, and may react negatively to the use of physical force (Straus 1994; Wolf 1991; Carl 1985). The fact that there are those adults who grew up in homes were physical discipline or spanking was used frequently and yet; still grew up morally bad or poorly behaved, seems to indicate that spanking cannot be said to be a method of child discipline that is effective towards achieving moral and ethical uprightness for every child (Straus 1994; Bradshaw 2009; Wolfe 1991).
As also alluded to earlier, various research studies suggest that the literalistic view of certain Bible passages on corporal punishment of children, especially in the Book of Proverbs, have a great influence on the rampant use and abuse of physical child discipline by many Fundamentalist Christians, including the Pentecostals (Greven in Straus 1994, Capps 1995; Bradshaw 2009; Pais 1991). Consequently, "much physical abuse does occur in fundamentalist congregation" (Bradshaw 2009:405). Data that was gathered from interviews with the co-researchers during this research study, agree with this research findings. For example, Mr Tebogo and the three other parents that we interviewed, hold to a literalistic view of Scriptures on corporeal punishment (see chapter four).

As a result of the high rate of this phenomenon amongst Christian parents, some scholars seem to consider the Bible as contributing to this problem situation; since it legates the practice, and therefore directly or indirectly promotes the wide spread of the use and abuse of the practice, and therefore, bad news for children (Capps 1995; Greven in Straus 1994). However, it seems right to contend that the problem does not lie with the Bible, but with poor misinterpretation and application of Scriptures that are related to corporal punishment of children, as it is with other areas of the Christian faith and practice, where abuse is evident. For instance, at a time, the practice of slave trade in America was argued by many Christians, who perpetuated the practice to be scripturally justified. But now, many Christians do not seem to have difficulty in understanding that the practice was, morally, wrong, and not in line with sound scriptural understanding that every human being was made in God’s image. Similarly, the practice of apartheid in South Africa was claimed to be scripturally justified. But today, we know better, theologically and morally (Bradshaw 2009; Pollard 1997; Pohlmann 2007). Therefore, we cannot blame the unrestrained use and abuse of corporal punishment of children on the Bible, but the perpetrators for their misuse or abuse of Scriptures to support their wrong and harmful actions towards children.

Lastly, it is important to mention, here, that the researcher had assumed that most parents in the church were unaware of the traumatic impact of abusive forms of child
discipline on children. He also assumed that many parents were not well aware of alternative methods of child discipline that are non-violent, which seemed to be one of the reasons that most parents saw aggressive spanking as the main method of child discipline. According to the interviews with parents, many parents were not aware of how traumatic the practice (aggressive spanking) can be on the children’s psychological well being, which agrees with the researcher’s assumption.

However, as noted also in chapter four, many of the parents were aware of some alternatives to spanking of children, that are non-violent. In other words, the qualitative findings of this research, in that regard, did not agree with the researcher’s hypothesis. However, the researcher’s assumption was also based on Wolfe’s suggestion that, “many parents are unfamiliar with alternative methods of punishment, and may fail to realize that discipline involves considerably more effort and planning than punishment alone” (1991:9). The disparity points to the error that can sometimes occur in researcher studies, when one, wrongly, assumes that something is true when, in actuality, it is not, referred to as Type 1 Error, (Saunders et al 2007:612). Further, this wrong assumption also shows that over the years, there is quite an appreciable measure of awareness on other methods of child discipline apart from spanking among parents in the church. Only that, the awareness of non-violent alternative methods to spanking among parents did not prevent them from still using physical punishment as the main and necessary component of child discipline.

7.3 Challenges that were Faced and Research Limitation

During the qualitative survey method that was used in this research study (which involved the use of questionnaire and setting up of interviews with co-researchers), the researcher was also faced with the difficulty which was presented by the controversy over what may be may be agreed as a generally rule as to what may be considered as moderate and reasonable spanking. For some parents, for instance, Mr Tebogo, one or two spankings on the buttocks of a child is considered reasonable. Some others believe that physical child discipline must be painful enough to communicate the message to
the child or correct misbehavior; otherwise it is no discipline in the first place. Therefore, arriving at a general conclusion as to what is reasonable and moderate spanking is no doubt a controversial subject (Wolf 1991; Carl 1985).

There was also the challenge of those parents who do not see the possibility of aggressive spanking being harmful to their children’s psychological well being. Some parents considered the proposal as conflicting with their religious beliefs as entailed in the Scriptures, as explained in this research study (e.g., Prov. 22:15). Furthermore, the research is limited in that the population target was mainly the researcher’s local church. Therefore, the results cannot be argued to be an accurate representation of the situation of other Pentecostal churches that are faced with similar problem situations or with this pastoral care challenge.

The research is also limited in that the researcher depended on the data that was given by co-researchers on the subject matter. As such, he only had access to what co-researchers were willing to reveal or could reveal; which is also one of the limitations that are faced in qualitative research studies (Straus 1994; Merriam 1998). Some parents were, somehow, uncomfortable with some sensitive questions, like: telling how aggressive they spanked their children or how often they did. The researcher made sure that he did create an atmosphere of trust, confidentiality and safety, to help the co-researchers feel comfortable enough to express themselves (Merriam 1998).

Some parents could not remember very well how their childhood experience with aggressive spanking were, and hence; had difficulty suspecting any link between the possibility of such childhood experience and certain traumatic effects in their present that they may be owing to such traumatic experience (Straus 1994). Furthermore, as Straus (1994:213) has rightly observed that, “there are biases of inclusion and exclusion in surveys.” Merriam (1998) also made a similar observation. In other words, as much as the data collected is reliable and valid, the researcher could only include data that were considered vital and that buttress the aim of this research study.
This research study is also limited by the fact that, although the assumptions of this research study rate high among the reasons for the rampant use and abuse of physical child discipline by parents in the church, there may be other factors that contribute to the widespread of the practice by parents in the church. For instance, a parent’s financial stress, challenges at work, poor health, other childhood traumatic experience, etc (Straus 1994; Wolfe 1991; Carl 1985). In other words, while contributions from various literature sources that were consulted in this research study are convincing, it would be unreasonable to conclude that every fundamentalist Christian parent that engages in aggressive child physical discipline does so because of their literalistic view of Scriptures on corporal punishment, and because they had similar childhood experience of abusive spanking.

7.4 Research Gap

This research study does not claim to be exhaustive. Therefore, there would be need for further research on the rampant use of aggressive spanking of children and excessive use of other forms of corporal punishment by parents within the Pentecostal church; and on the underlying worldviews/theological views on this phenomenon. Moreover, there seem to be a research gap with regard to exploring how to provide effective pastoral therapy for children and teenagers, who are still victims of this form of violence by their parents or loved ones. In other words, a research study that is aimed at caring for such children, therapeutically, by proposing a method of pastoral care that can help the children that are victims/survivors of this method of child discipline, may have to be done.

Also, it would be helpful for a further research to be done within the Pentecostal church, in the area of integrating contributions from the field of psychology and other social science disciplines with theology, to ensure effective pastoral care for members who are faced with violence or trauma related problems. As mentioned in this research study, this integration movement in pastoral care is still faced with resistance or rejection in the researcher’s church and in many other Pentecostal churches. Therefore, further
research studies in the few areas that have just been mentioned could be done, either at master’s or PHD level.

7.5 Recommendations and Conclusion

The researcher would like to make the following are some recommendations:

In addition to this research study, there is need for other forums (e.g., seminars, workshops, campaign) in order to create more awareness among parents in the church on the traumatic impact of abusive spanking. Also, parents should also be encouraged to integrate other methods of child discipline that are effective and non-violent and effective with reasonable or moderate physical child discipline. As noted in this research study, the researcher discovered that many parents in his church are actually aware of some non-violent methods of child discipline other than corporal punishment of children, although they do not really apply those methods apart from corporal punishment.

By helping parents and other adults with the charge over children to see the need for this integration of non-violent methods of child discipline with reasonable spanking; they will become more creative in their approach to child discipline, instead of always resolving to the use of spanking or other forms of child discipline that require the application of physical force on children. Examples of non-violent methods of child discipline includes the use of time-up, loss or withdrawal of privileges, grounding. Also, such forums (seminars, workshops, campaign) can be used to help parents see the importance of having a sound biblical understanding of child discipline, as how they understand scriptural instructions on corporal punishment does impact on their approach to child discipline and on their children, either positively or negatively.

Some parents that have serious struggles in this area, which may be as a result of deeply rooted psychological issues, should be advised to undergo proper therapy. In other words, they may need to be referred to an expert in the field of trauma counseling and therapy, etc. This, of course, should be done alongside the pastoral care/spiritual
care that they need to receive in this area from the church. Furthermore, it would be helpful to form a support group; where parents with similar challenges meet to discuss the problem, pray about it together, and to hold one another accountable. Pastoral caregivers, who are skilled in attending to their problem, may be required to pilot the support group and to journey with those parents, as they work towards overcoming the problem.

Leaders within the church should recognize the need for pastoral care and counseling in addition to preaching or gospel proclamation from the pulpit, as pastoral care and counseling are relegated to the background by many pastors. Many Pentecostal pastors seem to believe that preaching from the pulpit should suffice in caring for members’ needs. Not many pastors seem to have the skill and patience to sit down and listen to hurting people go over their problems repeatedly, or the patience to journey with such people over a long time; as the case may be. Pastors need to desist from the mindset of always expecting care seekers to just exercise faith in God’s Word that pastors preach from the pulpit and have their problems solved immediately, and when that does not happen, they see these care seekers as being unspiritual and lacking faith in God. Pastors must be ready to journey with care seekers.

Also, pastors should learn to create a safe environment for members, who have deep-rooted issues, for them to be able to vent out their feeling without the fear of being judged wrongly or condemned as being carnal, by pastors. This will help reduce the number of members who are suffering in silence; with deeply rooted issues, and yet; when they are in church and in the company of fellow believers, pretend as though all is well.

The researcher would like to also recommend that, Instead of pastoral caregivers rejecting the integration of every and any concepts from the field of psychology and seeing it as ant-Scripture or anti-faith, they should scrutinize proposed concepts and methods of therapeutic interventions in the light of sound Bible teachings. Seeing that there are some contributions from the field of psychology and other social science
disciplines (e.g., from object relations theory, family systems theory, attachment theory, etc), that can enhance the pastoral caregiver’s effective care giving; especially, when it comes to handling members’ problems that have psychological undertones (e.g., issues domestic violence like physical child abuse).

Therefore, pastors within Pentecostal churches that are resistant to the integration movement of theology and psychology in caring for members, need to begin to see the importance and benefits of this integrative approach to pastoral care. Rather than throw away the baby with the bath water, contributions from the field of psychology and other social sciences, should be scrutinized, theologically and the ones that are, actually, anti Scripture or anti-Christian faith, should be discarded (McMinn 1989, Carter & Narramore 1979). Furthermore, it is also important for pastoral caregivers in the church to learn to scrutinize their theological views on corporal punishment in the light of sound/balanced biblical teachings on the subject, for instance, as analyzed and proposed in this research study. This is very essential because, as noted repeatedly for more emphasis, our theology has an enormous impact on our practice or what we do and how we do it. Pastoral caregivers also need to have their theology on physical child discipline biblically sound, because what we, as pastors, communicate to the laity, either by way of preaching, pastoral care or counseling, has an enormous impact on our members.

In other words, pastoral caregivers and other church leaders within the church need to be sound or balanced in their reading or interpretation of Bible passages from the OT (which are mostly from the Book of Proverbs), that seem to motivate or encourage the abuse of spanking and other forms of corporal punishment of children by Christian parents, while they claim to be obeying biblical instructions on the practice of child physical discipline.

As stressed in this research study, the researcher, strongly, maintains that although there are a couple of passages in the Book of Proverbs that instruct on the use of the rod in child discipline/rearing, they never were intended to encourage or propound a doctrine that supports or legitimates child physical abuse by parents or other adults in
the name of child discipline (Longman 111 2006; Tripp 2008, Capps 1995, etc). It is the pastor’s duty to correct the misconceptions surrounding the use of excessive corporal punishment by church members, etc.

**Conclusion**

Based on exploration and analyses of the various research studies and proposals, it is evident that aggressive or excessive has immediate and long term traumatic impact on children. And because these negative side effects are often not easily detected until later in life (life depression, low self esteem, tendency to carry on with the same cycle of abuse as an adult, twisted perception about as a harsh, unforgiving God, etc.), many parents take for granted the danger of engaging in this form of child abuse or violence against children (Doyle 1990:45115; Straus 1994:151,164; Bradshaw 2009:411).

On the other hand, moderate and reasonable spanking, coupled with formative instruction, done in the atmosphere of love, good communication, is not harmful to a child’s well being, and should be encouraged (Larzelere 1986; Tripps 2008; Longman 111 2006). In other words, the researcher thinks that the current law on corporal punishment of children in South Africa, that allows for moderate and reasonable chastisement of children by prance (corporal punishment), is a good and effective clause in the law against the use of corporal punishment of children by parents, as against the idea of complete ban on corporal punishment (http://www.rapcan.org.za/wgpd/documents: Waterhouse 2012. Retrieved 23th February 2012 ).

As alluded to in this study, Kitchen (2006:296) points out, rightly, that the notion of corporal punishment flies in the face of popular psychology or certain secular views and laws on physical child discipline. Nonetheless, it is clearly a part of God’s instruction for parenting a child to maturity. Therefore, the researcher agrees with Longman 111 (2006) that, complete withdrawal from administering reasonable physical discipline to a child, when necessary, is also a form of child abuse (Prov. 13:24, 22:15; 23:13-14).
Conversely, abuse occurs when parents and other adults misapply this program or provision from God and expose children to traumatic or negative effects that accompany such parental abuse of the practice and others (as violence children abused in this manner can in turn become similar abusers), as violence is a learned behavior (Doyle 1990:111; Bradshaw 2009: 410). In other words, both extremes are abusive: excessive administration of the practice on children is an abuse, as well as, total withdrawal from administering spanking to a child, reasonably, when it is necessary.

Furthermore, following from ample research evidence that rampant use and abuse of the practice is much prevalent or highest among fundamentalist Christian parents, and is largely due to their literalistic view of Scripture on corporals punishment of child (mostly from Proverbs), it was necessary to propose a model of pastoral care that would help in positively deconstructing the underlying worldview or theological views that are held by such parents. The model delineates on the importance of sound biblical understanding on physical child discipline, which the researcher believes, plays a key role in bringing to an end the practice or abusive use of corporal punishment by parents. This is because, our theological orientation as Christians, greatly influences our practice/ethics (Pohlmann 2007; Tripp 2008; Bradshaw 2009).

Therefore, a biblically sound approach to child discipline acknowledges the necessity and effectiveness of spanking in child discipline/childrearing but refutes its abuse. In other words, it acknowledges that there is the tendency for physical discipline to become an abuse; even though we seem to be driven by biblical injunctions on child discipline. And, one effective way to maintain a reasonable balance between biblical injunctions on the application of physical child discipline in the OT, is to learn to interpret OT instructions on physical child disciplines in the lenses of the NT teachings on child discipline.
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**Appendix A: Consent Letter from Co-Researcher**

Research topic: Spanking, Violence, and Child Abuse: A Challenge to Pastoral Care
Researcher’s Name: Rev. Samuel J Brown

Research purpose:

- To explore the immediate and long term traumatic effects of aggressive spanking on children.

- To create awareness among parents and other adults in the church, on the traumatic effects of this method of physical child discipline on children.

- To construct/proposal a pastoral care model that is biblically sound or balanced that will equip pastoral care givers in the church to be more effective in caring for parents that struggle with this issue or problem situation.

Declaration from participants (or co-researchers):

- The purpose of this academic research work has been clearly and satisfactorily explained to me by the researcher, Rev. S.J. Brown.
- I am free to ask for clarification on any question or information he requires from me, that I am not clear about.

- He has assured me confidentiality with regard to any personal information I share with him except the ones I have given him the permission to publish, etc.

- I am aware of his intention of using the information I share with him during the interviews in his dissertation, but without using my real name, for confidentiality purpose.
- I am also aware that my participation in this research as a co-researcher is voluntarily. In other words, it does not involve any financial obligations.

Co-researcher: ..............................  Signature: ............  Interview Date: ............

Researcher: .................................  Signature: .............  Interview Date: ............

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Appendix B: Questionnaire that was given out to 50 parents in the church

Please kindly answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Questions are centered on the use or abuse of spanking (corporal punishment) and its impact on children. Please tick A or B or C, and if none of these options suits your view, you may write your response on the dotted lines.

1) What is your view concerning spanking of children or the use of corporal (physical) punishment as a form of child discipline? A) It is always necessary for children’s upbringing B) It is sometimes necessary children’s upbringing C) It is not necessary at all children’s upbringing D) ……………………………………………………………………………

2) How often do you spank or beat your child? A) Every time he or she child commits an offence worthy of spanking B) Frequently C) Sometimes D) Rarely

3) Do you think spanking is always effective or produces the desired result that parents would want to see in their children? A) Always effective B) Sometimes effective C) Not effective at all D) ……………………………………………………………………………

4) Experts observe that frequent, aggressive spanking has negative effects on some children (e.g. low self esteem, poor learning ability at school, interpersonal relationship issues). Are you aware that spanking can have negative effects on children? A) Well aware B) Partially aware C) Not aware D) ………………………………………………………

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5) Did you have an experience of aggressive spanking in your childhood? A) Yes B) No. C) .................................................................

If your answer is ‘yes’, would you say it did affect your self-esteem or self confidence growing up as a child, negatively? A) Yes. B) No. C) Not sure D) .........................

6) Some experts/scholars argue that the Bible in a way does motivate physical abuse of children by “legalizing” the use of corporal punishment. Do you think they may be right? A) Agree B) Strongly Agree C) Neutral D) Disagree E) Strongly Disagree

7) Some experts in child-care advice that should parents to adopt alternative methods to spanking of children that are non-violent and yet effective. Are you familiar with such alternatives? A) Very well B) fairly well C) Not aware D .................................

8) Would it be okay with you if the researcher were to approach you for a one-on-one interview on the subject of the use of/abuse of corporal punishment? A) Yes B) No
Appendix C: Questionnaire for Pastoral Caregiver

What is your view concerning the use of physical child discipline in child rearing by Christian parents?

1) What is your position concerning the idea of taking certain Bible passages on physical child discipline in the Book Proverbs literally? (The researcher quotes Prov. 23:13-14, and Prov. 20:30 as examples).

2) Do you think the Bible passages in the Book of Proverbs on corporal punishment should be taken literally?

3) Do you think it is true that some parents have become too aggressive in the way they spank their children as a result of interpreting such passages of Scripture literally? (Other passages in the Book of Proverbs that the researcher quotes/makes references to include Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 29:15).

4) Do you think that it would make any difference if parents were to read such passages in the OT in the light of certain accounts in the NT, like Paul’s warning to fathers in Ephesians 6:4? (“And you, fathers, do not to provoke their children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and of the Lord.” The researcher also made mention of other NT accounts that would help him communicate his points effectively, for instance, Mat.19:13-15; Mk. 10:13-16; and Col. 3:21, which are also the passages the researcher also used in the research study to analyze how to achieve a biblically balanced approach to child discipline).
5) Do you think that there is truth in the proposal that excessive application of physical child discipline, like aggressive or excessive spanking, can have serious traumatic effects on children (e.g., low self esteem, lower their learning ability, make them take violence against others lightly or even violent towards others as violence is a learnt behavior?

6) Has there been any attempt by the church leadership towards creating awareness amongst parents on the traumatic effects of aggressive or abusive use of corporal punishment on children?

7) Do you think integrating certain concepts or ideas from the field of psychology in the pastoral care method of the church will make caring for members’ problems more effective, or do you think it is not proper to mix psychology with theology or spiritual direction?

8)