



ADVANCING HEALTH EDUCATION & RESEARCH

ACADEMY ON VIOLENCE & ABUSE

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**WORKING WITH  
PARENTS & CAREGIVERS  
WHO USE SCRIPTURE  
TO JUSTIFY CORPORAL  
PUNISHMENT**

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# SUMMARY OF RESEARCH ON THE RISKS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

**T**HERE IS A LARGE AND GROWING BODY OF RESEARCH documenting that hitting children as a means of discipline is ineffective and increases the risk for poorer medical and mental health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Children physically disciplined or “spanked” at the age of three are more likely at the age of five to be defiant, to have temper tantrums, to insist on instant gratification of their desires, and to be violent toward people and animals.<sup>2</sup> In a meta-analysis of five decades of research involving more than 160,000 children, researchers found that even mild corporal punishment is associated with an elevated risk for poor outcomes including aggression, anti-social behaviors, lower cognitive ability, lower self-esteem, and poor relationships with parents.<sup>3</sup>

*“Five decades of research involving more than 160,000 children finds that even mild corporal punishment is associated with an elevated risk for poor outcomes including aggression, anti-social behaviors, lower cognitive ability, lower self-esteem, and poor relationships with parents.”*

Corporal punishment also poses a number of medical risks. Harsh physical discipline<sup>4</sup> is associated with increased risks later in life of cardiovascular disease, arthritis, and obesity.<sup>5</sup> Harsh physical discipline also correlates with a loss of brain gray matter which, in turn, impairs the child’s ability to regulate his or her behaviors.<sup>6</sup> There is also a correlation between the use of corporal punishment and physical injury. In the United States approximately 50% of substantiated cases of physical abuse involve escalated corporal punishment.<sup>7</sup> An anonymous telephone survey of mothers found that parents who “spank” a child are 2.7 times more likely to engage in abusive behavior including kicking, beating, burning, shaking or hitting a child’s body in places other than the buttocks.<sup>8</sup> When objects were used in physical discipline, these mothers were nine times more likely to also report abusive behaviors.<sup>9</sup>

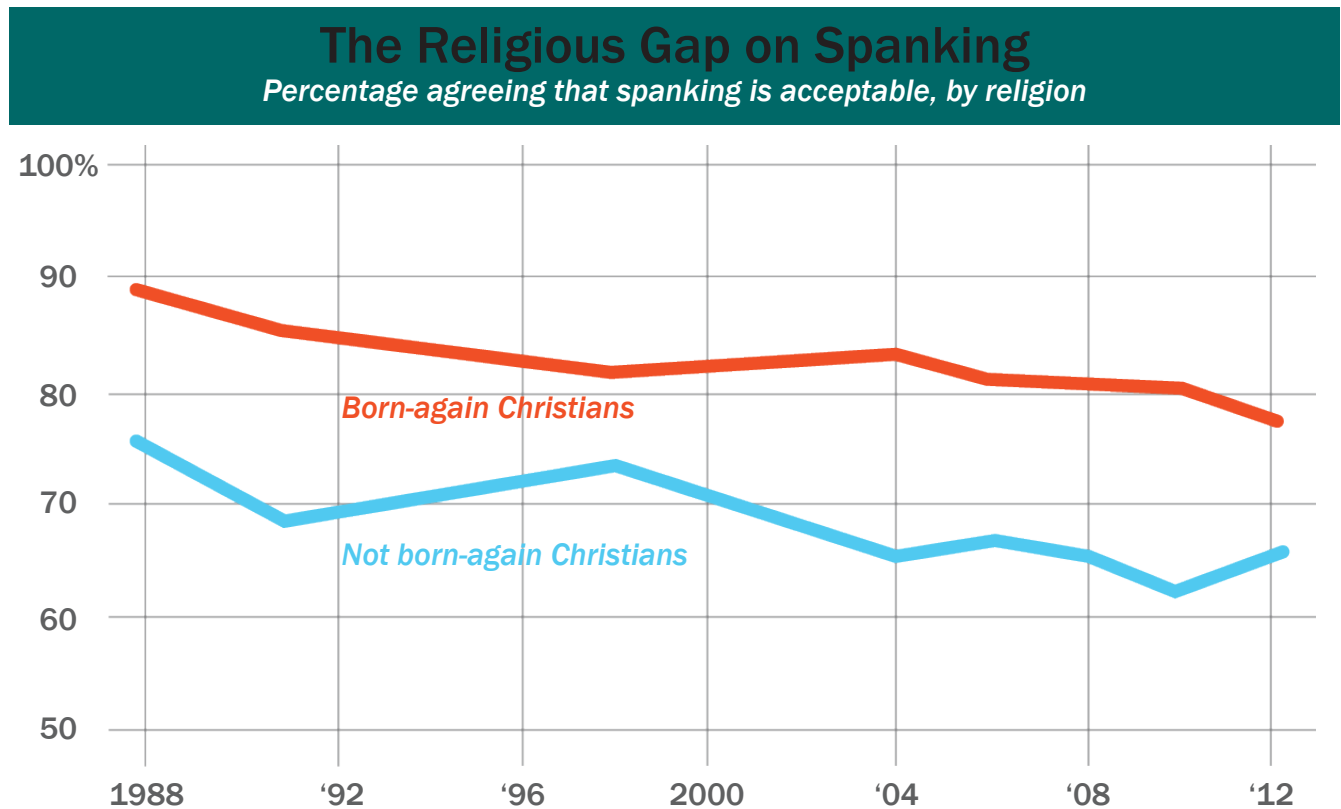
As a result of this research, numerous prestigious organizations discourage or call for a ban on corporal punishment of children<sup>10</sup> and there is evidence that parental support for the practice is declining.<sup>11</sup> Although civil and criminal codes in the United States continue to allow parents to use “reasonable” force on their children, the legal definition of reasonable force is contracting.<sup>12</sup>

## RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE ON THE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN

**I**N THE UNITED STATES, approximately 95% of Americans identifying with a religious tradition are Christian.<sup>13</sup> Given this demographic, there is less research on the influence of non-Christian religions on the practice of corporal punishment. Even so, there is some evidence that “(c)onservative, traditional views in other religions,” including Islam and Orthodox Jewish communities, “are not as consistently associated with endorsement of obedience or spanking” as are theologically conservative Christians.<sup>14</sup>

Within the Christian demographic in the United States, Catholics,<sup>15</sup> as well as theologically moderate and liberal Protestants, are less inclined to support corporal punishment.<sup>16</sup> However, theologically conservative Protestants are more likely to support the practice and report using physical discipline more often.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, this pattern has held solid for over thirty years and does not decline markedly by higher education or other factors that often influence a decline in support for physical discipline.<sup>18</sup>

As a visual demonstrating the religious gap on attitudes toward spanking, consider this graph:<sup>19</sup>



A primary reason for this is that conservative Protestants adopt a more literal view of scripture and thus “emphatically reject popular and academic criticisms of corporal punishment” that appear to be inconsistent with Biblical references to physical discipline.<sup>20</sup> However, two studies from researchers at Pepperdine University have found that when conservative Protestants are presented with information on the risks of corporal punishment as well as alternative views of Biblical texts pertaining to physical discipline, a significant number have a change of attitude toward the practice.<sup>21</sup>

*“When conservative Protestants are presented with information on the risks of corporal punishment as well as alternative views of Biblical texts pertaining to physical discipline, a significant number have a change of attitude toward the practice.”*

## WORKING WITH PARENTS JUSTIFYING CORPORAL PUNISHMENT WITH SCRIPTURE

**M**EDICAL, MENTAL HEALTH OR CHILD PROTECTION PROFESSIONALS may encounter this cultural belief whenever physical discipline meets civil or criminal definitions of child maltreatment.<sup>22</sup> Even in the absence of a child abuse case, conversations about physical discipline may develop. For example, as medical professionals seek to discourage corporal punishment through initiatives such as “no hit zones,”<sup>23</sup> religious and other cultural support for physical discipline may be discussed between doctors and patients.<sup>24</sup>

Below are ten guidelines<sup>25</sup> that may assist medical, mental health, social services, education, legal and other professionals interacting with a parent who believes hitting children as a means of discipline is encouraged or commanded by God.

***“If a parent believes their child is born sinful and in danger of damnation without punishment, it makes perfect sense to periodically employ physical discipline...”***

## **1. Cultural competence**

Cultural competence is a longstanding staple of child protection.<sup>26</sup> As with any issue, professionals must grow their knowledge about religious beliefs pertaining to corporal punishment to understand myriad nuances of this belief system.<sup>27</sup> For example, while one study found “no significant link between membership in a conservative Protestant denomination and the strength of support for the practice of corporal punishment,” the researchers determined that a hierarchical view of God, a belief that humans are “sinful and fallen,” and a belief in a literal hell is “positively associated with the approval of the corporal punishment of children.”<sup>27</sup>

If a parent believes their child is born sinful and in danger of damnation without punishment, it makes perfect sense to periodically employ physical discipline, particularly when corporal punishment is referenced in a sacred text believed to be inspired by God. Researchers on this issue agree, finding a “clear rationale for corporal punishment among many evangelical parents; this is part of a coherent approach to child rearing, rather than a mechanism for desperate or angry parents to use in achieving short-term behavioral compliance.”<sup>29</sup> Unless child protection professionals are willing to understand this rationale, they will be unable to address the use of corporal punishment based on religious belief.

This can be done by reading,<sup>30</sup> through instruction, and by breaking bread with diverse communities. There is a growing trend of developing collaborative relationships between medical, mental health, spiritual care<sup>31</sup> and child protection professionals<sup>32</sup> with some Children’s Advocacy Centers employing chaplains to assist in meeting the spiritual needs of maltreated children and as a bridge to all sectors of the religious community.<sup>33</sup>

## **2. Be aware of our biases**

When working with a culture that may be different from our own, it is important to assess our own personal biases and the possibility that these attitudes, or prejudices, may impair our ability to work with a particular parent. As one example of potential dangers, research suggests a clinical psychologist’s personal biases and orientations toward religion may “affect the therapeutic course and outcome with religious clients.”<sup>34</sup> Biases may be overcome with awareness, training, and by having diverse members involved in a case.<sup>35</sup>

## **3. Distinguish between parents who need education and those who are abusive**

***“Although conservative Protestant parents are more likely to use corporal punishment, they may not be otherwise abusive.”***

Although conservative Protestant parents are more likely to use corporal punishment, they may not be otherwise abusive.<sup>36</sup> In fact, one study found that rates of child abuse were actually *lower* in counties in which religiously conservative views were predominate.<sup>37</sup> There are several reasons why this may be the case. First, while it is true that “biblical literalism” is linked with the approval of corporal punishment, not every member of a conservative Protestant denomination adheres to Biblical literalism.<sup>38</sup> Second, as noted earlier, there is often a “clear religious rationale for corporal punishment” in a conservative Protestant family that is “part of a coherent approach to child rearing...”<sup>39</sup> This “coherent approach” may provide checks and balances such as limiting the number of times a child may be struck, restricting blows to the buttocks, discouraging corporal punishment when a parent is angry, and using physical discipline as a last resort.<sup>40</sup> Assuming a parent or other caregiver adheres to these conservative Protestant guidelines, the risk of egregious physical abuse may be lessened.

In assessing child abuse potential, professionals should consider the frequency of spanking and the use of objects.<sup>41</sup> Professionals should also be alert to extreme views of corporal punishment<sup>42</sup> such as teachings that advocate physically disciplining infants.<sup>43</sup> Another factor is whether the parent has an intrinsic or extrinsic view of religiosity.<sup>44</sup> Parents or other caregivers with an extrinsic view of religion “view religiosity as a means for attaining other goals rather than as an end in itself.”<sup>45</sup> Other researchers have defined extrinsic religiosity this way:

Persons with this orientation are disposed to use religion for their own ends...Extrinsic values are always instrumental and utilitarian. Persons with this orientation may find religion useful in a variety of ways—to provide security and solace, sociability and distraction, status and self-justification.<sup>46</sup>

**“Many religious parents adhere to corporal punishment because they believe it will reign in bad behavior and instill good or at least better behavior.”**

Researchers have noted “there may indeed be cases in which abusive individuals...are attracted to Conservative Protestant churches precisely because the church’s traditional theological doctrine unwittingly allows the abuser to take advantage of selectively literal interpretations of scripture that support their abusive behavior...”<sup>47</sup>

In contrast, persons with an intrinsic religiosity “find their master motive in religion. Other needs, strong as they may be, are regarded of less ultimate significance, and they are, so far as possible, brought into harmony with the religious beliefs and prescriptions.”<sup>48</sup> These parents may view parenting as a sacred, holy and blessed activity and treasure children as a gift of God.<sup>49</sup>

Applying this research, professionals should have greater concern when a parent speaks of corporal punishment not so much as an aid in helping a child grow in a healthy manner, but rather because the parent wants the child to meet the parent’s needs or in defiance of the secular community’s attempt to infringe on parental rights.

#### **4. Emphasize effective discipline**

Many religious parents adhere to corporal punishment because they believe it will reign in bad behavior and instill good or at least better behavior.<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, it may be helpful to discuss the value of other forms of discipline in improving a child’s behavior.<sup>51</sup> Recommending evidence-based parenting programs that include the incorporation of scripture but do not involve corporal punishment may be a culturally sensitive option that is respectful of a patient or client’s culture while minimizing the risk of physical or emotional harm to a child.<sup>52</sup>

#### **5. Emphasize a parent’s strengths**

Although conservative Protestants are more likely to use corporal punishment, research indicates they may also be more involved with the lives of their children, yell less, and praise and hug them more than other groups.<sup>53</sup> Although this doesn’t necessarily moderate the association between corporal punishment and increased child aggression,<sup>54</sup> it is a solid foundation to build on.

#### **6. Seek a path within the religious framework to move away from physical discipline**

**“There are conservative Bible commentaries which maintain the concept of ‘spare the rod’ is a figure of speech referencing discipline of any kind.”**

Although some conservative Protestants claim the Bible *requires* parents to use corporal punishment<sup>55</sup> and contend the Bible has a clear preference for physical discipline with a switch as opposed to a hand,<sup>56</sup> this view is not universally shared. A number of conservative Protestants assert that while the corporal punishment of children is authorized by the Bible, it is not commanded and parents are free to choose other forms of discipline.<sup>57</sup> This is the view of the editors of the magazine *Christianity Today*,<sup>58</sup> a publication founded by Billy Graham.<sup>59</sup> There are conservative Bible commentaries which maintain the concept of “spare the rod” is a figure of speech referencing discipline of any kind.<sup>60</sup> Although they are in the minority, some conservative Bible scholars go so far as to challenge the belief the scriptures can be used as authority for physical discipline.<sup>61</sup>

Understanding these and other nuances is critical in working with a parent using physical discipline based on his or her religious beliefs. If, for example, a parent accepts that physical discipline is authorized but not required, there is a basis to move away from the practice while still respecting a faith tradition.

In discussing theological or spiritual issues with a patient, doctors and other medical professionals may want to consult a hospital chaplain or another expert who can provide advice or even take the lead in speaking with a patient raising religious concerns about child discipline.

In turn, the chaplain may be able to help a parent find resources within his or her religious community or theological construct that can aid a caretaker in moving away from physical discipline without abandoning or violating their beliefs.<sup>62</sup>

### **7. Find a champion within the religious community**

When working on population health initiatives or other prevention strategies, it is critical not to ignore conservative Protestant communities. When engaged, it may be possible to find one or more champions who, when presented with the evidence of the potential risks of physical discipline, may take a lead in discouraging the practice among parishioners.<sup>63</sup>

### **8. Develop culturally appropriate materials**

Since research from Pepperdine University suggests that combining education on corporal punishment research with instruction on alternative views of Biblical passages pertaining to physical discipline is effective in changing attitudes, it may be helpful to develop videos, brochures, or other materials that address both research and theology.<sup>64</sup> These materials can be available in waiting areas or other settings where parents and caregivers congregate. If one or more champions within a religious community are engaged, they can be helpful in developing the portions of the materials addressing the theological concerns raised by corporal punishment and they, in turn, can use the materials in their congregations or other faith settings.

*“Make it clear that any conversation about religion is not being done to change someone’s faith.”*

### **9. Make clear you are not serving in a pastoral capacity**

Many conservative Protestants fear encroachment on their religious beliefs.<sup>65</sup> Research indicates that evangelical Christians “often feel excluded, marginalized and discriminated against by secular institutions and elites.”<sup>66</sup> Accordingly, it’s important to make it clear that any conversation about religion is not being done to change someone’s faith but to reflect sensitivity toward someone’s culture and to find a way within that belief system to move away from a practice that multiple studies show to be detrimental to children.

### **10. Acknowledge the importance of faith**

To alleviate concerns that you are interfering with someone’s faith tradition, it may be helpful to acknowledge to a patient or client your familiarity with a large body of research documenting the positive impact of religiosity on our medical and mental health<sup>67</sup> as well as the value of spirituality in instilling resilience and mitigating the impact of trauma.<sup>68</sup> When a medical or other professional affirms the value of faith, a patient or client may be more receptive to a conversation about moving away from physical discipline.

## **CONCLUSION**

**W**HEN RELIGIOUS OR OTHER CULTURAL PRACTICES are in play, many parents may be reluctant to move away from corporal punishment. However, research suggests that a culturally sensitive approach that discusses not only the research about physical discipline but also addresses theological concerns can be effective in changing attitudes and, hopefully, practices.



# ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth T. Gershoff and Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, *Spanking and Child Outcomes: Old Controversies and New Meta-Analysis*, 30 JOURNAL OF FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY 453-469 (2016); ELIZABETH T. GERSHOFF, REPORT ON PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT IN THE UNITED STATES: WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US ABOUT ITS EFFECTS ON CHILDREN (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Catherine A. Taylor, Jennifer A. Manganello, Shawna J. Lee, Janet C. Rice, *Mothers' Spanking of 3-Year-Old Children and Subsequent Risk of Children's Aggressive Behavior*, 125 PEDIATRICS (2010)

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth T. Gershoff and Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, *Spanking and Child Outcomes: Old Controversies and New Meta-Analysis*, 30 JOURNAL OF FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY 453-469 (2016).

<sup>4</sup> In this study, harsh physical discipline was defined as pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping and hitting.

<sup>5</sup> Tracie O. Afifi, et al, *Harsh Physical Punishment in Childhood and Adult Physical Health*, 132 PEDIATRICS e333-38 (2013).

<sup>6</sup> Akemi Tomoda, MD, PhD, Hanako Suzuki, MA, Keren Rabi, MA, Yi-Shin Sheu, BS, Ann Polcari, PhD, and Martin H. Teicher, MD, *Reduced Prefrontal Cortical Gray Matter Volume in Young Adults Exposed to Harsh Corporal Punishment*, 47 NEUROIMAGE T66-T71, available online at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2896871/> (last visited March 6, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth T. Gershoff, *Corporal Punishment, Physical Abuse, and the Burden of Proof: Reply to Baumrind, Larzalere and Cowan (2002), Holden (2002), Holden (2002) and Parke (2002)*, 128 PSYCHOL. BULL. 602, 609 (2002); In Canada, the figure has reached as high as 75%. Joan Durrant & Ron Ensom, *Physical Punishment of Children: Lessons from 20 Years of Research*, 184 CMAJ 1373 (2012), available online at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3447048/> (last visited February 12, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Adam J. Zolotov, et al, *Speak Softly—and Forget the Stick: Corporal Punishment and Child Physical Abuse*, 35 AM J. PREVENTATIVE MED. 364 (2008).

<sup>9</sup> Id. at 367.

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. Robert D. Sege, MD, PhD, FAAP, Benjamin S. Siegel, MD, FAAP, *Effective Discipline to Raise Healthy Children* (American Academy of Pediatrics 2018).

<sup>11</sup> The Harris Poll, *Four in Five Americans Believe Parents Spanking their Children is Sometimes Appropriate*, available online at: <https://theharrispoll.com/new-york-n-y-september-26-2013-to-spank-or-not-to-spank-its-an-age-old-question-that-every-parent-must-face-some-parents-may-start-off-with-the-notion-that-i-will-never-spank-my-child-bu/> (last accessed March 6, 2018) (poll notes these numbers declined from 1995).

<sup>12</sup> John E.B. Myers, MYERS ON EVIDENCE OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE: CHILD MALTREATMENT, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, RAPE, STALKING, AND ELDER ABUSE, 262-264 (5<sup>TH</sup> ED 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Frank Newport, GOD IS ALIVE AND WELL: THE FUTURE OF RELIGION IN AMERICA 9-11 (2011). According to Pew's "Religious Landscape Study," 70.8% of Americans identify as Christian, 5.9% identify with a non-Christian faith, 1.8% are placed in a category of "other faiths," and the remaining 22.8% are "unaffiliated" or labeled by Pew as "nones." Pew Research Center, *Religious Landscape Study* (2015), available online at: <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/> (last visited November 7, 2018). Gallup's 2017 update finds the following demographics in the United States: 48.5% of Americans are Protestant, 22.7% are Catholics, 1.8% are Mormon, 2.1% are Jewish, 0.8 are Muslim, 2.5% are other non-Christian religions, and 21.3 have no religious identity. Frank Newport, 2017 *Update on Religion in America* (December 22, 2017), available online at: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/224642/2017-update->

americans-religion.aspx (last visited November 21, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Rebekah J. Breyer and David MacPhee, *Community Characteristics, Conservative Ideology, and Child Abuse Rates*, 41 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT 126, 127 (2015). For a discussion of Jewish views on corporal punishment, see generally, MEIR MUNK, SPARE THE ROD: A TORAH PERSPECTIVE ON REWARD AND PUNISHMENT IN EDUCATION (1989).

<sup>15</sup> Consider, for example, this Catholic commentary on Proverbs 23:13-14: “The sardonic humor means the exhortation is not to be taken literally, an argument for corporal punishment.” THE CATHOLIC STUDY BIBLE 867 (Donald Senior et al. eds., 2d ed. 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Victor I. Vieth, *From Sticks to Flowers: Guidelines for Child Protection Professionals Working with Parents Using Scripture to Justify Corporal Punishment*, 40(3) WILLIAM MITCHELL LAW REVIEW 907, 916-920 (2014).

<sup>17</sup> Id. at 917; Christopher G. Ellison & Darren E. Sherkat, *Conservative Protestantism and Support for Corporal Punishment*, 58 AM. SOC. REV. 131, 140 (1993).

<sup>18</sup> John P. Hoffman, Christopher G. Ellison, and John P. Bartkowski, *Conservative Protestantism and Attitudes Toward Corporal Punishment*, 63 SOC. SCIENCE RESEARCH 81-94 (2017).

<sup>19</sup> Henry Enton, *Americans’ Opinions on Spanking Vary by Party, Race, Region and Religion*, FiveThirtyEight, September 14, 2014, available online at: <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/americans-opinions-on-spanking-vary-by-party-race-region-and-religion/> (last visited November 5, 2018).

<sup>20</sup> Christopher G. Ellison & Darren E. Sherkat, *Conservative Protestantism and Support for Corporal Punishment*, 58 AM. SOC. REV. 131, 132 (1993).

<sup>21</sup> Robin Perrin, et al, *Changing Attitudes about Spanking Using Alternative Biblical Interpretations*, 41 INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BEHAVIORAL DEVELOPMENT 514-22 (2017); Cindy Miller-Perrin and Robin Perrin, *Changing Attitudes about Spanking Among Conservative Christians Using Interventions that Focus on Empirical Research Evidence and Progressive Biblical Interpretations*, 71 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 69-79 (2017).

<sup>22</sup> For an overview of when corporal punishment exceeds what is lawful in the United States, see generally, John E.B. Myers, MYERS ON EVIDENCE OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE: CHILD MALTREATMENT, INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, RAPE, STALKING, AND ELDER ABUSE, 262-264 (5TH ed. 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth T. Gershoff, Sarah A. Font, Catherine A. Taylor, Ann Budzak Garza, Denyse Olson-Dorff, Rebecca H. Foster, *A Short-Term Evaluation of a Hospital No Hit Zone Policy to Increase Bystander Intervention in Cases of Parent-to-Child Violence*, 94 CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES REVIEW 155 (2018).

<sup>24</sup> This is not to suggest that every medical doctor or other professional is opposed to corporal punishment. In 2019, Robert Hamilton, a pediatrician and Christian missionary, wrote an opinion piece for the Wall Street Journal suggesting that anti-spanking bias influenced the American Academy of Pediatrics to strongly oppose corporal punishment. Hamilton took issue with the large body of research finding corporal punishment to be ineffective and associated with multiple risks. Instead, Hamilton cited anecdotal evidence of the benefits of hitting children as a means of discipline as well as “multiple biblical injunctions regarding child discipline.” According to Hamilton, it is “unreasonable to demand that believing Jews and Christians dismiss clear teachings” in the Bible. Accordingly, Hamilton recommends “limiting spanking to one to three swats with a wooden spoon, not a hand.” Robert C. Hamilton, *The Right Way to Spank a Child*, WALL STREET JOURNAL, February 5, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> These guidelines are adapted from: Victor I. Vieth, *From Sticks to Flowers: Guidelines for Child Protection Professionals Working with Parents Using Scripture to Justify Corporal Punishment*, 40(3) WILLIAM MITCHELL LAW REVIEW 907-942 (2014).

<sup>26</sup> Judith S. Rycus & Ronald C. Hughes, FIELD GUIDE TO CHILD WELFARE: FOUNDATIONS OF CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES VOLUME ONE 32 (CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA 1998).



- <sup>27</sup> David R. Hodge, Developing Cultural Competency with Evangelical Christians, 85 *FAMILIES IN SOCIETY: THE JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SERVICES* 251-260 (2004).
- <sup>28</sup> Christopher G. Ellison & Matt Bradshaw, *Religious Beliefs, Sociopolitical Ideology, and Attitudes Toward Corporal Punishment*, 30 *JOURNAL OF FAMILY ISSUES* 320, 335 (2009).
- <sup>29</sup> Christopher G. Ellison & Matt Bradshaw, *Religious Beliefs, Sociopolitical Ideology, and Attitudes Toward Corporal Punishment*, 30 *JOURNAL OF FAMILY ISSUES* 320, 335 (2009).
- <sup>30</sup> E.g. William Webb, *CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN THE BIBLE* (2011); MEIR MUNK, *SPARING THE ROD: A TORAH PERSPECTIVE ON REWARD AND PUNISHMENT IN EDUCATION* (1989).
- <sup>31</sup> As an illustration of one hospital's work to coordinate spiritual and mental health care, see Michael D. McGee & Jennifer Torosian, *Integrating Spiritual Assessment into a Psychiatric Unit*, 3(12) *PSYCHIATRY* 60-64 (2006).
- <sup>32</sup> See e.g. Pete Singer, *Coordinating Pastoral Care of Survivors with Mental Health Providers*, 45(3) *CURRENTS IN MISSION & THEOLOGY* 31-35 (2018); Victor I. Vieth, *Coordinating Medical and Pastoral Care in Cases of Child Abuse & Neglect*, 45(3) *CURRENTS IN MISSION & THEOLOGY* 27-30 (2018).
- <sup>33</sup> *Julie Valentine Center becomes first Child Advocacy Center in the US to add Chaplain to its Staff*, GSA Biz Wire (January 17, 2017), available online at: <http://gsabizwire.com/julie-valentine-center-becomes-the-first-child-advocacy-center-in-the-us-to-add-chaplain-to-its-staff/> (last visited November 7, 2018); Victor I. Vieth, et al, *Chaplains for Children: Twelve Potential Roles for a Theologian on the MDT*, 3(6) *CENTERPIECE* (National Child Protection Training Center 2013).
- <sup>34</sup> Edward P. Shafranske & H. Newton Malony, *Clinical Psychologists; Religious and Spiritual Orientations and Their Practice of Psychotherapy*, 27 *PSYCHOTHERAPY* 72, 77 (1990).
- <sup>35</sup> Mark D. Everson & Jose Miguel Sandoval, *Forensic Child Sexual Abuse Evaluations: Assessing Subjectivity and Bias in Professional Judgments*, 35 *CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT* 287, 297 (2011) (A "team" approach to assessment that emphasizes diversity in professional position or discipline, gender, and experience level is likely to ...counterbalance individual biases.")
- <sup>36</sup> Christopher W. Dyslin & Cynthia J. Thomsen, *Religiosity and Risk of Perpetrating Child Physical Abuse: An Empirical Investigation*, 33 *J. PSYCHOL. & THEOLOGY* 291, 295 (2005).
- <sup>37</sup> Rebekah J. Breyer and David MacPhee, *Community Characteristics, Conservative Ideology, and Child Abuse Rates*, 41 *CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT* 126 (2015).
- <sup>38</sup> Christopher G. Ellison & Matt Bradshaw, *Religious Beliefs, Sociopolitical Ideology, and Attitudes Toward Corporal Punishment*, 30 *JOURNAL OF FAMILY ISSUES* 320, 331 (2009).
- <sup>39</sup> *Id.* at 335.
- <sup>40</sup> This list is taken from William Webb's summary of current conservative Protestant teachings on physical discipline. WILLIAM J. WEBB, *CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN THE BIBLE: A REDEMPTIVE-MOVEMENT HERMENEUTIC FOR TROUBLING TEXTS* 28-54 (2011).
- <sup>41</sup> Adam J. Zolotov, et al, *Speak Softly—and Forget the Stick: Corporal Punishment and Child Physical Abuse*, 35 *AM J. PREVENTATIVE MED.* 364 (2008).
- <sup>42</sup> See generally, Bette L. Bottoms, Michael Nielsen, Rebecca Murray and Henrietta Filipas, *Religion-related Child Physical Abuse: Characteristics and Psychological Outcomes*, 8 *JOURNAL OF AGGRESSION, MALTREATMENT, & TRAUMA* 87-114 (2003).
- <sup>43</sup> Michael and Debi Pearl, *TO TRAIN UP A CHILD* (1994).
- <sup>44</sup> Victor I. Vieth, *From Sticks to Flowers: Guidelines for Child Protection Professionals Working with Parents Using Scripture to Justify Corporal Punishment*, 40(3) *WILLIAM MITCHELL LAW REVIEW* 907,

932-933 (2014).

<sup>45</sup> Christopher W. Dyslin & Cynthia J. Thomsen, *Religiosity and Risk of Perpetrating Child Physical Abuse: An Empirical Investigation*, 33 J. PSYCHOL. & THEOLOGY 291, 296 (2005).

<sup>46</sup> Christina M. Rodriguez & Ryan C. Henderson, *Who Spares the Rod? Religious Orientation, Social Conformity, and Child Abuse Potential*, 34 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 84, 91-92 (2010).

<sup>47</sup> Dyslin and Thomsen, note 44, at 296.

<sup>48</sup> Rodriguez & Henderson, note 45, quoting Gordon W. Allport & J. Michael Ross, *Personal Religious Orientation and Prejudice*, 5 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCH. 432, 434 (1967).

<sup>49</sup> See generally, Joan E. Dumas & Jenelle Nissley-Tsiopinis, *Parental Global Religiousness, Sanctification of Parenting, and Positive and Negative Religious Coping as Predictors of Parental and Child Functioning*, 16 INT'L. J. PSYCHOL. RELIGION 289, 294 (2006) (discussing parents who view their role in a sacred context).

<sup>50</sup> Victor I. Vieth, *From Sticks to Flowers: Guidelines for Child Protection Professionals Working with Parents Using Scripture to Justify Corporal Punishment*, 40(3) WILLIAM MITCHELL LAW REVIEW 907, 937 (2014).

<sup>51</sup> The American Academy of Pediatrics has a website with guidance for healthy discipline for all age ranges. The website can be accessed at: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx> (last visited November 7, 2018).

<sup>52</sup> E.g. Donald F. Walker & Heather Lewis Quagliana, *Integrating Scripture with Parent Training in Behavioral Interventions*, 26 J. PSYCHOL. & THEOLOGY 122 (2007).

<sup>53</sup> Christopher W. Dyslin & Cynthia J. Thomsen, *Religiosity and Risk of Perpetrating Child Physical Abuse: An Empirical Investigation*, 33 J. PSYCHOL. & THEOLOGY 191, 195-96 (2005); W. Bradford Wilcox, *Conservative Protestant Childrearing: Authoritarian or Authoritative?* 63 AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW 796-809 (1998); John P. Bartkowski and W. Bradford Wilcox, *Conservative Protestants and Child Discipline: The Case of Parental Yelling*, 79 SOCIAL FORCES 265-291 (2000) John P. Bartkowski and Xiaohe Xu, *Distant Patriarchs or Expressive Dads? The Discourse and Practice of Fathering in Conservative Protestant Families*, 42 SOCIOLOGICAL QUARTERLY 465-485 (2000); Christopher G. Ellison & Matt Bradshaw, *Religious Beliefs, Sociopolitical Ideology, and Attitudes Toward Corporal Punishment*, 30 JOURNAL OF FAMILY ISSUES 320, 331 (2009).

<sup>54</sup> See Shawna J. Lee, et al, *Does Warmth Moderate Longitudinal Associations between Maternal Spanking and Child Aggression in Early Childhood?* 49 DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOL. 2017, 2017-18 (2013).

<sup>55</sup> Albert Mohler, *Should Spanking be Banned? Parental Authority under Assault*, available online at: <https://albertmohler.com/2004/06/22/should-spanking-be-banned-parental-authority-under-assault/> (2004) (last visited November 6, 2018).

<sup>56</sup> One conservative Protestant Bible commentary on Proverbs 13:24 states “Love and discipline go together. The rod does not necessarily mean a spanking but simply whatever physical discipline is reasonable for the offense. The rod refers to a branch or switch. It is a small object that stings, but does not inflict serious bodily harm. The use of the rod for spankings is clearly taught in scripture in preference to spanking with one’s hand.” THE KING JAMES STUDY BIBLE SECOND EDITION (2013).

<sup>57</sup> John Schuetze, DOCTOR OF SOULS: THE ART OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY 295 (2018).

<sup>58</sup> Editorial, *Thou Shalt Not Abuse: Reconsidering Spanking* (2012), available online at: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/january/editorial-spanking-abuse.html> (last visited November 21, 2018)

<sup>59</sup> For a discussion of Billy Graham’s role in founding of *Christianity Today*, see Harold Myra, *No Figurehead Founder*, THE BILLY GRAHAM ISSUE (Christianity Today 2018).

<sup>60</sup>THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE 1015 (St. Louis: Concordia 2009); NIV STUDY BIBLE 1049 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2011).

<sup>61</sup>Eric R. Andrae, *Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child? Spare Me!* 12 LUTHERAN FORUM 14 (2014).

<sup>62</sup>See generally Victor I. Vieth, *From Sticks to Flowers: Guidelines for Child Protection Professionals Working with Parents Using Scripture to Justify Corporal Punishment*, 40(3) WILLIAM MITCHELL LAW REVIEW 907, 937 (2014).

<sup>63</sup>In addition to the issue of corporal punishment, many children who are interviewed as suspected victims of sexual abuse pose spiritual questions about their victimization and there is a need to develop effective collaborations between faith, medical and mental health professionals to develop a holistic approach to a child's needs. Amy C. Tishelman and Lisa A. Fontes, *Religion in Child Sexual Abuse Forensic Interviews*, 63 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT, 120-130 (2017).

<sup>64</sup>See e.g. Victor I. Vieth, *Augustine, Luther & Solomon: Providing Pastoral Guidance to Parents on the Corporal Punishment of Children*, 44(3) CURRENTS IN MISSION & THEOLOGY, 25-33 (2017).

<sup>65</sup>Victor I. Vieth, *From Sticks to Flowers: Guidelines for Child Protection Professionals Working with Parents Using Scripture to Justify Corporal Punishment*, 40(3) WILLIAM MITCHELL LAW REVIEW 907, 937 (2014).

<sup>66</sup>David R. Hodge, "Developing Cultural Competency with Evangelical Christians," *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services* 85 (2004): 251-260.

<sup>67</sup>Harold G. Koenig, *Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications*, INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARLY RESEARCH NETWORK (Volume 2012).

<sup>68</sup>Terry Lynn Gall, *Spirituality and Coping with Life Stress Among Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse*, 30 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT, 829 (2006); Thema Bryant-Davis, et al., *Religiosity, Spirituality, and Trauma Recovery in the Lives of Children and Adolescents*, 43(4) PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: RESEARCH AND PRACTICE, 307 (2012); Katie G. Reinhert, Jacquelyn C. Campbell, Karen Bandeen-Roche, Jerry W. Less, and Sarah Szanton, *The Role of Religious Involvement in the Relationship Between Early Trauma and Health Outcomes Among Adult Survivors*, 9 JOURNAL OF CHILD & ADOLESCENT TRAUMA, 231-241 (2016).



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