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**The Role of Parental Authoritarianism and Religiosity  
in Child-Rearing Goals and Practices**

By

Henry A. Danso

B.A. (Hons), University of Ghana, 1992

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Master of Arts degree  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
1996

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Dedicated to my dear mother, **Comfort Boateng**, and father, **Benjamin Danso**,  
for their loving support and encouragement which has made  
me what I am today.

## Abstract

Do one's religion and authoritarian attitudes affect child-rearing techniques? Research suggests that factors such as religious orientation, educational attainment and authoritarian attitudes of parents are implicated in their child-rearing goals and practices (e.g., Wiehe, 1990). Also, parents' fundamentalist religious orientation is associated with an authoritarian norm of parenting, which involves greater emphasis on obedience and the use of punitive disciplinary practices (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a; 1993b). 83 mothers and 71 fathers participated in a survey study to examine how parents' religious orientation and their endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes are linked to the kinds of goals they establish for their children, and their approval of corporal punishment. A model was developed which hypothesized that while parents' religious fundamentalism would be negatively related to their endorsement of child autonomy, it would be positively linked to stronger desires to keep children in their religious faith, to greater emphasis on obedience and to greater approval of corporal punishment. Also, parents' right-wing authoritarian attitudes should be linked to their fundamentalist religious orientation, as well as a more authoritarian norm of parenting. Results from the zero-order correlations were in keeping with the hypotheses. However, a LISREL path analysis procedure indicated that the relationship between parental religious fundamentalism and emphasis on obedience was indirect, mediated through parental right-wing authoritarian attitudes. Also, the positive relationships obtained between faith-keeping and obedience, as well as approval of corporal punishment, were spurious. Parents' right-wing

authoritarianism was a better predictor of their child-rearing attitudes than was religiosity. Religiosity, however, proved important in predicting parents' goal of socializing their children to accept their religious faith.



## Acknowledgements

God has been so faithful to me, and I give Him all the glory for that.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest thanks to my thesis advisor, Dr. Bruce Hunsberger for his input and support throughout the completion of this thesis. Dr. Hunsberger was very approachable, and he was more than a mere advisor to me. His gentle sense of humour as well as his sincere interest in me gave me the confidence to put my ideas forward. I would also like to thank my thesis committee members, Dr. Mike Pratt and Dr. Mark Pancer, for their suggestions and recommendations which were very rich and apt for the final form of this work.

In addition, I am thankful Rebecca Filyer for assisting me with the data analyses. She walked me through the "path" of path analyses with great expertise. I am also grateful to Susan Alisat for her input in my earlier research project which served as the basis for this thesis.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my wonderful wife, Lydia, for enduring my long absence with patient understanding. Her loving support and encouragement sustained me throughout my study at Laurier. My love to her

I cannot forget my caring family as well as my friends for their continuous encouragement. They all deserve my utmost appreciation.

Lastly, I would like to thank the participants of this study, and everyone who in diverse ways helped to make this work complete.

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## **Introduction**

The main objective of this thesis is to examine how parents' fundamentalist religious orientation and endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes are linked to their child-rearing goals and practices. A model is proposed to conceptualize the relationships among the variables under investigation. This study extends previous research which examined the role of religion in relation to students' perceived parenting goals and practices (Danso, 1995).

In this paper, we first examine the role of parents in the socialization process of their children generally, in the light of some parenting models. We then focus more specifically on the role of religion in child-rearing goals and practices. Finally, the review of the literature covers the relationship between right-wing authoritarianism and religious fundamentalism, and how that is related to parents' emphasis on child obedience as a parenting goal, and endorsement of the use of corporal punishment as a specific parental disciplinary practice. A mediating role of parents' desire to keep their children in the family's religious faith ("Faith-keeping") in these relationships is also examined.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Role of Parents in Socialization**

An important issue in the child development literature has been the role of parents in the socialization process of children. Within this literature, socialization is typically conceptualized as the process by which the youngster comes to acquire the

patterns of behaviour appropriate for his or her culture (Baumrind, 1973). According to Baumrind, socializing adults, primarily parents, play a very crucial role, since they have the power to control the child's behaviour during the early stages of development. Reflecting the recognition given to the role of parents in socialization, a body of child-rearing research has focused on the pathways through which parenting styles are linked to child development (e.g., Baumrind, 1971, 1973; Buri, 1989; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Another focus of research on parenting during early childhood has been on the goals and practices of parents in rearing their children, and the impact of these goals and practices on the developing child (e.g., Bachman, 1982). There is also a growing interest in identifying the factors which are associated with the ways parents raise their children. For instance, Benedek (1975) theorized, from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, that patterns of parenting are acquired through the process of internalization during psychosexual development of individuals. Vander Zanden (1989), on the other hand, noted that social class and culture are related to child-rearing practices, from a sociological perspective. Further, Belsky (1984) posited that factors such as marital relations, occupational experiences and family interactions are related to the ways parents raise their children. Another factor in this process is parents' religious orientation (e.g., Wiehe, 1990).

There are several agents of socialization which contribute to the overall psycho-social development of children. The school, the church, peers and possibly even staff of juvenile courts may have an impact at a point in time of the child's life,



but none of these agents spends as much time with the child as parents do. Parents are, therefore, considered very important agents of socialization, especially during the early stages of the child's development. Parents not only provide comfort and protection, in the form of food, clothing, shelter and love, but also typically provide experienced guidance and training in order that their children might become responsible adults. In this regard, parent-child interaction can potentially influence the child's behaviour and activities, often encouraging the child to adopt culturally normative behaviour.

A considerable amount of research effort has been devoted towards understanding how the parent-child relationship affects children's development of social competence. Specifically, some attention has been focused on the effects of parental attitudes towards children. These attitudes are primarily expressed through parenting styles. Baumrind (1971, 1989, 1991) classifies parenting styles into four types: Authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and rejecting-neglecting. According to Baumrind, parenting styles typically vary along two orthogonal dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness.

Baumrind's typology is about broad styles or types of parenting rather than specific practices. The authoritative style of parenting involves high control or demandingness, as well as positive encouragement of independent behaviours by children, and responsiveness to children's needs. The authoritarian style of parenting, according to Baumrind's model, involves less responsive behaviours by parents to children's needs, but enforcement of strict compliance with parental authority and

demands. The permissive or indulgent style of parenting involves less control or demandingness but high responsiveness to children's needs. Rejecting-neglecting parents, on the other hand, are seen as neither demanding nor responsive.

Studies have shown that the various styles of parenting are related to the processes of socialization, and often to children's development of instrumental competence (e.g., Baumrind, 1973). Authoritativeness has been shown to be the parenting style most conducive to children's development of social competence, and is often associated with positive adolescent outcomes in North-American culture. For instance, Buri (1989) found that authoritativeness is associated with increased competence, autonomy and self-esteem. A similar finding was reported by Steinberg, Elmen and Mounts (1989).

However, research extending beyond white samples and middle-class families suggests that the influence of the different styles of parenting varies with the social environment within which the family is embedded (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). For instance, Baumrind (1972) found that while the authoritarian style of parenting is associated with fearful, timid and unquestioning behavioral compliance among European-Americans, it is associated with assertiveness among African-American girls. The obvious question is why the same style of parenting is associated with different behavioral outcomes among people in various social environments. Darling and Steinberg (1993) suggest that the goals of socialization might be different for parents in the various cultural milieus, or that even if the goals are the same the methods used to help the children to attain the goals may differ. Thus, it is important

to examine specific parental goals and practices, as well as styles, in the socialization process.

### **Darling and Steinberg's Integrative Model of Parenting**

Darling and Steinberg (1993) proposed that the processes through which parenting styles are associated with children's development of social competence encompass three aspects: parenting goals, parenting practices and parenting styles. Parenting goals involve the importance that parents attach to encouraging various characteristics that adults or parents find most important or desirable in children (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a). According to Darling and Steinberg, parenting practices include all the specific goal-directed behaviours exhibited, such as giving instructions to the child or disciplining the child. Parenting style is conceptualised as a constellation of parenting attitudes and characteristics which set the emotional climate within which socialization occurs. Thus, a distinction is made between parenting practices and parenting styles in terms of specificity.

Darling and Steinberg (1993) contend that parents' goals of socialization are critical determinants of parenting behaviour. They argue, for instance, that it makes more sense for parents to show interest in their child's activities if they have the goal of socializing the child to develop a strong sense of self-esteem. Such parents might show parental behaviours like visiting places of interest at the child's request and asking about the child's friends. On the other hand, if the goal is academic excellence, parents are most likely to make time for the child's homework and attend

school functions. Parents seeking spiritual growth for their children may specifically make time for family devotional prayers and worship at home, and be more likely to take their children to church for Bible classes. In other words, depending on the desired developmental outcome, different parental behaviours may be shown (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

One could see how different goals may lead to varied parental behaviours. Showing interest in the child's activities, having family devotional prayers, attending school functions and other parenting practices could all be done in ways that show positive demanding attitudes and responsiveness to the child's needs (behaviours which are consistent with authoritativeness). Nevertheless, these specific parenting practices, influenced by different parenting goals, may lead to varied developmental outcomes. The parenting practices cited above could also be shown in ways that reflect high demanding attitudes, but less responsiveness (an authoritarian style). In this regard, one might expect a somewhat different developmental outcome.

Darling and Steinberg (1993) proposed that parenting styles moderate the effects of parenting practices. In other words, specific practices that could be associated with all the styles of parenting could lead to different developmental outcomes, depending on parents' attitudes and communication of warmth and affection to their children. For the purposes of this study, the distinction between parenting styles and parenting practices will not be reviewed. The focus here is on the relationship between parenting goals and parenting practices.

Of relevance to this study is Darling and Steinberg's (1993) proposition that

the goals toward which parents socialize their children influence the practices they adopt to help their children achieve those goals. This study seeks to test the link between parents' emphasis on certain values (parenting goals) and disciplinary strategies (parenting practices). It has been found that parents' religious orientation is associated with their preferences for certain values or goals and practices (e.g., Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a, 1993b). We will, therefore, examine the importance of religion to individuals and its relationship to parents' child-rearing goals and practices.

### **The Role of Religion in Parenting**

#### **Religion and Value Transmission**

This study focuses on the role of parental religiosity in child-rearing goals and practices, in part because of the important role religion plays in human life. The influence of religion can be seen in almost every area of the devoutly religious person's life, such as in the selection of friends or even marriage partners, occupational choice, selection of school, recreational activities, and so on. Research also supports the view that religious participation is important in many people's lives (e.g., Taylor, Thornton & Chatters, 1987). Taylor et al. (1987) noted that participation in religious activities provides spiritual guidance and acts as a source of social support for its members.

Social psychological studies have reported a positive link between religiosity and various indices of family relationships, including higher marital interaction quality

and co-caregiver support, lower levels of marital and co-caregiver conflict (Brody, Stoneman, Flor & McCrary, 1994), as well as better marital adjustment (Wilson & Filsinger, 1986) and marital stability (Shrum, 1980). Other studies have reported a link between religiosity and coping mechanisms adapted for negotiating the stresses of life (e.g., Krause & Tran, 1989; Taylor & Chatters, 1991). These studies underscore the importance of religion for many individuals. However, the most profound influence of religiosity on people's lives might be on their values. Wiehe (1990) noted, for instance, that:

Some families look to their church not only for spiritual guidance but also as the primary resource for their friendships, their values, and for prescriptions for living which would include their parenting role. The impact of religion on parents may be most obvious in teaching values to children, since values are an essential part of religion. Religion, however, may also impact more specifically on parental functioning in the area of discipline (p. 175).

As expected, research indicates that religious values of parents are typically passed on to their children. Studies on this theme have reported correlations of .40 to .90 between parents' and their children's religiosity (e.g., Acock & Bengston, 1978; Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975). Spilka, Hood and Gorsuch (1985) reported that the percentage of children affiliating with their parents' religious groups varies with the religious denomination of the parents. Usually, a lesser affiliative tendency is reported by children whose parents are members of the more liberal denominations (e.g., the

Anglican church), while a higher affiliative tendency is reported by the more fundamentalist groups (e.g., Baptist), which stress the uniqueness of their denominations.

Simple observation might reveal that it is not every child of a religious parent who is also religious. Certainly, some parents might be more effective in communicating and transmitting their religious culture to their children than others are. Such parents might put more stress on religion in the early development of their children. For instance, research indicates that the extent to which religion was emphasised at home is related to students' reports of religious commitment during the college years (Hunsberger, 1976; 1980). This underscores the importance of religion to some individuals. Having noted the importance of religion in the transmission of values to children, we now review the literature that relates religion and child-rearing goals and practices.

### **Religion and Parenting Goals**

Religious orientation of parents is an important factor which has been found to influence child-rearing practices. The methods of child upbringing are sometimes obtained from the teachings of the religious groups that parents identify with. A review of some Christian writers' propositions about child-rearing practices (e.g., Dobson, 1976; Fugate, 1980; Meier, 1977) supports the view that some fundamentalist religious beliefs encourage more authoritarian norms of parenting. That is, a great deal of emphasis is placed on traditional family values, such as

obedience, as the most important goals toward which children should be socialized, and often tougher sanctions are prescribed for those who dissent (e.g., Boyd-Franklin, 1989). It is important to know what religious fundamentalism means here.

Religious fundamentalism (RF) has been defined by Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) as:

The belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by the forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow those fundamental teachings have a special relation with the deity (p. 118).

Altemeyer and Hunsberger's conceptualization of RF transcends denominational and other religious groupings since it does not focus on specific Christian aspects of fundamentalism such as "the second coming of Christ." In this study, fundamentalism is defined as conceptualised by Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992).

The focus of this paper is on Christians, so we shall examine the implications of this definition for the Christian fundamentalist. Four belief patterns of Christian fundamentalists could be identified from this definition: The Christian faith is the only true religion, evil forces which oppose it should be fought, the tenets of the faith must be followed by all, and those who believe and follow Christian doctrines have a



special reward from God.

One gathers from this definition that high religious fundamentalists will not only follow the teachings they believe, but will also be more likely to make some efforts to get others to follow their teachings. The most practical point to begin this "crusade" might be to focus on the children of such parents. In effect, those who are high in fundamentalism might also consider it their religious duty to bring up their children to accept their religious teachings or faith. This desire to bring up children to accept the religious teachings of the parents could also influence their parenting goals and practices. For instance, some Christian writers teach that if children are not well disciplined they are likely to become irresponsible adults, and more importantly, this may have devastating spiritual consequences since such children might grow up to reject parental authority, including religious teachings (Fugate, 1980; LaHaye, 1977, cited by Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a).

The lesson, then, is simple. According to this line of reasoning, fundamentalists believe that children should be taught to submit their selfish goals and desires to the will of God and this could be effectively done when the children belong to the one and only true religion, whose teachings are based on the fundamental principles of God. This suggests the importance that some individuals may attach to keeping their children in their religious faith. To such parents, socializing their children to accept the family faith could be a central goal around which all other parenting goals revolve. These parents might be those who act on this biblical advice: "Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it"

(Proverbs 22:6, New International Version, NIV).

Scriptural interpretation is important to the Christian fundamentalist. It could be argued that the kind of interpretation given to scriptures may be related to the attitudes held by religious parents about parenting. It has been suggested that those who subscribe to religious fundamentalism are committed to literal interpretation of scriptures. That is, Christian fundamentalists consider the Bible as the absolute word of God, providing the ultimate source of authority and guidance for human behaviours (see Dobson, 1976; Fugate, 1980). For this reason, they argue that all human conduct, including parenting, should be referred to the Bible for judgement or evaluation.

Oosterhuis (1993) argued to abolish the use of the "rod" to discipline children. She pointed out that the use of corporal punishment or the rod to discipline children belongs to the old testament era, and that "children's roles and rights have changed over the years to reflect a more Christian and humanitarian view of children" (p 127). Gangel and Rooker (1993) responded to this "Abolishing the Rod" article and advised that "the pattern of parental discipline must be determined by Scripture, not by modern-day children's advocates" (p 136). The rationale for this advice is that "... the Bible, being the word of God, cannot be wrong; it cannot be in error and cannot lead into error" (Achte-meir, 1980, p. 3). This belief in infallibility or inerrancy of the Bible leads fundamentalist Christians to quote the Bible to support whatever claim they make. The advice of secular writers and the findings of social researchers are rejected when they are construed to contradict what the Bible offers. For example,

according to Gangel and Rooker (1993):

If one bases judgements on what society is saying at any given moment, not only is there no authority nor absolute truth, there are no controls in deciding what is right (p 135).

This is an urgent call to turn to the church and the Bible for guidance on how children should be reared. One could gather from this that certain individuals' parenting goals and practices could be influenced by the teachings they receive from their religion.

Also, the scriptural understanding that prevails among today's rank-and-file fundamentalists stresses the certainty and legitimacy of biblical texts which emphasize obedience and submission to authority. Such themes are central in contemporary fundamentalist literature on parenting (e.g., Hunter, 1987; Peshkin, 1986; Rose, 1988). They argue that the Bible commands children to obey their parents (e.g., Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:17; Colossians 3:20; 1 Timothy 3:4). Ephesians 6:1-3, for instance, states: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother - which is the first commandment with a promise - that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" (NIV).

Thus, under threat of condemnation from the church and divine judgement (Deuteronomy 21:18-21; Proverbs 29:15), children are brought up by their Christian fundamentalist parents to obey and submit to authority that "it may go well" with them and that they "may enjoy long life." It is reasonable to suppose from this that parents who are oriented towards fundamentalist Christian beliefs may consider the

traditional family value of obedience as an important value to emphasize in the upbringing of their children. Consistent with this view, fundamentalist writers advocate that successful parenting should involve training youngsters to respect and submit to duly constituted authorities (e.g., Dobson, 1976).

Such writers argue that human institutions and relationships are governed by principles of hierarchy and authority, God being the ultimate authority. They stress that the hierarchy or patterns of authority within the family should not be changed, challenging the democratic models of family organization embodied in much popular literature (Fugate, 1980; McNamara, 1985, cited by Ellison & Sherkat, 1993b). Some fundamentalist writers further argue that errant conceptions of parenting are responsible for moral decay and other social problems which are now on the increase in modern cultures (e.g., Bartkowski & Ellison, 1993).

Ellison and Sherkat (1993a) designed a study to examine the link between religious factors and child-rearing orientations. They were interested in testing whether Catholics embrace more "hierarchical, authoritarian child-rearing values" than other Americans, as well as whether denominational differences exist between Catholics and Protestants in terms of their valuation of obedience and autonomy in children. They tested the hypothesis that both Catholics and conservative Protestants would value obedience disproportionately, and devalue autonomy compared with other non-fundamentalist Americans. It was further predicted that acceptance of the doctrine of biblical literalism, belief in original sin and punitive attitudes toward sinners, would be positively related to valuation of obedience, and inversely related to

valuation of autonomy in children.

Ellison and Sherkat used data from the General Social Survey (GSS, Davis & Smith, 1989), which is an American national cross-sectional study of non-institutionalized adults which gathers information on religious beliefs and practices and parental values, as well as on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Respondents were presented with five parenting values and were asked to pick the one they consider most important for a child to learn to prepare him or her for life. The values were: to obey; to be well liked or popular; to think for himself or herself; to work hard; and to help others when they are in need. After choosing the most important value, respondents were asked to rank the other four values from most important to least important. The rankings were scored for obedience and autonomy (the dependent variables) from (1) least important to (5) most important. The predictor variables were respondents' denominational ties, belief in biblical literalism, conception of human nature and attitudes toward punishment of sinners.

Results indicated that approximately 23% of the respondents ranked obedience as the most important value, while 15% ranked it the least important. Autonomy was valued much more within the sample. About 49% of the respondents ranked it as the most important value to teach children. It was found that conservative Protestants, and to a lesser extent Catholics, valued obedience in children as more important than other Americans did. Also, belief in the doctrine of biblical literalism, belief in sinful human nature and a punitive attitude towards sinners were all positively related to stronger preference for obedience in children. There was no significant difference in

preference for autonomy between conservative Protestants and other (non-Catholic) Americans. However, biblical literalism and punitiveness towards sinners were negatively related to preference for autonomy in children, while belief in evil human nature was not related to support for autonomy. Catholics were slightly less supportive of autonomy than were other Americans.

The results of this study are impressive, but one problem is that the study lumped many denominations together and referred to the whole group as conservative Protestants. Thus, it suffered from the same methodological problem (focusing on denominational differences) for which it criticised other studies. Though the denominations might share common beliefs on certain aspects of life, they could also differ on other aspects. One could also identify variations in belief patterns even within the same denomination. It will be more useful to use a tool that measures religiosity on a continuum, such as the Religious Fundamentalism scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), which cuts across denominational barriers.

From the above, one could realize the role of religion in the values of parents, and the goals toward which socialization is directed. Not only is parental religiosity related to the goals of socialization, but it is also linked to the parenting practices of discipline. To understand the role of religion in parenting practices, let us review evidence on this relationship.

### **Religion and Parenting Practices**

One central practice exercised to help parents attain their child-rearing goals is

the disciplining of children. Some biblical texts support or advocate the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary practice. Scriptures like "he who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" ( Proverbs 13:24 NIV), "do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death" (Proverbs 23:13,14, NIV) and others (e.g., Proverbs 22:15; 29:15 and Hebrews 12:5-10) seem to support this idea. For this reason, parents who adhere to a religious orientation which emphasizes literal interpretation of the Bible have been argued to be more likely to be proponents of the use of corporal punishment (Greven, 1990).

Indirect evidence further suggests a link between Christian fundamentalism and endorsement of the use of corporal punishment. Ham (1982) reported that parents enrol their children in fundamentalist Christian schools primarily because of their belief that schools should use corporal punishment. Also, Roof and Roof (1984) found that fundamentalists are more likely to hold punitive images about God. Support for such views is found in this scripture "...For the Lord corrects and disciplines every one whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes" (Hebrews 12:6, Amplified Bible). On this basis, some fundamentalists argue that spanking disobedient children is a moral imperative.

Wiehe (1990) also examined the relation of religion to parents' attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment. He tested the hypothesis that parents affiliated with Christian denominations which subscribe to biblical literalism would be more

likely to advocate spanking of children than those who do not subscribe to literal interpretation of the Bible. Data were collected from different denominations and, on the basis of the completed questionnaires, the denominations were grouped into literalists and non-literalists. For instance, Baptists and Pentecostals were classified as literalists, while Presbyterians and Methodists were classified as non-literalists.

Wiehe's participants responded to the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI), which consists of 32 statements about parenting. The AAPI measures parenting attitudes on four dimensions: Belief in the use of corporal punishment (e.g., "Children should always be spanked when they misbehave"); developmental expectations (e.g., "Children should be expected to feed themselves by twelve months"); empathy towards children's needs (e.g., "Parents spoil their children by picking them up and comforting them when they cry"); and reversing parent-child roles (e.g., "Young children should be expected to comfort their mother when she is feeling blue"). A five-point Likert-type response format was used, and each dimension was scored separately. Results indicated that literalists demonstrated a stronger belief in the use of corporal punishment, less empathy toward children's needs and more parent-child role reversal than their non-literalist counterparts.

Furthermore, Fugate (1980) remarked that external controls must be used to restrain childhood inclinations toward sin until controls can be internalized. This external control, some conservative Christian writers point out, should be punishment with the "rod." For this reason, endorsement of the use of corporal punishment and other harsh disciplinary practices persists among religious fundamentalists in spite of



the outcry by social scientists regarding its negative effects. For instance, Gangel and Rooker (1993) argue that:

To be sure, many modern parents and educators are revolted by the thought of corporal punishment, but that does not remove it from the Bible passages that commend it. How can we abolish what God has designed? We can avoid its misuse, condemn its abuse, and these things we must do. But we must also speak out against its disuse (p. 135).

This is not all; the role of religion and socioeconomic status in relation to support for corporal punishment in schools was examined by Grasmick, Morgan, and Kennedy (1992). Data were collected as part of the annual Oklahoma City Survey in 1989. The dependent measure was support for the use of corporal punishment in schools, assessed by five items with a four-point response format. Respondents indicated their agreement with statements like "Teachers should spank children when they use obscene language."

Two predictor variables, religiosity of parents and parents' socioeconomic status (SES), were measured. Family income, educational background and occupational experience were used to assess respondents' SES. Respondents were classified into four categories based on their reports of religious affiliation. Personal religious identity salience was assessed by the use of a four-item Likert-type scale (e.g., "Religion is a very important part of my life") as a measure of religiosity. The effects of religiosity and SES were assessed separately.

Results indicated that highly religious people scored significantly higher on

support for the use of corporal punishment than did low religious people. Also, education as a measure of socioeconomic status was negatively related to endorsement of the use of corporal punishment, but family income and occupational experience were not. Grasmick et al. suggested that the greater support of corporal punishment in schools among highly religious individuals might be primarily due to their punitiveness or negative attitude towards "sinners."

In a recent study, Danso (1995) examined the relationship between university students' religious fundamentalism and their perceived parenting goals and practices. The study tested the hypothesis that students' fundamentalist religious orientation would be positively related to the importance they attach to keeping children in the family's religious faith, to emphasis on obedience and to approval of the use of corporal punishment to discipline children. The participants imagined themselves as parents and completed the Religious Fundamentalism scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992) and three other scales prepared by the researcher to assess three aspects of parenting: Importance attached to keeping children in parents' religious faith (Faith-Keeping scale); emphasis on child obedience as a parenting goal (Obedience scale) and endorsement of the use of corporal punishment to discipline children as a specific parenting practice (Approval of Corporal Punishment scale). The Obedience scale also had items which were used to assess students' valuation of autonomy in children.

As expected, scores on the Religious Fundamentalism scale correlated significantly positively with scores on the Faith-Keeping, Obedience and Approval of Corporal Punishment scales. A regression analysis procedure proposed by Baron and

Kenny (1986) was used to test a hypothesized mediating role of faith-keeping in the relationship between religious fundamentalism and obedience, and the result was consistent with that hypothesis. When faith-keeping was introduced as a mediator in the relationship between religious fundamentalism and obedience, fundamentalism no longer predicted obedience, but faith-keeping did. Thus, religious fundamentalism was only indirectly related to obedience, mediated by faith-keeping. Also, religious fundamentalism, obedience and faith-keeping scores all negatively correlated with scores on autonomy.

Though the findings of the study make a contribution to our understanding of the role of religion in parenting, the results would have been more conclusive if the study had been carried out with actual parents as participants. For example, we do not know to what extent young (mostly single) adults are able to realistically "role play" being parents. The present study extends the previous study in an attempt to replicate the findings with actual parents.

From the above-reviewed literature, one can see a relationship between parents' religiosity and their child-rearing goals and practices. That is, there is a link between religious fundamentalism and emphasis on child obedience as a parenting goal (Danso, 1995; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a). We have also reviewed literature linking parents' religiosity with their endorsement of the use of corporal punishment. One variable which could play a role in these relationships is parental right-wing authoritarianism (RWA). First, parental RWA might be related to the religious beliefs that parents subscribe to and, second, it could be directly linked to their child-rearing

goals and practices. Thus, parental RWA might play a mediating role in the links between parental religiosity and child-rearing orientations. We, therefore, review these possibilities in detail.

### **Right-Wing Authoritarianism**

Altemeyer (1981) conceptualised right-wing authoritarianism as the co-variation of three attitudinal clusters:

- 1 Authoritarian submission - a high degree of submission to the authorities who are perceived to be established and legitimate in the society in which one lives;
- 2 Authoritarian aggression - a general aggressiveness, directed against various persons, which is perceived to be sanctioned by established authorities; and
- 3 Conventionalism - a high degree of adherence to the social conventions which are perceived to be endorsed by society and its established authorities. (pp. 147 - 148)

By this definition, RWA is seen as a syndrome which is characterized by a tendency to be submissive to authority without questioning, a tendency to be hostile or aggressive towards out-group members and a tendency to view things in black and white, as right and wrong, or good and bad, with no mid-line or shade of grey in between (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988).

To understand how RWA and religiosity are linked, let us review the

implications of this definition for personal religiosity.

### **Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Religiosity**

Altemeyer (1988) contends that authoritarians embrace their childhood religious teachings, since the Christian religion emphasizes obedience and submission to a supernatural authority. In line with this, children are taught to obey and submit to the earthly authority system which represents the supernatural authority - parents, teachers, religious officials and the state authority. Religious officials may find support for their emphasis on obedience from scriptures like Romans 13:1, where the apostle Paul entreats Christians to be loyal and submissive to instituted authority since every authority exists by the approval of God. With regards to the connection between religion and conventionalism, Altemeyer (1988) noted that it "is almost tautological, it being one of religion's traditional functions to define and defend the moral norms in a culture" (p. 203).

From this, one can deduce that traditional religious training could foster authoritarianism, much as authoritarianism could make one comfortable with certain religious teachings. Supporting this suspicion, positive associations have been reported between RWA and various indices and measures of religiosity. It has been found that high right-wing authoritarians tend to carry their childhood religious teachings into adulthood and act religiously (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988). Thus, Altemeyer reported that right-wing authoritarians pray more regularly, attend religious meetings and read scriptures more often, and accept their religious teachings more strongly than others

do in their adulthood. In effect, they remain the "True Believers," as Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) put it.

Positive relationships have also been reported between RWA and the following measures of religiosity: Religious emphasis in childhood training, religious orthodoxy, and intrinsic religious orientation (Altemeyer, 1988). Also, Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) found that high right-wing authoritarians tend to have a fundamentalist religious orientation. In their study, parents of university students completed the RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988) and the RF scale. Results indicated correlations of .66 to .75 between scores on the RWA scale and that of RF, across different samples.

This rather strong relationship between RWA and religiosity begs the question as to which influences the other. Altemeyer (1988) noted that high right-wing authoritarians tended to report having experienced little doubt about their religious teachings (the RWA scale correlated -.41 with a religious doubt scale), a phenomenon he interprets as reflecting submission to religious authorities. On the other hand, high right-wing authoritarians report that it is part of their religious training to submit to authority and to look negatively on others who do not share their beliefs (Altemeyer, 1988). Thus, Altemeyer (1988) stated that "authoritarianism and religiosity often shape and reinforce each other" (p. 200).

### **Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Parenting**

As noted earlier, RWA is not only related to religiosity but it may also have

implications for child-rearing orientations. As we saw from the conceptualization of RWA, high right-wing authoritarian parents as authorities at home may also have certain norms and standards they will want their children to follow. For instance, there might be norms as to how long the child can wear his or her hair, restrictions on friends the child could associate with, when to go out and for how long, and so on. Since the parents are submissive and conventional themselves, one could predict that they might demand obedience and compliance with their rules by their children. One may also reasonably suspect that such parents might demonstrate the same aggressive and hostile tendencies to their children who dissent, just as they would to individuals who are sanctioned by society.

As expected, Altemeyer (1981) noted that high right-wing authoritarians tended to be punitive. For instance, they recommended longer jail terms for people convicted of crimes. He noted that they believed in using "good old-fashioned physical punishment" to discipline their children. It may also be tautological to say that high RWA parents will value child obedience, and are oriented towards authoritarian norms of parenting. Baumrind (1973) also noted that "the authoritarian parent values obedience as a virtue and believes in restricting the child's autonomy." (p 13). From the above, one can deduce the role of RWA in child-rearing orientations.

Endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes might play a mediating role in the relationship between parents' religiosity and their child-rearing ideas. Research is thus needed to examine and clarify the relationships between parental authoritarianism, religiosity, and child-rearing orientations.

## The Present Study

### The Problem and Purposes

We have noted the important role that religion plays in human life and the importance that some individuals attach to keeping their children in their religious faith. The literature reviewed suggests a link between parental religiosity and child-rearing goals and practices, mediated by the doctrine of biblical literalism, belief in original sin and punitive attitudes towards sinners. That is, parents who subscribe to literal interpretations of scriptures hold the view that humans are born evil and that there is the need to curtail those evil urges by punishing non-conforming children with the "rod."

However, none of the studies relating religion with parenting examined the possible mediating role of parents' desire to keep their children in their religious faith. In a recent study, Danso (1995) reported that a desire to keep children in the family faith was positively related with students' perceived parenting goal of child obedience and approval of corporal punishment, if they had hypothetical children of their own to discipline. However, this study involved students thinking about how they might react if they were parents, and their ideas about parenting may not truly reflect the child-rearing attitudes of actual parents. It was, therefore, one of the purposes of the study to replicate this finding with parents, to assess the hypothesis that the desire to socialize children to uphold the family's religious faith mediates between parents' fundamentalist religious orientation and their child-rearing ideas.



In addition, we have noted the relationship between religiosity and right-wing authoritarianism, as well as a possible link between parental RWA and child-rearing orientations. One may speculate that parents' RWA might mediate the relationships reported between religiosity and parenting (e.g., Danso, 1995; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a, 1993b; Wiehe, 1990). That is, if the influence of RWA is removed, the relationship between religious fundamentalism and parenting might diminish or completely disappear. It was also the purpose of this study to replicate results linking RWA with religiosity, and to examine the mediating role of parental RWA in the relationship between parents' religiosity and their child-rearing goals and practices.

Finally, a model was proposed, based on Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative model of parenting, the findings of Danso (1995) and the expectations from the literature linking parents' RWA and RF with their child-rearing goals and practices. Specifically, the study examined how parents' authoritarianism, linked with their religious orientation, was associated with their child-rearing goals and practices. Parenting goals were divided into two broad categories based on Ellison and Sherkat's (1993a) study: Obedience and autonomy. Endorsement of the use of corporal punishment was assessed as a specific parenting practice.

The present study focused on the rearing of children aged seven to twelve years. Since the participants of the present study were parents of university students, they were asked to think back to the attitudes they held when their children were between 7 to 12 years of age and respond to the survey items. Research suggests that spanking can be useful in controlling children's behaviour from the second year of

age to the sixth year (e.g., Roberts & Powers, 1990). Also, over 90% of parents of toddlers are reported to use spanking or other forms of corporal punishment, as revealed by the 1975 and 1985 National Family Violence Surveys (cited by Straus & Kantor, 1994). The 7 to 12 age range was therefore chosen in order to avoid this period when spanking and other forms of corporal punishment are widely used, and to focus on a period when the use of corporal punishment might be considered inappropriate or interpreted as a manifestation of an authoritarian norm of parenting.

Denominational differences in child-rearing patterns were not of interest in this study so a Religious Fundamentalism scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992) was used as a measure of parental religiosity. Fundamentalism, as conceptualised by Altemeyer and Hunsberger, cuts across denominational barriers and it offered a more appropriate measure of the parents' religious orientation.

### **Definitions of Terminology**

The following terms are important to the understanding of the present study. Thus, definitions of the terms are offered before a model of parenting is proposed.

**Faith-keeping (F-K).** The importance that parents attach to keeping their children in their religious faith; the desire of parents to socialize their children to accept the family religious faith (Danso, 1995).

**Obedience (OB).** Promotion of obedience of children to the dictates of authority figures, primarily parents and teachers (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a).

**Autonomy (AT).** Parents' goal of encouraging independent thinking and

reasoning by youngsters (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a)

**Approval of Corporal Punishment (ACP).** Parents' endorsement of any form of punishment or acts intended to inflict physical pain on the child for the purposes of correction or control of misbehaviour (Carey, 1994; Straus & Kantor, 1994).

### The Model

Figure 1 presents an overview of the conceptual model linking parental authoritarianism and religiosity with child-rearing orientations. Religious fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism are related for reasons not explained by the model (double headed arrow linking the two variables). The model postulates that the relationship between religious fundamentalism and obedience would be indirect, mediated through two pathways: 1) Faith-keeping; and 2) right-wing authoritarianism. Also, RF will mediate the relationship between RWA and F-K. Altemeyer (1981, 1988) noted that high right-wing authoritarians tend to value obedience to authority and tend to be punitive toward dissenters. It was therefore expected that RWA will be directly, as well as indirectly, linked to ACP, through obedience. Danso (1995) also found that emphasis on obedience was negatively related to university students' emphasis on autonomy as a perceived parenting goal. To the extent that valuation of obedience is negatively related to valuation of autonomy, and right-wing authoritarians tend to value obedience, one may speculate that RWA might be negatively related to valuation of autonomy. Based on this, it was hypothesized that parental RWA is associated negatively with child autonomy

(autonomy is not shown in the model because of the conceptualized negative relationship between obedience and autonomy in the present investigation). Danso (1995) found that while obedience was related positively to approval of corporal punishment, autonomy was associated negatively with university students' support for the use of corporal punishment to discipline children. Based on this finding with university students, and on Darling and Steinberg's (1993) proposition that parenting goals are related to parenting practices, differential relationships were hypothesized between obedience and ACP, and for autonomy and ACP.

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**Insert Figure 1 here**

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### **Guiding Hypotheses**

The following specific hypotheses, derived from the model, apply to separate analyses for mothers and fathers:

1. Religious fundamentalism is correlated negatively with autonomy, and positively with the following: Right-wing authoritarianism; faith-keeping; obedience; and approval of corporal punishment.
2. Right-wing authoritarianism is linked negatively to autonomy and positively to the following: Faith-keeping; obedience; and approval of corporal punishment.

3. Endorsement of child autonomy as a parenting goal is associated negatively with approval of corporal punishment, whilst emphasis on obedience is associated positively with approval of corporal punishment as a child disciplinary strategy.
4. Religious fundamentalism mediates the association between right-wing authoritarianism and faith-keeping.
5. Religious fundamentalism is linked to obedience through two mediating pathways:
  - a) Faith-keeping;
  - b) right-wing authoritarianism
6. The relationship between parental right-wing authoritarianism and approval of corporal punishment is partly mediated via OB.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

154 parents (83 mothers and 71 fathers) of first-year university students participated in the study. The mean age of the mothers was 47.15 (SD = 4.89) and for the fathers was 49.04 (SD = 4.30). 10.5% of the fathers and 6.8% of the mothers reported non-affiliation with any religious group ("no religion"). The rest of the participants reported an affiliation with a religious group, mostly Christian denominations. The mean educational attainment of the sample was completion of a college program, with about 25% of the fathers and 6% of the mothers completing

postgraduate training. Although this sample of parents of university students may be better educated than a random sample of Canadian parents, they served the purpose of this study well. They were highly motivated to respond to the survey items.

### Measures

**Single Items.** Single item questions were used to tap the age, gender, educational attainment, and religious background of the respondents (see Appendix E for questionnaire).

**Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) Scale.** The Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale (Altemeyer, 1981, 1988) was used to measure respondents' authoritarian attitudes. The scale consisted of 30 items (e.g., "What our country really needs is a strong leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path"). Fifteen of the items were worded in the protrait direction, while the other fifteen were worded in the contrait direction to control for response set. Respondents indicated their agreement using a nine-point Likert-type response format, ranging from -4 (very strongly disagree) to +4 (very strongly agree). They indicated a score of "0" when they felt precisely neutral about an item. For scoring purposes, these responses were converted to a 1 to 9 format by adding the constant 5 to each score. Coding for the contrait items was reversed, such that a high score always indicated high RWA, with the possible overall score ranging from 30 to 270. The scale mean was 153.0 (SD = 39.0) for this study. Average inter-item correlations of .19 to .24 and Cronbach's alphas of .89 to .90 were reported for the RWA scale by Altemeyer and Hunsberger

(1992). For this study, the mean inter-item correlation was .21, producing a Cronbach's alpha of .92. Thus, the scale was reliable in capturing the respondents' right-wing authoritarian attitudes, as conceptualized by Altemeyer. See Appendix E for the items.

**Religious Fundamentalism (RF) Scale.** The Religious Fundamentalism scale (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992) was used to measure participants' religious orientation. It consisted of 20 items, balanced against response sets (e.g., "God will punish most severely those who abandon his true religion"). Respondents followed the same response format, and scoring was done as described for the RWA scale. Possible overall scores could range from 20 to 180, higher scores indicating higher fundamentalism. The mean score for the scale was 70.8 (SD = 31.04). Researchers have reported mean inter-item correlations ranging from .37 to .48, with Cronbach's alpha of .92 and higher (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992). Here, the mean inter-item correlation was .37, producing a Cronbach's alpha of .92 in the present study. The scale has also shown evidence of validity, correlating with Batson's Quest scale at -.79, and with the Christian Orthodoxy scale at .51. Thus, the scale was an effective and reliable measure of religious fundamentalism as conceptualised by Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992). See Appendix E for the items.

**Faith-Keeping (F-K) Scale.** This scale was developed by the researcher to measure the importance that parents attach to socializing their children to accept the family faith (Danso, 1995). It consisted of 6 items balanced against response set (e.g., "It is important that my children be raised to accept my family religion"). The scale

followed the same response format, and the responses were scored as described for the RWA and RF scales. Overall scores could range from 6 to 54, the average of which was 24.6 (SD = 10.22) in this study. Higher scores always indicated a stronger desire to keep children in the parents' religious faith. A mean inter-item correlation of .41, and a Cronbach's alpha of .81, were obtained in a previous study of university students (Danso, 1995). Scores on this scale correlated with the RF scale at .54. Thus, the scale showed adequate validity and reliability, at least with a university population. With the parents in this study, the mean inter-item correlation was .35, while the Cronbach's alpha was .76, indicating a reasonable level of reliability for the scale. See Appendix E for the items on the scale.

**Obedience (OB) Scale.** This was a balanced 8-item scale which assessed parents' goal of promoting obedience of their children to authority figures (e.g., "Parents always know what is best"). Four of the items came from a 29-item scale used to assess parents' inclination towards emphasis on traditional family values by Nguyen and Williams (1989). Two items came from the scale used by Danso (1995) to measure students' perceived parenting goal of obedience, while the other two items were constructed for the purposes of this study (See Appendix E for these items and their sources). The response format and coding were similar to the ones already described for the RWA and RF scales. Possible scores could range from 8 to 72, with higher scores indicating greater emphasis on child obedience. Cronbach's alpha was .59, with the mean inter-item correlation being .15. The mean score for the scale was 30.2 (SD = 8.51). Care should therefore be taken in interpreting the results, given



the weak reliability of the OB scale.

**Autonomy (AT) Scale.** This scale initially consisted of eight items, balanced against response set. Two of the items came from Nguyen and Williams' (1989) study, while another two came from Danso's (1995) study. The remaining four items were constructed for this study. The weak reliability for this scale was compounded by two items (one contrait and one protrait ) which were not well correlated with the rest of the items. These items were therefore removed from the scale to bring the inter-item correlation up to .22 ( from .11) and the Cronbach's alpha to .61 (from .32). The new scale therefore had six items, which were used to assess the parenting goal of encouraging children to reason and think independently. Possible scores could range from 6 to 54, with higher scores indicating greater endorsement of child autonomy. The mean score of the respondents was 46.0 (SD = 5.73). Given the weak reliability of the AT scale, care should be taken in interpreting the results. See Appendix E for the items and their sources.

**Approval of Corporal Punishment (ACP) Scale.** To assess parents' endorsement of the use of corporal punishment as a child disciplinary strategy, a balanced 6-item Approval of Corporal Punishment scale (Danso, 1995), was used (e.g., "A good firm spanking can be one of the best ways to teach children right from wrong"). The scale followed the same response format, and scoring was done as described for the RWA and RF scales. Possible scores could range from 6 to 54, with higher scores indicating greater approval of the use of corporal punishment. The mean score for the scale was 25.3 (SD = 11.18). University students demonstrated

considerable internal consistency in responding to the items. In a previous study the mean inter-item correlation for the scale was .59, producing a Cronbach's alpha of .88 (Danso, 1995). In this study also, the reliability for the scale was very good, with a mean inter-item correlation of .43 and a Cronbach's alpha of .82. See Appendix E for the items.

For more information on the psychometric properties of all of the scales, see Table 1.

### **Procedure**

Introductory psychology students were contacted in class, and a brief explanation given concerning the study (see Appendix A for the verbal explanation given in class). The names and addresses of their parents were then collected from willing students through a sign-up sheet (see Appendix B for a sample of the sign-up sheet). Overall, 434 names and addresses were collected (228 mothers and 206 fathers), out of which 300 parents (150 fathers and 150 mothers) were selected to be sent a survey package. The only criteria for selection of these 300 parents were: 1) parents whose children had indicated they could carry the package to them personally, to save mailing costs (128 mothers and 115 fathers); and 2) parents whose names and addresses were more legibly written by their children, to ensure that the package was delivered to the right person (22 mothers and 35 fathers).

A covering letter describing the study (see Appendix C for the covering letter), a request for feedback sheet (see Appendix D), a self-administered questionnaire (see

Appendix E) and a stamped, return-addressed envelope were packaged and mailed (or sent personally by the students who indicated they could carry them by hand) to the parents. The covering letter stated that the study was an MA thesis research project which was investigating general social, religious and child-rearing issues, with specific emphasis on the parenting of children aged 7 to 12 years. Since the participants were parents of university students, they were asked to think back to the attitudes they held when their children (now at university) were between 7 and 12 years old, as they responded to the survey items concerning parenting goals and practices. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the survey and they were told they could skip any question they did not want to answer. In all, 165 completed surveys were received (89 mothers and 76 fathers). Thus, the return rate was very good, 59.3% for mothers, and 50.6% for fathers. For the analyses, only those with "complete" data (fewer than a third skipped items for any particular scale) were included. Thus, there were slightly different numbers of respondents across the various scales. Overall, 154 participants' (83 mothers and 71 fathers) responses were used for the analyses. Missing items were assigned the participant's average score for the remaining items on that scale.

## Results

### Psychometric Properties of the Scales

Table 1 presents psychometric information for the scales used in this study.

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Insert Table 1 here

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Cronbach's alpha ranged from .59 to .92 for the 6 scales involved. Thus, the scales had very good reliability with the exception of the Obedience and Autonomy Scales. Considering the weaker reliability of the OB and AT scales, care should be taken in interpreting the results.

### Gender Differences

Separate analyses were carried out for the fathers and mothers. A one-way ANOVA was used to test for any differences between fathers' and mothers' scores across the variables. No gender differences were found for scores on fundamentalism, faith-keeping, obedience, autonomy and corporal punishment. However, the mothers scored significantly higher on the RWA scale ( $M = 160.73$ ,  $SD = 35.87$ ) than did the fathers ( $M = 146.09$ ,  $SD = 37.50$ ),  $F(1,155) = 6.49$ ,  $p < .025$ . It should be noted, however, that since responses were received from both the mother and the father for some of the families, the two samples were not truly independent. For instance, Pratt,

Alisat, Hunsberger and Pancer, (1995) reported a correlation of .63 between mothers and fathers of university students' RWA scores. Given this confounding factor, care should be taken in interpreting the gender difference in RWA scores in the present study.

### **Correlational Analyses**

Table 2 shows the inter-correlations among the variables under study separately for fathers and mothers. All the correlations were significant, with two exceptions for fathers (RF with ACP, and F-K with ACP).

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**Insert Table 2 here**

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Hypothesis one received support from the correlational analyses. For mothers, fundamentalism was related negatively to autonomy,  $r(83) = -.32, p < .01$ , and positively to the following: Right-wing authoritarianism,  $r(83) = .60, p < .001$ ; faith-keeping,  $r(83) = .60, p < .001$ ; obedience,  $r(83) = .34, p < .01$ ; and approval of corporal punishment,  $r(83) = .34, p < .01$ . For fathers also, fundamentalism correlated negatively with endorsement of autonomy,  $r(71) = -.33, p < .01$ , and positively with RWA,  $r(71) = .62, p < .001$ . In addition, as predicted, the following variables were found to correlate positively with fathers' fundamentalism: Faith-keeping  $r(71) = .58, p < .001$ ; and obedience,  $r(71) = .25, p < .05$ . However, fundamentalism was not significantly related to approval of corporal punishment among fathers,  $r(71) = .06, ns$ .

Consistent with hypothesis two, the relationship between parental right-wing authoritarianism and parents' reports of their emphasis on child autonomy was negative,  $r(71) = -.40$ ,  $p = .001$  for fathers, and  $r(83) = -.45$ ,  $p < .001$  for mothers. RWA was related positively with scores on F-K,  $r(71) = .58$ ,  $p < .001$  for fathers, and  $r(83) = .53$ ,  $p < .001$  for mothers. There was also a strong positive relationship between scores on the RWA scale and reported emphasis on obedience as a child-rearing goal for both fathers and mothers,  $r(71) = .56$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $r(83) = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively. Also, as hypothesized, there was a positive association between parents' right-wing authoritarianism and their approval of corporal punishment,  $r(71) = .36$ ,  $p < .01$  for fathers;  $r(83) = .45$ ,  $p < .001$  for mothers. This is reasonable since right-wing authoritarianism, as conceptualized by Altemeyer (1981, 1988), involves punitive attitudes towards dissenters.

Consistent with hypothesis three, emphasis on obedience was linked positively to parents' approval of corporal punishment,  $r(71) = .49$ ,  $p < .001$  for fathers, and  $r(83) = .30$ ,  $p < .01$ , for mothers. In addition, reports of greater endorsement of child autonomy were associated negatively with approval of corporally punishing children,  $r(71) = -.34$ ,  $p < .01$  for fathers, and  $r(83) = -.30$ ,  $p < .01$  for mothers, supporting hypothesis three.

### **Mediation Analyses**

An inspection of Table 2 suggests that our primary measures are inter-correlated as expected. However, from the bivariate correlations, one cannot ascertain

the relative importance of the predictor variables in estimating the outcome measures. Therefore regression analyses were carried out for further testing. The conceptual model postulated that parents' fundamentalist religious orientation would mediate the relationship between parents' right-wing authoritarian attitudes and their desire to keep their children in their religious faith. This postulation was tested by using Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure for assessing mediation effects.

The analyses followed a standard procedure, involving three series of multiple regression analyses. First, the direct association between RWA (the predictor variable) and faith-keeping (the outcome variable) was assessed, followed by an assessment of the direct relationship between RWA and fundamentalism (the mediating variable). Finally, a determination was made whether the significant direct effect of RWA diminished or completely disappeared when fundamentalism was introduced as a mediator in a simultaneous regression analysis. As expected, the significant direct association between RWA and faith-keeping was reduced when fundamentalism was introduced as a mediator for both fathers (49% decrease in the beta for RWA) and mothers (50% decrease in the beta for RWA).

Tables 3a and 3b present a summary of the regression analyses for variables predicting faith-keeping for fathers and mothers respectively. As can be seen from the Tables, introduction of RF as a mediator between RWA and F-K reduced, but did not completely eliminate, the significance of the direct effect of RWA on F-K.

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**Insert Tables 3a and 3b Here**

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This finding suggests that the relationship between RWA and faith-keeping is partly mediated by fundamentalism. In other words, right-wing authoritarian parents are more likely to desire to keep their children in their family faith when they also subscribe to a fundamentalist religious orientation. Further support for this conclusion was found by a partial correlation procedure. Removing the influence of fundamentalism from the relationship between right-wing authoritarianism and faith-keeping reduced the correlation coefficient to .30 for fathers (from .62), and to .27 for mothers (from .60),  $p$ 's < .05 in both cases.

The same procedure was used to test the hypothesized mediational role of faith-keeping in the association between fundamentalism and emphasis on obedience. For mother., fundamentalism predicted obedience on step one,  $t(1,84) = 3.05$ ,  $p < .01$ , and faith-keeping on step two,  $t(1, 84) = 7.10$ ,  $p < .001$ . When faith-keeping was introduced as a mediator in step three, the beta for fundamentalism decreased by 65%, and the direct association between fundamentalism and obedience disappeared altogether,  $t(1,83) = .90$ , ns. Faith-keeping, however predicted obedience,  $t(1,83) = 2.59$ ,  $p < .05$ . This suggests that faith-keeping mediated the association between fundamentalism and obedience (see Table 4a) for mothers, which supports hypothesis 5a. A partial correlation procedure, controlling for faith-keeping



in the relationship between fundamentalism and obedience, yielded similar results.

The correlation coefficient decreased to .10, ns (from .34).

The situation was somewhat different for the fathers. Fundamentalism predicted obedience on step one,  $t(1,70) = 2.16, p < .05$ , and faith-keeping on step two,  $t(1,70) = 6.96, p < .001$ . However, simultaneously regressing obedience on fundamentalism and faith-keeping yielded non-significant results in both cases, though faith-keeping approached significance,  $t(1,69) = 1.80, p < .1$ . Also, a partial correlation procedure, controlling for F-K, reduced the correlation between RF and OB to .06, ns (from .25). Thus, for fathers, hypothesis 5a was not supported (see Table 4b).

Tables 4a and 4b present a summary of the regression analyses for variables predicting obedience, to test the mediational role of F-K in the association between RF and OB. Note that the hypothesis was supported for mothers, but not for fathers.

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**Insert Tables 4a and 4b Here**

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The hypothesized mediational role of RWA in the association between RF and OB was tested by using Baron and Kenny's (1986) regression procedures. For both fathers and mothers, fundamentalism predicted obedience on step one,  $t(1,70) = 2.16, p < .05$ , and  $t(1,82) = 3.16, p < .01$ , respectively. On step two, fundamentalism predicted RWA,  $t(1,70) = 6.29, p < .001$  for fathers, and  $t(1,82) =$

6.76,  $p < .001$  for mothers. Finally, obedience was regressed simultaneously on fundamentalism and RWA, and RF ceased to predict obedience altogether,  $t(1,69) = -.13$ , ns for fathers, and  $t(1,81) = .02$ , ns for mothers. Consistent with the hypothesis, RWA predicted obedience,  $t(1,69) = .63$ ,  $p < .001$  for fathers, and  $t(1,81) = .60$ ,  $p < .001$  for mothers. This finding suggests a mediating role of RWA in the relationship between RF and OB.

Tables 5a and 5b present a summary of regression analyses for variables predicting obedience. It can be observed from the table that simultaneously regressing OB on RF and RWA completely removed the direct relationship between RF and OB, obtained from step one, just as predicted. It should be noted that the two pathways through which RF was hypothesized to link with OB were tested separately and independently of each other. Results from a path analysis procedure which takes all the variables into consideration will be presented later.

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**Insert Tables 5a and 5b Here**

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It was also postulated (hypothesis 6) that the association between parental right-wing authoritarianism and approval of the use of corporal punishment would be partly mediated by parents' emphasis on obedience. To test this assumption, the same Baron and Kenny (1986) procedure was used, with a partial correlation procedure providing further testing. For fathers, a right-wing authoritarian personality style (as

measured by the RWA scale) predicted approval of the use of corporal punishment to discipline children,  $t(1,70) = 3.17, p < .01$  (step 1), and emphasis on child obedience,  $t(1,71) = 5.49, p < .0001$  (step 2). However, when ACP was predicted from fathers' RWA and obedience simultaneously, the significant direct relationship between RWA and ACP completely disappeared,  $t(1,69) = 1.12, ns$ , and the beta for RWA decreased by 60%. Collectively, fathers' RWA and their emphasis on obedience accounted for over 22% of the variance in their ACP. Further, an inspection of the partial correlation coefficient, controlling for obedience, showed a decreased, non-significant relationship,  $r = .13, ns$  (from .56), between right-wing authoritarianism and approval of corporal punishment. Consistent with hypothesis 6, this suggests a mediating role of emphasis on obedience in the association between RWA and ACP. That is, higher scores on RWA were predictive of higher ACP when child obedience was highly emphasized.

A similar finding was expected for the mothers, but this was not the case. Simultaneously regressing ACP on RWA and OB showed a significant positive association between RWA and ACP,  $t(1,80) = 3.39, p < .01$ , but only a non-significant positive relationship between OB and ACP,  $t(1,80) = .74, ns$ . Controlling for OB, in the relationship between RWA and ACP, only marginally decreased the correlation coefficient to .35,  $p < .01$  (from .45). Thus, for mothers, OB did not mediate between RWA and ACP, contrary to the prediction.

### Overall Test of the Model

A path analysis was carried out, using a LISREL software package (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989), to test the hypothesized relationships depicted in the theoretical model. The package allows for specification of the direction of influences among a set of variables under study. The results of the LISREL software package provide an estimate of the magnitude of the hypothesized effects, and the goodness-of-fit indices assess the extent to which the model reproduces the actual covariance matrix. The model can be rejected as being unlikely when it is inconsistent with the observed data, or accepted as plausible when it is consistent with the data. It should be noted, however, that a good fit of a model does not necessarily prove that it is correct, as different models can be consistent with the same data (Klem, 1995).

In the model, RWA and RF were conceptualized as exogenous variables. That is, parental RWA and RF were related for reasons not explained by the model, and were hypothesized to be the two basic predictor variables. The relationship between the two variables was therefore depicted by a two-headed arrow from RF to RWA (see Figure 1). F-K and OB were both considered endogenous variables when their variances were estimated from one or more of the other variables, and considered exogenous variables when they were used to predict other variables. ACP was an endogenous variable in the model. The directions of the influences are depicted by an arrow pointing from the source to the outcome as in Figure 1.

An advantage of the LISREL package is that it is an effective procedure for assessing direct and indirect relationships when the variables are interdependent on

each other. The goodness of fit statistic was examined to assess how the model fit the data. Four criteria were used in this assessment: A non-significant chi-square test, a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) below .05, a goodness of fit index (GFI) above .90 and an adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) above .90. All these criteria suggest a good fit for the data (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989).

In the first test, as shown in Figure 2, the model did not fit the data well for either fathers or mothers. For the fathers, the chi-square test was significant,  $\chi^2 (4, N = 71) = 11.47, p < .05$ , the RMSEA was .17, the GFI was .91 and the AGFI was .77. For the mothers, the chi-square test was not significant,  $\chi^2 (4, N = 83) = 7.95$ , ns. However, the RMSEA was .11, the GFI = .96 and the AGFI = .86. Figure 2 depicts the path diagrams with standardized coefficients, showing the poor fit for the model.

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**Insert Figure 2 here**

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It appeared, then, that the model was not plausible and it was therefore modified. One way to modify a model is to remove the non-significant paths. As can be seen from the fathers' model in Figure 2, the path from faith-keeping to obedience ( $p_{ok}$ ) was -.01, ns. This indicates that the positive relationship that was observed between F-K and OB, in the zero-order correlations, was spurious. In other words, the two variables are related because they have the same source of influence (i.e., RF

and RWA). Also, the path from RWA to ACP ( $p_{pr}$ ) was .12, ns.

The mothers' model produced somewhat different results. The path from faith-keeping to obedience ( $p_{ok}$ ) = .17, ns., indicated a spurious relationship between F-K and OB. Also, the association between obedience and approval of corporal punishment was not significant ( $p_{po}$ ) = .09, ns, indicating that the positive relationship obtained on the zero-order correlation between them was spurious. These findings appear to contradict the results of Danso (1995). It should be noted, however, that the present data were obtained from parents, not from students. Also, no such path analyses were done to test the "causal ordering" of the variables in the earlier investigation, and the data from the male and female students were collapsed together for the analyses in the previous study.

Another way of modifying a model is to delete or add paths, based on the modification indices. An inspection of the residual table and graph showed that there were large unfitted covariances (residuals) for most of the variables in both cases (between -2.50 and 2.50). The modification indices and expected change further showed a large "expected change" for RWA and F-K, suggesting that the direct relationship between RWA and F-K was being underestimated, since no path was specified between the two variables. The non-significant paths were therefore removed from the model (justified by the large expected change from the modification indices) and the parameters of the new models were re-estimated, now specifying a path from RWA to F-K for both mothers and fathers.

Overall, the new models fit the data quite well, justifying the inclusion of the

new path. The RMSEA was 0.04 for the fathers and 0.0 for the mothers. The GFI were .97 and .98, while the AGFI were .92 and .94, for fathers and mothers, respectively. The chi-square tests were also not significant,  $\chi^2 (5, N = 71) = 5.50$ , for the fathers, and  $\chi^2 (5, N = 83) = 4.57$  for the mothers. The new models with their path coefficients and their significance are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 presents path diagrams depicting the observed relations between parents' RF, RWA and their child-rearing attitudes with standardized path coefficients. Both parental RWA and RF contributed to the desire to keep children in the parents' religious faith. However, the relative importance of parents' RF to predicting F-K ( $p_{kf} = .45$  for fathers and  $.44$  for mothers) was greater than the predictive power of the parents' RWA ( $p_{kr} = .30$  for fathers and  $.27$  for mothers). This is consistent with the expectation that fundamentalism will partially mediate the relation between RWA and F-K. Collectively, RWA and RF accounted for 46% of the variance in the fathers' F-K and 41% in the mothers' F-K.

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**Insert Figure 3 here**

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For both fathers and mothers, parental RWA was directly linked to emphasis on child obedience, accounting for 31% of the variance in the fathers' emphasis on obedience and 29% of the mothers' emphasis on obedience. The path from RWA to OB ( $p_{or}$ ) was  $.56$ ,  $p < .0001$  for the fathers and  $.54$ ,  $p < .0001$  for the mothers. This

is consistent with the prediction that parents who endorse right-wing authoritarian attitudes are more likely to value obedience highly. Since the path analyses were more inclusive, taking into account the two paths through which RF was proposed to be associated with OB, these findings suggest that fundamentalism was linked to obedience as a child-rearing goal, only, through RWA.

A difference emerged between the fathers and mothers in terms of the links between RWA and ACP. For the mothers, the association was more direct. The path from RWA to ACP ( $p_{pr}$ ) = .45,  $p < .0001$ , accounted for 20% of the variance. However, for the fathers, the positive link was indirect, through emphasis on obedience. The indirect effect of the fathers' RWA on their ACP was .27 ( $p < .001$ ). The re-estimated path coefficient from OB to ACP ( $p_{po}$ ) for the fathers was .49 ( $p < .0001$ ). On the whole, both the direct effect of OB, and indirect effect of RWA, accounted for 24% of the variance in the fathers' ACP.

## Discussion

One objective of the study was to replicate Danso's (1995) finding that parents' desire to keep their children in their religious faith mediates the association between parents' religious orientation and the kinds of goals they emphasize for their children, and that the kinds of parenting goals established are, in turn, linked to the kinds of practices used to achieve those goals. Also, an important objective of this study was to examine the role of parental right-wing authoritarianism in those relationships.



A model was developed, based on the literature reviewed and the findings of Danso (1995), to conceptualize the relationships that exist among the variables under study. The discussion focuses, firstly, on the relationship between parents' religious orientation and their child-rearing ideas, and then on the role of parental RWA in parenting. Finally, the relationship between parenting goals and practices is discussed in light of the existing literature.

### **The Link Between Religion And Parenting**

Prior research on the role of parental religiosity in child-rearing practices has often reported a positive link between conservative Protestant affiliation and high emphasis on child obedience as a parenting goal (e.g., Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a) and greater approval of the use of corporal punishment as a child disciplinary strategy (e.g., Ellison & Sherkat, 1993b; Wiehe, 1990). However, this research has failed to consider the importance of parental authoritarianism in these relationships. The present study took into account the role that parents' endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes plays in their child-rearing practices. Consistent with the findings of previous research, the present correlational analyses indicated that both fathers' and mothers' scores on religious fundamentalism were positively linked with higher emphasis on obedience and negatively associated with support for child autonomy. Similar to what Danso (1995) found, the mediation analyses indicated that these relationships were mediated by the parents' attitudes towards keeping their children in their religious faith.

Thus, the more rigidly parents' religious beliefs were held, the more they desired to socialize their children to accept their religious faith, and the greater that desire was, the more likely they were to value child obedience and to grant their children less autonomy. This reinforces the contention that the importance that some parents attach to keeping their children in their religious faith serves as a source of their parenting ideas and attitudes (Danso, 1995).

Further analyses were carried out to take into account the role played by parents' authoritarianism. The results of path analyses indicated that relationships suggested by the zero-order correlations were spurious. Could it be that the positive relationship often reported by previous research on the relations between parents' religiosity and their high valuation of obedience may be due to parental endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes? That is what the present findings seem to suggest.

Results from the path analyses, which took all the other relationships into account, suggested that RWA mediated the association between RF and obedience for both the fathers and the mothers. Apparently, the parents valued child obedience not because of their religious beliefs per se, but mainly because of their authoritarian attitudes. Given Altemeyer's (1981) conceptualization of RWA as involving a tendency to submit to authority and greater inclinations towards conventionalism, this seems to be a reasonable conclusion, especially since RWA and RF were strongly related.

Similarly, a positive link between conservative Protestant religious affiliation

or fundamentalist religious orientation and greater approval of the use of corporal punishment to discipline children has often been reported by past research (e.g., Ellison & Sherkat, 1993a; Grasmick, Morgan & Kennedy, 1992; Wiehe, 1990), and this was replicated in the present study. But it is important to go beyond simple correlational findings to explore the complexities of such relationships.

Ellison and Sherkat (1993b), for instance, used single item measures to gauge parents' approval of corporal punishment, belief in biblical literalism, conceptions of original sin and punitive attitudes towards sinners. They focussed on Catholic/Protestant differences in child-rearing attitudes and found that both Catholics and Protestants endorsed the use of corporal punishment more than other Americans did. Also, biblical literalism, original sin and punitive attitudes were positively related to greater approval of corporal punishment and mediated the relationship between conservative protestantism and approval of corporal punishment. Using Altemeyer and Hunsberger's (1992) 20-item balanced RF scale as a measure of religiosity, Danso (1995) similarly found that university students' fundamentalist religious orientation was positively related to their approval of corporal punishment in child-rearing. However, this relationship disappeared when the desire to keep their children in their religious faith and their emphasis on obedience for children were controlled. A similar tendency for religious fundamentalism to be unrelated to approval of corporal punishment after controlling for F-K, OB and RWA was found in the present study.

Here, the mothers' religious fundamentalism was positively related to greater approval of corporal punishment, a relationship that ceased to exist after parental

authoritarianism had been controlled. Thus, the positive relationship obtained between mothers' RF and ACP could have been due to their high scores on RWA. Since the mothers' RWA strongly predicted their ACP, this buttresses the fact that parental religiosity may not play as much role in parents' child-rearing attitudes as their authoritarian attitudes do, especially regarding their endorsement of punitive disciplinary practices.

In the case of the fathers, RF was not related to ACP at all. This is surprising when one considers the considerable amount of research documenting a positive relationship between parents' religious affiliations, beliefs or orientation and a stronger support for the use of corporal punishment as a child disciplinary strategy (e.g., Ellison & Sherkat, 1993b; Grasmick, Morgan, & Kennedy; 1992, Neufeld, 1979; Wiehe, 1990). Possibly, this finding was confounded by education. As has been documented by past research, higher education tends to have a negative impact on parents' approval of corporal punishment (e.g., Grasmick, Morgan & Kennedy, 1992). In the present sample, about 25% of the fathers and 6% of the mothers had postgraduate training and about 50% had college degrees.

One might argue that the parents' RF was not related to their child-rearing attitudes because the RF scale did not actually assess the content of their religious beliefs. Considering the fact that the RF scale measured how parents' religious beliefs were held, however, it provided a better measure of parental religiosity. If parents' religious groups advocate greater emphasis on obedience and the use of corporal punishment to teach obedience, one would expect a stronger relationship between how

rigidly those religious beliefs are held and parents' implementation of those practices endorsed by their religious groups. This seemed not to have happened in this study. This suggests, again, that religious teachings per se, may not have much role to play in parents' child-rearing attitudes.

However, parental religious fundamentalism proved to be an important predictor of parents' goal to socialize their children to accept their religious faith, even after authoritarianism had been controlled. The results supported the hypothesis that having a fundamentalist religious orientation is linked to the desire to keep one's children in one's religious faith. This was the case for both fathers and mothers, which is consistent with what Danso (1995) found with university students. Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992) theorized that individuals' religious fundamentalism involves the belief that they belong to the one, true faith. It is reasonable then that this belief of parents was associated with stronger desires to keep their children in their religious faith.

We have found that parents' religious fundamentalism was related positively with their desire to keep their children in their religious faith and that it partially mediated the link between RWA and F-K. Also, an independent mediation analysis, where RWA was not taken into account, suggested that the mothers' desire to keep their children in their religious faith mediated the relationship between their fundamentalist religious orientation and emphasis on child obedience. While the fathers' scores on RF and F-K were not related at all to their ACP, the mothers' scores were, though this relationship disappeared when RWA was controlled. It

seems, therefore, that apart from the desire to keep their children in their religious faith, parental religiosity did not play much role in child-rearing attitudes. A much greater role was played by the parents' endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes. We therefore turn to an in-depth consideration of the links between RWA and parents' child-rearing ideas.

### **The Links Between Right-Wing Authoritarianism and Parenting**

In keeping with what was expected, right-wing authoritarian attitudes among both fathers and mothers were positively linked to an attitude of socializing their children to accept their family religious faith. As Altemeyer (1981) has described, the right-wing authoritarian personality involves adherence to societal customs established as norms and accepted by authority. Most churches advocate the importance of having one's children accept and follow the family's religious traditions, and in a sense, this has come to be accepted as a norm. One might say, then, that it is more conventional to socialize one's children to uphold the tenets of one's religious faith than to allow freedom of choice, especially among more fundamentalist or conservative religious groups.

Though this is a correlational study, it can be argued that the observed relationship between parental right-wing authoritarian attitudes, and the desire to keep children in the family faith, reflects the parents' desires to shape their children's behaviour in conformity with the standard set by the church authority, to have one's children brought up to uphold the principles and doctrines of the church. The finding

that parents' fundamentalist religious orientation partly mediated this relationship means that this tendency is more likely for parents who rigidly hold and follow their religious beliefs.

Not only were RWA scores related to faith-keeping, but they were also positively associated with greater emphasis on child obedience and lesser endorsement of child autonomy. The right-wing authoritarian personality, as described by Altemeyer (1981), involves obedience to those who are perceived to be in positions of authority. It is reasonable, then, to suppose that parents who have a high tendency to be submissive and obedient to authority figures would also value obedience in their children. Pratt et al. (1995) also noted that the right-wing authoritarian personality is similar in focus to the authoritarian style of parenting. Consistent with their expectation, they found a significant positive correlation between parents' scores on the RWA scale and their children's (university students') perceptions that their parents had a more authoritarian style of parenting.

One could argue from this that right-wing authoritarian attitudes of parents could be reflected in their authoritarian style of parenting, and in keeping with Baumrind's (1971) contention that the authoritarian parent values unquestioning obedience and believes in restricting the child's autonomy, it is reasonable that both fathers' and mothers' right-wing authoritarian attitudes were correlated positively with their valuation of obedience, and negatively with their attitudes towards autonomy of their children.

Do authoritarian parents try to control their children's behaviour through the

use of punitive disciplinary measures? That is what Baumrind's (1971, 1991) conception of the authoritarian style of parenting seems to suggest. Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson and Sanford (1950) also noted that punitiveness is associated with authoritarianism. In addition, Altemeyer's (1981) conception of right-wing authoritarianism involves hostility, which is thought to be sanctioned by those in authority positions towards dissenters. The results of the present study were consistent with this proposition. Parents' endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes was related to greater approval of corporal punishment. For the mothers, this relationship was direct. For fathers, however, the relationship was indirect, mediated by their goal of promoting obedience in their children.

It is not clear why this gender difference exists. One possible explanation is that since mothers are, traditionally, more involved in the day-to-day activities of child-rearing, they are more likely to resort to corporal punishment to bring their children under control, especially when their endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes predisposes them to be hostile or punitive towards their non-conforming children. Fathers, on the other hand, may be a bit removed from the practicality of the day-to-day child-rearing activities and might not have to deal with "difficult" children every day. For instance, research has shown that fathers are less likely to perceive changes in their adolescent children because they do not have strong responsibility for every day family life as mothers do (Alessandri & Wonzniak, 1987; Silverberg, 1989, cited by Goodnow & Collins, 1990). Thus, fathers may find corporal punishment more useful when they want to enforce strict compliance with



parental authority.

The difference in the links between RWA and ACP for fathers and mothers could also be attributed to differential endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes. The mothers scored significantly higher on the RWA scale than the fathers. It could be that parental right-wing authoritarian personality played a more central role in the parents' punitive attitudes towards their children, such that higher scores were more likely to be directly linked to approval of corporal punishment, whereas lower scores were more likely to have indirect effects, mediated by other variables linked to approval of corporal punishment. Thus, the mothers' RWA scores were directly linked to their ACP scores, while the fathers' RWA scores were indirectly linked to their ACP scores, mediated by their scores on OB.

In summary we have found that parents' right-wing authoritarian attitudes were related to their child-rearing attitudes. Each of the links could be matched to the three components of Altemeyer's (1981, 1988) conception of RWA. The parents' reported desires to keep their children in their religious faith could be related to their "conventionalism," while the emphasis on child obedience could be related to their "authoritarian submission." Also, the parents' attitudes towards greater approval of corporal punishment could be linked to their "authoritarian aggression." We have seen that the fathers' authoritarian attitudes were linked to their endorsement of corporal punishment through their emphasis on obedience, though this was not so for mothers. This leads us to the links between parenting goals and practices.

### **The Links Between the Parenting Goals and Practices**

Results of the mediation model for parenting goals and practices were in keeping with Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative model of parenting. This was particularly the case for fathers, but not for mothers. Parents whose reported attitudes of child-rearing showed greater valuation of child obedience, also reported greater endorsement of the use of corporal punishment as a child disciplinary strategy. Conversely, attitudes towards greater endorsement of child autonomy related negatively with the fathers' approval of corporal punishment. In a sense, greater valuation of obedience might be more likely to be associated with parental behaviours geared towards controlling children's behaviours, which might include punitive disciplinary practices. Parents who endorse attitudes towards greater child autonomy might not see the need to be punitive, since that might rather tend to restrict their children's free expression. Greater valuation of child autonomy may be more likely to be associated with non-punitive forms of child discipline. Further research is needed to evaluate this proposition.

An important finding of the study was that valuation of obedience related negatively with valuation of autonomy, as was expected. This might mean that the more parents endorse child obedience, the less likely they are to have positive attitudes towards child autonomy. Admittedly, both the Obedience and Autonomy scales had weak reliability which could have affected the results, but the fact that the finding was consistent with Danso's (1995) earlier finding with university students gives more credence to the present results.

This seems to contradict what Ellison and Sherkat (1993a) found. They concluded that parents could value obedience and autonomy in children at the same time, and that the two were not antithetical. This conclusion is surprising, however, in light of their own findings. For example, they found that endorsement of biblical literalism and punitive attitudes towards sinners related positively to greater valuation of obedience, and negatively to greater valuation of autonomy. Also, they found that Catholics tended to value obedience and devalue autonomy in children more than other Americans did. One might therefore expect that valuation of obedience would be negatively related to valuation of autonomy. However, no test was done to ascertain the relationship between the two, which makes it difficult to determine what was actually the link between parents' valuation of autonomy and obedience in children in their study.

Given this uncertainty, the present author is inclined to argue that valuation of obedience and autonomy are to some degree antithetical. Alwin (1984) had earlier suggested that parents' emphasis on obedience was opposed to their endorsement of autonomy in their children. Further research is needed to clarify the link between valuation of obedience and autonomy as parenting goals.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

It is important to note some methodological problems in this study. Parents were asked to think back to the attitudes they held more than 5 years earlier, in order to respond to the items to reflect their child-rearing attitudes for children aged seven

to twelve. To what extent this procedure was successful, one cannot determine. It could be that their reports reflected the present attitudes they hold on child-rearing, which might mean that the responses were geared towards what is now advocated and publicized by the media on parenting. One might therefore question the value of a study which asked parents of university students about strict compliance with parental authority and the use of corporal punishment to discipline children. Having said this, it seems unlikely that the parents would blatantly disregard the survey instructions, or completely fail to recall their earlier attitudes. Especially in light of the care taken by the parents in responding to the survey, the high internal consistency of most of the scales, and the general expected inter-correlations among measures, there is little evidence to suggest a serious lack of validity in this study. Future research could benefit from the suggestion to consider parents who are actually rearing younger children.

The weak reliabilities of the Obedience and Autonomy scales cannot go without mention. The LISREL path analysis used in this study has strict requirements regarding the measures used to gauge the variables under study. Since the reliability of the two scales was weaker than desired, it could have affected the results. However, considering the consistency in the results with past research and theoretical propositions, one cannot not easily discount the findings of the study. Perhaps, greater care should be taken to validate and ensure adequate reliability for the measures before they are used in future research.

Also, future research might consider investigating how parents' goals are

related to the kinds of specific practices they use, focusing on many different goals (e.g., high achievement at school, popularity among peers and altruistic behaviours) and practices (e.g., time spent helping children with their school work, parents' interaction with their children, and parents' outing behaviours with their children), rather than just looking at one practice. Research of such nature could be more useful in assessing the links between parenting goals and parenting practices in a more comprehensive way.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The findings of the study were consistent with the theoretical propositions put forward by Darling and Steinberg (1993). The different parenting goals (obedience and autonomy) were differentially associated with approval of corporal punishment as a child disciplinary practice (a parenting practice), which is in line with the proposition that the kinds of goals which parents establish for their children are linked to the kinds of practices used to achieve those goals.

The literature relating religion and child-rearing orientations described three mediating variables as affecting the relationships between parents' religious orientation and their emphasis on child obedience, and the use of corporal punishment. None of the previous studies of this issue examined the possibility that the relationship could be mediated by parents' desire to socialize their children to uphold their religious culture, or mediated by parental authoritarianism. Results from the mediation analyses suggested that faith-keeping played a mediating role between RF and OB (i.e., when

RWA was not taken into account).

However, contrary to what was expected, parents' reported religious orientation did not play much role in their child-rearing attitudes. Parents' fundamentalist religious orientation, however, predicted their attitudes towards keeping their children in their religious faith. It related to greater emphasis on obedience and lesser endorsement of autonomy. While the mothers' fundamentalism was weakly positively related to their approval of corporal punishment, the fathers' fundamentalism was not related to approval of corporal punishment at all. These observed relationships between parents' religiosity and parenting ceased to exist when parental right-wing authoritarian attitudes were controlled, suggesting that parents' religious beliefs per se might not play as much role in their child-rearing attitudes as their authoritarian attitudes.

Further, the right-wing authoritarian disposition of parents played a very significant role in their reported child-rearing attitudes. Parental endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes was positively related to reports of stronger desires to keep children in the parents' religious faith, greater emphasis on child obedience and greater approval of corporal punishment. It also related negatively with endorsement of child autonomy, consistent with the expectations of the study. Thus, it has been found that parental right-wing authoritarianism is associated with an authoritarian norm of parenting, mediating the religiosity/child-rearing links. Since none of the previous studies linking parental religiosity with child-rearing ideas took into account the possible role of parental authoritarianism, the findings of this thesis make a

substantial contribution to the parenting literature. That is, the present study provides a clearer understanding of the relationship between parents' religiosity and their child-rearing attitudes.

In summary, the evidence suggests that parents' religious orientation is related to their child-rearing ideas, through their endorsement of right-wing authoritarian attitudes. It will be useful for future research investigating the religiosity/child-rearing links to take parental authoritarianism into consideration, as that plays a much stronger role in parents' preferences for certain child-rearing goals, and their endorsement of punitive disciplinary practices to achieve those goals.

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**Table 1****Psychometric Information for the RWA, RF, F-K, OB, AT and ACP Scales**

Scale	No of Items	Item Mean	Scale Mean	Scale SD	Mean Inter-Item r	Cron's Alpha
RWA	30	5.10	153.0	39.00	.28	.92
RF	20	3.54	70.8	31.04	.37	.92
F-K	6	4.10	24.6	10.22	.35	.76
OB	8	3.78	30.2	8.51	.15	.59
AT	6	7.66	46.0	5.73	.22	.61
ACP	6	4.28	25.3	11.18	.43	.82

**Note:** RWA = Right-Wing Authoritarianism

RF = Religious Fundamentalism

F-K = Faith-Keeping

OB = Obedience

AT = Autonomy

ACP = Approval of Corporal Punishment



Table 2

## Inter-Correlations Among RWA, RF, F-K, OB, AT, and ACP Scales

	RWA	RF	F-K	OB	AT	ACP
RWA	1.000	.62***	.58***	.56***	-.40**	.36**
RF	.60***	1.000	.64***	.25*	-.33**	.06
F-K	.53***	.60***	1.000	.32**	-.30*	.20
OB	.54***	.34**	.41***	1.000	-.45**	.49***
AT	-.45***	-.32**	-.24*	-.50***	1.000	-.34**
ACP	.45***	.34**	.23*	.30**	-.30**	1.000

N = 71 (fathers); 83 (mothers)

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Note: The fathers' correlations are above the diagonal and the mothers' correlations are below the diagonal.

RWA = Right-wing Authoritarianism; RF = Religious Fundamentalism; F-K = Faith-Keeping; OB = Obedience; AT = Autonomy; ACP = Approval of Corporal Punishment

Table 3a

**Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Faith-Keeping, for Fathers**

Variable	<u>B</u>	<u>SE B</u>	$\beta$
<b><u>Step 1 (F-K on RWA)</u></b>			
RWA	0.16	0.02	.57**+
<b><u>Step 2 (RF on RWA)</u></b>			
RWA	0.50	0.08	.60**
<b><u>(F-K on RWA &amp; RF)</u></b>			
RWA	0.08	0.03	.29*+
RF	0.16	0.04	.47**

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ .

N = 71

Multiple R = .68;  $R^2 = .46$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .45$

+ Note that the significant direct association between RWA and F-K diminished, but was not completely eliminated, when F-K was regressed simultaneously on RF and RWA. The beta decreased by over 49%.

**Table 3b****Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Faith-Keeping, for Mothers**

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
<b>Step 1 (F-K on RWA)</b>			
RWA	0.14	0.02	.54**+
<b>Step 2 (RF on RWA)</b>			
RWA	0.52	0.08	.60**
<b>Step 3 (F-K on RWA &amp; RF)</b>			
RWA	0.07	0.03	.27*+
RF	0.13	0.03	.44**

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ .

N = 83

Multiple R = .64;  $R^2 = .41$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .39$

+ Note that the significant direct association between RWA and F-K diminished, but was not completely eliminated, when F-K was regressed on RF and RWA simultaneously. There was a 50% decrease in the beta for RF.

**Table 4a****Summary of regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Obedience for Mothers  
(Testing the Mediatorial Role of Faith-Keeping)**

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
<b>Step 1 (OB on RF)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.09	0.03	.32**+
<b>Step 2 (F-K on RF)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.18	0.03	.61***
<b>Step 3 (OB on RF and F-K)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.03	0.04	.11+
Faith-Keeping	0.32	0.12	.32*

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

Multiple R = .41;  $R^2 = .17$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .15$

+ Note that the beta for RF decreased by 65% when OB was regressed on RF and F-K simultaneously. With F-K as a mediator, the significant direct link between RF and OB was completely eliminated.

**Table 4b****Summary of regression Analyses for Variables predicting Obedience for Fathers  
(Testing the Mediational Role of Faith-Keeping)**

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
<b>Step 1 (OB on RF)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.06	0.03	.25*+
<b>Step 2 (F-K on RF)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.22	0.03	.64**
<b>Step 3 (OB on RF and F-K)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.02	0.04	.08+
Faith-keeping	0.18	0.10	.26

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$

Multiple R = .32;  $R^2 = .11$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .08$

+ Note that, though the beta for RF decreased by 68%, neither fundamentalism nor faith-keeping predicted OB in the simultaneous regression procedure on step three.

**Table 5a****Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Obedience, for Fathers  
(Testing the Mediatlional Role of RWA)**

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
<b>Step 1 (OB on RF)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.06	0.03	.25*+
<b>Step 2 (RWA on RF)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.72	0.12	.60**
<b>Step 3 (OB on RF &amp; RWA)</b>			
Fundamentalism	-0.03	0.03	-.13+
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	0.12	0.03	.63**

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$

N = 71

Multiple R = .56;  $R^2 = .31$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .29$

+The significant positive relationship between RF and OB changed to a non-significant negative relationship when OB was regressed on RF and RWA simultaneously.

**Table 5b****Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Obedience, for Mothers (Testing the Mediational Role of RWA)**

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
<b>Step 1 (OB on RF)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.10	0.03	.33*+
<b>Step 2 (RWA on RF)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.69	0.10	.60**
<b>Step 3 (OB on RF &amp; RWA)</b>			
Fundamentalism	0.01	0.04	.02+
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	0.14	0.03	.60**

\* $p < .01$ ; \*\* $p < .001$

N = 83

Multiple R = .53;  $R^2 = .28$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .27$

+ There was a 93% decrease in the beta for RF on step three, and RF ceased to predict OB altogether.

Figure 1

A Conceptual Model of Parental Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Religiosity  
Child-Rearing Orientations.

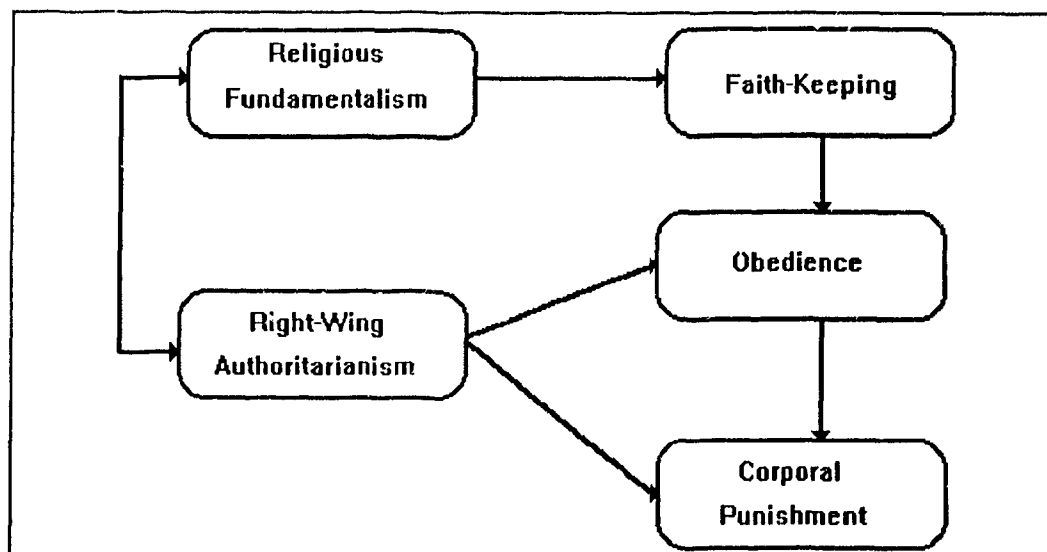
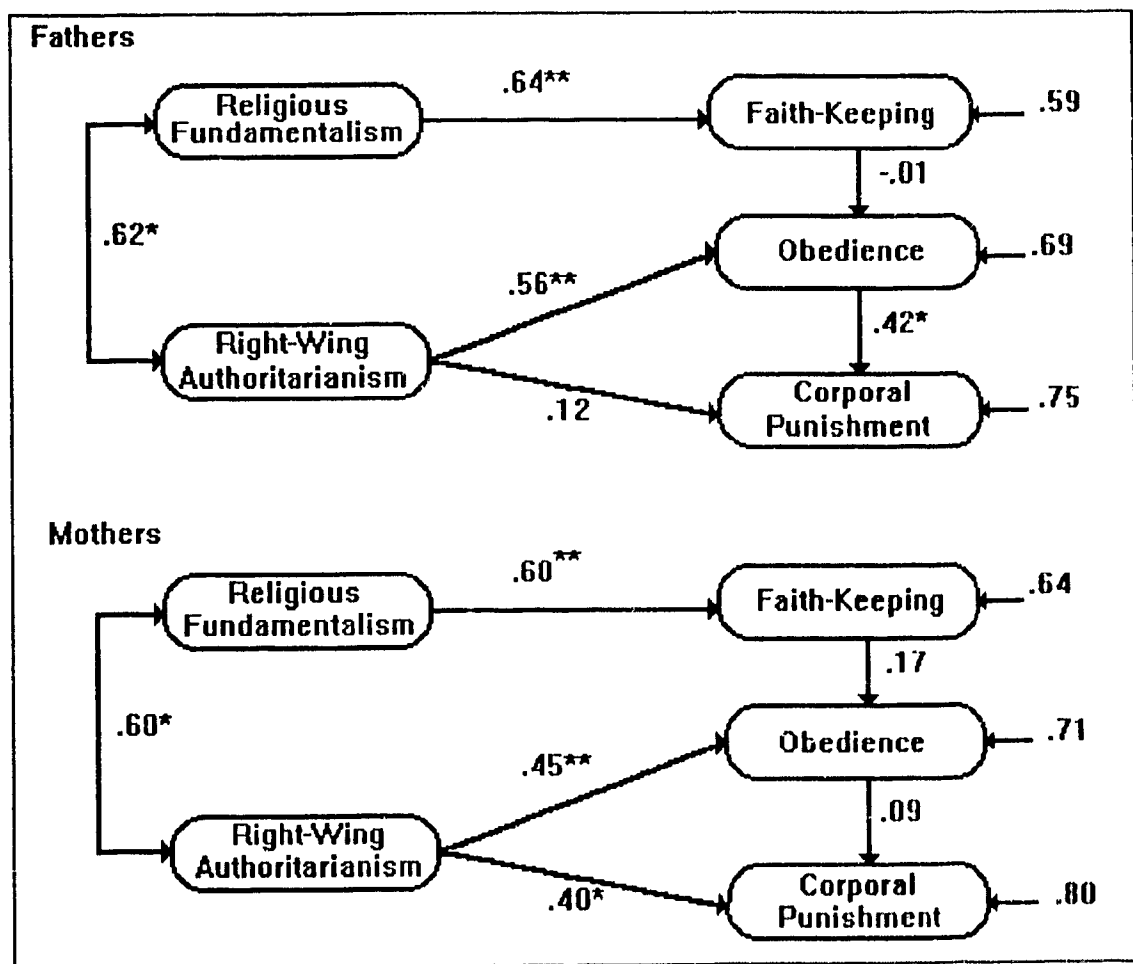




Figure 2

Path Diagrams Depicting the Conceptual Models of the Relationship Between Parents' Religious Orientation and Authoritarianism and Their Valuation of Obedience and Approval Of Corporal Punishment with Standardized Coefficients.



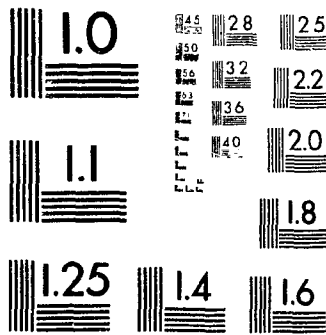
\* $p < .001$ ; \*\* $p < .0001$

Mothers' GFI = .96 AGFI = .86 RMSEA = .11

Fathers' GFI = .94 AGFI = .77 RMSEA = .17

2 of /de 2

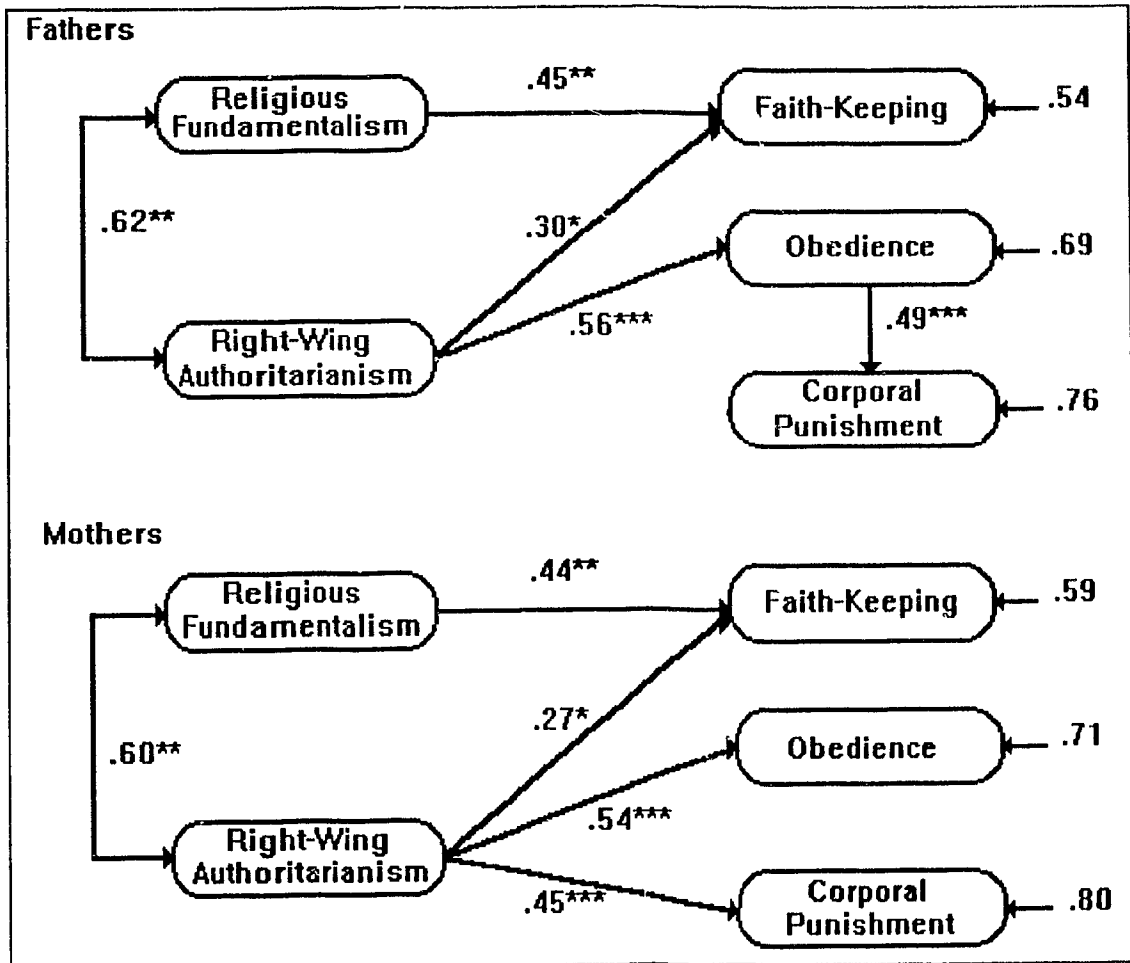
PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET  
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT



PRECISION<sup>SM</sup> RESOLUTION TARGETS

Figure 3

Path Diagrams Depicting the Observed Relation Between Parents RF, RWA and Their Child-Rearing Orientations with Standardized Path Coefficients



\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .0001$

N = 71 fathers; 83 mothers

Mothers' GFI = .98 AGFI = .94 RMSEA = 0.0

Fathers' GFI = .97; AGFI = .92 RMSEA = .03

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Verbal Explanation to Students in Class

"Hello. My name is Henry Danso and I am a second year M.A. psychology student at this university . For my master's thesis, I am undertaking a research project supervised by Dr. Bruce Hunsberger, your introductory psychology professor.

This study involves a survey which investigates general social, religious and child-rearing issues, with specific emphasis on the parenting of children within the age bracket of 7 to 12 years old. Because this study asks about opinions about raising children, it is important that we have actual parents to participate in this investigation. That is why I am asking you to give me the names and addresses of your parents, if you are willing. Your mother and father will participate separately and independently of each other by responding to a 7-page questionnaire.

Of course, your parents' participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and they are free to choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time. They are also free to skip any question that they do not want to respond to. Your parents' responses will be kept strictly confidential. All surveys will be destroyed after the data have been analyzed. Also, reports written on the basis of this study will discuss general trends without mentioning any individual's responses which might identify someone.

Feedback on this study will be posted on the bulletin board outside the General Office of the Psychology Department. Also, a summary of the main findings will be mailed to your parents by June 30, 1996, if they request it. Your parents' participation in this study would be very much appreciated.

Are there any questions? (Pause). You may also contact me or Dr. Hunsberger at the Psychology Department if any questions come up later.

A sign-up sheet is being sent round for you to provide your parents' names and addresses. Please read the sign-up sheet carefully and provide us with the needed information. Thanks for your attention and help."

**Appendix B**Sign-up Sheet

In order to fully investigate the issues under study, it is important that we get actual parents to participate, giving us their opinions on general social, religious and child-rearing issues. Thus, we would like to send a separate questionnaire to each of your parents. In order to do so, we need to know the names and current addresses of your parents. Specifically, those who reared you when you were about 7 to 12 years of age. Also, please indicate below if you could personally carry the survey packages to your parents within the next two weeks

**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY**

Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's address:  Same as above  
or as follows:\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In addition, it would be helpful if you see or communicate with your parents over the next few weeks, please mention that the questionnaires will be arriving and emphasize the importance of filling it out. in order for us to complete our study.

Under no circumstances will we allow your parents to have access to any information

you have given us on your survey, and likewise, we do not allow students to have access to the information their parents give us. All information in this surveys will remain strictly confidential. Thanks for your help!

I could carry the survey package, within the next two or three weeks, to my:  
father \_\_\_\_\_ mother \_\_\_\_\_ (please check).

Dr. Bruce Hunsberger (Advisor)    Henry Danso (Researcher)  
Department of Psychology, WLU    Department of Psychology, WLU

## Appendix C

### Covering Letter to Parents

Dear Parent,

I am an M.A. psychology student at Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) conducting a research project for my thesis. My supervisor is Dr. Bruce Hunsberger, a WLU Psychology professor. Your son/daughter, who is now attending WLU gave us your name and address, so we could send you this survey package. We would be very grateful to you if you would take a bit of time to fill out the enclosed survey and return it to us via your son/daughter, or by mail in the enclosed addressed and stamped envelope. There are two parts to this questionnaire: Section A deals with child-rearing issues and section B deals with your opinions on general social and religious issues. The study focusses on the parenting of children within the age bracket of 7 to 12 years old, so if you choose to participate you will be asked about your thoughts on raising your son/daughter (the one now at WLU) when s/he was 7 to 12 years old. The survey itself will probably take 30-40 minutes to complete.

All responses will be kept strictly confidential. Any reports written on the basis of this study would discuss only general trends without mentioning any personal responses which might identify someone. All questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabinet, and only the research team will have access to them. All surveys will be destroyed after the data have been analyzed.

Please note that it is important that you not discuss the questions in this survey with anyone (including your spouse) until after you have completed the entire survey and placed it in the mail. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may skip any question you do not want to answer. However, it is important that you answer as many items as possible. If you are willing to participate, we would appreciate receiving your completed survey soon, by Monday, November 13, if possible. Also, if you would like to hear about the findings, please indicate this on the enclosed "Request for Feedback Sheet" by providing us with your name and mailing address. This sheet will be separated from the questionnaire before we analyze people's responses. A summary of the findings will then be mailed to you by June 30, 1996. If you have any concerns or questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor at WLU. Your participation is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Danso (Researcher)  
Rm N2062; Phone : Ext. 2988

Dr. Bruce Hunsberger (Supervisor)  
Rm N2023; Phone: Ext. 3219

**Appendix D****Request for Feedback**

If you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study, please print your name and address below. The findings will then be sent to you before June 30, 1996, after the surveys have been analyzed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please note that this sheet will be separated from the questionnaire before we begin analyzing people's responses.



## Appendix E

### The Questionnaire\*

Survey Number \_\_\_\_\_

#### SOCIAL ATTITUDES, RELIGION AND CHILD-REARING STUDY

This study is an M.A. thesis project that investigates parents' opinions concerning certain social, religious and child-rearing values. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You may skip any question you do not want to answer, however, it is important that you answer as many questions as possible. All information in this survey will remain strictly confidential. When you return the completed survey in the stamped envelope, we will take this as your permission to use your responses in our data analyses.

#### Background Information

Please check the appropriate alternative, or write in the information requested.

1. Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ years

4. Educational Background:

What is the highest level that you completed in school?

- Less than high school
- Some high school
- Some college or university
- Completed high school
- Completed college programme
- Completed undergraduate university degree
- Postgraduate training

5. Religious background:

Which religious group do you identify yourself with?

- Protestant (which denomination \_\_\_\_\_)
- Catholic
- Some other religious group (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- No religion (no affiliation with any religious group)

## SECTION A

### Opinions About Parenting

Below you will find many statements concerning your personal ideas about parenting, when your child was younger. Please think back to the attitudes you held when your child was about seven to twelve years of age. You will probably find that you agree with some of the statements, and disagree with others, to varying extents. Please use the scale below to indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with each of the items.

-4 = <u>very strongly disagree</u>	+4 = <u>very strongly agree</u>
-3 = <u>strongly disagree</u>	+3 = <u>strongly agree</u>
-2 = <u>moderately agree</u>	+2 = <u>moderately agree</u>
-1 = <u>slightly disagree</u>	+1 = <u>slightly agree</u>

If you feel precisely neutral about an item, please write "0" in the space provided.

**Please think about these items as they apply to your attitude when you were raising your son/daughter who is now in university.**

### Obedience (OB) Scale

1. \_\_\_ Parents always know what is best (Nguyen & Williams, 1989, Pro).
2. \_\_\_ There should be a clear line of authority within the family and no question about who is in charge (Nguyen & Williams, 1989, Pro).
3. \_\_\_ If children do not do what their parents say, it is difficult to teach them anything else (Danso, 1995, Pro).
4. \_\_\_ All the knowledge children acquire is meaningless unless they submit to authority for proper guidance (New, Pro).
5. \_\_\_ Parents should be able to admit their mistakes to their children (Nguyen & Williams, 1989, Con).
6. \_\_\_ Children need to recognize that parents and authorities are not always right (Danso, 1995, Con).
7. \_\_\_ It is important that parents do not impose their wishes on their children (New, Con).

8. \_\_\_ Important family decisions should involve discussion among its members (Nguyen & Williams, 1989, Con).

#### Autonomy (AT) Scale

9. \_\_\_ Children who learn to reason independently and think things through for themselves will grow up to be better adolescents and adults (Danso, 1995, Pro).
10. \_\_\_ It is important that children learn to be independent and not think that their parents have all the answers (Danso, 1995, Pro)
11. \_\_\_ Every member of the family has a right to keep certain thoughts and feelings private (Nguyen & Williams, 1989, Pro).
12. \_\_\_ On weekends, children over 7-8 years of age should be able to watch whatever they choose on TV (Nguyen & Williams, 1989, Pro).
13. \_\_\_ Children who are encouraged to reason and think independently by their parents are likely to get into trouble (New, Con).
14. \_\_\_ Parents should always make certain decisions for their children (New, Con).
15. \_\_\_ Children can never be trusted to make the right decisions in life independently (New, Con).
16. \_\_\_ It is not critical that children learn to make decisions by themselves (New, Pro).

#### Approval of Corporal Punishment (ACP) scale

17. \_\_\_ A good firm spanking can be one of the best ways to teach children right from wrong. (Pro)
18. \_\_\_ It is not necessary to spank children ever. (Con)
19. \_\_\_ When children get "mouthy" or get into trouble, sometimes they need to be spanked. (Pro)
20. \_\_\_ The best way to deal with difficult children is to reward them with love and attention when they do good things, not to physically punish them for the bad things. (Con)

21. \_\_\_ Parents who are afraid to use physical punishment to discipline their children are going to raise children who are spoiled and demanding. (Pro)
22. \_\_\_ There is no reason to physically punish children when other disciplinary strategies have not been used first. (Con)

#### **Faith-Keeping (F-K) Scale**

23. \_\_\_ It is important that my children be raised to accept my family religion. (Pro)
24. \_\_\_ The best way to raise children is to allow them to develop their own religious beliefs as they grow up (Con)
25. \_\_\_ When children show interest in other people's religion it is important to explain to them that other religions are wrong, and they must believe the family religious teachings. (Pro)
26. \_\_\_ Children should be exposed to different religious teachings so they can make informed decisions about their own religious beliefs as they get older. (Con)
27. \_\_\_ I consider it my religious duty to keep my children within my own religion. (Pro)
28. \_\_\_ It really does not matter to me what religious beliefs my children end up with. (Con)

#### **Non-Corporal Punishment**

29. \_\_\_ There can be no substitute for the effectiveness of reasoning with children and explaining to them why a particular behaviour is unacceptable. (NCP)
30. \_\_\_ When children intentionally prove stubborn, parents should realize that reasoning with them will not help. (NCP)
31. \_\_\_ If parents will just explain the consequences of children's misdeeds to them, they will learn to behave. (NCP)
32. \_\_\_ Children learn best if their privileges are withdrawn when they misbehave. (NCP)

SECTION B**RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL ISSUES**

**Please continue using the scale above in responding to the following statements (-4 = very strongly disagree; -3 = strongly disagree; -2 = moderately disagree; -1 = slightly disagree; +4 = very strongly agree; +3 = strongly agree; +2 = moderately agree; +1 = slightly agree; and "0" when you feel precisely neutral about an item)**

**Religious Fundamentalism (RF) Scale**

1. \_\_\_ God has given mankind a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed.
2. \_\_\_ All of the religions in the world has flaws and wrong teachings.
3. \_\_\_ Of all the people on this earth, one group has a special relationship with God because it believes the most in his revealed truths and tries the hardest to follow His laws.
4. \_\_\_ The long-established traditions in religion show the best way to honour and serve God, and should never be compromised.
5. \_\_\_ Religion must admit all its past failings, and adapt to modern life if it is to benefit humanity.
6. \_\_\_ When you get right down to it, there are only two kinds of people in the world: The righteous, who will be rewarded by God; and the rest, who will not.
7. \_\_\_ Different religions and philosophies have different versions of the truth, and may be equally right in their own way.
8. \_\_\_ The basic cause of evil in this world is satan, who is still constantly and ferociously fighting against God.
9. \_\_\_ It is more important to be a good person than to believe in God and the right religion.
10. \_\_\_ No one religion is especially close to God, nor does God favour any particular group of believers.

11. \_\_\_ God will punish most severely those who abandon His true religion.
12. \_\_\_ No single book of religious writings contains all the important truths about life.
13. \_\_\_ It is silly to think people can be divided into "the Good" and "the Evil."  
Everyone does some good, and some bad things.
14. \_\_\_ God's true followers must remember that He requires them to constantly fight Satan and Satan's allies on this earth.
15. \_\_\_ Parents should encourage their children to study all religions without bias, then make up their own minds about what to believe.
16. \_\_\_ There is a religion on this earth that teaches, without error, God's truth.
17. \_\_\_ "Satan" is just the name people give to their bad impulses. There really is no such thing as diabolical "Prince of Darkness" who tempts us.
18. \_\_\_ Whenever science and sacred scripture conflict, science must be wrong.
19. \_\_\_ There is no body of teachings, or set of scriptures, which is completely without error.
20. \_\_\_ To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, true religion.

#### **Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) Scale**

21. \_\_\_ Our country will be great if we honour the ways of our forefathers, do what the authorities tell us to do, and get rid of the "rotten apples" who are ruining everything.
22. \_\_\_ It is wonderful that young people can protest anything they like, and act however they wish nowadays.
23. \_\_\_ It is always better to trust the judgement of the proper authorities in government and religion, than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people's minds.
24. \_\_\_ People should pay less attention to the Bible and other old traditional forms of religious guidance, and instead develop their own personal standards of what is moral and immoral.

25. \_\_\_ What our country really needs, instead of more "civil rights" is a good stiff dose of law and order.
26. \_\_\_ Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fibre and traditional beliefs.
27. \_\_\_ The sooner we get rid of the traditional family structure, where the father is the head of the family and the children are taught to obey authority automatically, the better. The old fashioned way has a lot wrong with it.
28. \_\_\_ There is nothing wrong with premarital sexual intercourse.
29. \_\_\_ The facts on crime, sexual immorality, and the recent public disorders all show we have to crack down harder on deviant groups and troublemakers if we are going to save our moral standards and preserve law and order.
30. \_\_\_ There is nothing immoral or sick in somebody's being a homosexual.
31. \_\_\_ It is important to protect fully the rights of radicals and deviants.
32. \_\_\_ Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.
33. \_\_\_ There is no "one way" to live your life. Everybody has to create his/her own way.
34. \_\_\_ Once our government leaders condemn the dangerous elements in our society, it will be the duty of every patriotic citizen to help stomp out the rot that is poisoning our country from within.
35. \_\_\_ Government, judges and the police should never be allowed to censor books.
36. \_\_\_ Some of the worst people in our country nowadays are those who do not respect our flag, our leaders, and the normal way things are supposed to be done.
37. \_\_\_ In these troubled times laws have to be enforced without mercy, especially when dealing with the agitators and revolutionaries who are stirring things up.
38. \_\_\_ Atheists and others who have rebelled against the established religions are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who attend church regularly.
39. \_\_\_ Some young people sometimes get rebellious ideas, but as they get older they ought to become more matured and forget such things.

40. \_\_\_ There is nothing really wrong with a lot of the things some people call "sin."
41. \_\_\_ Everyone should have his/her own life-style, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes him/her different from everyone else.
42. \_\_\_ The situation in our country is getting so serious, the strongest methods would be justified if they eliminated the troublemakers and got us back to our true path.
43. \_\_\_ Authorities such as parents and our national leaders generally turn out to be right about things, and the radicals and protestors are almost always wrong.
44. \_\_\_ A lot of our rules regarding modesty and sexual behaviour re just customs which are not necessarily any better or holier than those which other people follow.
45. \_\_\_ There is absolutely nothing wrong with nudist camps.
46. \_\_\_ The real keys to the "good life" are obedience, discipline, and sticking to the straight and narrow.
47. \_\_\_ We should treat protestors and radicals with open arms and open minds, since new ideas are the lifeblood of progressive change.
48. \_\_\_ What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path.
49. \_\_\_ Students must be taught to challenge their parents' ways, confront the authorities and criticize the traditions of our society.
50. \_\_\_ One reason we have so many troublemakers in our society nowadays is that parents and other authorities have forgotten that good old-fashioned physical punishment is still one of the best ways to make people behave properly.

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End of survey. Thank you for participating

\* This is not the exact form of the questionnaire which was sent out to the participants. The headings were omitted from the actual questionnaires and, also, the items were mixed within the scales.