

Continued... from overleaf

are the responsibilities of parents, by definition, and for the government to usurp them unilaterally is a totally unacceptable intrusion and invasion of the family's integrity. The government does properly intervene in cases of abuse when they come to light, but it does not properly intervene into every family on the assumption that all parents are equally incompetent and undisciplined and probably going to be guilty of bashing their own children somewhere along the line.

**Q6. Isn't a ban on spanking a very responsible way to send a signal to society that violence will not be tolerated?**

**A.** Charge school bullies with assault; slam those abortion certifying consultants who are clearly flouting the law into jail; tighten up on the censorship laws: these things will send really good signals! And they will prevent real crimes already happening every day.

**Q7. Isn't it mainly Christian religious fundamentalists who have this crazy notion you have to beat children into submission?**

**A.** Christians more than any other group have a highly developed doctrine and theology of spanking, which *does not* include beating children into submission. (See Family Integrity brochure titled *The Christian Foundations to the Institution of Spanking*.)

**Q8. Parents could never justify spanking another adult. How can they justify spanking their child?**

**A.** Neither would parents ever try to change another adult's clothes, feed him, bathe him, toilet him, tuck him in at night or confine him to his room for "time out". The child is not auto-

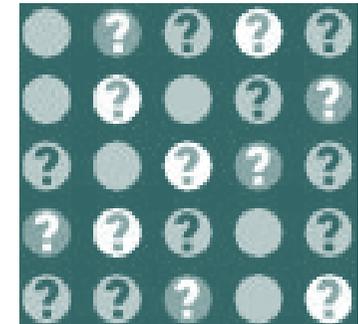
nous or mature but thoroughly dependent upon his parents. Most parents willingly, even eagerly shoulder these many responsibilities toward their child's care, upbringing and welfare.

**Q9. Doesn't research prove that spanking produces harmful effects for a child?**

**A.** No it does not. Otago University's Professor Anne Smith's recent review (June 2004) of the social science literature relating to corporal punishment quotes extensively from Dr Elizabeth.T. Gershoff. The American Psychological Association (APA) said of Gershoff's research, "[T]he nature of the analyses prohibits causally linking corporal punishment with the child behaviors." That is, the research showed no cause-and-effect between spanking and negative child behaviours, only a statistical association, in the same way that negative social behaviours are also statistically associated with poverty, other factors. It is apparently the same for all such research.



Family Integrity



Spanking Questions and Answers

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# All Your Questions Answered!

## Q1. Doesn't the UNCROC require NZ to ban spanking?

**A.** No it does not. Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) requests "all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child". It is "violence, injury or abuse" that UNCROC is after. The anti-spanking lobby insists that this requires the repeal of Section 59 of the Crimes Act (1961) which says: "(1) Every parent of a child and, subject to subsection (3) of this section, every person in the place of the parent of a child is justified in using force by way of correction towards the child, if the force used is reasonable in the circumstances."



**Putting the pieces together.**

The anti-spanking lobby is being illogical: there is obviously a world of difference between reasonable force on the one hand and violence, injury or abuse on the other. The two are not equivalent. (See Family Integrity brochures titled, *Spanking vs. Child Abuse & Violence*, *A Working Definition of Spanking*, and *Spanking and the Law in New Zealand*.)

## Q2. Don't abusive parents hide behind the provisions of Section 59?

**A.** There were a mere 18 Section 59 cases in the 13 years from 1990 to 2002, or 1.4 cases per year. That is, very few even try to hide behind it. In 10 of those 18 cases the parent was found guilty of abuse/assault, one needed a re-trial, one had the child removed and the remaining six parents were found not guilty of abuse. (See <http://tinyurl.com/2njb4> for full report.) It seems that in the end nobody hides behind it.

## Q3. Isn't it just too easy for angry parents to start off by spanking and then escalate into violence and abuse?

**A.** This is a common misconception. Spanking is the controlled, judicial and measured use of reasonable force to correct / train / discipline. Violence and abuse are just the opposite: uncontrolled, unjust and unreasonable. One does not grade into the other as on a continuum: the two phenomenon are completely different in motivation, aim, objective, methodology and outcome. (See Family Integrity brochures *Spanking vs. Child Abuse & Violence* and *A Working Definition of Spanking*.)

## Q4. Isn't NZ too accepting of violence?

**A.** Indeed it is. This country systematically dismembered 18,500 NZ children in 2003 mostly because of their inconvenience. Yet the UNCROC which the anti-spanking lobby is so fond of quoting says in its Preamble, "Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, *before as well as after birth*". This sentence defines *the unborn* as a child with rights NZ is bound to protect. So where is the protection? Escalating levels of gratuitous and graphic violence is being pumped into private

homes through the TV, videos, video games and DVDs all in the name of entertainment. The truly harmful effects of this are well known and well documented (the school shootings at Jonesboro, Arkansas; Paducah, Kentucky; Pearl, Mississippi; Stamps, Arkansas; Conyers, Georgia; and of course, Columbine High in Littleton, Colorado; see *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call to Action Against TV, Movie and Video Game Violence* by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman and Gloria DeGaetano). Government schools seem unable to curb the bullying. While the anti-spanking lobby wants to ban spanking in the hope that it will prevent one or two cases of abuse a year (see Q2 above), they should be turning their efforts to these other causes of violence and death, for they are real and systematic, the deaths numbering at least 50 *every day* of the year.



## Q5. Having banned caning in schools, is it not logical and needful to now ban spanking in the home?

**A.** To say it is a logical step to move from government schools to private households is to assume the government has the same right to regulate *private* households and families as it does to regulate *its own* schools. Such an assumption is completely in error and ignores many issues foundational to society. The rearing of children is the preserve of parents, not the government. The parents are the proper and primary agents for training and disciplining their children, not the government. These

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