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**Subject:** Corporal Punishment: Legislation.

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Dear Saints

Proposed amendments to the Children's Act were accepted unanimously by the National Board of Provinces (NBP) on Tuesday (29/05/2007). These amendments, if approved by Parliament, will rule out ALL parental corporal punishment from private homes, and make it a criminal offence for parents to spank their children.

Ms. Joyce Masilo, ANC MP and chairperson of the select committee on social services, described this decision of the NBP as "wonderful." This was echoed by ms. Helen Lamoela, DA MP and committee member: "This will become one of the most important [laws] in the country."

(Taken, and translated from *Die Burger*, 31 May 2007).

We believe that a clear, biblical and godly voice should go up about this proposed legislation:

Biblically, the Government or State has no right to tear the upbringing and/or education of our children out of the hands of their parents. The function of Government is to express the wishes of the people whom it represents. Such legislation would represent a most forceful tyranny over the private lives of families - and the reverse of the governmental function. Far more than two thirds of South Africans indicate on their census forms that they subscribe to the Christian faith. These South Africans should prescribe to Government what they want, and not the other way round. That is the foundation of Democracy.

Apparently the motivation for the Act is child abuse by parents or foster parents. So, in stead of merely prosecuting such individual cases, ALL corporal discipline is now to be taken from ALL homes. This represents reverse logic. It could be compared to outlawing the planting of vineyards, because some people abuse alcohol.

It could also be compared to the reverse logic we find with the advocates of gun laws: Because some people kill others with guns, NOBODY may possess a gun!

One could ask, shouldn't Government then also be outlawed, because some ministers mess up their portfolios?

On a more serious note:

The South African Government is tampering with God's order. God's order stipulates that parents and older people have authority over children (Eph. 6:1 - 3; 1 Pet. 5:5). Also, that parents who don't spank their naughty children, hate their children (Prov. 13:24). The Author of humankind knew that no healthy society would be possible without corporal punishment. Lack of corporal punishment (and the resulting lack of parental discipline) breaks down the moral fibre of a civilization - as we see in almost every "developed" nation on this planet. Economical prosperity does not simply translate to morality and national stability. If it did, the Romans would have still ruled the world.

The very day when corporal punishment was banned from South African schools, the 5% "baddies" amongst school children took over, and started to dominate the school atmosphere (I know, I was there!). Thirteen years later, our school systems stagger against an onslaught of unruly youngsters. Individual schools that cope well, lean heavily on parental discipline at home.

Are we crazy to think that by taking the rod out of the hands of parents, we will build a healthier society?

This scenario also calls for civil disobedience - in the sense that this godless proposed law could not be obeyed if implemented.

When Government, which receives its authority over it people from God Himself (Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:13 - 14), abuses this very position to bully its subjects into godlessness, it is time to say: "*We must obey God rather than men*" (Acts 5:29. Also compare Heb. 11:23, Ex. 1:17; Dan. 3:17 - 18, 6:10; Mat. 2:13). No authority remains an authority when it goes beyond the mandate of the One from Whom it received its authority.

There is a difference, though, between obedience and submission. Submission is absolute, obedience not. We should always submit to Government (in attitude, respect and decency), but should disobey Government as soon as it goes beyond its Godly mandate. And with these proposed corporal punishment laws, it surely does.

It seems clear that an ignorant South African Government, backed up by a godless Human Rights based constitution, is swinging its fist towards heaven.

And, as from the beginning, God is still on the throne. I tremble when I contemplate the consequences of this legislation. For thousands of years, peoples and nations have borne the terrible consequences of their defiance of, and rebellion against the wisdom of a righteous God. Why would South Africa be an exception?

God help us!

Eben Swart