

# Churches' Network for Non-violence (CNNV)

## Anglican Bishops' Statement in support of Equal Protection for Children 7 October 2008

The forthcoming vote in the House of Commons on equal protection for children from assault is a crucial one because it says so much about the sort of society we want for every child in modern Britain.

Ending the practice of hitting children in the name of discipline is long overdue and will reflect the seriousness with which the UK regards the human rights of every child to grow up free from the fear of being hit and humiliated by those whose duty it is to protect children from harm.

For Christians, ending this commonplace form of violence against children is not only a moral imperative, it is about following Jesus' example of giving children the respect to which they are entitled.

Jesus offered a new way of relating to others through love and mutual respect and that includes children. This means teaching and guiding children by adult example - not through the humiliation of hitting and causing pain to children. Jesus responded to children by placing them in the centre of the group, as in Mark 9: 37: "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

It is important that extensive public education promoting positive, non-violent parenting and access to resources and support for parents, accompanies law reform.

This is an opportunity for our values and hopes for our children and families to shape the laws of our land and to make a positive difference. If we really want a less violent society we must end the legality of hitting children and treat our children with gentleness, compassion and respect.

George Cassidy, Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham  
David James, Bishop of Bradford  
Michael Langrish, Bishop of Exeter  
Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Hulme  
John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds  
Michael Perham, Bishop of Gloucester  
John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford  
Tony Robinson, Bishop of Pontefract  
John Saxbee, Bishop of Lincoln  
Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester  
Kenneth Stevenson, Bishop of Portsmouth  
Tim Thornton, Bishop (elect) of Truro