

## Discussion of th brave...

Saturday, 25 October 2008

Discussion of the brave &ldquo;Questions and Answers&hellip;But how have we got into this dire strait?&rdquo; Is it really the case that one or two sad events (like Soham) were enough to trigger the consequent legislative panic? Is it really the case that even intelligent (?) lawmakers cannot look dispassionately at the overall facts but are, like so many of the public, overawed by what they see and hear on the media --- and by what their screaming constituents tell-em? &ldquo;Answers and Questions&hellip;You ask good questions! I do not have the answers.&rdquo;

I wonder if you saw the C4 TV programme with Esther Rantzen recently? She, with Michelle Elliott, founded the child protection industry in this country. Anyway, she said she was aghast at how it had misfired. She got two child actors, a girl of 8 and a boy of 12 to stand separately in a big shopping mall, each pretending to be lost and consequently distressed. Over 1000 &lsquo;Levites&rsquo; passed by without doing anything. There were two Good Samaritans. He interviewed both, and also a sample of the Levites. The latter all said that it would be far too dangerous to intervene, in case people thought that they were trying to abduct the children. The Samaritans, however, knew the rules (eg don&rsquo;t put an arm round their shoulders) and what to do &ndash; ie escort them to a policeman, security officer or someone authorised to handle the situation.

It reminded me of a half-remembered incident in Queen Street, Auckland, in about 1980 when I encountered a little girl in a similar predicament. I instinctively stopped, bent down and asked her what was the matter. A few others stopped too. She had lost her mummy. We found the mummy. It never occurred to me that I was putting myself at risk. That&rsquo;s what happens when common sense is abandoned.