

CHILD ABUSE

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Abuse is misuse; it is any unjust or corrupt practice including insults, and whatever is the bad or wrong use of another; it is ill-treatment, an attack in words or actions. Children, because of their immaturity and vulnerability, constitute a large group of people who are submitted to, and suffer from abuse. Of course what hits the headlines is sexual abuse, so much so that non-sexual abuse towards children is played down to the extent that it may often not be considered abuse.

The Protection of Children Act 1978 prohibits the taking, possessing and showing of indecent pictures of anyone under sixteen years of age. If anyone is convicted under the Act they could face imprisonment and also be placed on the sex offenders register. It will be argued as to what constitutes indecency but, as it is established that exposing one's sexuality or genitals in public, or merely to one other person, is indecent exposure, indecency is thereby defined, both clearly and unambiguously.

If a man lifts the skirt of any female thus exposing her thighs or underwear, or both, then that is an indecent act. It may not necessarily be an indecent assault punishable at law since any police action would have to consider whether the female was touched, whether force was used or whether the act caused her apprehension or mental distress. Whatever the police or courts determine in any such event it does not invalidate the fact that what was done to the female was improper, immoral and indecent. If, however, a woman dresses in such a way that her thighs or underwear is seen, whether intentionally or not, and however briefly, this is not considered to be an indecent act at law, although she may be showing even more than when a third party lifted her skirt. If she 'shows herself' it is either by choice or by accident and she can 'get away with it'. If a man reveals her, even momentarily, it is an indecent act.

Again, indecency is defined, albeit morally. And that is how the Bible defines indecency. For further consideration of this subject refer to the author's *A Woman's Dress and Male Modesty*.

One of the earliest photographers of partially clothed and nude children was Lewis Carroll, otherwise the Reverend Charles Dodgson (1832 - 1898). One has to ask the question as to why he did it.

There are many medical and sex education books readily available and one includes a photograph of two naked teenagers, one of each sex, almost on top of each other. It is explicit in that their sexuality is displayed in detail. The excuse proffered by those who approved of this picture was that, as it did not depict an actual sexual act, it was 'merely natural' and therefore the photograph was justified and not indecent.

Many assert that there is no link between such images and actual child abuse and that within a family, nakedness is an expression of love, beauty and tenderness. But surely family photographs can be lovely, beautiful and tender when people are clothed. Why do people want to take pictures of nude children including their own? This practice seems to turn children into dolls, playthings or sexual objects and, as we have seen, it is sexual exploitation and abuse.

In 1993 Graham Ovendon was arrested for possessing photographs of nude children and for taking them. His models, Emily Ovendon and Emma Hewes, were photographed over a long period of time including their pubescent teenage years. Michael Freeman, professor of law at University College, London, states that these pictures are 'real porn'. Some of the poses of Ovendon's teenage models are no different from what can be seen in pornographic magazines.

The American photographer, Jock Sturgess, was investigated by the FBI for taking and possessing pictures including teenage nudes. One such picture is of a girl apparently asleep. Was she aware that her photograph was being taken? This picture does confirm one thing... the vulnerability of nakedness!

Naturalists insist that such pictures, and of their own children being in the nude, does not and cannot possibly harm any child. This is untrue as the evidence presented here indicates.

Sally Mann, in her book of photographs, *Immediate Family*, has intimate pictures of her children including their performing bodily functions.

What may not be realised is that while a photograph is a mere instant of time, time was expended in preparation before it was taken. Therefore each photo session constitutes a relationship since a relationship is an association, something organised for a purpose.

Phil Stokes, a professor of photography, argues that what makes a photograph or image of any nude indecent is its intent and context. He says, "People looking at such a picture do not know its context; it could be innocent. People judge the mind, not the photo!" That is both a feeble and devious excuse. No one can ever know what is really in anyone else's mind. That being so, artists and photographers knowing this can get away with, and justify, their 'work' with nudes. This is their smokescreen, their ruse for disguising their motives and activities. When artists and, indeed, some photographers, are criticised for some of their work they often retaliate with words such as, "If you think this picture is dirty it is because you have a dirty mind!" Whenever morality and decency are upheld, it is the honourable who are often dismissed as being dishonourable.

Artists have stated, "Our judgement is an aesthetic one, not a moral one." Hidden in that statement is the fact that artists and photographers are putting themselves above the law, and the code of morality and decency, and certainly disregarding Divine standards. They legitimise nudity in art insisting that it is a skill and further protest by saying, "Art books are not dirty books!"

We could all adopt that attitude of self-justification. A successful cat burglar must have skill and so his breaking into houses and stealing is justified!

Peter Merritt of Chatham, Kent, was investigated by both the police and the Social Services concerning photographs he took of his daughter, Helen, when she was thirteen years old. Although the pictures were not nude photographs, Helen was partially clothed and looking sexually provocative. That the Social Services wanted to put her into care was high-handed. But what type of man wants to take overtly sexy pictures of his daughter?

Such photographs can be both embarrassing and abuse. They can also be pornographic since pornography is defined as "representation of sexuality which may have the potential to titillate, arouse and stimulate eroticism which could lead to harmful consequences."

That artists were the first pornographers cannot be refuted. Neither can it be gainsaid that children are both sexually exploited and abused.

In a television debate in the series *Late and Loud* screened on Channel 4 in August 1997 we learnt about girls who were catwalk models as young as thirteen-years-old. The pressures exerted upon such teenagers were examined. Modelling agents made them lose weight causing eating disorders and other unnecessary illnesses and their looks and their bodies were constantly being criticised. They were made to model lingerie, underwear, see-through clothes, low tops and short skirts and, in addition, elevated on a catwalk for all to see. Many of these models complained of psychological, mental and sexual abuse. Thirteen-year-olds were made to look like women in their mid-twenties which effect was achieved by clever make-up and other glamour aids. Several modelling agents said that modelling was part of the entertainment industry and that there were 'no problems' in teenagers modelling revealing clothes or underwear on the catwalk with men taking photographs. One agent, Mark Macho, said that beauty is a talent to be used in the same way that a talented violinist is employed.

The teenagers were made both to look and to feel good. Their pride was pandered to. They were instructed to 'sulk and pout' down the catwalk, looking sexy as it would 'sell the product'.

Much of teenage modelling is deliberately aimed at women in their thirties who long to be young and fashionable again. The audience readily accepted that many women are so insecure that they want to regress into being a teenager and wear revealing clothes, flirt, be promiscuous, listen to 'pop' music and be generally rebellious. Girls of thirteen to sixteen are not emotionally ready to parade semi-naked or glamorously and, furthermore, it encourages voyeurism, sexual fantasies and promiscuity. Jane Moore, Woman's Editor of The Sun, said, "It is indecent to take a teenager and make her more mature. It is accelerating her life. The clothes that they are made to wear are sexually provocative." And the provocation includes the seduction of men.

A fifteen-year-old Canadian model, Courtney Miller, looks like a woman in her twenties. She said, "When I was young I saw pretty women on the television and I decided to be like them. If you start modelling when you are very young you can go on. I continue my school work through the post." Clearly television glamour is a tremendous influence upon women.

A commentator replied to Miss Miller, "You have no normal life. Have it. You're a long time being old!"

The immature and irresponsible attitude of many women who consider themselves beautiful or sexy is, "I've got it! I'll flaunt it!" In other words they want to show off sexually.

While prostitution is selling your body for sex, surely exposing or accentuating your sexuality for money (or some other 'advantage') is a type of secondary prostitution. It is obvious that modelling, because it is glamorous and involves various degrees of exposure, can easily lead a girl into topless modelling, pornography and prostitution or into television and the cinema if she is prepared to take her clothes off in front of the camera. I met Lucy who appears as the centrefold in a 'girlie' magazine and she told me she received £10,000 for that 'shoot' and further lucrative contracts.

Modelling is one exploitation of sex. Women show themselves. Men look. And other girls and women want to be just as glamorous as the models, television and cinema stars and some deliberately develop eating disorders to be both slim and attractive and, tragically, some die.

Immature people copy their idols. If a favourite 'pop' star takes drugs it is 'cool,' that is to say, fashionable and worthy to be copied. This is one reason why teenagers take drugs. One of the major influences that engenders free sex, people living together, rather than being married, or trading in one partner for another, as one might trade in an old car for a new one, is because it is endemic of the entertainment and glamour industries which more than suggests its immorality.

What a female wears, which is revealing or potentially revealing, encourages male attention, promiscuity and sexual offences. And women say, "I'll wear what I like. It's my body and I'll show it to whoever I like. If I am attacked or raped it is the man's fault entirely. It's not my fault. Men who attack and rape women are sick."

Karen Stevens, another modelling agent, said, "It is obscene to put teenagers on the catwalk. It is profiteering. I have seen some who were so nervous modelling underwear and mini-skirts that they were shaking. Some agencies are procuring under-age modelling."

Another woman said, "Modelling is abuse. Girls and women are being exploited for their faces and their bodies. We do have brains. We are people!"

In the national newspapers of 23 February 1998, an outcry was reported concerning pictures of a twelve-year-old model 'striking sensual poses'. The schoolgirl, Elizabeth Preston, is heavily made-up

and wearing a skimpy dress, belying her tender age and immaturity. The photographs have been circulated to clients by a top London modelling agency. Dorothy Grace-Elder, who works with the international organisation, Action Against Child Exploitation said that the poses were 'legitimised pornography'. Before objection is made to this statement we should remind ourselves of the definition of pornography which is "representation of sexuality which may have the potential to titillate, arouse and stimulate eroticism which could lead to harmful consequences." Therefore, anyone seeing Elizabeth, or any other female, like this, whether in a picture or in the flesh, is looking at an example of sexual exploitation which is what pornography is, in part. This proves yet again that what a female wears, or does not wear, can be seductive, dangerous and pornographic. To some, this may seem an exaggeration but it is not. All such modes of female representation can engender child abuse, sexual assaults and rape and not necessarily on the female seen in the revealing, or potentially revealing, clothes. Valerie Riches, director of Family and Youth Concern asks the pertinent question, "What sort of message is this giving to paedophiles? The fashion for girls to look sensual must be a terrible temptation to sick individuals, and must confirm their twisted ideas about sex." June Rose is the principal of Elizabeth's school, Redroofs Theatre School at Maidenhead, and was rightly shocked and said, "Elizabeth does not need these sort of clothes to make her look pretty." Indeed, clothes do not make any female pretty, or prettier, but they can make her appear sensual, sexual and erotic which can lead to anything from unwelcome looks to rape. Sex offenders have openly confessed to this. Dr. Adrian Rogers, director of the Conservative Family Institute said, "Elizabeth's mother has lost her sense of duty. She is selling her child into a type of slavery." Valerie Riches makes the most incontrovertible statement when she says, "This type of thing sends out messages that children are both sexy and available." But not only children. Any woman who wears even a shortish skirt or anything else that is revealing is giving out a clear message, whether intentional or not, that she is sexually available or wanting to be admired sexually.

Let us be frank. Glamour really refers to 'showing more of one's sexuality'. Women are described as glamorous if they show more of their thighs and cleavage. A woman in a bathing suit or bikini is said to be in a glamorous pose. The same woman, however beautiful, hidden in a suit of armour with perhaps only a little of her face showing would not be called glamorous in that pose.

The world of glamour is indeed a pernicious world and, as we have seen in the instances highlighted already, it can constitute child abuse and paedophilia.

It must first be realised that a paedophile is not just someone who sexually abuses children but anyone that has a sexual interest in children. Physical abuse is determined in the mind before it is put into action, although it may not always be premeditated but an impulse.

Photographs of nude children, even one's own, is abuse. Recently, I was present when my companion stopped a young woman in the street and said, "Hello, Sally! Hey, you've grown. I remember that framed photograph of you in your house when you were about eight years old. You were in your birthday suit!" Sally blushed, lowered her eyes and was emotionally upset. That picture constituted child abuse. Many readers will remember a television newsreader being reprimanded for a similar incident involving photographs.

Statistics state that about three out of every four children abused are girls and in 26% of cases it is the biological father. The main ages for abuse are 3-5 years and 13-16 years.

People want glamour and sexual licence rather than the protection of children from abuse. And society often has more sympathy for the abuser than the victim. We have become too soft, liberal and lenient yet it is not revenge that is advocated but justice and effective deterrents.

The ultimate child abuse is their murder but other abused children can be emotionally destroyed for the rest of his or her life.

Often, rough treatment is excused as parental punishment for naughty behaviour. Women are generally more violent to children because they have the responsibility for them over longer periods of time. Because of the problems and tensions of being a woman, they themselves can be unpredictable and spiteful. Men who drink are a high risk category, as are men who are deprived of sex and may subsequently develop incestuous relationships with their own daughters or perpetrate outbursts of physical violence.

Children have rights. They are not toys, dolls or slaves but people. It is wrong for a teacher or any other adult to see another child's private parts unless in authorised medical circumstances. Photographs of nude children, even one's own, is abuse. I know an art teacher - we shall call him Stephen - who has in his living room a framed photograph of his children standing nude and full frontal. I have been told of another art teacher - we will call him Derek - who welcomes people into his home and has over his fireplace, a large oil-painting of his wife and daughter as well as himself, completely nude. In addition to this there are framed photographs for all to see of his wife, his teenage daughter and himself explicitly nude.

In 1996 a man was arrested in Bournemouth for taking photographs, using a powerful telephoto lens, of small children playing naked on the beach. What he did was wrong... but the offence may not have taken place if the children had not been naked. A friend, who is a solicitor and has experience of child care cases, told me that the adults allowing children to be undressed on the beach are guilty of child abuse or encouraging it. In the summer you can see older children and teenagers change into and out of bathing costumes and the modesty towel slips, falls or blows in the wind and what should not be seen is seen.

You can also see children playing naked in and around paddling pools. I have seen children up to eight years of age doing this and in full view of passers-by. What a rich hunting ground for the pervert and paedophile! The adults are inviting abuse upon these children.

Often common sense only seems to prevail following a traumatic event. Several mothers whose children had been sexually abused and who had been emotionally damaged themselves made a statement broadcast in a Channel 4 documentary:

“We do not allow children to bath together; they cannot go into the paddling pool without clothes on. We tell our girls, ‘Keep that dress down. Don’t lift your legs up high. Never show your knickers... and when you are grown-up still behave like this and tell your own children the same’.”

These mothers were now behaving more responsibly. They fully realised that they had made mistakes, albeit unintentionally, which had cost their respective children their innocence and may have scarred them for life.

During the period between the wars teenagers in the main still had their childhood innocence intact. It was the pop and rock music revolution with its explicit sexuality that changed all that and corrupted our society. Indeed, forty years ago in the mid 1950's, society scarcely recognised the existence of child sexual abuse. Now over 1000 families every week are investigated in Britain. Such is the destruction of innocence that schoolteachers are not only telling very young pupils to beware of strangers but also to be careful of people they know and trust. We sow doubts and suspicion because there is a danger. But there are double standards here... don't talk to a stranger because he may be a pervert but if you are up to eight years old you can play naked in your garden even if a pervert is watching!

But innocence was not first lost in the 1950's. It was lost in Eden as a consequence of sin which resulted in the fear, danger and sin of being naked or semi-naked. Sin is disobedience to God and a very great amount of sin and crime has to do with sexual advertising, the clothes we wear and not

covering our bodies. However prudish it may sound, the prevention of crime and emotional damage to protect our children and anyone else we love is far, far more important.

Without doubt, it is the display, or accentuation of sexuality that causes, or encourages a large proportion of sexual abuse and rape and, in the adult world, leads to affairs and breakdowns of marriages, divorces and emotional pain both for adults and for children. One could say that child abuse is involved in most divorces as there is bound to be emotional harm. A physical injury such as a broken leg usually heals but some people never recover from emotional damage.

If children are allowed to play naked on the beach it will tempt the pervert and the paedophile such as the Bournemouth photographer. But parents themselves take nude photographs of their children and no one complains until years later when that child is a teenager or young adult and these photographs are shown by parents to visitors and the subject of the picture is hurt, as we have seen in the example of Sally.

If an attractive teenage girl or woman wears a shortish skirt it will tempt. If there is alcohol in the house it will tempt the children. A decent parent will remove any temptation from his or her child but parents, particularly women, will tempt people of the opposite sex. Television, including teenage television, highlights sex, drugs, rebellion against authority and such programmes are made by adults. The cinema and television focus on glamour, sex, violence, and nudity. Teenage magazines aimed at young girls are rife with sex and encourage it.

Let us return to Stephen. He is always looking up the skirts of teenage pupils and women. He seeks every opportunity to do so. He puts his arm around teenage girls and 'accidentally' touches their breasts and immediately offers a feigned apology. On several occasions he has walked into the girls' showers while they were occupied. He takes great delight in showing nude paintings to female pupils, some of whom he takes for private lessons; he enquires of them about their menstrual cycle; he goes to the swimming-pool and beach to lust after girls. He is a pervert. His peers know about him and allow him to be permissive. But let honesty prevail. He is a paedophile. He has a sexual interest in children. He is as bad, if not worse, than that man in Bournemouth. How he has got away with his many indiscretions for so long, and is still getting away with them, is a mystery and unfortunately, the longer he gets away with it, the more people may not believe the truth about him but rather succumb to his nauseating boyish charm.

In March 1997, 52 year old Keith Laverack was sent to prison having been found guilty on 15 charges of sexual abuse of boys and girls, some as young as nine years old. He was a schoolteacher and for thirty years was in a position of trust and authority with children. Outwardly he was caring and responsible but he was living a lie. For 30 years he was abusing children and getting away with it. In sentencing him, Judge Hugh Daniel referred to Laverack's acts as, "Reprehensible in the extreme. Children have been humiliated and to expect any child to give evidence would be further humiliation!"

I knew a man, Eric, who often appeared in the Law Courts for indecent exposure and sexually molesting children. Eventually he went to prison but later it was disclosed that he had been sexually abused as a child in a children's' home in Essex. It is true that if you sexually abuse a child, the child will be hurt and in turn either hurt others or turn it on itself.

There is the case of Mark Trotter who died of AIDS. He had responsible jobs in children's' homes and had sex with many children. As a result, all the children have had to be tracked down to undergo medical tests.

It is sad to record that not only are teachers guilty of abuse but so are people in the church and other positions of trust. A Pentecostal youth worker regularly took his teenage young peoples' group to the swimming pool. After several years he was brought before the magistrates on several charges of

sexual assault against these young swimmers and he went to prison and rightly so. A character in my book, *The Unacceptable Face of Christianity*, belonged to a very respectable brethren assembly. He started a young peoples' Bible Study but swimming parties became more regular than spiritual meetings and it was only teenage girls that went with him. He spoke to me one day about my girl-friend and said, "I want Elisabeth to come swimming with us. I bet she looks nice in a swimsuit!" Now don't tell me that was a harmless piece of fun. It was sexist, lewd, offensive and abusive.

A schoolteacher left Somerset to teach on the Isle of Wight. He became responsible for taking the boy-pupils swimming. After some time he was arrested for sexually assaulting some of them. It was later revealed that while he was teaching in Somerset he was guilty of similar offences.

In my local paper today, there is reported the case of a 53 year-old man who has been arrested for indecency going back eight years. He belongs to a charismatic house church which, apparently, has known about his behaviour for years. When it is remembered that Pentecostal and other charismatic churches practise kissing, holding hands and embracing members of the opposite sex one can easily see how one thing leads to another. We can all see it except those who do it. In the same issue of that paper there is the case of a music teacher who has committed acts of indecency with boy-pupils. When the police raided his home they found photographs of nude children. Such pictures constituted an offence and therefore, what Derek and Stephen have on their living-room walls, are offences also.

One of the first legal cases I encountered was that of an attractive young divorced woman who had oral sex with her teenage son and frequented the beach and swimming-pools to ogle men.

A disturbing film, *No Child of Mine*, was shown on Channel Four in February 1997. It dealt with a divorced woman who had sex with her eleven year-old daughter. The woman remarried and the stepfather had sexual intercourse with the little girl. The enraged biological father attacked the molester but then turned his own daughter into a child prostitute for £30 a time as he desperately wanted money for a new car. At 12, she had a miscarriage. In a subsequent children's home she was also abused. What makes one so irate about this true story is that no criminal proceedings have been instituted against any of the abusers of this tragic child.

I loathe those who abuse children in any way... but I have to say that the style of modern life and the media encourage sexual and other physical abuse. The day after the showing of this film I met several people deeply upset by it. One lady said, "Well, what do you expect? A few hours earlier this pop group, The Spice Girls, were on the telly flashing all they've got!" No comment from me but the bystanders all agreed.

There are women, who are not in pop and rock groups, who have the insane and insidious attitude, "It's my body and I can show as much of it as I like to whoever I like!" In so doing, by wearing bikinis, low-cut tops or even shortish skirts they are courting disaster and tempting men. If such a woman is attacked it is always claimed to be the man's fault. Women have this dominant attitude that they can wear what they like. So be it. But if their dress causes a man to be tempted they must take some responsibility.

The clear message of the New Testament is that we are not to do anything which will cause another to be tempted. If we do so we are part of the sin and the resultant consequences.

On the Montel Williams Show, screened on 10 March 1997, some mothers were expressing genuine concern at their respective daughters, whose ages ranged from 14 to 16, because these girls were wearing short skirts. The teenagers admitted that they were doing it to attract men. In other words it was fashion-flirting. The mothers were distraught because their daughters were in very real danger of sexual attack or rape. They had every cause to be alarmed.

What was not said was that some mature women also dress like this.

Certain young men in the audience said that while these teenagers were sexy and attractive they looked trashy, cheap and like tramps. Their clothes gave, intentionally or otherwise, the clear message that they were in the market for sex. One woman engendered tremendous applause when she rightly said that any woman who wore anything that had a risk of showing her underwear was cheap and inviting trouble. The Bible teaches the modesty of a woman's dress and verses such as Isaiah 47.2ff, Judith 9.2 and 1 Timothy 2.9 cannot be contradicted.

Yet these girls were defiant. They were going to wear what they wanted.

On another show, hosted by Ricki Lake, invited men said that they were so worried and upset by how their respective partners dressed that if they did not modify it they were considering leaving them. A female psychologist on the programme said that if a woman truly loves her man she will not wear anything that causes him shame or worry. Rather, she will always show him respect by how she dresses. A woman who dresses in a way that upsets her partner does not truly love or respect him. As I have discussed elsewhere, the Biblical teaching is that a man can divorce his wife for any shame or sexual impropriety.

Yet in our modern society such matters may be interpreted as matters of control or dominance. A woman may say to her man, "How dare you tell me what the length of my skirt should be!" and despite his explaining to her how much he loves her and does not want her to be lusted after (Matthew 5.28) which is "adultery in the heart", that is to say visual rape, she cries, "Manipulation and restrictions!" And her devoted partner is called a prude.

Objections to such restrictions are often said to be the consequence of Biblical precepts; that both Judaism and Christianity want to 'keep people down' and suppress certain activities. It is also sometimes asserted that this very suppression is the usual progenitor of the very ills which discerning Christians attribute to the modern sexual ethos. What has to be remembered is that society needs laws, and good ones, but to some people any law could be suppressive. Indeed good law itself is suppressive in that it seeks to prevent certain activities and reduce crime. The law of God is so designed; if it were obeyed it would reduce crime and prevent people being hurt. The alternative is anarchy.

It is argued that no one finds the ankles of women extravagantly titillating today and therefore long-term social history would not support the notion of any direct ratio or correlation between sartorial female immodesty and sexual licence. But history is neither law nor morality and whatever history records or has to say, it is subservient to what God says. History is not concerned with common sense, decency or God's standards.

Quite simply, some people object to Christian teaching, claiming it to be restrictive and suppressive, because it judges some of their own activities as wrong and 'men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.'

Albeit a minority, there still exists the man who wants his wife or partner, as well as his female children, to always dress and behave in ways that do not attract voyeurism, lust or possible sexual attack and while the cynic will call that restrictive or sexist, such a protective attitude is an evidence of genuine love. It has to be said that many of these honourable men are neither supporters of Judaism nor Christianity.

Abuse of anyone... not just children... is sin.

The Lord Jesus condemned even the mildest abuse of children. He upheld their rights as individuals. The disciples tried to prevent children 'worrying' the Lord by taking up His time but he said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them... for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

When Christ said, "Whosoever offends one of these little ones it would be better if a millstone were hanged around his neck and he be dropped in the sea," he was referring to the need of people to set an example, to be humble and innocent and thereby avoid any possibility of causing another to sin (Matthew 18.6). We are to be as harmless as doves (Matthew 10.16); we are to be wise and circumspect and follow that which is good and benefits fellow men and women (Romans 16.19); we are to be sincere and genuine and not give offence (Philippians 1.10); we are to be blameless and harmless without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse society (Philippians 2.15). In short, we are to be like Christ... holy, harmless, separated from sinners (Hebrews 7.26) for surely a Christian is like Christ. He said, "It is better to lose a hand or a leg than sin or cause another to sin and, as a consequence, that someone end up unsaved and in hell." (Matthew 18.9).

A woman divorced her husband and, after three years had him back. The eldest daughter, a teenager, was emotionally troubled by this reversal and displayed intense mental feelings. At 15, her skirts became shorter and she entered into sexual relationships. She explained that her father had at least three sexual relationships in three years and had also slept again with her mother who herself had slept with three men in five months, one of whom was this girl's father, of course. This is in direct violation of Deuteronomy 24.4. What was right for her parents was right for her, she reasoned to herself. Her mother explained that she had only slept once with the ex-husband and that was because she was drunk! That was not an explanation but an excuse. The mother stayed out one night so the daughter copied this only to come home to face a slap around the face from her father. That is child abuse!

Not only was the physical assault abuse but the example given to her and the emotional damage inflicted upon her was also abuse. It is inequitable to punish a child physically for copying the example of its parents' bad behaviour. Many children smoke, drink alcohol and sleep around because their parents do.

The attitude of much of society today is that as soon as a girl can become pregnant, put her on the pill! Television advertisements aimed at teenage boys advise them to always carry a condom. In these two examples, it is not morality and decency that is being taught, but promiscuity! We are advocating immorality. We allow bad morals because we cannot deal with them.

In February 1998 statistics from the Department of Health revealed that one in ten of all girls aged fourteen and fifteen went to family planning clinics to obtain contraception during 1997. This means that in eight years the number of teenage girls wanting sex and to avoid pregnancy while still below the legal age for sex has trebled. A closer examination of these figures found that one in seven of all fifteen-year-old girls asked for contraception and these figures do not take into account the girls that go to their own doctor for contraception or simply buy condoms from a chemist or slot machines. Therefore, the number of girls having under-age sex may be as high as one in three. According to the statistics, eight in every thousand girls under sixteen get pregnant and about four thousand under-age girls a year undergo abortions. Dr. John Champion, director of the Family Action Law Group, says that clinics should stop handing out contraceptives which help under-age girls to break the law. He continues, "These shocking figures indicate that it is acceptable for children of all ages to have sex." Valerie Riches, director of Family and Youth Concern, rightly says that these girls are the victims of an unlawful act. Leading social commentator, William Oddie, produces evidence shown from extensive research that premature sex is the main cause of cancer of the cervix and causes other serious health problems. We are advocating immorality. The government is legalising under-age sex!

It is incredible to witness American girls of six or seven years of age saying that they cannot wait to be pregnant! I remember reading in a newspaper in 1956 about a nine year old in Alabama having a baby. In fact it is estimated that in one state, 20% of girls of that age have already had sex. In Britain, children of eight are being taught sex education. Children of this age have school discos and listen to pop music full of sexual innuendo and so this example is not only at home but also at school.

Children should be allowed to have their childhood... that 'magical' time of innocence. We sometimes complain about adults behaving childishly but we are making children into adults long before they are ready.

One of the real problems is that parents are becoming younger and the age gap between them and their children is lessening. Going back to the Alabama case, can you imagine that child when ten saying that her mum is nineteen years old? You could have a woman under thirty with a teenage daughter and they could both be interested in insalubrious pop music, stupidly swoon over some actor who is good-looking and indulge in other silly behaviour. Some mothers act as irresponsibly as their teenage daughters.

Fathers can be a bad example as well. I know one who watches 'dirty videos' with his eight year old son and they compare notes on the beautiful women. Some young parents go to the same nightclubs which teenagers frequent and at such places there are pop music, drugs, flirting and sex. People are 'on the pull', that is to say sexually attracting the opposite sex.

Other influences on children and teenagers come from the media of modern films, television, videos and magazines. Currently, films fall into five main classifications as laid down by the British Board of Film Classification which is not primarily concerned with morals. The first classification is 'U' which means that the film is deemed suitable for all ages; the second, PG, means generally suitable for all but 'some scenes may be unsuitable for younger children'. The next classification is '12' which means it is only suitable for those of twelve years or over. I have seen films in this category showing nudity, drug abuse and using the 'f' word which seems to give the message that when you begin to approach your teenage years, obscenities are permissible. There are 'advanced' sex scenes in '15' films as well as repeated foul language and complete nudity all of which seems to state that when you are 15 you can see people completely nude and watch them having sex. A film in this category is *Striptease* starring Demi Moore, which 'allows' viewers, who are still children, to visit a strip club. The violence in some '15' films is both severe and cruel but cruel deaths can be viewed in James Bond films which are merely 'PG'. Films with the category '18' are for adults only but, of course, this is quite absurd as videos of such films are watched at home by young children.

Some films do encourage some children and teenagers into violence, drug-taking and promiscuity. This is evidenced by innumerable case files as well as the admissions of some offenders themselves who openly state that they copy the media and, in particular, movie stars and pop idols. While such media presentations are not child abuse in themselves, if they influence some young people to go wrong - and they do - are not these influences the cause of some child abuse?

The influence that parents give to their children can be either good or bad. A harmful or morally unacceptable example is both unpleasant and regrettable and, as such, is child abuse. Abuse is misuse; it is an unjust or corrupt practice, including insults and whatever is the bad or wrong use of another. As a bad example is, by definition, 'bad', then the setting of a bad example must be a form of child abuse; the encouragement of unacceptable behaviour or rudeness in children is a type of abuse. The failure to discourage bad behaviour, as well as the lack of discipline, must also come within this category.

Let me give but one example. A family who were often in dire financial straits found an exceptionally benevolent friend. Without him they might not have survived. He paid their debts and bills, purchased clothes for the children and refurbished the house. After seven years of his generosity, and his sincere love for them, he was 'put out' and snubbed. The parents instructed their children to avoid this kind man completely in the future and not even speak to him. And this is what happened... but, not before two of the children said to the benefactor, "Mum and Dad said that you have not done anything wrong. It's just that they don't want anything more to do with you!"

Not only was this kind-hearted man being used, he was being abused. And the children are too. To add

insult to injury, the children can treat this good man badly and are allowed and indeed encouraged to speak to their next-door neighbour who is a pervert. Such a bad example can lead children into trouble and crime much of which is the result of a lack of respect for other people and their property. But is it their fault? There must be thousands of cases like this? Is it not the parents fault? Are they the ones who are inadequate or, perhaps, in some cases, very young themselves?

If parents are immature, irresponsible and lack morality, what are they bequeathing to their children? Surely, a bad example. Is that not child abuse?

But why are parents becoming younger?

It is possibly because they cannot refrain from sex which is thrust at them everywhere and from a very young age. This is why sexual abuse has dramatically increased as well as the unbridled passion to have sex. A teenage girl with a baby can live off the Welfare State. She can get Family Allowance, Income Support and Housing Benefit and possibly, maintenance from the father, if he is known.

Some people make bad parents. While children are given sex education, there is no training for parenthood. Bad parents are often inadequate because they are selfish... that is to say they have strong feelings for themselves which eclipse all other feelings. The curious thing is that the selfish person not only enjoys feeling good but often enjoys other people being hurt. A father who leaves his children, whatever the reason, is guilty of causing family dysfunction and, as the children are likely to be hurt, he is guilty of child abuse. It has often been said that suicide is never justified; that life itself is so precious, or potentially precious, that it is not worth ending it for any reason. Suicide can also be selfish for it hurts the family left behind. So it is with a parent who walks out on his or her children... it is never justified. Another anomaly is that some women who have been deserted by their husbands are often ready to accept them back or even forgive them... yet if it happens in another family, they condemn it. Similarly, if a man rapes a neighbour's child he is evil; if he rapes his own daughter or abuses her in any way, he needs help!

A lot is made of the concept that a family is a biological unit. After a divorce, a stepfather, however good, is always at a disadvantage. The mother may say to him, "They are not your children and however bad their father is, he is still their father, you're not!" So the stepfather is criticised and indeed abused for being decent and the delinquent biological father is excused for all his 'indiscretions' and consequently, the bad triumphs over the good. Families should be an operative, loving and positive unit where lies, deceit and character assassination are not known. The rights of children are violated when parents set them a bad example or when the children are used as emotional pawns or spies in disputes such as a divorce. That is child abuse. In a divorce a child will invariably respond to an absent father, even though he may be selfish and morally bad, simply because the child has always been taught to trust him. A good mother will always put her children first so that they do not grow up with any sense of neglect or rejection. Andrew Vachss, in his book, *Another Chance to Get it Right* says, "A dog has puppies; but it is what a dog does that makes it a mother!"

If divorce engenders emotional child abuse a second marriage or a potential second marriage can suffer from interference, emotional blackmail enacted upon the children by the ex-spouse, often because he or she is jealous.

There are more sexual attacks upon young girls than young men although sexual and other abuse is perpetrated on both sexes. With girls it is because their clothing is more obvious. Because boys wear trousers their sexuality is more obscure but not so with girls who, particularly in the summer months, wear skirts or dresses. Therefore voyeurism, in the normal course of daily life, is a male facility. It is when we come to sports, particularly the glamour sport of swimming, that girls can indulge in voyeurism.

Drugs are rampant among children, teenagers and young people. To some extent it is due to the

example given by pop singers who are their role models and who take drugs themselves. In actual fact, many pop stars have actually stated that teenagers should take illegal drugs. One such advocate is Paul McCartney who, despite his encouraging children to such crime, receives a knighthood. We might as well have given knighthoods to the Kray brothers.

Alcohol is a drug. People believe it can help them relax and feel more sociable; some drink to 'escape from their problems'. It is a depressant drug. Long-term drinking can lead to serious liver, heart and stomach problems. Women get more drunk than men on the same amount of alcohol. Tobacco is a powerful and fast-acting drug. When smoke is inhaled, the nicotine effects hit the brain about eight seconds later. It causes asthma, chest problems and cancer. Anabolic steroids can help build up muscles and help users recover from strenuous exercise. But they make users aggressive and taking them can damage the genitals and cause heart attacks and liver failure. Cannabis is also known as marijuana, weed or hash. It heightens the senses especially when it comes to colours, taste and 'pop' music. Someone once said, "Pop music is pretty awful but after taking cannabis, it's great." Cannabis affects good judgement, concentration and impairs driving skills; it can cause paranoia and it is a hard drug to quit. It can also cause serious respiratory disease and lung cancer. Cocaine, sometimes called snow, is a powerful stimulant. It is a class A drug and like cannabis and other drugs, its use causes the craving for more. It can cause heart problems, chest pains and it always leaves users confused and paranoid. Crack can lead to potentially fatal heart problems and convulsions; it harms the lungs and causes chest pains. Ecstasy causes depression, liver and kidney problems and can seriously affect the brain. Heroin, sometimes called smack, is very addictive. Injecting it can damage veins and lead to gangrene. Tolerance develops which means the user needs more to get the same effect. LSD, or acid, produces bad 'trips' when the user is out of control. Hallucinations occur and the drug causes mental problems such as schizophrenia.

Drugs have a significant place in the free sex society. Amphetamines are a 'dance drug' used to prolong sexual interest; cannabis enhances sexual pleasure; ecstasy is also a 'dance drug' and has been described as the 'love drug'; LSD generates a loss of inhibition which can lead to sex; women using steroids may experience an increased sex drive. It is said that it costs a heroin addict £30,000 a year to pay for their addiction. Few earn that amount, so they turn to crime, prostitution and other deviant behaviour to finance their habit.

In March 1998 a survey was published concerning the devastating inroads which drugs are making into schoolchildren's lives. Two out of every five children up to the age of sixteen admit taking drugs. Not only are they threatening their long-term health but also their academic and career prospects. One in five sixteen-year-olds admits having taken drugs within the last month. One in nine boys and one in eleven girls aged fourteen and fifteen are regular users.

The overall level of illegal drug-taking is five times higher than a decade ago and children who indulge are falling behind at school. Half the regular users and a third of occasional users never do homework. The children who say no to drugs are just one in five. This shocking report, *Young People and Illegal Drugs in 1998*, will come as a blow to the 'liberal' thinkers who are pushing for the legalisation of drugs such as cannabis by arguing that they do not affect users' behaviour. Anti-drugs campaigner, Julian Brazier, MP, said, "This is clear evidence that using cannabis does harm children." Paul Betts, whose daughter, Leah, died after taking one ecstasy tablet on her eighteenth birthday, said that drugs were turning talented students into dropouts. Drugs affect people's personality whether it is cannabis, heroin or alcohol. It is medically proven that cannabis causes tiredness, irritability and bad temper and the drug can stay in the body for up to thirty days. Dr. Adrian Rogers said, "Drugs will cause chronic tiredness and even mental illness. As people come down from the high of taking amphetamines it will cause lethargy and depression."

The Schools Health Education Unit at Exeter University found that children using drugs are less likely to take precautions against sexually transmitted diseases. Glamour, drugs, pop music and sex are all linked being used to encourage of child abuse, intentionally or not.

The ultimate abuse is, of course, killing. Children are killed in violent acts by parents out of control or to gratify sexual perversions. It should also be noted that a large number of children killed are found to be naked. With girls it is often because they have been sexually assaulted or raped. Many sexual attacks upon girls and women are connected with events when they wear either few clothes or revealing clothes, such as 'glamour sports' and modern fashion.

The Bible details occasions of ultimate child abuse. An evil king of Judah named Manasseh caused his children to walk through the fire in the valley of Hinnom as a sacrifice to the pagan god, Molech of the Ammonites. Such human sacrifice was absolutely forbidden by God (Leviticus 18.21). In 2 Kings 23.12, Molech is referred to as Milcom and these barbaric acts done to children were described as an abomination. Another pagan god, Baal, was worshipped in the same valley and the same ritual was followed. Children and young people being human torches (Jeremiah 32.35). The Israelites took up Molech worship (Amos 5.26) and saintly Stephen was still denouncing this practice 800 years later. Its memory remained disturbing. How could the chosen people of God endorse this horrific practice? How could the Roman Catholic Church do it? How could England pass a law in 1401 to burn non-Catholics at the stake? Christians as burning torches was the horror inflicted by pagan Rome in the first century and repeated by pagan Catholics thirteen centuries later!

In the first centuries of Christianity, the persecution of Christians was on a very large and horrific scale. Why were Rome and other pagan régimes so afraid of Christianity? Adalbert of Prague was murdered for his faith by Prussians in 997; Afra was a prostitute in Germany but was converted to Christianity and arrested during the persecution of Diocletian and burned to death in 304. A young noble Sicilian named Agatha dedicated herself and her virginity to God. When pursued by an amorous consul named Quintian she rejected his advances. Furious, he sent her to Aphrodisia, who kept a brothel, in an attempt to corrupt her. She refused to succumb. As a result her breasts were removed and she was murdered after being rolled over red-hot coals in 251. Agnes died in Rome in 304 rather than compromise her faith and virginity. Alban was beheaded as the first Christian in Britain a year later. The list is endless. In the twentieth century Marxist Russia tortured and murdered Christians and yet some people complain that Christians are "responsible for most of the wars and murders of the centuries." This is factually untrue. It is the abuse of Christians that cannot be quantified and it includes young Christians. For example, the above-named Agnes was only thirteen years old when she died.

Wicked King Herod slaughtered all children up to the age of two in Bethlehem in a vain attempt to kill the infant Jesus (Matthew 2.16). That is also child abuse!

Homosexuals are a high risk group in child abuse. I know a few homosexual men who, when they have broken up with their lovers, have coerced boys into acts of indecency. We have read of Social Services staff and those employed at children's homes, abusing children both physically and sexually.

Perhaps Freud was right when he said that the fundamental cause of all personality disorders was sexual. The Bible seems to endorse this but while the first sin was not sexual, the effect was. The first fear of all time was in being naked. Even in their fig-leaf underwear, Adam and Eve were still naked, records Genesis. The consequence of original sin was the need to dispel fear and shame by covering the body. The Bible always equates nakedness, semi-nakedness or immodest dress with sin and shame.

Parents have a duty to their children. They are to train them to go the right way (Proverbs 22.6) and to provide for them (2 Corinthians 12.14). Fathers are not to provoke their children to anger or rebellion (Ephesians 6.4). Children are to receive correction (Proverbs 22.15) and trouble will ensue where there is an undisciplined child. It follows that if a parent is setting a bad example in anything from smoking, drinking, drugs, sex to bad language, the children will copy them. If morality is lacking in a parent it will be seen in the children. We sometimes read in the books of Kings and Chronicles that a new king walked in the evil ways of his father and mother. Ahaziah is one example (1 Kings 22.51ff). The bad or even unhelpful influence of parents can make their children just as bad, if not worse.

We live in days of latch-key children. Children and teenagers come home to an empty house and watch television indiscriminately and bring friends in. Many teenage girls have become pregnant at times like this. Proverbs 29.15 is very apt when it says, "A child left to itself brings shame to its mother." A mother's place is with her children throughout all the years of their development. Eli's neglect of his sons made them vile (1 Samuel 3.13). Samuel was a good man but his sons were always on the cadge; they were spongers, male gold-diggers; they loved money and took bribes, thus perverting the course of justice.

David was soft with his sons because he knew that if he punished them for their sexual sins they could turn round to him and say, "You've done it, Dad!" or even, "You're still doing it, Dad!" And they would be right. The kingdom of Israel split into two after the death of Solomon. One of his sons, Rehoboam, ruled Israel and was evil (2 Chronicles 12.14); his other son, Jeroboam, ruled Judah and was also evil (1 Kings 13.33). But it is not surprising when you read of the glaringly and obviously outrageous behaviour of their father, Solomon (1 Kings 11).

An individual can cause another to sin. Nadab made Israel sin (1 Kings 15.26). Baasha did likewise. He angered God by influencing others to sin and yet it was he who was punished and not the people (1 Kings 16.1ff). History does not change.... some people are manipulated, often subtly, to do wrong.

Of course, there are badly behaved children in their own right. Perhaps they are not disciplined. There are cases in the Bible. Elisha was journeying to Bethel and children came out of the city and mocked him because of his baldness. Elisha cursed them. In other words he told them off. That forty-two of these children were injured by two bears makes one wonder where the adults were in whose care the children were (2 Kings 2.23ff). Children made fun of righteous Job (Job 19.18) and young people ridiculed the elderly and wise (Isaiah 3.5). Some young people are stubborn, rebellious or dependent on drink (Deuteronomy 21.20) and sons and daughters do dishonour their parents (Proverbs 30.11, Micah 7.6). A sensible child pleases a good father but an unruly child is showing its dislike for its mother (Proverbs 15.20). Fair discipline is essential.

Consider the discipline of children. You hear parents say, "If you do that you will get a smack when you get home!" If a child is badly behaved it should be punished without delay. A child may be told, "Because you've been so bad this week you won't get your pocket money," but when the day comes, Mum gives in and says, "Ooh! All right!"

I live opposite a school and witness mothers collecting their children daily. You should hear what some of those mothers say to their children.

Discipline has its problems. A child can ring up Helpline and say, "Mummy has hit me!" Fewer than 1 in 7 of the 1000 child abuse cases each week resulted in the conclusion that the child was at risk. A man falsely accused of child abuse bears that stigma for the rest of his life. As a result he may not be able to be a loving father any more. The Social Services and the Child Protection Unit of the Police Force do not write an apology. Often it is a case of once a loving father now a distant one who is too frightened to dress or undress his daughter or bath her; she cannot sit on his lap and he cannot even brush her hair.

Many Social Workers, when visiting a home to investigate an incident of abuse, check what is on the video rack, what is in the magazine rack and what alcohol is in the house. These things often have a strong bearing on the matter.

Of all the false accusations it was found that in many cases the suggestion of abuse was made by a divorced man wanting to get back to his ex-wife and in order to do so, having to disgrace the new man in her life... and there is no easier way than the emotional blackmail of, "Your lover is abusing my children!" Often the father will employ the children in his deception, promising them rewards. That is another example of child abuse!

The Social Services are sometimes over-zealous. One such case was of a playgroup leader who was troubled by what a three year-old said, namely, "Licking bums is rude." She also said that when Daddy wiped her bottom it hurt but it didn't when Mummy did it.

The father was investigated by the police for 12 weeks, during which he suffered great stress and was abused himself by the condemning attitude of those in the neighbourhood. At the end of the investigation it was accepted that what was said in reply to the little girl commenting upon a dog licking its bottom was, "Dogs do that. We don't. People don't do it for it would be rude!" As to the bottom-wiping it was simply that mother was more able and gentle.

Men treated like this become confused. Fathers are made to feel like bad fathers. Society may then ostracise him and call him a pervert.

Parents who allow their children, even when very small, to see their private parts, encourage their sexual curiosity and abuse. There are girls who sit and wriggle on their fathers' laps to feel him and sometimes the father is investigated for sexual abuse as a result.

If a very young child can do this what else can they do? But their bad behaviour is often rooted in an adult indiscretion.

A friend told me that in her opinion many children are badly behaved because their parents are so young that they are almost children themselves.

Some parents leave their children regularly for hours. Some employ baby-sitters or nannies and in America, secret cameras are installed in homes to record what the baby-sitter does. And feminists assert that because society is male-dominated this is why there is so much child abuse and that men are the usual offenders. But the use of 'nan-cams' in the USA has shown the appalling and cruel behaviour of some baby-sitters and nannies. Some scenes were horrific... and they all involved women. The violent shaking of some of these children could have led to irreparable brain damage.

Some child abuse may not be deliberate but something that happens when an adult loses control, often because a parent is too young for parenthood... either emotionally or literally. Yet children, particularly teenagers, do not always like a parent who is wise and sensible, ridiculing that parent with accusations of being 'old-fashioned' and 'not cool'.

It is said that children seldom make false accusations about sexual abuse. It is also known that some abused children seem to get 'hooked' on the thrill of violence. To take this into the adult realm, a similar thing happens when a woman has a violent, abusive or a 'no-good' husband back. Men can be just as foolish. They have a wife back after she has been flirting, flaunting and flouncing, as well as flashing herself for other men to ogle. Or she may be having an affair or sleeping around. For reasons we do not understand, certain children seem to develop styles that provoke abuse... for example, cheeky, wilful or badly behaved children or a girl by the very way she dresses. Let us not condemn these children. Adults do it too. What is also often overlooked is that emotional damage caused by child abuse can be far worse than any physical hurt or injury.

Widely accepted is the fact that the 'sexual liberation' of the 1950s and 1960s has generated the idea that 'anything goes' sexually - even the abusing of children. I have read feminist literature which states that children have rights - I agree - and those rights include their choice to take their clothes off and have sex if they wish. I strongly disagree!

Schools or other organisations influencing children into potentially dangerous sport or exercises or glamour sports where more of the body is shown, such as swimming, can be a form of physical abuse. If any virus is transmitted in water, as some medical experts believe, subjecting children to water

sports is abuse. If I deliberately kill a child, it is abuse. If I deliberately injure a child, or cause it to be ill, it is abuse.

There is abuse in Christian circles. Preaching hell-fire to children is abuse because it can frighten them. The charismatic practice of manipulating small children to speak in tongues is abuse.

Child abuse is a symptom of decline in moral values but society still does nothing. It does not ban illicit sex, violence or bad language. Exposure to sexy magazines, television, videos and films and, indeed, dirty talk, makes people more likely to commit sexual offences or 'indiscretions', including those against children. A consumer society that encourages girls to buy make-up, uses pubescent girls to wear mini-skirts and offers them role models, such as the pop stars Madonna or The Spice Girls, stimulates the sexual abuse of girl children as well as their own sexuality. We should be prepared to censor out from books, films, newspapers, radio, television and the consumer society, any material which might stimulate potential child abusers.

Parents have a duty to protect their teenagers from their own foolishness and lack of experience. Women who put their own needs and wishes before those of their children have a lot to answer for in terms of child abuse. Such abuse would be reduced if mothers were discouraged from working outside the home when the children are there. Those who offer cigarettes, alcohol or drugs to children are abusing them. Parents who abuse their children sexually, physically or emotionally are not fit to be parents.

It may be considered radical to say this but we should keep a record not only of all child abusers but all potential child abusers including perverts and paedophiles. All employers and, indeed anybody, should have access to this register.

In a national television poll conducted in March 1997, 96% said that such a register should be kept and, by implication, should also include suspected paedophiles and perverts.

There are many behavioural signs of child abuse. In older children these can include masturbation, which is self abuse, talking about sexual things, overly compliant behaviour or acting out aggressive behaviour, running away, being untidy or unwashed, having a detached attitude at school, few friends, a lack of trust, a dislike for one parent or both, inability to sleep and a dependence on pain-killers such as paracetamol.

Some advocate the use of the extended family to support children. That in itself, presents problems because often an abused child is being misused by a family member although it is not known initially.

Paedophilia and homosexuality were well known in both Greek and Roman worlds as shown in their nude male sculptures and paintings and even of male naked cherubs urinating. The artist, Count Balthazar Klossowski de Rola, otherwise known as Balthus, painted pictures of nude girl children, sometimes with their legs open showing their underwear... and he used real models. Is this not child abuse?

Let us again return to Stephen. Recently he was almost found out on one matter. He apologised and said that it was an accident. His job is not at risk and of course, he is a professional and such a good teacher!! He has been having teenage girls one at a time to "discuss small items of sculpture and pottery" advocating the idea that if the girls are blindfolded, they can "respond to the work of art by touch." So he stands the blindfolded girl on two low stools about a foot apart. While the unsuspecting teenager is handling the object, Stephen uses a mirror which he puts between her legs to see up them. On this one occasion the blindfold slipped and he explained that he had dropped a mirror!

In 48 states of the USA there were 1,012,000 child victims of proven abuse and neglect in 1994. This

is the tip of the iceberg because it does not take into account unproven cases and cases not reported. Of these children, 53% suffered neglect, 26% physical abuse and 5% emotional abuse but surely it must be accepted that every child suffered emotional abuse as well as other forms of maltreatment. Nearly half the children abused were six years old or younger while a quarter were three years old or younger. In 43 states, 1,111 children died as a result of abuse in 1994.

Let me repeat this alarming statistic.

Of sexually abused children 72% were female and were most numerous at ages 3-5 years and 13-15 years and 26% of the sexual abusers were the biological fathers!

In Australia the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that sexual abuse accounted for 22% of all substantiated child abuse cases in 1989-90. Females were the victims in 77% of such cases and the highest risk group were girls between the ages of 13-15. This age is the greatest risk and how girls dress and behave must have a bearing on the fact that they are the highest risk group. Jim Hopper, Ph.D, is an American clinical psychologist who has made a study of sexual abuse in males. He states that in the USA, approximately one in six boys is sexually abused before the age of 16. The damage done to them leads some to homosexuality and others to crime and sexual attacks on women to 'prove' their masculinity by having multiple female sexual partners and sexually victimising others, engaging in violent behaviour. There is mounting evidence of the number of females abusing males. R. S. Krug has studied cases of boys sexually abused by their mothers; T. C. Johnson has specialised in children who molest other children; K. C. Faller has a study on women who sexually abuse children and R. L. Johnson and D. Shrier have a study of adolescent males in medical clinics being abused by females (American Journal of Psychiatry, 144, 1987).

In England it is estimated that 1 in 5 girls are abused and 1 in 15 boys. Most often the perpetrators are the biological fathers themselves and they usually fall into one of the following categories:

1. Those with an exaggerated libido which they have no desire to reduce.
2. Those who are perverts.
3. Those who are unemployed and have lost 'power' and self esteem and want to regain it, doing so by picking on the vulnerable and those closest to them.
4. Those denied sex and who consequently feel less than a man.
5. Those bereaved.
6. Those who enjoy sex, nudity and violence on the television and elsewhere.

Castration is not the answer. It does not stop them; rather, it makes them more violent. In any event they will still be able to lust with their eyes and employ their hands. Do we blind them and cut off their hands as well? If we are going to adjust men surgically, should we do the same to women who are molesters? Bearing in mind that among the main carriers of venereal disease and AIDS are prostitutes, do we surgically mutilate them in an attempt to reduce such disease?

In the year up to 31 March 1995, 60,000 children were registered as abused in England. Not all abusers are violent; some are gentle, loving and very subtle. Of the abused children who phoned Helpline 96% knew their abuser. In one area of London, during a period of two years, 1476 cases were notified..... 91 went to Court and there were only 9 convictions. In 1995, in England, a total of 2,202 men went to prison for sex offences against children. The current trend is to treat offenders rather than punish them. But what is clear is that any decent person or other responsible adult will stay away from and prevent their children being with an offender or even with a suspected offender.

If I had children now I would not, for example, allow them anywhere near Stephen under any circumstances and no moral or respectable adult would seek or want his company.

I know another school teacher whose ex-girl friend was assaulted by him. In the police investigation they found at his home, photographs of nude children. He was therefore a paedophile. He was found guilty on the assault charge but nothing else. The school did not sack him. He is still teaching there... and that, in itself, is putting children at risk.

There are two final thoughts.

When someone such as myself highlights these problems we are often verbally abused as scare-mongers or even accused of being sexual perverts ourselves. A friend of mine who is a solicitor went to a weekly meeting where everyone sat in a circle. After a few weeks my friend stopped going and was later asked by the organiser why. He quietly and graciously explained that he did not want to sit opposite teenage girls, or their mothers, showing their intimate items of clothing. My friend was called a pervert for simply mentioning this. Four weeks later he had an appointment with a mother and daughter who regularly attended this meeting. The daughter had been raped by a fellow who regularly sat opposite her.

Society has no answer to these things. The only answer is Christ's teaching and that of the New Testament but it seems that society does not want anything of Christ or to be 'religious'. We have to accept that as freedom of an individual's choice, but cannot society see that, on moral grounds alone, society should heed such unsurpassed teaching and act positively. The danger is that 'things have been left too long' so that if we now banned and made illegal all harmful matter, we would be 'setting up a police state' and infringing people's rights... so we turn a blind eye and deaf ear to the plight of those abused. But better to be safe than sorry. Prevention is always better than cure. It does not hurt so much!

(12,389)

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