

Do We Have an Epidemic of Sexual Abuse?
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The modern world appears awash in sexual abuse and misbehavior. Over the past decade, we see grownup men (coaches and priests, both revered in society) who cannot resist sexually abusing children; those are the worst of the worst. But other misbehavers are lechers who cannot resist groping women, exchanging job promises for sex, or keeping young women captive for years to use them sexually. Are we losing our values, or is this not an epidemic at all, but the last flush of bad human behavior that did not used to be called bad?

The fact that we find these behaviors (along with wife and child beating, forced marriages, and \223honor killing\224) unacceptable in our society indicates that we have come a long way from how things have been for the past 5,000 years.

It is difficult to know how primeval humans behaved to children, but we can get a glimpse in today\222s outlier primitives, in New Guinea or Afghanistan, for example. Those children grow up early\227as early as they are fertile\227and we know they began to bear children in their teens. I recall a case decades ago of a Peruvian 5-year old who gave birth, impregnated by an uncle, they said. Considering the age of the child, we all thought this a one-time freakish event, but we were wrong.

Joel Brinkley, \223Foreign Matters\224 columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle, recently wrote about \223Afghan Children: Grim Statistics and Few Rights.\224 The Afghan government (that cost us blood and treasure to rescue) has just cut the budget for human rights in half. This is a non-issue for them, dominated by the cultural values of the majority Pashtun tribe. Brinkley cites the following facts:

\225 The Taliban notoriously used children as human shields and child soldiers.

\225 Afghan parents can and do hand over girl children in settlement of a law suit. The aggrieved party can do with the child as they wish, and they do. Little girls are beaten, raped, and enslaved by their new masters and all their menfolk. Many girl children are also given as a \223gift,\224 so that the parents can be spared a dowry.

\225 Girls handed over in marriage (in their early teens) have no protection against abuse by their husband or his family. Those bold enough to run away are pursued and murdered. In one infamous case, Time Magazine had a cover picture of a young woman whose nose had been cut off and she was left to bleed to death. American soldiers found and rescued her.

\225 Children can be sent to jail to serve out a sentence for an adult in the family.

\225 Children are deliberately maimed and sent out to beg, or work in brick factories, mining, or harvesting opium. School is out of the question for most.

\225 And those oh-so-manly Afghan warlords are pederasts. It is a common practice to buy \223beautiful\224 little boys from impoverished parents to be trained as \223entertainers\224 who sing, dance, play musical instruments, to amuse their all-male parties. Grown men wax romantic about their beautiful boy lovers, whom they discard when they get their first whiskers. It seems that Pashtun men really don\227t like females much. Neither did the ancient Greeks, who may have introduced this culture to the Afghans via Alexander the Great.

These abuses and more are documented by human rights workers, western publications, documentary filmmakers, and UNICEF. Ask any veteran of the war in Afghanistan to tell you more. The country is barbarous, and the average miserable life span is 44 (much less for women).

The sexual bad behavior of the Afghans is culturally learned; that of modern, western men (including the passion for pornography) is not the norm, and seemingly involves the wiring of the brain. We can hope that our great progress in brain science will someday be able to identify and stop these remnants of sexual exploitation and abuse. It is to our credit that we find it horrible. Our only hope now is to imprison the

perpetrators and not pass on the practice to the victims.

674 words

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