

How Safe are your Kids in Church?

Today there is a growing surge of child abuse cases that are coming out in the newspapers we read. A day barely goes by where we read about horrific cases of children being subject to depraved behaviour by adults. Statistics show that 99% of sexual abuse was inflicted by people known to the victims. It has been shown that the person raping at knife point is about 0.5%. In Australia, where I live, a report by the

Victorian child protection agency has shown that teenagers are responsible for a third of all sex offences against children and of these it was shown half of the perpetrators had been victims of sexual exploitation themselves.

The statistics are absolutely mind blowing. The report goes on to show that out of 534 victims, 82% were under 10 years of age and 22% endured more than 2 years of exploitation. It gets worse ...the report goes on to show that statistically, if an offender reaches the age of 40, they may have had more than 100 victims. The question I ask is why society is the way it is today? I believe that in the last 50 years the moral standards have dramatically fallen to a point where it is almost amoral. The scripture verse that comes to mind is from the book of Judges Chapter 21, verse 25, "every man did what was right in his own eyes." If you think things are going to get better, then you better think again as it is going to get worse. Lawlessness will greatly abound. These times that we live in are a precursor for the return of Jesus Christ.

Today there is an epidemic of violence on television, movies and computer games. Life's difficult questions are answered by a pistol or an automatic rifle, killing innocent victims and maiming many. The psychological scars that remain with victims and families are for a lifetime. What is the answer to this problem? In the case of the USA, they might well take note that by removing God from schools and prayer in public, they have effectively allowed Satan a foothold into the classroom. If any American takes the time to read what is on your money and coinage you will see the words "IN GOD WE TRUST." It is sad to say that the majority don't.

My heart goes out to the families who have lost sons and daughters in these senseless shootings. My heart goes out to those who have been maimed and those who bear the mental scars that will probably never heal. For those who have found Jesus in all of this, let me say that He is the only one who can remove those scars and take away the pain.

In saying this, what about the victims of sexual abuse? They are the ones that suffer in silence as they are living in a prison within their minds. They are the ones that bear the shame and guilt of having been a victim. They are the ones whose lives are destroyed because someone

close, like a father, uncle or grandfather has sexually molested them. Many are afraid to speak out so as not to embarrass the family. They carry these deep personal feelings day in and day out, 365 days a year. For many it is like carrying a heavy weight on their shoulders, a weight that they can never seem to get rid of. These victims have an ache in their hearts that long to be free of this guilt. They cry out from their very depths for a shoulder and a tender ear for someone who will listen to them, someone who will take the time to care.

You may ask, what has this got to do with the title of this message? Sexual abuse doesn't happen in churches. For those naive people I am so sorry to say, "YES IT DOES!", and it is probably happening under your very noses. Sadly to say it is a common occurrence, but you don't hear about it. Fortunately God's word is faithful and true. Jesus said what is hidden will be brought into the light and what is whispered in the ear will be shouted from the rooftops. We have read in the newspapers about the gross abuses in the Roman Catholic Church by priests and brothers. There have been many, many victims. The Jehovah's Witnesses have recently come under attack for sheltering pedophiles (pedophiles.) In August last year in the city of Wollongong in Australia, a judge launched a scathing attack on the congregation at Balgowie, accusing the eldership of failing to report child sex abuse. The judge, John Goldring, was surprised that the police had not taken action against the congregation. The angry judge was quoted as saying, "And I wished they had."

This man is 100% correct. There is child abuse happening and pastors and elders are sweeping it under the carpet, keeping it quite. Why? Because of their PRIDE and STINKING REPUTATION. What these foolish men are doing is (1) placing themselves above the law of the land and, (2) placing themselves above God's Law. God has said in His word that we are subject to the governments WHOM HE HAS APPOINTED!

I am certain that many who read this or who have been victims of abuse know that what I am saying is correct. The typical scenario is to tell the victim to go home and forget about it. Try not to remember, that it didn't happen and get on with your life. The problem is compounded as the perpetrator is placed under Church Discipline, which is a joke. What clearly should happen is that the person who committed the crime should be handed over to the proper authorities to be punished by the Law. In Australia there is no time limit to when you can report an indictable crime like Child Abuse. We recently had a politician who in his early years was a school teacher who had abused a number of children. It took them 36 years to come forward and now that politician has been safely locked up in goal (JAIL).

Why, you may ask, did it take them such a long time to come forward? This is often the case of many victims. For women the time arrives in their mid thirties and many have carried the scars for over 25 years. Some don't make it and end up in a mental institution, while others find

the courage and strength to come forward and to take a stand...while still there are some others who remain a prisoner.

I Have to ask the QUESTION...How long do these people have to remained trapped? If I had a wish, it would be this: that all victims of sexual abuse would be set free. This is the hardest article that I have written. My heart is breaking as I think of all those boys and girls who have been abused in the house of God, or on some church picnic or camp, who have had their lives destroyed by people whom they had trusted in. If you are one of these, I would like to hear from you and help you take the first steps to recovery. I am weeping as I am typing this as I truly feel for each and every one that has been affected by some demented pervert who gets his jollies off on innocent kids. These are children that CANNOT Defend Themselves! Their childhood has been ripped away from them. When will it END? Only and Only when we have people that have courage enough to come forward and say enough is enough. This may spare some family some of the agony of having their children molested by some creep who calls himself a human. To those Pastors and Elders who read this article and have covered up sexual abuse I pray that the Lord will NOT give you rest until you right what is wrong. If you fail to do that, the scripture that comes to mind is "suffer not the little children who come unto me." I hope you get used to the weight of a millstone tied around your necks and in the words of Jesus, "Depart from me I NEVER KNEW YOU."

To those victims out there, my prayers and my heart goes out to you. I feel your pain and my love goes to you. I pray that God will give you the GRACE and courage to come forward. By your courage you may stop 1 victim from being molested. If we can achieve this, then this article would not be in vain. IF I can help one victim then this article would not be in vain. Remember the statistic I quoted at the beginning of this article, "by the time the perpetrator reaches 40 years of age he will have had 100 victims." How many more KIDS have to SUFFER??

I will probably get accused of mudraking, or why do you want to dig up the past? What's happened has happened. To this I say, rubbish. I see a wrong that has to be righted. There is a thing called justice and righteousness and If I don't make a stand for the children, WHO Will?

I cannot bear to think that as I have been sitting down writing this article that there has been some child or teenager who has been molested somewhere in the US or Australia or the UK.

**I PRAY MARANATHA (COME LORD JESUS COME)
Your Servant in Christ,
Rev. ED BARCLAY**