



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on December 10, 2018

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Child Abuse: Not Just a Catholic Problem

“Protestants can be very arrogant when pointing to Catholics,” opined Liberty University law professor Basyle Tchividjian. “I think we are worse.” During a Religion Newswriters Association conference in Austin, Texas he called the Christian mission field a “magnet” for sex abusers. Tchividjian is the grandson of late Southern Baptist minister Billy Graham and founder of the non-profit GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment). As chief prosecutor for Florida’s Sexual Crimes Division and attorney for the Child Advocacy Center in Daytona Beach, he discovered that abuse is prevalent in Protestant evangelical circles. Just as some Catholic bishops reassign accused priests to new parishes, Protestant abusers jump from one church or agency to another, leaving a path of victims.



The problem is even worse in public schools. A U.S. Department of Education researcher estimated in 2004 that “physical sexual abuse of students in schools is likely more than 100 times the abuse by priests.”

Media’s double standard is glaring. Dave Pierre of NewsBusters.org told *Catholic World Report* he began to notice an alarming trend in the *Los Angeles Times*. “The *Times* was often giving front-page coverage to stories about Catholic priests alleged to have committed abuse decades ago. Meanwhile, arrests of public school teachers for abuse happening today were often not reported or buried in the ‘news briefs’ section.”

Further research resulted in Pierre’s 2011 book, *Double Standard: Abuse Scandals and the Attack on the Catholic Church*. It details widespread media bias and asserts that with its current screening procedures and protocols, the church is a much safer environment for children than schools and other religious organizations.

If that sounds implausible, consider statistics from SESAME (Stop Educator Sexual Abuse Misconduct & Exploitation), which reports that “one in ten K-12 students is a victim of educator sexual misconduct.” One child molester can have between 70 and 400 victims in his or her lifetime, according to various child advocacy groups.

The problem isn’t new. A 1998 *Education Week* article reported, “It is no secret in education circles that these itinerant abusers, often called ‘mobile molesters,’ are abetted by school officials who let them quietly slip away when allegations arise. This practice of ‘passing the trash’ has attracted rising criticism in recent years.”



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Criticism was obviously short-lived. Fast forward to 2017 when the Children's Center for Psychiatry, Psychology & Related Services reported that "sexual abuse by teachers is on the rise." In one year alone, nationwide nearly 500 educators were *arrested* for sexual abuse of minors. Contrast this with Pennsylvania's grand jury findings of 301 Catholic priests *accused* (not necessarily guilty) over more than 70 years. Where is media outcry against public-school scandals?

Let's not forget Hollywood. Women make headlines alleging sexual assault against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein and comedian Bill Cosby. But media reaction to former child star Corey Feldman — who warned in 2011 that pedophilia is Hollywood's "big secret" and "number one problem," describing a powerful sex-abuse ring among movie executives — has been icy at best. Film star Elijah Wood, who also grew up in Tinseltown, received a similar cold stare in 2016 when he spoke of convicted pedophiles working in Hollywood. Meanwhile, industry insiders rush to defend the likes of film directors Roman Polanski and Woody Allen after their sexual exploits with minors. This is the culture spawning such obscenity as *Big Mouth*, a children's Netflix cartoon that critics have slammed as "animated kiddie porn." It "features two obviously demonic characters teaching pre-pubescent children to engage in perverse sexual and homosexual activity of all kinds," writes Alex Newman for *Freedom Project Media*. Yet producers of the 2014 documentary *An Open Secret*, which exposes pederasty among Hollywood big-wigs, never found a distributor for their explosive tell-all. (It's now available free on Vimeo.)

No matter who commits it, one case of child abuse is too many. But media reserves its venom for priestly crimes, reveling in depictions of the Catholic Church as a cesspool of corruption. They cast a blind eye on monstrous vice elsewhere. Catholic depravity reaps higher ratings.

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