Abolition of the Ancient: Responding to Human Trafficking:

In exploring the terrifying and horrific elements of human trafficking and slavery, it is important to understand the history of it all. However, when one attempts to understand the history, things only seem to get more muddled. The practice of slavery is as old as the practice of breathing; it is “as old as human civilization itself”, according to David Masci. In some countries, it is simply common practice to sell women and children into sex and labor slavery. It is part of the culture, an inherent part of the way the economy and the world works from the perspective of morally-corrupt business men. If such a practice as selling and buying human beings is, as Masci claims, as old as civilization itself, the question remains: is it actually possible to eradicate evils that are seemingly inherent to the nature of human society?  
 It has been two centuries since the abolition of what we typically perceive as slavery in the United States. Still, long after the words of Lincoln, human slavery and trafficking bills are moving through the legislative system. It is astonishing to think that in the 21st century, bills geared toward the prevention of human trade are necessary; it has been two centuries since the abolition of what we typically perceive as slavery in the United States. Still, long after the words of Lincoln, human slavery and trafficking bills move through the American legislative system. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act passed in 2000 established a means for producing annual reports on trafficking and its agents (Masci, 280). The three tiered ratings of countries involved in human slavery reveal a little more than most people feel comfortable knowing. The simple fact that, as of 2003, fifteen countries were ranked in the third tier for their stagnant or non-existent efforts to combat the trading of their people again raises a question of nature v. evolution. In a world where slavery was once not only accepted but glorified, what efforts can be made that will effectively eradicate its evils on a universal level.   
 I find the lines to be quite blurred. This is not to, in any way, suggest that I somehow approve of or encourage the practices laid out above. I simply find that in the cases of human rights violations in countries like the one on the third tier list (many of them third world countries), there is a very clear issue of cultural differences. The things that many understand to be as evil, wrong, immoral, and bluntly put, disgusting, are inherent to the culture of the world in which the persecutors of these crimes exist. I hope that something can be done to end the sort of atrocities that are connected to human trafficking, however, I fear that with a practice so historically relevant to the makeup of human civilization it will take more than a third-tier rank and the loss of non-humanitarian US aid to stop trade abroad-- especially when there are battles that the US has not resolved domestically as human trafficking and sex-slavery thrives within our borders. I am not without hope in terms of my beliefs about the end of such atrocious tragedies, but I do find that when practices are as old as slavery is, and when the countries who attempt to combat its evils are former enthusiasts of its so-called economic benefits, it will take more than just legislative action. There has to be a real change in the make-up of human civilization, the respect we have for other human beings, and the value we assign life that is not our own. The practice is ancient and universal. Therefore, I believe our response must be to change our human goals and values universally. Otherwise, it seems the attempt to abolition modern slave trade is indeed a lost cause.

in Persons, which issues an annual

report on what countries are doing

to end trafficking \