

# Where are the Boys? Where are the Men? A Case Study from Cambodia

Transformation

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## Abstract

This paper examines the vulnerability of boys and young men to trafficking and sexual abuse/exploitation globally as an often-hidden problem. Exploration of the story of Joseph in Genesis and how he was trafficked to Egypt by his brothers and then sexually harassed by Potiphar's wife will challenge a number of assumptions about vulnerability. The research that has been conducted in Cambodia and the Asia region demonstrates that boys and young men are indeed vulnerable and require our attention. Awareness and response must go beyond stereotypes of what boys should be like to understanding their real context and needs.

The paper will emphasize the importance of the Church and Christian faith-based organizations being driven not by donors or current political correctness, but instead focusing on a biblical mandate to work with the most marginalized. Further research is needed to identify exploited populations better, including diverse persons of age, gender, ethnicity disability/ability or sexuality.

In addition, the paper will describe the importance of encouraging men in the church towards an authentic biblical masculinity where there is transparency and a deep respect for females and sex. It also promotes the idea of a community where boys and men, in and outside the church, can experience prevention and long-term healing. The restoration of men is needed in relation to buying sex, sexual abuse, pornography and other addictions, which drive the demand for exploitation and trafficking. This includes models of genuine father figures in the church and examples of Christian faith-based organizations that are seeking to challenge men to be better husbands, fathers and brothers.

## Keywords

Boys, men, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, gender based violence

## Introduction

One of the foci of the UN and a number of international NGOs in the past 20 years has been the 'girl child', especially since the United Nations 4th World Conference on Women (WCW) in Beijing, China in September 1995,<sup>1</sup> in the same way that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)<sup>2</sup> has drawn particular attention to the rights of those under 18 years. This emphasis on girls has drawn attention to the needs of what is seen as the more vulnerable gender. The 4th WCW set out nine strategic objectives as a platform for action.<sup>3</sup> Feminists have welcomed this attention, donors have developed their selection criteria to fit with this agenda and many NGOs have developed policies and programmes to ensure that girls' needs are met (e.g. She's the First).<sup>4</sup> Yet, I

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**Table 1.** Comparison of Experience of Violence by Boys Versus Girls.

a) Peer bullying	Boys: 40.6% Girls: 34.5%
b) Corporal punishment – home	Boys: 50.5% Girls: 36.4%
c) Corporal punishment – school	Boys: 34.7% Girls: 24.1%
d) Direct experience of sexual genital touching by an adult since nine years old	Boys: 18.9% Girls: 13.5%
e) Direct experience of rape by an adult	Boys: 1.8% Girls: 0.6%
f) Witnessed rape of another child by an adult	Boys: 23.5% Girls: 21.4%
g) Direct experience of child sale	Boys: 3.7% Girls: 2.4%

would argue that the vulnerability and invisibility of the boy child has been overlooked in the Christian arena. Also, there has been an absence of Christian men addressing the issue of sexual abuse and exploitation of both genders.

### More Violence towards Girls than Boys?

The assumption in policy documents, even at the highest level, is that girls experience more violence than boys. For example, the 4th WCW article 269 says, ‘sexual violence and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, have a devastating effect on children’s health, and girls are more vulnerable than boys to the consequences of unprotected and premature sexual relations.’

Although I do not wish to minimize the impact that sexual abuse has on girls, I do not believe this kind of comparison is helpful because it can have the effect of ignoring the needs of sexually abused boys, or at least seeing them as less important. It goes on to say that, ‘girls are more vulnerable to all kinds of violence, particularly sexual violence, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking, possibly the sale of their organs and tissues, and forced labour.’ I believe that this is untrue. Our research with 1314 school children aged 13–16 years throughout Cambodia (Miles, 2008; Miles and Sun, 2005, 2006; Miles and Thomas, 2007) shows that the gender differential may not be as great as might be assumed. In an anonymous survey, more boys than girls reported experiencing violence, including sexual violence (see Table 1).

The CRC recognizes that:

States Parties [that is, countries] shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, *sex*, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status. (Art. 2, para. 1, my emphasis)<sup>5</sup>

### How Boys are Perceived, Compared to Girls

In the meantime, the way that boys are seen continues to be very different from the way that girls are seen. Boys are often depicted as strong, resilient, able to survive in difficult circumstances, and far better at coping than girls. Girls are seen as fragile, vulnerable, in need of protection and with little personal agency. This is exacerbated by much of the persistent Western male-centred evangelical theology. A more complementarian theology that takes into consideration the context of the poor and vulnerable is promoted by Mimi Haddad, who leads the NGO Christians for Biblical Equality.<sup>6</sup>

As a result, whilst there are hundreds of NGOs dedicated to rescuing and helping girls and young women who have been sexually exploited and trafficked, there are only a handful focusing

on exploited boys and young men. Where does this cultural gender bias originate? In Cambodia there is a proverb that says: 'Girls are like a piece of white linen. Once thrown in the mud, the cloth is stained and spoiled forever.' By contrast, a boy is like a piece of gold. 'If it gets muddy, then simply wash it clean and it will be restored.' Although this proverb appears strongly in favour of boys, on further examination a picture emerges of vulnerability for girls but resilience for boys. This reveals the fatalistic attitude that a girl's life will never be the same if she is abused; she is ruined forever. However, boys are not allowed to express any feelings of hurt and are effectively muzzled; they are to get up, brush themselves down, stop crying and act as though nothing has happened. Both are equally serious outcomes, but at least, in some cases, a sexually abused girl can turn to others for sympathy, whereas a boy is often left on his own to deal with his pain.

In the meantime, policies, programmes and research which claim to be conducted on children or minors deal primarily with girls. For example, the 2013 report, 'Commercial sexual exploitation of children in Cambodia'<sup>7</sup> (my emphasis) by the International Justice Mission (IJM) is actually a study of girls and includes neither boys nor young men. Boys are effectively 'hidden in plain sight'.

## Misconceptions and Consequences

These misconceptions of boys and girls extend much wider than the majority South. In the West, stories sold to contemporary audiences by Disney and film studios are often based on ancient narratives congruent with gender stereotypes. For example, the story of Sleeping Beauty portrays a beautiful princess trapped in a castle, waiting to be rescued by the handsome prince. She is vulnerable, because she is asleep, and can do nothing but await her rescuer. On the other hand, Aladdin is the very picture of resilience, a street ragamuffin who, no matter what is thrown at him, will survive. No room for tears or vulnerability here. Girls are painted as vulnerable and not resilient, while boys are resilient and not vulnerable.

The problem with this gender difference is that we give preference to girls over boys based on cultural assumptions and feelings, rather than research with victims of both genders and those who have worked with them (Dennis, 2008).

Donors, including Christian ones, are selective about providing funding based on cultural assumptions. Recently a research colleague shared that a donor organization would not cover the costs of a group of young men who had been trafficked overseas to return to their home country because the donor's priority was to help women and children (meaning girls).

In my doctoral research, 'Cambodian children's experiences and understandings of violence and abuse' (Miles, 2008) nearly one in five boys said they had been sexually touched on the genitals by an adult since they were nine years old. Although some argue that it is culturally normal in Asia for people to fondle boys, this is usually only acceptable with toddlers, not older boys. In our survey boys were asked if they had experienced genital touching 'since nine years old' to eliminate from the study the culturally acceptable touching of toddlers.<sup>8</sup> Our results of 19% were consistent with international studies, which suggest that around one in six boys are sexually abused before they become adults compared to around one in four girls.<sup>9</sup> Of course, statistics involving sexual behaviour are notoriously inaccurate due to the hidden and covert nature of sexual abuse and exploitation. Findings that are available are likely to be conservative.

Alastair Hilton's research of First Step in Cambodia found that youth workers were not aware of sexual abuse of boys in his study: 'I never thought it could happen to boys' (Hilton et al., 2008). International NGOs advocating to prevent the sexual abuse of children describe the need to 'break the silence' but the focus is often on girls. An exception to this is the Stairway Foundation<sup>10</sup> which has developed a strategic media campaign to address the abuse of boys. Our research confirms that boys should receive equal attention.

## Biblical Perspective

The story of Joseph (Gen 37–39) is an extraordinary one that shatters a number of assumptions. Joseph was trafficked by his brothers for 20 shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites/Midianites, who took him to Egypt (Gen 37:28). Sadly, trafficking can and does involve family members. In Cambodia, there was a case where several boys as young as eight years old were sold to paedophiles for sex on a regular basis to pay for their mother's drug habit.

This leads us to ask how families can lay aside their maternal, paternal or fraternal bonds and responsibilities and allow a child to be sold or brutalized. The Ishmaelites sold Joseph as a slave to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials. 'Joseph found favour with his master as well as with God. He lived in the house of his Egyptian master and became his attendant' (Gen 39:1–4 NIV). Joseph was handsome and well-built (Gen 39:7) and Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to come to bed with her. Day after day she sexually harassed him, even though he refused and pushed her away (Gen 39:8–10).

Having power but not getting what she wanted, Potiphar's wife accused him of raping her and as a result Joseph was put in prison for several years (before he was released to interpret Pharaoh's dreams). This story describes what might be an unusual case, where the exploiter is a wealthy, powerful woman and the vulnerable is a young male slave. However, there are increasing reports that sexual abuse and exploitation of boys and young men by women teachers,<sup>11</sup> youth leaders, counsellors and tourists, may not be as uncommon as we would like to think. Without denying that the majority of abusers are men, we need to accept that women can also be abusers. If we deny it, then abuse of boys by women will continue to be trivialized and under-reported. Survivors' suffering is accentuated when we neglect what has happened to them (Hetherington, 1999).

Someone in a position of power may abuse a vulnerable 'slave' child or young person. Caregivers involved in child protection services can and do recount stories of pastors, missionaries, teachers, youth leaders, media figures and others who have been investigated following accusations of sexual abuse/exploitation. Where is the church in this scenario? Sadly, many Christian organizations focus their attention on girl children and do not have their eyes open to the exploitation and trafficking of boys.

## The Importance of Research

In 2011, a gay rights activist, child protection colleague and friend, Jasmir Thakur from Samabhavana<sup>12</sup> who works in Mumbai, India visited Cambodia. In a week, he was able to discover more about the sexual exploitation of boys and young men in Phnom Penh than I had discovered in the previous 10 years I lived there. Based on his experience caring for boys in Mumbai, Thakur knew where to look in Phnom Penh. I was ashamed that I had not seen this reality. Over the years, people had repeatedly said to me, 'there is no problem with sexual abuse of boys in our city/country/region.' I accepted these statements as true, neglecting a more empirical approach in my assessments.

Sometimes sexual exploitation of boys is conflated with homosexuality and seen as a 'Western problem'. Many young men who are both victims and clients of sexual exploitation would not describe themselves as 'gay'. Like many people involved in prostitution they work to provide financially for their families. There are men who self-identify as gay, who experience sexual exploitation and deserve our attention. The secular research community tends to avoid these men because they are concerned about being perceived as disapproving of the gay lifestyle. At the same time, the Christian community may not interact with these young men for fear of being seen as 'pro-gay'. As a result, little has been done to help this vulnerable group. Christians trying to work

with gay men are sometimes accused of being ‘liberal socialists’ by more conservative Christians and ‘right-wing extremists’ by the gay community – a difficult paradox for those of us engaged in research and advocacy on behalf of sexually exploited men.

After Thakur’s visit to Cambodia we commissioned a research series on the ‘Vulnerability of sexually exploited persons in South East Asia’, which is still underway in a number of cities in Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines.

A review of the literature revealed a comparatively large amount of research on girls and young women but little on boys and young men. The exception was some baseline research conducted by ECPAT in South Asia, in India (Akula, 2006), Bangladesh (Raghuvanshi et al., 2006) and Pakistan (Muhammad and Zafar, 2006). Some research on male entertainment workers focused almost entirely on their status as vectors of HIV (e.g. Toledo et al., 2010).

We decided to address this practical research gap, at least in South East Asia, by going onto the streets and speaking to the victims themselves. After preliminary research and training with Thakur in Mumbai (Miles et al., 2013), we started in Cambodia. First, we listened to the most visible young men – those working in the massage parlours and bars specifically aimed at male clients in Phnom Penh (Blanch and Miles, 2012), Chiang Mai (Davis et al., 2013), and Manila (Davis and Miles, 2013b; Davis and Miles, 2014b). Then we listened to those employed in mixed-gender massage establishments in Siem Riep, Cambodia (Davis and Miles, 2013a). We learned from interventionists and practitioners that street children (including boys) were particularly at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation and then turned our attention to the tourist beaches of Sihanoukville, Cambodia (Davis and Miles, 2014a), the streets of Manila (Davis and Miles, 2015) and Chiang Mai (Davis, Fiss and Miles, 2016). We interviewed both ‘short-haired’<sup>13</sup> more masculine young men and ‘long-haired’ feminine transgender young people. These groups are at serious risk of sexual exploitation in Phnom Penh (Davis, Lippman, et al., 2014) and in Bangkok (Davis, Quinley and Miles, 2016).<sup>14</sup>

We also did research with ethnic minorities and those working with disabled children. We learned that child protection and care provided by faith-based organizations (FBOs) can be very selective. Some Christian FBO staff members saw boys as difficult and unmanageable. We found prejudice against ethnic minorities and some organizations overwhelmed dealing with able-bodied children could not do more for those with disabilities. We concluded that sexual exploitation can happen to anyone, irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality or ability/disability. We realized that the Christian FBOs face serious challenges in partnering with local churches to care for the most vulnerable.

## Men’s Role and Responsibilities

In Luke 4:18–19 Jesus’ mission was to set free the poor, marginalized and oppressed. Mary’s song describes Jesus as bringing down those in power (Luke 1: 51–53) and Jesus’ parable in Luke 16:19–31 reminds the wealthy and powerful not to store up possessions or to look with disdain on the poor and vulnerable. Against the cultural norms of his time, Jesus chose to treat the sinful woman (possibly a prostitute) at Simon’s house with grace and dignity. By all accounts this woman would normally have been excluded. Where is Jesus leading his church today? We suggest that he is always calling the church to be with the most vulnerable people, irrespective of gender, background, ethnicity or sexuality.

Traditional pictures of masculinity portray men actively involved in the rescue of innocents in challenging situations – the soldier protecting his country, the policeman serving his community, the fireman rescuing the child from the burning smoke-filled building. But this culturally defined picture of muscular strength is one-sided. A biblical picture of masculinity also embraces more ‘feminine’ characteristics such as nurturing and caring. For example, the fruit of the Spirit in

Galatians 5:22–23 lists love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness and gentleness – characteristics both masculine and feminine.

Men are needed in the ‘modern day abolitionist movement’ (Bales et al., 2012) to demonstrate an alternative model of manhood to young women and girls than that which they have experienced, especially those who have been sexually exploited. Women need to know men who treat them with respect and dignity rather than objectifying them. Young men and boys who are the victims of sexual exploitation also need positive male interaction.

Many men have been influenced by a fatalistic worldview where openness concerning gender is not possible. It is important that Christian men embrace a biblical view that healing is possible and change can and does happen. Men can be wonderful caregivers. This is vital for children and young people impacted by the trauma of sexual exploitation. Many children come from a background where the father is absent and need an alternative model of fatherhood. As a registered child-health nurse, I have had the privilege of playing an important role in the restoration of young lives, but this role has often been questioned and seen as ‘feminine’.

The polarization of gender roles is unhelpful and unbiblical. When the disciples pushed the children away, Jesus was indignant and welcomed them into his loving arms (Matthew 19:13–15), an act which did not make him less masculine. Christian men can assume nurturing roles in churches and faith-based NGOs, reflecting on and critiquing cultural norms of masculinity and exploring alternative ways of being not harmful to young people.

Transformation of gender stereotypes is more difficult when men have little, if any, significant role in their children’s upbringing. Men need to consider how they can more meaningfully undertake their roles as fathers, husbands, uncles, brothers. There is an encouraging story from Cambodia of a male NGO worker who was once a street boy. He admits to being one of the most difficult boys in his rehabilitation programme, continually causing trouble until one day during vocational training an adult male trainer called him, ‘son’. No-one had ever called him ‘son’ and it struck him that someone really did care about him. It became a turning point in his life.

Jesus was a friend of sinners and prostitutes, and loved both the exploiters and the exploited. Jesus invites his followers into difficult places such as red light areas and bars. As followers of Christ, we should be careful of labelling others as ‘prostitutes’, ‘sexpats’, ‘paedophiles’, ‘sex tourists’, ‘perverts’ or worse. We are called by Christ to bring good news and to offer grace in keeping with the kingdom of God. In the same way that Jesus loved Zacchaeus the tax collector, we who follow Christ need to find ways to reach the most despised groups in society. Zacchaeus was welcomed into the Kingdom before he changed his behaviour; it was the love and grace he experienced from Jesus that led him to radical and public change. One of Jesus’ most significant parables about forgiveness was that of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32), whom we might describe today as a ‘sex tourist’. This young man went to a far country and ‘spent his money on wild living’ (15:13). The forgiveness given to the prodigal son did not depend on what he had done in the past or his ‘coming to his senses’. In this story of grace, the father loved him because of their relationship, in spite of what he had done. Repentance and change of behaviour were secondary and not prerequisites for the father to love him.

## Addressing Demand in Sexual Exploitation

We were inspired and supported by the MST Project<sup>15</sup> of Bangkok to set up our own version in Phnom Penh<sup>16</sup> as part of our outreach ministry into the red light areas with the Message Parlour.<sup>17</sup> We are still learning how to carry out this work as there is little precedence for ministry to men who visit red light areas. We often feel inadequate, but often once we get past the first five minutes of conversation with the men we find ourselves talking at length. We are surprised how many men we



speak to have a history of involvement with the church but now feel distance from it and even hatred towards it. One man told us that he had been abused by a pastor as a child.

The outreach to men in red light areas has opened new aspects of ministry. It provides a space for men doing the outreach to confess their own sexual temptations and sin to their co-workers. This then leads them beyond themselves, and they can go out and challenge other men, as brothers. The men doing the outreach speak of the grace they have received which they feel helps them communicate effectively that same 'amazing grace' to other men. This is the opposite of what many men visiting red light areas expect from a Christian witness. Rather than receiving judgment, they find themselves talking to a 'brother' who also needs healing, restoration and God's love.

We realize this approach of 'talking to men in a bar' is significantly different from the typical perception of a 'children's ministry'. We ask our readers to imagine the potential impact on child sexual exploitation in a specific community if only one serial paedophile or sex offender is challenged and supported to deal with their addiction. We have met some men who have sex with a different prostitute every night. One man recently wrote to us saying he had been inspired to join us in the men's outreach team. He went on to say that when he returned to the United States he acquired a copy of the local 'Sex Offenders Register' and formed a small group. He has since written to every one of these 'registered offenders', inviting them for coffee. This is extending God's grace to both the vulnerable and to the exploiters. It does not excuse their behaviour, but it leaves God to do the judging.

We believe that steps must be taken to address demand in sexual exploitation (that is, the clients of the prostitutes) and not only the supply side (the victims of sexual exploitation). Addressing demand needs to start well before men and women reach red light areas as perpetrators or victims. Pornography is a driver for prostitution and trafficking (Child Welfare Group, 2003; Fordham, 2006; Garcia and Crawford, 2014) as people want to experiment with what they have seen. Our research with expatriate and Cambodian men who frequent prostituted women indicates that men have a demarcation in their minds between their wives/partners and prostitutes (see also Havey et al., 2014a, 2014b). Wives are understood to offer comfort and procreation; prostitutes are visited for excitement and fun.

This is further accentuated by the ready availability of pornography for youth. This is not limited to internet pornography. Pirated, often violent, pornographic DVDs are exchanged in local playgrounds for a small fee and second-hand DVD players are available for around US\$10. Many Cambodian men we interviewed said that pornography was a way to learn about sex, but sadly they are learning self-gratification rather than the joys and challenges of mutually-satisfying sexual relationships.

The sense of entitlement among young men to have sex with whomever they like is disturbing. When I taught a group of Cambodian university students recently one young man said to the class, 'I think it is selfish if my girlfriend does not let me go to visit a prostitute if she is not prepared to perform sex in the way in which I ask her to.' I believe the health messages accompanying the campaign for the eradication of HIV over the past 20 years have been unhelpful for the abolition movement because the emphasis has been on wearing a condom rather than changing sexual behaviour. This is not because I think that men who have sex outside of marriage should not wear a condom, but because the focus is moved away from mutual consent in sex, which does nothing to challenge different forms of sexual violence including sexual exploitation.

## **Challenging Men in Changing Sexual Attitudes**

We are convinced that men need to challenge other men concerning sexual attitudes and exploitative behaviour towards others. As long as men surround themselves with other men who do not

challenge the status quo then the situation discussed in this essay is not likely to improve. We have learned in our research that when men wake up to the serious consequences of pornography or prostitution for themselves, their families, their communities and their nation, things can begin to change.

Where is the church in this effort to help shape men for Christ? In the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia there is a women's, youth and children's department but there is no men's department. This may be due to the perceived resilience of men who do not want to be challenged concerning attitudes about sex. To address this issue in Cambodia we have set up a local organization that encourages men in the church to be better fathers, husbands and brothers and to reach out to other men in the community to do the same. It is called 'Real Good Men' (Borah L'Or Pith<sup>18</sup>), inspired and supported by the British organization, 'Christian Vision for Men'.<sup>19</sup>

Over the last 20 years, IJM<sup>20</sup> has developed an innovative NGO/FBO model involving collaboration and training with local law enforcement and legal reform. IJM has changed its focus from 'rescues' (where the placement of children was not always adequately considered) to working with agencies and local, national, regional, and international systems. This has in turn led to more influence in local government and UN policy, ultimately reducing violence against children.

The church in the USA is starting to take the issue of pornography more seriously and recognizes the link with sex trafficking.<sup>21</sup> The Stairway Foundation in the Philippines has produced an animation showing how a man watching pornography in the West is inextricably linked to a young girl in the developing world being used in pornographic films.<sup>22</sup> It is not suitable for children, but is a powerful challenge to men who use pornography, and a disturbing reminder of the wider impact on men and their families. With a collaborative team of practitioners from Chab Dai Cambodia<sup>23</sup> and Alongsiders<sup>24</sup> we have produced a new toolkit<sup>25</sup> to teach youth about the dangers of porn.

## Talking Sex and Sexual Abuse in the Church

The evangelical church remains cautious about talking about sex, with adults and even more so with children. The fear that if we talk about sex with children, then they will want to try it extends from parents to teachers and church youth leaders so that all too often, children learn about sex through pornography! Men feel that they cannot talk about sex with other Christian men: those with problems with pornography, flirting, erotic massage or various forms of sexual addiction become isolated and reluctant to seek help within the church. Often an unbiblical isolationism exists, where a man sees the need to address an addiction and does acknowledge God but is unable to confront the problem on his own. Men's support and accountability groups can be tremendously helpful but cultural taboos, perceived resilience and reliance on self rather than on God often get in the way.

The Catholic Church has begun to acknowledge more openly child sexual abuse by people in positions of leadership in local parishes and Church institutions. The documentary video 'Deliver us from Evil!'<sup>26</sup> investigates a serial paedophile who raped both boys and girls while a priest in California. It explores the official cover up and the Church's practice of moving the priest around, thus exposing more children to him.

As a result of the publicity surrounding the Catholic Church, some dioceses are instituting child protection policies. Much remains to be done; many churches (Protestant and Catholic) continue with the myth that 'we are Christians and nothing like that could happen here'. The Churches Child Protection Advisory Service<sup>27</sup> have developed materials ('Thinking the Unthinkable!') to help churches develop child protection policies. Faith-based and secular NGOs can and should audit their partner organizations and conduct training, using materials available on the Keeping Children Safe website.<sup>28</sup>



In spite of reluctance in the church, positive steps have been taken to educate children about sexual abuse and exploitation. We helped to develop the Good Touch Bad Touch flipchart,<sup>29</sup> Power Point, comic and dance in collaboration with Chab Dai Cambodia<sup>30</sup> and Resource Development International.<sup>31</sup> This story of three children going to school includes a boy so that kids become accustomed to the idea that boys can also be sexually abused. At school they learn some key points about protecting themselves and then on the way home they meet 'Mr Cool', who starts to groom them, leading to one of them being abused. Eventually they remember the key lessons and report 'Mr Cool' through the National Childline and to their teacher, who calls the police. This powerful story has been used with children in Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Nepal, Bangladesh and India, and as the message spreads we have had requests from Zambia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Its main limitation is translation. There is a training day for people who can then use it to teach groups of children in schools, clinics, churches and communities.

## Conclusion

This paper has described how important it is not to neglect boys but look beyond cultural norms of resilience to see vulnerabilities that need our attention. It also shows how important it is for men to take a primary role in the care of children, especially child victims, both boys and girls, and to reach out and inspire other men to live in sexual integrity.

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## Notes

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2. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/> (accessed 24 January 2016).
3. United Nations Organization Women Watch. Available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/girl.htm> (accessed 10 January 2015).
  - Strategic objective L.1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child.
  - Strategic objective L.2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
  - Strategic objective L.3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.
  - Strategic objective L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.
  - Strategic objective L.5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.
  - Strategic objective L.6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.
  - Strategic objective L.7. Eradicate violence against the girl-child.
  - Strategic objective L.8. Promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.
  - Strategic objective L.9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.
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8. However, it could also be argued that fondling is in itself abusive as it normalizes such behaviour to the child as well as adults who have an unhealthy tendency towards sexual behaviour with children.
9. See <https://lin6.org/the-1-in-6-statistic/> (accessed 24 January 2016), which cites a number of international empirical statistical studies on sexual abuse of boys and men.
10. See <http://www.stairwayfoundation.org> (accessed 24 January 2016).
11. World Net Daily online article on women teachers who abuse male students. Available at: <http://www.wnd.com/2014/08/39783/>.
12. Samabhavana. Available at: <http://www.samabhavanasociety.org/> (accessed 24 January 2016).
13. UNESCO (2008) describes how in Cambodia more masculine MSM are described as 'shorthaired' and more feminine transgender are described as 'long-haired'. See <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001630/163077e.pdf> (accessed 23 January 2016).
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Glenn Michael Miles, PhD, is currently Lecturer in Childhood Studies in Swansea, Wales, UK and teaches doctoral level Holistic Child Development courses for Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (Penang) and Asia Graduate School of Theology (Manila). He has served as the Asia Capacity Building Facilitator for Love146 based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He is coordinating a series of research projects into the vulnerabilities of sexually exploited children/young people including boys, young men and transgender people in Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines. He also set up The Message Parlour which provided a safe space for children in the red light area in Phnom Penh and outreach to women, children and men victims as well as male clients. He has developed a training to prevent sexual exploitation of school children and serves on a number of boards for anti-trafficking organizations. He is co-editor of *Celebrating Children: Equipping People Working with Children and Young People in Difficult Circumstances Around the World* (2003), *Authentic Media and Stopping the Traffick: A Christian Response to Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking* (2014). He is married and has three daughters.