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Prifysgol Abertawe



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GLENN MILES PhD

Modern Day Child Slavery:
Where are the Boys?
Where are the Men?

**Lausanne Children at Risk
Consultation**
Quito, Ecuador. November 16-20, 2014



Emphasis on the 'Girl Child'

One of the recent foci of the UN has been the girl child

- ❖ Feminists have welcomed the attention
- ❖ Donors have developed selection criteria
- ❖ Int'l NGOs have developed policies and programs for girls



Comparing girls and boys

- ❖ 4th World Congress on Women in 1996 in Beijing
- ❖ “Girls are more vulnerable than boys to all kinds of violence, including rape, sexual abuse and exploitation, trafficking and forced labor”
- ❖ Stop Violence Against Us!’ (2005-6)
- ❖ In a national survey I conducted in Cambodia boys reported more violence than girls in every category including sexual abuse, rape, witness of rape and child sale.

“A **girl** is like a **piece of fine linen**; if she is stained then she is spoiled forever but a **boy** is like **solid gold**; if he is dropped in the mud then he can easily be washed clean again”

– Cambodian Proverb



- Each culture has similar stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. For example, the story of Sleeping Beauty verses Aladdin.

Comparing Genders

- ❖ Boys are seen as Strong, **resilient**, able to survive in difficult circumstances thrown at them.
- ❖ Girls are seen as fragile, **vulnerable**, in need of protection and with little agency.

What about **boys** as victims of sexual abuse?

Globally,

ONE IN SIX

males are sexually abused before the age of eighteen

Men and boys are also sexually exploited but culturally men and boys are not seen as vulnerable.

The statistics are not as diverse as we might think:

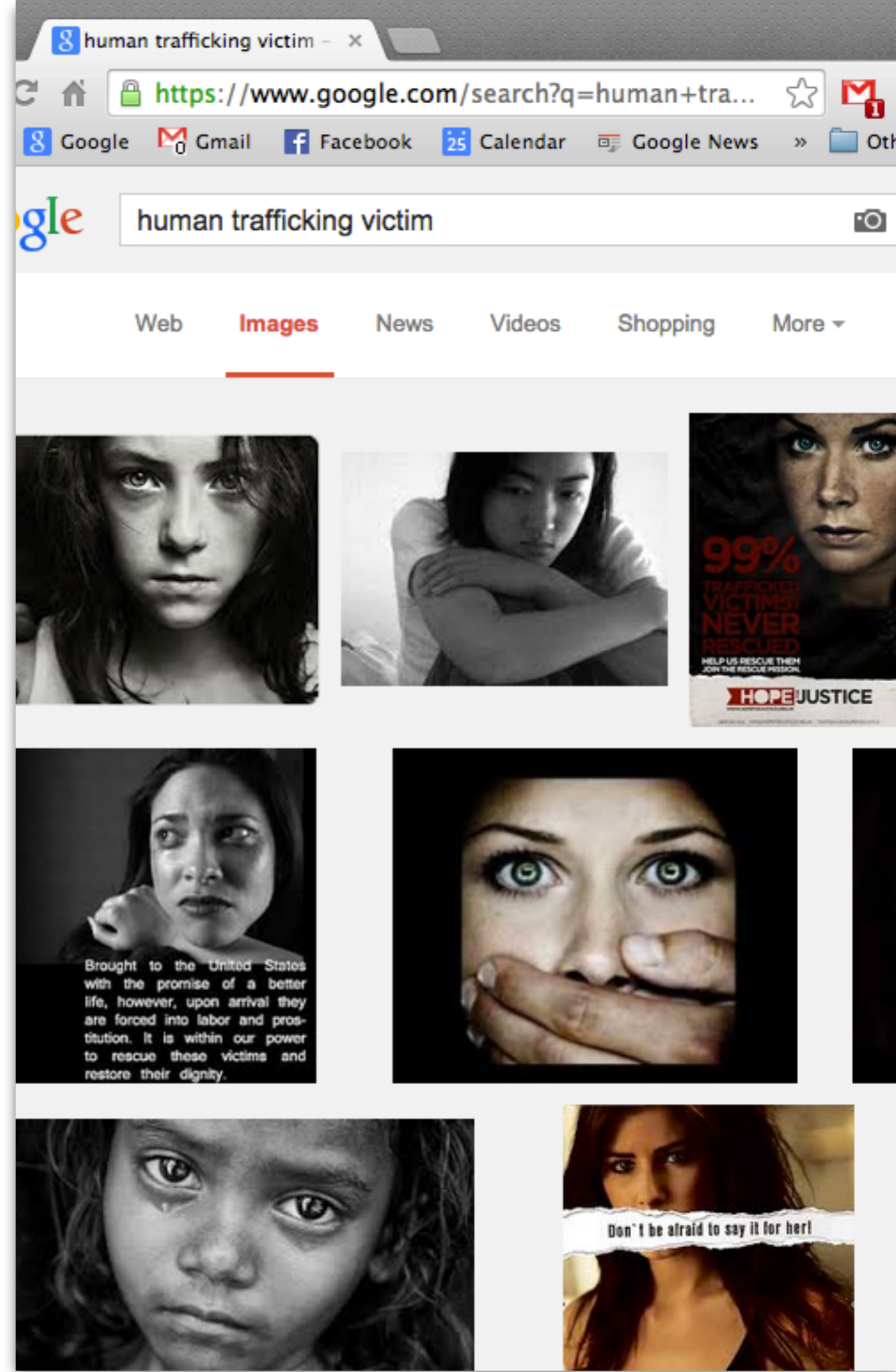
1:4 girls sexually abused

1:6 boys sexually abused



The current, prevailing understanding of **Trafficking & Exploitation**

- Hinges on stereotypical constructions of the social roles of men and women.
- Predator vs. Prey. Sex is a male right and entitlement; Women and girls are sexualized commodities functional to that male right.
- As a result of this emphasis there are hundreds of NGO's dedicated to rescuing and helping girls and young women but only a handful dedicated to boys



Joseph **sold into slavery** by his brothers



Joseph **sexually harassed** by Potipher's wife



Where is **the church**?

- The church absorbs current cultural perspectives that girls are vulnerable and boys are resilient. This is exacerbated by persistent Western male centred evangelical theology rather than a more complementarian theology.
- Christian groups don't want to be seen as pro-Gay and secular groups don't want to be seen as anti-Gay.
- So policy and programs are based on assumptions and feelings rather than research and theology.

Research on Male Vulnerability (Miles & Davis)

See www.gmmiles.co.uk

- Started with research listening to young men who were most visible – masseur industry
- Then street boys and those working on the beaches
- As well as more masculine young men we discovered the more feminine transgender exceedingly at risk.
- We have started to do research with ethnic minorities and then want to do research with children with disabilities e.g. deaf
- Sexual exploitation can happen to anyone irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity and ability/disability.
- We have come to realize how selective the Christian abolitionist movement has been in focusing only on girls

What is Biblical Masculinity?

- Traditional pictures of muscular masculinity are not enough.
- A biblical view of masculinity does not exclude more culturally defined 'feminine characteristics' of nurturing.
- The fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5 is not gendered.
- Men are needed in the abolition movement to show young women and men an alternative role model of manhood where they are treated with dignity.

Where would Jesus be?

Jesus had a reputation for hanging out with prostitutes.

Today he might also be having a beer with 'abusers' in the red light areas, challenging and loving them into the Kingdom.

The Prodigal Son was a 'sex tourist' who went to a far country and spent his money on 'wild living' but his forgiveness was never in doubt.



Talking to a man in a bar may seem a long way away from 'children's ministry' but imagine for a moment the impact on sexual exploitation in a community if only one serial pedophile was challenged and supported to deal with their addiction...

Addressing Demand

- ❖ Pornography is undoubtedly a driving factor for sexual exploitation so we must address is not only child pornography but accessibility of pornography to children and young people through mobile phone, DVDs and the internet.
- ❖ We must start with the church.
 - ❖ Borah L'Or Pith (Good Real Men)
 - ❖ Sex education of children including abuse and porn
 - ❖ Accountability and support for men who are struggling with addictions- not only porn but erotic massage and other forms of prostitution

Finally...

- ❖ Child Protection in churches and Christian NGOs should no longer be optional. Story of ESCAPE
- ❖ www.good-touch-bad-touch-asia.org educating children about sexual abuse
- ❖ www.cpas.co.uk educating churches about child protection
- ❖ www.keepingchildrensafe.org educating NGOs about developing their own child protection policies