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### Conference contribution :

Miles, G. (2014). *'Where are the Boys? Where are the Men?'*.

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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



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# Comparing girls and boys

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- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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# Comparing Genders

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- ❖ 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?

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Globally,

**ONE IN SIX**

males are sexually abused before the age of eighteen

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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

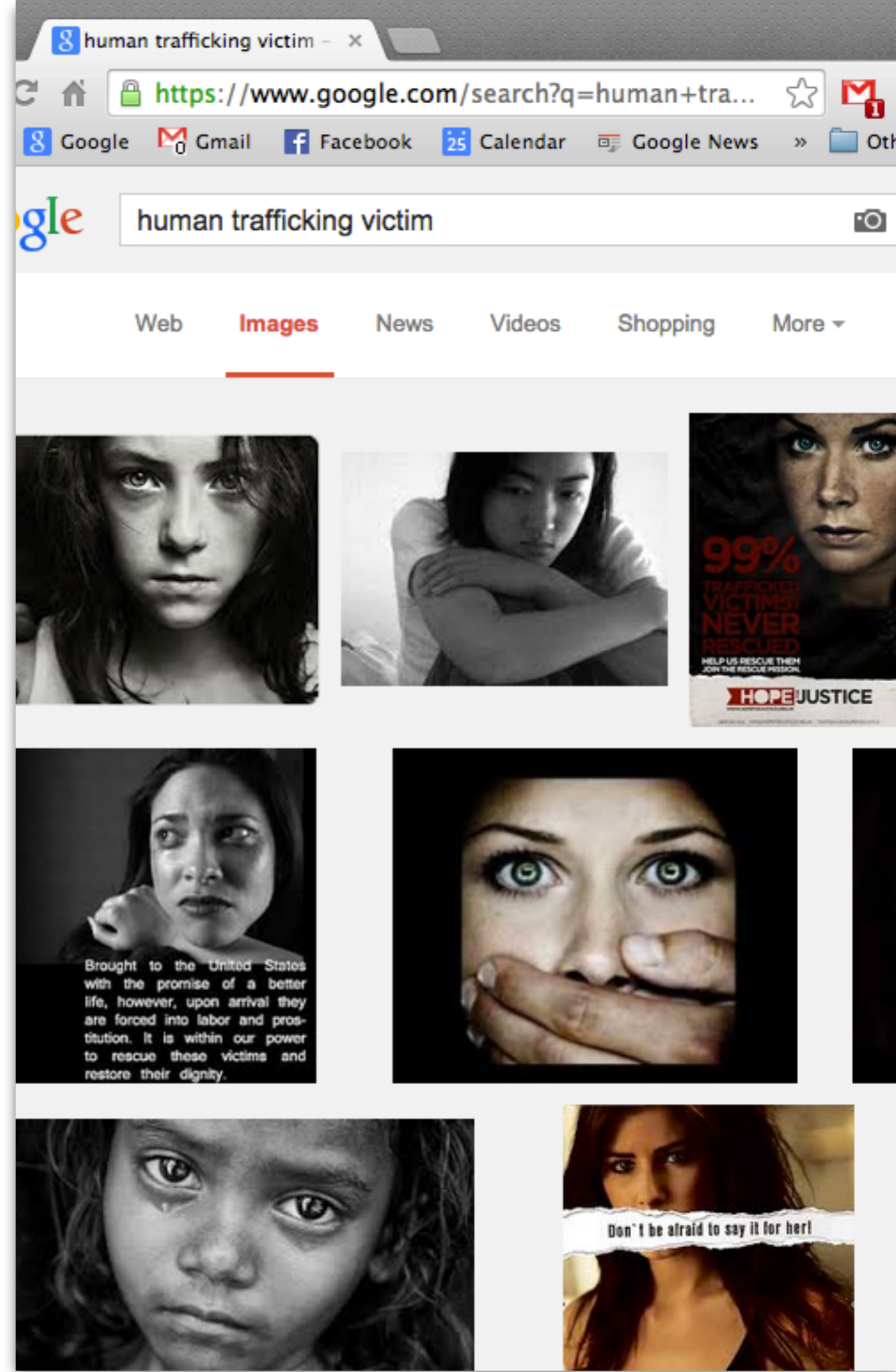
**1:6** boys sexually abused





## 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

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

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# Where is **the church**?

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- 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](http://www.gmmiles.co.uk)

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- 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?

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- 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.

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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...



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# Addressing Demand

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- ❖ 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

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# Finally...

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