

A weather report helps us to be prepared and to plan ahead. This *Rainbows of Hope* 'weather report' concerns the **Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of children**



Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of children is:

- A hidden problem - those involved in the sexual exploitation of children do not want others to know.
- A serious problem - sexual exploitation causes severe and lasting physical, emotional and spiritual damage to children. Trafficked children are removed from the protection of their family and community.
- A growing problem - Over a million children are entering the sex trade every year, according to UNICEF.
- Everyone's problem - It is probably happening where you are. In Proverbs 31: 8-9, we are called to: "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,...defend the rights of the poor and needy."



Sexual exploitation is any abuse of a position of vulnerability, difference in power, or trust for sexual purposes

- Children, even the very young, are being exploited and trafficked into pornography, prostitution, stripping, and live-sex shows; they may be beaten, raped, or deprived of food to comply; they may be locked in rooms or even in cages
- The losses to children include physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, basic rights, dignity, and autonomy
- Human trafficking generates \$31 billion annually and enslaves 27 million people, half of them children and most destined for the sex trade (according to David Batstone in his book and DVD Not for Sale)
- Sexual exploitation can occur whenever children are vulnerable, e.g. children in poverty, street children, orphaned children, child laborers, children of war, etc
- The Internet makes child pornography easily accessible. On some sites, viewers can special order a live feed of children being sexually abused. In some cases children die during these acts. There has been a 1500% increase in the number of child-pornography images since 1997, according to the Internet Watch Foundation.
- Children from developing nations are being sold and trafficked into modern-day slavery with false promises to their families of 'a better life' in urban centers or in Western countries



Sexual exploitation of children is gaining media attention. Public awareness is being raised through newspaper and magazine articles, television shows, radio broadcasts, documentaries, etc.

- Those who minister to children are learning to recognize signs of sexual exploitation, such as, unexplained and/or extreme behavior changes; withdrawal; fearfulness; moodiness/crying; obsessive washing; unexplained injuries/bruising/discharge; acting out inappropriate sexual behavior.
- International protocols are now in place in the Tourism industry, law enforcement agencies, and Internet companies to help address this issue. In some countries, authorities are seeking to protect vulnerable children arriving at ports or bus/train stations.
- Christian organizations and NGO's are working to inform the public, to help victimized children, and to stop this evil, e.g. Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking www.faastinternational.org and UNICEF www.unicef.org
- Believers around the world are being challenged to pray for the children, their families, and those who are exploiting them, e.g. Viva Network: www.viva.org and Asha Forum: www.asha.viva.org



What can I do?

A - **ask**: what does this problem look like where I am? Research, ask questions, listen, discover (*we can help by providing you with country specific research*)

B - **be proactive: pray** - recognize this attack on children is spiritual warfare; **determine** ways in which you and your team could respond, e.g. help parents and children to **be aware** of the schemes used by exploiters and traffickers in your area; make sure your ministry has **procedures** to protect children from abuse

C - **commit** to being involved, e.g. **share** the Biblical message of the value of children; help **train** and **equip** churches to **advocate** for children in your area, **protect** vulnerable children, and **care** for the victims; **network** with other organizations



For more information: contact **Rainbows of Hope**: email: rohusa@comporium.net; website: www.rainbowsofhope.org

- **Seminar:** May 14 -17 Crisis Care Training International and World Relief will co-host a Train the Trainer Seminar in Durham, North Carolina, featuring *Hands that Heal: International Curriculum to Train Caregivers of Trafficking Survivors*, produced by Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST). For info or to register, email: crisiscare@comporium.net
- **Book: Sexually Exploited Children** Working to Protect and Heal, Phyllis Kilbourn and Marjorie McDermid, editors (*we have a copy of this book to give away to a team - email: rohusa@comporium.net*)
- other websites: www.missingkids.com; The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children www.icmec.org; Internet Watch Foundation www.iwf.org.uk; International Justice Mission www.ijm.org; End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes www.ecpat.net; Rahab ministries www.rahabinistriesthailand.org