

Gospel Making Inroads Into Asia's Red Light District

Human trafficking has so hardened some women in Asia that they are unable to even mother their children.

Vision for Women, an outreach of Vision Beyond Borders (VBB), is working in some of the world's poorest countries to meet the spiritual and physical needs of these women. The extreme poverty in Nepal, Burma and India often results in malnutrition, disease, illiteracy and deep spiritual depravity.

Little value is placed on women and girls in these countries. Too many are sold into sex slavery by members of their own families for as little as \$10.

On his last trip through Nepal and Burma, Wes Flint of Vision Beyond Borders says the disturbing realities really hit home: "One of the things that really caught me off guard is the greed and the selfishness and the brutality that [occurs] on a daily basis with these girls."

The numbers are stunning. In Nepal alone, Flint notes an estimated 250,000 women and girls have been sold into sex slavery to work in the brothels of India. These girls often bear children. The future for these innocents is grim, says Flint.

"The children are really without any hope," he says. "They will be sold into this same lifestyle as soon as they are of age, usually very young."

Even if they are not sold, they are expected to do hard physical labor to make money to help feed their families. It's a future of drudgery, humiliation and loneliness. It's no wonder, says Flint, that "they refer to themselves as 'the

walking dead.' That's how they look at their own lives. It is hopeless, it is completely void of emotion and feeling."

According to partners with VBB, girls as young as 7 have been sold into slavery. These women and girls are confined in a room called "the cage" where they are beaten, starved, and raped until their will is broken. Then they are forced to service customers to repay their debt—a debt that incurs more in interest than they are paid for their services. Boys are not exempt from the abuse, either.

And yet Flint says, "God is bringing people to bring hope and bring the **Word of God** into these precious lives so that we can provide an opportunity of trust and get these girls rescued out of this lifestyle."

Flint says in many areas they've never heard the name **Jesus Christ**. They are coming out of a Hindu culture, and they don't understand a God who saves. VBB partners are trying to bring hope to these women and children.

"We work with contacts to establish a school and a training facility so that they understand and know the gospel, they understand the God who saves, and we provide them an education," Flint says. "With that education, these children can have a hope of obtaining a normal job."

For their mothers, it's a bit trickier. Most of them have been horribly abused. Building trust takes time. Female Christians work in these areas to bring healing and restoration.

"What we have are contacts there that establish trust with these girls, and then we provide an opportunity to get them out of that lifestyle and get them into a safe house," Flint says. "We then retrain them into a craft trade and help to facilitate selling those items so that they can earn an income."

Flint goes on to explain that this task seems impossible.

However, they're after the end game.

"Nothing will really change until these brothel owners and those that are the perpetrators come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior," he argues. "When the heart of these people change, then the same thing will happen with those that are under them in those brothels."

The gospel is making inroads in the red-light districts of South Asia. Rescued children blossom. Flint says because of that, VBB is witnessing the power of the gospel transforming lives.

Flint sums it up this way: "Once the truth of the gospel comes through, where God transforms these people and changes their lives, then that is what establishes true hope and that is what brings change into these brothels."