

# PROJECT: CAMBODIA



## Child Sex Slaves

These three words do not belong in the same sentence, and yet this unthinkable and horrible travesty not only exists, but it is thriving and growing. Today there are over 1 million children who are bought and sold for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the global commercial sex trade each year.

In Cambodia, girls ranging from as young as 5 to 15 years old are either sold into prostitution to pay off family debts or forcibly recruited on the streets to work in brothels. Torture and violence are a girl's daily companions. She will be raped 8 to 10 times a day by adult males who come from all over the world for 'sex tourism'. They will take photos and videos of her terror so they can "re-live" the moment and impress their friends.

## Cambodia

**The Context:** The Khmer Rouge revolution and subsequent Vietnamese invasion of the 1970's left Cambodian society in tatters. There were few social, family and moral structures left standing and along with this vacuum came profound poverty. Under these circumstances, desperate parents, unable to feed their children will sometimes sell one child and use the money to care for the rest. In a culture already numbed by violence and with no real legal system in place, such children are unprotected and subject to terrible abuse and over time, this sad situation has become accepted by society. An environment where children are bought and sold, where no limits are placed on the degree of abuse and where few legal restraints exist will attract and encourage the very worst forms of human behavior. In more recent years, the AIDS epidemic has added to the disaster. Children are now left orphaned and are sold by neighbours, friends, police officers and distant family members. Those seeking "safe sex" pursue younger and younger girls who are felt to be less diseased. Cambodian folklore teaches that an AIDS infected man can be cured by having sex with a young, "clean" virgin. The implications of such thinking are absolutely

devastating. The situation is now well known world wide and so scores of international pedophiles fly into Cambodia to wreak their havoc and add to the suffering. Brothels are now commonplace, young women and girls as young as five years of age are held captive to be abused daily. Many corrupt police and officials turn a blind eye.



## **Mission trip: July 14 – August 5, 09.**

Two years ago, since joining the Core group of the ‘Ratanak Foundation’ [www.ratanak.org](http://www.ratanak.org). I was given opportunities to learn, raise awareness, promote advocacy and encourage actions to end this vicious industry. To take my conviction further in a more personal way, I have the privilege of travelling to Cambodia for 3 weeks this summer. I am part of a team of 12 from 5 different churches in Toronto, being trained by the Ratanak Foundation, headed by President and Founder Brian McConaghy.

We will be staying in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, also well known as a hub for ‘sex tourism’. We will spend time working with one of Ratanak Foundation’s partnership organizations, ‘Daughters Cambodia’ <http://www.daughterscambodia.org/> and Prayer walking in Svay Pak, Stung Meanchay (slum area- local brothel area), Street 63 and Waterfront. Possible ministries to NewSong Centre (a ‘safe house’ in a secluded and undisclosed location with tight security for very young girls - they are valuable commodities for traffickers), and Rahab’s House (former brothel - helping with outreach to community).

‘Daughters Cambodia’ is a Transition Life Skills Centre for the girls who have been rescued. Our Team ministries there will include giving workshops on Anatomy/Nutrition, Drugs effects, Domestic Violence, Choosing a Mate, Budgeting, Hair Cutting, Dance Training, daily Intercession and Worship and ‘Member Care’ Clinic for Staff.

## **Ways to partner with me**

Prayer: Please consider being a prayer partner for the entirety of my training and my mission trip. I will send out prayer requests for those who wish to join my prayer support team. Your prayers

will be my support when I enter the overwhelmingly dark world of child sex trafficking.

Financially: The total cost of the trip is \$2,900, which includes airfare, inoculations, evacuation insurance, accommodations, food and any other materials needed for the trip. I will also be taking a second suitcase of shoes for the girls at 'Daughters Cambodia'. If you are interested in supporting me financially, please send donations to Rexdale Alliance Church, 2459 Islington Ave, Etobicoke, M9W 3X9, on the memo line designate 'Joy Sumyi Lee – Cambodia Mission Trip 2009'. Tax receipts will be issued at the end of the year.

Attend a Fundraising Concert: given by piano students ages 5 – 18 on Wednesday, June 10, 2009, 7 pm, at Runnymede United Church, 432 Runnymede Road, Toronto, M6S 2Y8.