# Theology  

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 A bilingual Khmer-English Theological Journal to give biblical knowledge to its readers as a honeycomb gives strength to exhausted travelers.
 April 2002






บถૂูึติกร Russell H. Bowers, Jr.






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## From the Editor

Busy Christians have so many things to think about-and all are important! Budgets, plans, meetings with government officials, sermons, discipleship, church discipline. So we push lesser matters aside.

But sometimes in the crush to get things done we forget what truly is important.

It happened in Jesus' day. He met crowds who hung on his words, spies trying to trap him in his speech, lame and blind who cried for his healing touch. This is important stuff! So what should he do when mothers bring their children for him to hold?

The disciples confused bigness with importance, and shooed the doting parents and their squirmy kids away. But Jesus' idea of what is important often differed from his compatriots' view. "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

For many people, adults are important, money is important, power and prestige are important, sensual stimulation is important. Children are either nuisances . . or expendable tools to help us gain some of these. Even church leaders and Christian parents can forget the priceless value of our little ones.

But the scriptures bring us back to reality. "Sons are a heritage from Yahweh, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them." "I prayed for this child, and Yahweh has granted me what I asked of him." "[F]rom infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation." "Unto us a child is born."

This issue of Honeycomb is dedicated to our children. May its articles encourage us to see children the way God sees them, and to love, nurture, and defend them.

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## Honeycomb

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# "Such as these"- <br> A Framework for Understanding our Children 

Heather FORBES

When I was pregnant with my first child, it seemed that everyone-family, friends, even complete strangers-felt compelled to give me child-rearing advice. Some of my most interesting conversations on this topic happened at the local supermarket, while picking through broccoli or beans alongside women of varying cultural backgrounds. These fellow shoppers gave me a world of advice about my upcoming baby, starting with predictions about its gender:
"Your nose is wider now than a few weeks ago, so you're having a girl!"
"Is the baby active? Then you must be having a boy!"
"Your body is shaped like a pear, not an apple, so you must be having a girl."

Naturally, advice from others became more serious and more frequent as the baby's due date drew near. Relatives talked about baby care. Church members recommended books they had read. Our doctor registered us for childbirth education classes. Four years later, here in Cambodia, the advice continues. My neighbor across the road tells
me how to dress my daughters for the heat and mosquitoes. On a recent trip to China, we were often scolded for not putting enough layers of clothing on the kids.

Why do so many of us have something to say about parenting? The volume of advice so readily given hints at the profound nature of the job. It is at once the most sobering and most joyful of undertakings. When our first child was born, I lost a lot of sleep, but not only because of a wakeful, needy baby. In those weeks, even after we had put her down to sleep, my mind continued to churn with the overwhelming wonder of this new life, and the responsibilities ahead of us. God had given us the privilege of bringing a whole person, with an eternal soul, into this world, and her tiny presence in our home left me awestruck.

Thankfully, the God who gave us this awesome responsibility has also provided guidelines for the job. Proverbs $22: 6$ says, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." God would not have us underestimate the impact we have on our children. This verse tells us that the way we parent our children is bound to have long-term effects on them, whether for their good or ill.

Dr. William Sears, one of America's most renowned pediatricians and an outspoken Christian, says that the training of a child begins from the moment of her birth and involves every interaction we have with her. He refers to this task of training a child as the process of "discipline." Discipline, he says, is a process of "imparting God's Word to such a degree that it becomes part of each child's inner self, his inner controls, his base of operations ... in short ... to instill a sense of direction."

If, then, we are always in the process of instilling a sense of direction in our children, whether consciously or not, how do we make sure we are guiding them in "the way [they] should go"? Two interpretations of Proverbs 22:6 have been helpful in my efforts to discipline my own children. First, it can be read as a call to train ou: children to follow God's commandments. A second way to understand the phrase "in the way she should go" is as a reference to God's specific,

[^0]unique plan for each child. In other words, nurturing our children according to their own "bent," or the nature God has given them. I believe both interpretations are helpful: that as we teach our children to walk in God's ways, we should do so with recognition of their Godgiven uniqueness. However, what are some of the principles that will enable us to succeed at this awesome challenge?

## Becoming a Student of Your Child

Instilling a sense of godly direction in a child begins with getting to know him or her and establishing a secure relationship built on trust. Discipline, Dr. Sears says, is something done with-not toa child. Early in our marriage, my husband and I heard a piece of practical marriage advice that has proven to be a gold mine for promoting understanding, renewing loving feelings and enabling communication between the two of us. That statement was: study your spouse. Likewise, studying our children-finding out what really makes them "tick"-will lay a foundation of understanding that keeps our communication lines open, even as they grow and change. This will enable us to establish a climate in which loving, effective discipline can thrive.

## A Child is a Whole Person

Our study of our children must begin with what God says about them. A foundational principle in understanding our children is that every child is a person created in God's image.

So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ${ }^{2}$

Like the first humans and all that have come since, children are created in and for relationships with their creator, with other humans, and with the world around them. The highest commandments, identified by Jesus, are about those relationships.

[^1]"The most important [commandment]," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." ${ }^{3}$

A child, like all humans, is a whole person-a physical, mental, emotional, social and moral being. We can see from the above verses that God created children, as whole humain beings, to live in whole relationships with God and others, involving every aspect of their personhood.

Parents of very young children might ask how we can possibly relate on all these levels to infants who seem to have constant physical needs but no words to express thoughts. Once again, the Bible is encouraging in this endeavor. To Judah's prophet Jeremiah, God confided: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." 4 Israel's King David understood that:

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in the secret place.
When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body.
All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. ${ }^{5}$

Pastor Gary Chapman and physician Ross Campbell encourage parents that an infant is capable of receiving care on more than just the physical level. They say that a
great deal of research indicates that the emotional foundation of life is laid in the first eighteen months of life, particularly in the mother/ child relationship. The "food" for future emotional health is physical touch, kind words, and tender care. ${ }^{6}$
${ }^{3}$ Mark 12:30-31.
${ }^{4}$ Jer 1:5.
${ }^{\text {STP }}$ Ps 139:15-16.
${ }^{6}$ Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, The Five Love Languages of Children (Chicago: Northfield, 1997), 24.

Such nurture will enable the child to have healthy trusting relationships with God and with others as he or she grows.

Linguists tell us that a young child's mind is processing verbal input even when we don't see it happening--that a child receives and understands much more than he says. Because of this, Dr. Sears says your child witl begin to have a concept of God before being able to articulate it. "Your child will understand better the concept of God if she has been saturated with hearing about God from birth. By the time she is two years old, she hears the words God and Jesus spoke in association with love and protection. By the time she is three years old, she feels God's presence."

Seeing my own daughters' young responses to Christ has convinced me of this. Dylan, now four, has been listening to Bible stories since before she was one year old, and she now knows them backwards and forwards. Moreover, her sensitive spirit has internalized their truth and she is cultivating a real relationship with God. At times, we have seen her pause in the middle of what she is doing, and when we ask, she says that she is "listening to God." Two-year-old Zoe often initiates prayer at our dinner table and before bedtime. One night last year she woke up crying for our night guard, and we prayed for him: The next day we found out he had been injured in a car accident that same night. Seeing this type of spiritual sensitivity in our young children should encourage us to involve God-talk at the heart of our family lives. Pray, tell stories, and sing together, with the confidence that God's spirit is moving in your children. Or, in the words of Deuteronomy 6:6-9,

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

[^2]
## A Child is a Unique Person

While children are whole human beings and should be treated as such, each child is also unique. It is easy to interpret a child's perspective as less virtuous or important than an adult's; in a world where adults hold the power and authority, a child's opinion or needs are easily forgotten or discounted. On the other hand, God has given children special position in his kingdom, and throughout the gospels Jesus affirmed the value of the "least of these." In the gospel of Mark, we see Jesus contradicting the disciples' demeaning assumptions about children who came to see him. "Let the little children come to me," he says, "for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." ${ }^{8}$ In the story of the miraculous feeding of the crowd, it is a child's gift, a small lunch of bread and fish, that Christ used to bless thousands of adults. ${ }^{9}$ The radical choice of God to be incarnated among us as an infant first, rather than appearing as an adult, speaks volumes about the value he ascribes to the nature of a child.

People who have good rapport with children often interact with them at the children's-own eye level. Literally getting down on achild's level during times of play, comfort, and correction helps the adult see from the child's perspective and communicates understanding to the child. When Christian adults make the effort to get on the level of the children in our communities and incorporate some of their perspective into our community life and worship, we become more like the kingdom of God. Pastor Jim Brenneman of Pasadena Mennonite Church comments: "The church can only be a better place if, every now and again, we sit at our children's feet to listen to what they have to teach us." ${ }^{\prime \prime}$

Children are unique not only as a group, but also as individuals. Psalm 139 is a beautiful testament to the intimate craftsmanship of a creator who "knit [the child] together in [his] mother's womb" and who declares each child "fearfully and wonderfully made." Our discipline should recognize the uniqueness of each child. What my
${ }^{8}$ Mark 10:14.
${ }^{9}$ John 6:9.
${ }^{10}$ James E. Brenneman, Sermon 346, 27 February 2000.
husband and I learned about parenting through our sensitive, creative older daughter has not always been helpful with her spunky, extroverted little sister.

An exciting framework for conducting "research" on our children is to discover the unique ways they receive and give love. This is an idea promoted in several Christian child-raising books. One set of these "love languages" 11 includes physical touch, words of affirmation, quality time, gifts, and acts of service. Each culture might have its own categories of expressing and receiving love, or at least different variations within these categories. However, for all parents, it is good to ask ourselves: Do I know what really communicates love to my child? Have I noticed how my child most consistently expresses love to others? Training up a child in the way he should go can best be done when we have made the effort to know and affirm our children, in their unique gifts and personalities, just as God knows us intimately ,and knows best how to train us. Only then can we help them develop their gifts and communicate our love most clearly to them.

Learning our children's specific inner workings will help us understand reasons behind common areas of conflict with them. For example, I recently came to understand that a major source of tension between my daughter and me relates to the different speeds at which we operate. I am fast-paced and decisive; she is thoughtful, needing more time between transitions. Now that I understand this, I can better distinguish between what is a moral issue and what is just a difference in personality. If it is a personality conflict, depending on the situation, I can try to accommodate Dylan, since she is the one with less understanding, and by doing so, model humility and express love to her. Or, if it is not possible to accommodate her, I can try to teach her to adjust according to the situation, but do so gently, understanding her need for transition time.

[^3]
## A Child is a Person in Need of Direction

In order to know our children as God knows them, we must recognize that just ast they are designed by God as whole and unique people with potential for relationship with God and humans, so also they are also fallen people who, like the rest of us, need redemption. "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child," says Proverbs 22:15. Who of us with a two- or three-year-old doesn't know this? Sometimes the folly I see demonstrated in my kids is only an area of poor judgment, like jumping up and down while riding a cyclo in traffic, or running into the street during play. But other times the issue is a moral one. Discipline, or guidance, in times of correction is one of the most challenging aspects of our parenting role. But it is essential in order to guide the child into her God-given potential and into the blessing of walking with God.

To write about the specifics of correction is not my intention in this article. However, as in all aspects of discipline, keeping open communication lines through a continuing study of your child is essential. The sustained effort we put into knowing our children will assist in this aspect of discipline as well. For the kind of communication that springs from a relationship built on trust will help us to:

- approach correction within the context of the goal of all discipline: to impart understanding and build godly character in the child. ${ }^{12}$
- present our children with clear, consistent choices and consequences in a way they can comprehend.
- create structure and conditions in our homes that encourage desirable behavior.

This will help us to maintain the right attitude in our correction, so that we do not act out of anger, but rather with the self-control that mirrors God's own correction of his children.

[^4]
## The Power of a Parent's Influence

We have seen that God has a lot to say about who a child is: made in the image of God; a whole person with all the traits of personhood; unique in childlike nature, and created one-of-a-kind; capable of relationship but needing redemption to live in right relationship with God and neighbor. With all of these basics in place, Sears invites us to take up the challenge of studying our children, as a gardener knows the plants in his garden. This means to learn the right climate for best raising our children, and to be aware of the kinds of weeds that our children are especially susceptible to. Approaching discipline in this way, our guidance will be neither overly permissive nor abusive, because we will be viewing them with the wise and gracefilled eyes through which God sees us, and guiding them in his wisdom.

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${ }^{3}$ Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, The Five Love Languages of Children (Chicago: Northfield, 1997), 24.























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## A Determined Disabled Daughter

SOUN Neang

The night's silence is broken by the sound of Gnar Gnar streaming from a wooden house. Gnar Gnar is the sound a child makes who has just opened her eyes to see the light of her parents' love, to receive warmth from her grandparents, and to welcome hot and cold from the sun and the moon. The sound of Gnar Gnar. means that she is hungry, afraid because from now she has to make a serious effort by herself. She needs to breathe and has to suck the mother's breast and swallow by herself.

All the people in the family are very happy because they have a new member. The grandparents love their grandchild very much and name her Siew Ly. Nobody is worried about what is going to happen to this family.

And now one year passes by.
One day, a commune hospital staff came to immunize the children against six illnesses. Siew Ly's mother invited him to inject her child immediately. The doctor asked, "Does your child have a fever?" She replied, "No, she has not." But after the injection, the mother remembered that the previous night she had given paracetamol to her child. She only briefly remembered, and then quickly forgot again because she needed to comfort her child and calm her crying.

That night Siew Ly developed a serious fever, and her arms and legs began to convulse. Siew Ly's mother gave paracetamol to her again as her doctor had instructed.

In the morning Siew Ly's mother's concern grew because the child's temperature had not come down, and her arms and legs could hardly move. Some of the neighbors suggested that she take Siew Ly to the hospital, while others counseled, "Never mind, this is usual for children after receiving the injection to protect against the six illnesses." In a week's time, Siew Ly's condition worsened, so her mother decided to bring her to the hospital. She stayed there for three weeks. Siew Ly's temperature improved, but her arms, legs, and body deteriored, making her mother very hopeless. The child's mouth became twisted, her right fingers clenched into a fist, while her left hand stretched out straight and hard. Her feet were twisted in and her toes turned down.

Sadness covered this family. The parents and grandparents frequently consulted the Krou Khmer, prayed to the spirits of the ancestors, and offered food to the spirits as the mediums instructed.

More time passed.
By the time she was six years old, Siew Ly could sit but not very stably; she could speak but the people outside her family could not understand her; and she could not walk. The parents were quite hopeless; they stopped consulting the Krou Khmer and praying to the ancestral spirits. They turned back to their businesis.

Even though Siew Ly could not walk, her body continued to grow as the years passed. Now she is twelve. She often shuffles to the stairs and asks others to carry her up or down and put her either into the hammock under the house or into the swing in front of the house. Because her arms and legs are uncooperative, she often falls from the hammock or swing. But this experience provides a secret opportunity for her to stand up by herself. By the time she is thirteen, she can stand up in misery by herself, but she still cannot step.

One day God blessed Siew Ly. An old lady who is a traditional medical practitioner saw Siew Ly and asked that her parents bring her in for treatment. The parents did not expect any results; but decided to try anyway. So they brought Siew Ly to the lady's house. She did not allow anybody to stay with Siew Ly. While her parents were returning
home, their tears dropped out of pity because their child had to live with an old lady in a small cottage.

The old lady tied a bamboo pole to a betel nut tree to serve as a tightrope. The old lady asked Siew Ly to do exercises. The exercises consisted of Siew Ly grabbing this tightrope pole to help her stand up. Even though Siew Ly fell many times the lady didn't care. Siew Ly had to try very hard to hang on and walk along the tightrope. In addition to this exercise, Siew Ly had to do housework such as throwing rice to the chickens, washing up, cooking rice, and pulling out weeds.

Because she lived far away for six months, Siew Ly missed her home, good food, the family camaraderie when they were all together, and the warmth and tender care from her parents and grandparents. She dreamed that she was home now-swinging, watching television, or listening to music. But she also enjoyed observing real nature at the old lady's house. She could see the cows and buffalos, and watch the farmers planting rice, because sometimes the old lady hitched her cow to a cart and took Siew Ly with her to the field. At Phnom Penh with her parents she enjoyed many nice, good things. But she never went out of the house gate, and when guests visited she hid herself in her room.

In her first month at the old lady's house, Siew Ly's parents went to see her every week. During the second month, relatives or grandparents visited her on two or three occasions. This change maybe took place because Siew Ly's family trusted this old lady. Or maybe they were very busy with their business; we don't know.

During the sixth month, Siew Ly significantly developed her movements. She could stand up more quickly than before, and could step four or five steps without hanging onto the tightrope. The old lady's treatment method was a great success. Everybody was very happy. They thought that God had given the light of life to Siew Ly.

Dear Reader, who among these people do you think was the most happy?

The family decided to bring Siew Ly back home. Now Siew Ly was like a student who had just graduated from university. She remembered the instruction of the old lady and her intensive training for six months. Now she is fourteen years old, and can help with a lot
of the housework. Everything she did, she did well. The plates and dishes that she washed were so bright you could see your face reflecied from them as in a mirror. If she swept the house, even the ants could not escape.

Previously the older people in the family felt only pity for her because of her disabilities. But now they added a great heart of love and praise. Siew Ly had become a useful contributor to her family.

In 1998, God sent the Marist Mission of Australia to Cambodia. He charged this group to open a school for disabled children.

A golden opportunity for Siew Ly had arrived.
On 22 June 1998, the school opened. Among the forty-seven disabled students came Siew Ly. Her parents arrived with happy faces, and walked with Siew Ly to help her. She could not control her movements, and so could only walk with difficulty. She didn't wear shoes, not because her family lacked the money, but because she couldn't wear them. At that time Siew Ly was fourteen years old, and was neither particularly fat nor thin. During her first half year there, Siew Ly developed very quickly.

During the first two days of school, we did not study letters. We let the children play, talk about their families, and introduce themselves to one another. We explained about school policies, uniforms, and the reasons why this school was opened. Siew Ly was smiling the whole time.

Among the forty-seven students, five could hardly hold pen or chalk. Siew Ly was among those five. One student wrote with his leg. Another could not write in the notebook, so we got a big board for him. to write on with chalk. A few months later, these students could write in their notebooks by using extra large pens. Their letters were quite big and not so good, but we were very happy and we could read them.

As for Siew Ly, her letters were small and neatly written. Siew Ly was very diligent; she did all her homework carefully. Every day Siew Ly had to do exercises for one hour in order to stretch the ligaments of the arms, legs, and hips, and to help her try to walk a straight line. She always tried so hard to do it, and never complained or came late. At school Siew Ly was always happy, and one day she
expressed her feeling that, "I don't want the weekend to come; at home I miss the class so much."

One thing that made her very happy is the teacher taught her how to wear shoes. She chose sports shoes. First we taught her how to wear socks, and then we guided her to wear shoes, but just during class. The first week we taught and helped her, but the second week she put them on by herself. When she knew very well how to put them on, we allowed her to walk while wearing the shoes. Her classmates encouraged and motivated her in many ways when they saw her walking with shoes. She was a little bit shy at first because she had never walked with shoes for fourteen years, but she was extremely happy. This was another success in her life.

One day the teacher brought the students to the Praseth Mountain. After lunch most of the students sat and talked together under the tree. But Siew Ly was not among them; she had wandered off alone. The teacher began searching for her because she was afraid of losing Siew Ly, but Siew Ly said, "I'm very happy, teacher. I have never before walked as well as today. I'm sorry I made you worry about me." The teacher was not angry but very proud of her student. The teacher held Siew Ly and said, "I'm afraid that you are going to fall by yourself." Siew Ly replied, "Never mind, teacher. If I fall I can get up by myself."

The school at which Siew Ly studied is named "Lavala." She studied there for two years. She could read, write, and calculate. She is a very clever student, responsible, and never made any difficulties to her friends and teachers. When she was writing, she needed to spend a lot of time on it because her arms were always subject to spasms. Her struggle in writing and doing the exercises made her a very good example to those who didn't have to work as hard as she did.

In the year 2000, Siew Ly contracted typhoid fever and could not attend school. But when she recovered her family did not allow her to return, and we do not know why. The teacher went to visit, and found her thinner than before. She always sleeps on the mat, not eating, not speaking. Her grandmother said that she could not sleep at night.

When she met the teacher, she smiled with a sour face. She looked at the teacher for a while and turned away, and then she was crying. The teacher said nothing, just fondled the student's arms and said goodbye.

We have not seen Siew Ly for about two years. We miss her. Does she miss us or not?

May God bless and give hope to her!


Siew Ly and her former teacher Soun Neang

## Conclusion

Disabilities are very hard for those who have them. But we must not think that disabled people cannot be useful. We can see from Siew Ly's example that she could learn to study, write, walk, and work in the house as do people without disabilities. Usually the parents of disabled children always want them to walk or do things as well as others. Please look at the people who can walk and speak well but do not have the strength of character that Siew Ly has, because they neither had to struggle nor exert the serious effort the Siew Ly did to develop their abilities.

There are three conditions to help in ability development:
1- A brave heart that struggles to win over all difficulties.
2- A stubborn heart that rejects the old clichés that say, "Disabled persons are worthless," or "Disabled persons can do nothing."
3- Support and encouragement from friends, parents, and organizations.
Siew Ly's case has taught us that doing proper exercises is very useful in restoring body movement.

Siew Ly is not like the slogan that says, "Que será será."
God has opened the door for her and blessed her. She has received God's blessing and obeyed Him with all of her heart.


## A Christian Response to Disability in Cambodia

## Glenn MILES

## An Introduction to Disability in Cambodia

One out of twenty children are born with a disability or become disabled during their childhood. The following is a global estimate based on research. Cambodia probably suffers higher percentages in some areas, but this chart gives some idea of the extent of the problem.

| Type Of Limitation | Prevalence\% |
| :--- | :---: |
| Moving difficulty | $2.0-2.5$ |
| Seeing difficulty | $0.5-0.8$ |
| Hearing/speech difficulty | $0.5-0.8$ |
| Learning difficulty | $0.2-0.4$ |
| Chronic fits | $0.3-0.6$ |
| Strange behavior | $0.1-0.2$ |
| Feeling difficulty (in hands or feet) | $0.1-0.2$ |
| Cambinations of the above | $\underline{0.2-0.3}$ |
| TOTAL | $4 \%-5 \%$ |

Source: Helander, E (1993) 'Prejudice \& Dignity' UNDP
Fig. I. United Nations description of prevalence of disability according to limitation rather than diagnosis.

We might expect disability to affect all classes equally. But actually it is the poorest children who are most likely to be disabled due to the inadequate care their mothers receive during pregnancy and delivery, the unsafe environments in which the children live, and the lack of available care and support that compounds their disabilities.

Though Cambodia's conflict is past, children continue to be susceptible to injury and permanent disability from landmines and other unexploded ordnance. Those who did suffer wartime injuries might later find these exacerbated by subsequent mental trauma, or through separation from or loss of family members.

Poverty can also force children to work in dangerous occupations. In construction or road building sites, or in factories, children can suffer injury due to inadequate or no safety precautions. Advocacy for safe working conditions and against all forms of intolerable labor is therefore crucial for working children. Street children-who literally live and work on the streets-are at great risk of being disabled through traffic accidents. They are also less likely to receive treatment, care, or support after injury, and so suffer greater risk of complications.

## Our Attitude is the Biggest Disability of All

When I first wrote this article I kept referring to "disabled children." Readers rightly criticized this phrase, because children with disabilities are first "children," and then "disabled." This criticism reminds us how we must look at and work with children with disabilities. The labeling of children is one of their most profound disabilities. In fact, Cambodian children with disabilities experience some of the deepest discrimination of all children.

When I worked in Site 2 refugee camp, a number of young men were banished to one end of the camp to an "orphanage" for boys who had lost their limbs to landmines while fighting in the war. Even though they had fought for their country, they were despised by many of the community because they were disabled. So they endured a double tragedy-first losing a limb, and second losing the support of their loved ones. Some were so depressed that they agreed to act as assassins to kill people in the camp for a fee. I was glad to see the church taking
services to the young men on Sunday, and I remember asking one boy what he wanted us to pray for. Instead of asking that his limb would grow back he asked that his heart be mended. We prayed for a touch from God, but it was terribly sad.

Dr. Sue Jack from Servants to Asia's Urban Poor describes some of the problems of fatalism. "Because $95 \%$ of Cambodian people are Buddhist, disability here is often regarded as due to bad karma, either of the parents or of the child. Social and financial disadvantages accompany this assessment. So also does a feeling of helplessness, since the injury was decreed by 'fate' and therefore nothing can be done about it. Families who unsuccessfully seek help from traditional healers have less motivation to approach the fledgling disability services that are now appearing in Cambodia. The sense of fatalism and 'unfortunate destiny' means that children are often 'hidden' from view in the back of the house and at times neglected, so finding children needs to be very proactive."

## How are Christian Organizations Dealing with this Issue?

As well as Catholic ministries to people with disabilities at Wat Tan, and the Marist Lavalla School, a number of Protestant organizations also work with people with disabilities. It is exciting to see organizations like Servants address the problem of disability in their community of Srok Mean Chey.

Dr. Sue Jack describes the work of Servants, "We try to mainstream the children into schools if possible, advocate at the local schools on their behalf, and provide any equipment necessary to make mainstreaming possible. For example, we may build ramps. Once a week we have a therapy/play session where caregivers are taught appropriate exercises, reinforcement, and good caring practice for their children."

Servants does not give families false expectations. "We stress that it will be the caregivers' commitment to the child that will help him or her improve, not our expertise, and that it will be a long, slow process. We therefore do all we can to provide ongoing support for the whole family, making sure they understand advice given-for example, how to perform the exercises. Our work also provides a
great opportunity for families to meet one another. We facilitate links between old families and new, so that they may encourage each other in what progress is possible. This speaks much louder and has much more impact than anything we can say."

As well as prejudice towards disability, some people must combat racial prejudice as well. "We are seeing Khmer, Cham (Muslim), and an increasing number of Vietnamese children. One of our staff speaks fluent Vietnamese, and our health district has a significant number of Vietnamese families who are socially marginalized and therefore experience difficulty in accessing health care in Cambodia."


Fig. 2. Mr. Sam Ouen
Director of Cambodian Association of Farmers and the Poor

Another organization working in this field is the Cambodian Association for Development of Farmers and the Poor in Kampot. The director, Mr. Sam Ouen (Fig. 2), is himself disabled and hence an excellent role model. He demonstrates that, with God's help and personal determination, an individual can do exceptional things. He recently put together a photojournal of several children in their community (Fig. 3). The journal demonstrates his philosophy that, if a deed is possible, then it should be attempted and done. The children attend school, cook, play, assist with household chores, and work in the fields alongside their peers. The program supports families through a cow-pig bank,


Fig. 3a. The children at play


Fig. 3b. The children assist with household chores
which helps families who are more vulnerable because of a child's disability (for example when a family member cannot work because he or she needs to look after a child).

Children are sometimes so severely disabled that their families prove unwilling or unable to keep them. Some parents of the severely handicapped resort to infanticide. Even where this does not happen the infant may well die from malnutrition, malaria, or chest infection in the first year. If the child survives infancy, he or she is likely to live for some time and require a long-term commitment.

The Group Homes currently supported by YWAM and XPACT care for some of these children with severe disabilities. They were started in an attempt to develop alternatives to large institutions for children with disabilities who had already been abandoned. These ministries recognize the abilities such children possess, as well as their rights to dignity, love, support, and care in a community. Such active compassion for the disabled seems to be a predominately Christian trait. While Christianity is not the only faith that exercises such compassion, the number of organizations working with the disabled that spring from other faiths is very small.

## What is Disability and What is Impairment?

Tearfund believes that we should focus more on what the child can do than on what she or he cannot do. The World Health Organization (WHO) International Classification of Impairments and Handicaps (version 2, Fig. 4) employs the concept of disablement. This moves away from the strict medical model in an attempt to define the causes and effects of disability in a more positive way. The terms disability and handicap have been replaced by the more positive concepts of activities and participation. However, we must remember that, "words can be politically correct and well packaged, but the majority of people with disabilities are lonely, lost, isolated and often ostracized by society." A change of words alone is not enough but a genuine attitude of Christ-like servanthood.

[^10]| Term | Dyfinition <br> ImpairmentA loss or abnormality of a body part (ie. structire) <br> or body function (ie. psychological function). The <br> psychological finctions include mental functions. |
| :--- | :--- |
| Activity | Everything a person does from simple activities (e.g. <br> grasping, moving a leg, seeing) to conplex skills <br> and behaviors (e.g remembering past events or <br> acquiring knowledge). |
| Activity limitation <br> (formerly disability) | Difficulty in the performance, accomplishment, or <br> completion of an activity at the level of the person <br> because of, e.g, pain/discomfort, doing it too <br> slowly/quickly, or not at the right time/place. |
| Participation | Participation consists of all areas or aspects of <br> hrman life, inchuding full expenience of being <br> involved in practice, custom, or social behavior. |
| Participation <br> Restriction | The disadvantage for a person with inpairment that <br> is created or worsened by environmental and <br> personal factors. |

Source: WHO ICIDH - 2 (1997)
Fig. 4.WHO International Classification of Impairments and Handicaps.
The Medical Model of disability adhered to by many doctors views impairment as an "abnormality" that needs to be "corrected," "cured," or "overcome." It is based on the concept that while the human body is alterable the social environment is not. The Social Model of disability developed by community-based practitioners stresses that a handicap or disability is a relationship between an individual and his/her environment, and emphasizes the role societies play in disabling a person. ${ }^{2}$

## What Does the Bible Say about Disability?

Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat
${ }^{2}$ Hartley, Sally, and Sheilah Wirz, 1993.
with special honor. . . . Now you are the body of Christ and each of you is a part of it. ${ }^{3}$

Each child is uniquely created in the image of God anid bears inherent worth." If maturity is defined as "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ"s in whom "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, ${ }^{\prime} 6$ then for all children a limit exists as to how far maturity will be achieved. Christians believe this to be true whether or not a child has a physical or mental disability. In fact, none of us will reach complete wholeness or maturity until we reach heaven. Even Jesus had to live out his life in human form with all the limitations that human bodies impose. Dr. Peter Sidebotham, who previously worked with Servants in Cambodia, says, "Children with a disability or without one need to be encouraged to reach the full degree of their God-given potential."

Nevertheless, "the concept of wholeness is very much a part of accepting and understanding that disability is simply a small part of who a person is." Thus says Rev. Dr. Nancy Lane, who herself is disabled. Children with disabilities are "whole" as they are, and to imply otherwise perpetuates negative stereotypes. "It also perpetuates the notion that a disabled body means one is not a whole personthinking, sexual, with same needs and desires as non-disabled." ${ }^{7}$

By contrast, in Cambodia children with disabilities are often viewed as liabilities consuming precious resources. They are therefore not priorities for communities, most government and health departments, and even families.

All of us need to experience God's love. Unfortunately, children with disabilities more than other children may experience prejudice and rejection from an early age. So the response of the church must provide an alternative and loving environment. It can be painful to be "different," but in God's "upside-down" Kingdom, "to shame what is strong, God has chosen what the world counts weakness." ${ }^{8}$

[^11]Some key biblical characters like Moses' and St. Paul ${ }^{10}$ had impairments. Mel Horne from "Church Action on Disability" suggested, "This wouldn't have been the case if God didn't mean impaired people to be around." Both Moses and Paul were specifically chosen for their tasks of spreading God's message, yet God informed Moses regarding his speech impediment, "I made you thus." Paul's body metaphor in 1 Corinthians 12 suggests that all people (including children with disabilities) are created to reveal the interdependence of human beings (rather than dependence or supposed independence).

Disability is not due to the sin or lack of faith of the child or parents. It may be a wonderful revelation for a child with disabilities to find that God loves her unconditionally, and that she has equal access to him in prayer and worship like any other person. "I call you by name," says the Lord. "You are mine" (Isaiah 43:1)."

Jesus himself chose to retain the marks of crucifixion after his resurrection, when as a perfect being he might have chosen to bear no scàrs. Instead, Jesus invited his disciples to touch the holes in his body. In so doing he is "challenging the way non-disabled people avoid those with disabilities." ${ }^{12}$ "By his wounds we are healed." ${ }^{13}$

The New Testament church was continually encouraged to reach out to those with whom they wouldn't normally feel comfortable, and to love them unconditionally. The story of the Good Samaritan serves as an example. Jean Vannier founded the L'Arche communities, where people both with and without disabilities live together in community. Vannier has observed, "Loving someone is not doing things for them but revealing to them that they are precious." It is important that children with disabilities are not seen as existing only to enable others to serve God better. This could give the message that the server is more important than the recipient.

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## What is the Best Way to Help Children with Disabilities?

Historically, children with disabilities, especially those who were described as "mentally retarded," were kept out of site in huge asylums. For example, London is surrounded by a ring of asylum hospitals. Alternatively, children were put into special institutions such as schools for the blind. These ideas were exported to the developing world, so that governments and Christian organizations have until recently viewed institutions as the main way of dealing with the "problem" of disability.

However, things are gradually changing. United Nations Development Program research ${ }^{14}$ indicates that service delivery programs for people with disabilities in third-world countries would benefit from incorporating the following principles:

1. Mobilizing the family and community.
2. Empowering people with disabilities themselves.
3. Changing attitudes of people towards disability.

These principles mirror the biblical principles of supporting the family, supporting and encouraging the vulnerable, and harboring no prejudices towards those who are not the same as ourselves.

It is hoped that good community-based rehabilitation will enable many families to keep their children with disabilities with them, as communities are supported in every way to work with such children. By doing so they can experience the benefits and joys-as well as the heartaches and stresses-of raising a child with disabilities. Whether children can stay at home or not depends on their economic situation, community services that people are aware of, and sometimes what the doctor or midwife told the family at the child's birth.

It may also depend on the extent of their impairment and the presence of an older sibling, grandparent, or other adult to take responsibility for them. The main caregivers are usually immediate family. Their ability to work with a child with disabilities will depend on the family's work, chores, schooling needs, etc. They may require the support of their community and, where Christian, their church community.

[^13]The other way the issue of disability can be approached is through advocacy, in which the attitudes of the public, health, education, and social service/voluntary sector professionals-and of course parents-can be influenced to see beyond the disability to the ability of the child. As usual, though, the attitudes must start with ourselves and with the church. Do we welcome the disabled person into the church, or do we absorb the prejudices and inappropriate cultural norms and reject them? We must challenge our deep-seated fears and prejudices and ask, What Jesus would do?

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Deaf Christian Network, P.O. Box 212, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN2 5XA, UK Tel: +44 1302369684 (Voice/Minicom); Fax: +44 1302739660
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Resources for those working with women who have been abused or sexually exploited, including women with disabilities.
Evangelical Alliance Disability Forum, 186 Kennington Park Road, London SE11 4BT, UK Tel: +44 171207 2100; Fax: +441712072150
Umbrella organization for Christian disability organizations.
SPRED, Special Religious Education Department (Roman Catholic Church), c/o Brothers of Charity Services, Lissieux Hall, Whittle-le-Woods, Chorley, Lancashire PR6 7DX, UK. Tel: 441257266311
Looks at spiritual needs of people with learning difficulties and provides suitable study and worship material.
Through the Roof, P.O. Box 178, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 1YN Tel/Fax: +44 1932 866333; email: info@throughtheroof. org website: www.jafministries.com/throughtheroof The disability outreach of Joni Erickson Tada. Produces a series of one-page "Roofbreaker Guides" about including people with different types of disabilities in the church.
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Source: Helander, E (1993) 'Prejudice \& Dignity’ UNDP
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Source: WHO ICIDH - 2 (1997)
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${ }^{96}$ Helander, 1993.



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## An Unexpectedly Precious Gift

Susan CALDWELL

Little did I know how God had been preparing me for his birth. Little did we know what this child would mean to our family.

Joshua is our fourth and youngest child, born over ten years ago with a medical problem known as Down syndrome. This condition affects him both physically and mentally. Shortly after Joshua's birth a doctor told us, "Your son will learn to do many of the things other children do ... but it will take him longer." It took him much longer than most children to learn to roll over, sit up, stand up, and walk. But eventually he did. Those were days of great rejoicing in our home!

Though now ten years old, Joshua looks and acts like a six-year-old and is in first grade. He is learning to read, write, and do arithmetic, but will never learn as quickly or as much as the average child.

Our story about Joshua began two years before he was born when I was pregnant with his brother, Caleb. In my home country, people commonly ask a pregnant woman, "What do you want-a boy or a girl?" A typical reply is, "I don't care, just as long as the baby is healthy." But I have never been able to say those words. First of all, I have a brother who has never been able to walk. Second, I knew that the God who made us and loves us has not promised that each child he
gives will be problem-free, either physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually.

Early in my pregnancy with Caleb, a blood test suggested I might be carrying a child with Down syndrome. For the next six months I fought with God in my heart. Like everyone else, I wanted a normal child, not one with Down syndrome. Only a few days before Caleb's birth did I experience a change of heart. While walking along the ocean near our home, the thought suddenly came to me, "If this child has some kind of problem, he needs me." My thoughts had turned from what $I$ wanted to the needs of our child, and acceptance washed over my heart like the ocean waves sweeping over the sand before me. The fight was over. God won, and great was my joy. Not long after, Caleb was born, perfectly healthy.

While pregnant with Joshua two years later I refused the special blood tests, wanting to enjoy the pregnancy. And I did. How unexpectedly came the news only minutes after his birth: "He has Down syndrome." I could see in my mind a book on a shelf, once read. Taking the book in my hands, as it were, I opened it to the chapter and lesson learned two years earlier: This baby needs me. Our Father in Heaven had prepared me for his coming.

The morning after Joshua's birth, my husband Darrell came into the hospital room with a story. Our oldest son Luke, then nine years old, had asked his father on the way to school, "Dad, if God were to say to you, 'Which would you rather have-a child like Joshua or a normal child?' What would you say?"

Darrell's response: "What would you say, Luke?"
"I would say to God," Luke replied, 'Whatever you want, that's what I want."

Do you know what those words were to me? They were just what I needed to hear. No, more than that-they were just what my response needed to be: "Whatever you want, that's what $I$ want." Joshua, like every child, was a gift from God, ${ }^{1}$ and God was enabling us to accept his gift.

[^18]Still, we had to endure a "season" of grief and disappointment. It was as if the child we had been hoping for had died-we needed time to grieve the loss of that child. It was kind of like going through a storm that lasted for a while. Eventually, the storm passed, the sky cleared, and the sun shone once again.

Accepting the circumstances that God brought into our lives did not occur in a single moment, but over a long period of time. Many times God used his word to answer some of the deep questions of our hearts and to teach us truths that have instructed and guided us about having a child with special needs.

We have learned that God takes responsibility for how Joshua was made. One day while reading the story of Moses at the burning bush, I was struck with God's words to him: "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, Yahweh?"

Can you believe it? God was unashamedly taking responsibility for children who are born blind, deaf, and mute! It seemed reasonable to draw from that passage the truth that God was also taking responsibility for the way Joshua was formed in my womb. I cannot understand this. I only know that God can never be accused of doing wrong, ${ }^{2}$ and that his will for us is "good, pleasing, and perfect. ${ }^{י 3}$

We also believe that there is purpose in Joshua's life. One day I read a question Jesus' disciples asked him about a ce-tain blind man: "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

His disciples believed, like the people of that day, that there was a direct relationship between the man's or his parents' $\sin$ and this man's blindness. Jesus' answer must have surprised them: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

What wonderful news for that man and his family! The man's blindness was not a punishment for wrongdoing; instead, it was an opportunity for the work of God to be seen in his life. Likewise, there

[^19]is purpose in Joshua's having physical and mental problems-"that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

One way we have seen the work of God displayed in his life is in his personality and character. For example, he freely expresses praise to God. Sometimes while riding along on a moto, in the car, or playing at home, Joshua sings unaware and not caring that others may be watching and listening, and not attempting to draw attention to himself (though like every child, he is quite capable of doing that, too!). One day while walking along a road he sang over and over again, in a loud voice, "Oh the blood of Jesus, oh the blood of Jesus, it washes white as snow." Now there is a message that needs to be heard! The psalmist says, "From the lips of infants and children you have ordained praise." ${ }^{4}$

Joshua has a simple but strong trust in Jesus. One day last summer we were climbing a long, steep set of wooden stairs in the country. Joshua was getting tired, but we still had a long way to go. He started saying over and over, "Come on, Jesus; come on, Jesus...." until finally we reached the top. And then he burst into a heart-felt, "Praise the Lord!"

Another way we see the work of God in his life is through his compassion for people. One day while playing alone in our yard, he noticed a boy leading a blind man down our dirt road. Joshua rân to our bedroom, grabbed a twenty-dollar bill from our desk drawer (without permission) and ran to the front gate calling after them, "Boy! Boy!" His heart was touched by their need.

He is also very patient-both with himself and with others. His speech is not so clear as the normal child, and sometimes I cannot understand what he is saying. I may ask him again and again to repeat it, or to explain to me using other words. Joshua never shows impatience with this process. He keeps at it until I understand. I wish I were more like he.

He is very friendly, accepting, and loving. While riding by motodope on a Phnom Penh street, Joshua may call out a friendly, "Hello!" to some stranger. People are attracted to one whom they

[^20]sense loves and accepts them. Yes, he feels and expresses anger like the rest of us, but he is also very quick to forgive. These are some of the gifts that Joshua brings to the human family. And these are sonie of the ways in which, as different as he is from what we think of as normal, "the work of God [is displayed] in his life."

Over the years, on many occasions, God has shown his protection over this child who does not understand danger as well as other children. We have always had to be very careful about making sure that our home (and wherever else he may be) is a safe place for him.

In 1997 he found his way to the peak of a villa roof in Phnom Penh. Thankfully, he was discovered by another child and rescued, unhurt, by our oldest son. The message God communicated to my heart after that frightening experience was: "I am watching over Joshua." Is this not also "the work of God displayed in his life"?

In 1999 we were visiting our home country. I remember speaking in a church one Sunday in July about how God had proven his protection of our family. I went on to say with deep conviction, "And even if one of us were to be hurt or killed, he is still God and we will still trust him."

That very afternoon about twenty of us were walking up and down the streets of that city, searching for Joshua. He had wandered away during a backyard picnic. The name of the city is Lynn, and a local proverb warns, "Lynn, Lynn, the city of sin. You don't come out the way you went in." As we searched I remembered what I had so boldly asserted in church that morning, and cried out to God, "Are you going to make me live out those words this very day?"

Thank God, he did not. After what seemed like an eternity, Joshua turned up at the police station. Someone had seen this little boy about to cross a busy street, took his hand, and led him to a safe place ... where his father found him and brought him back to his family.

When my husband came home with Joshua and I took him in my arms, I could not help but cry tears of utter relief. Joshua put his little arms around me and said a tender and heartfelt, "Sorry, Mom." We give glory to God who displays his work in the life of a child whose ability to understand is not as great as most children.

Quite honestly, Joshua's lowered mental ability has been the most difficult thing for me to accept. As I have considered the reason for this over the years, I believe it has to do with society's silent (though loud and clear) message that the mentally retarded are less valuable.

I needed the truths of God's word to battle this lie. Both the creation story in Genesis and the story of salvation throughout the Bible paint a clear picture: Human beings have far greater worth than anything else God has created. Only human beings were made in God's image and have the unique potential to have a relationship with their Creator. It was love for people that motivated God to send his son to die for people. People have value simply because their Creator has made it so.

Consider all the times Jesus spent healing people with needs in their bodies, minds, and spirits. He obviously did not consider them less valuable. He stopped, he noticed, he took the time to care for them. The message? People mattered to Jesus. And people with needs touched his heart.

Children also touched his heart. Although his disciples considered Jesus' time far too valuable to squander on little ones, Jesus made it perfectly clear that to him they mattered a great deal. "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." ${ }^{\prime 5}$

Joshua happens to be a child who is mentally retarded. But that is not a description of his worth. It just means his potential to learn is not as great as that of most children. However, he can learn and, in fact, has gone to school since he was three years old. He has always been in classes with "normal" children. This gives him the much-needed opportunity to be with other children, and gives his classmates the opportunity to relate to a person who is different from them. Of course, going to school also means that his teachers have to adjust their classroom goals and methods to fit Joshua's abilities. But Joshua's teachers have always been eager to do all they can to help him meet his potential. And that is what we see as the most important goal in formally educating him.

One of the most important aspects of educating Joshua is helping him learn good behavior. It perhaps takes more patience, persistence, and consistent effort to teach a child such as he how to conduct himself. But I have seen over the years that he can learn good behavior, and he has made much progress in this area. I am very grateful to all of his teachers who have exerted such a positive influence in this area of his life, and have helped us to expect a higher level of good behavior from him.

I remember when Joshua first went to school in Phnom Penh his teacher asked, "What do you do to help Joshua obey?" Thankfully, by that time I had learned that there was one thing Joshua disliked almost more than anything else, and that was a "consequence." Even at his young age he understood well its meaning: Something he would not want to experience.

A "consequence" might be having to sit alone for a while, not being allowed to play with a friend or his favorite toys, losing some special sweet cookie or cake after a meal, or not being able to watch television. The most important thing about a "consequence" is that it has to be something he would not want to endure. These particular "consequences" are meaningful for Joshua because he is a boy who loves being with people, playing with friends, playing with toys, eating sweets, and watching television.

An effective "consequence" not only has to be an undesired event, but it has to occur soon after the unacceptable behavior. For example, if Joshua is misbehaving now, the "consequence" must occur as soon as possible so that he understands the connection between his undesired behavior and the "consequence."

Whenever I say the words, "Joshua, do you want a consequence?" I better have one in mind in case his behavior does not improve. When I first started using this method of correction, I often had to impose a "consequence." It was as if Joshua were saying, "I don't really believe you will do anything that I don't like." Now he believes me and rarely tests me when I ask him the question.

However, he does have a stubborn streak. Occasionally, he acts like a cow that stands still and refuses to budge no matter how hard one tries to move it. In fact, the more one prods the cow, the
more firmly it resists! At such times, the best thing for Joshua is to be alone until his stubborn streak quiets down within him.

Finally, I must be careful not to overuse the "consequence" method. Like cloth that will wear out from constant use, this method of correcting his behavior will no longer be useful if I ask the question too frequently.

Sometimes I have to think about why Joshua's behavior is not appropriate on a given occasion. Recently his teacher called me from school at lunchtime. "Joshua and another boy were in the changing room after swimming," she said. "We heard Joshua screaming and ran inside. They had been hitting each other." We never learned from Joshua why he was so angry with the other boy. Joshua only said, "He hit me."

When his doctor heard this story several days later she asked, "Was the other boy a new student?"

Surprised, I replied, "Yes. How did you know?"
"Of course he was a new student," was all she said.
His teacher told me, "When Joshua is saying or doing something the other children know is naughty, his friends who know him well say, 'Don't pay any attention to him.' They understand at their young age that he just wants their attention, so they are making a very wise decision: Ignore him!"

When Joshua has a sudden, unusually strong outburst of improper behavior, I have learned to ask myself, "Is he getting sick?" I have observed this enough times to keep this question in the back of my mind. Of course, Joshua is also capable of becoming angry with another child just like all children. We try to understand the cause of the outburst. In the case of the changing room story, I learned a few days later that he had an ear infection and was, indeed, sick. That may have been the cause of his outburst of anger. And then again, maybe not. Sometimes we just don't know.

We simply do not have all the answers about how to raise this child ... or any of our children for that matter. We pray for God to give us wisdom. He loves to answer that request. ${ }^{6}$

[^21]We do not know Joshua's potential. God does. He knows his plans for our son. ${ }^{7}$ We are filled with hope, not because of what he may accomplish in the eyes of men, but because we believe the words of Jesus: "This happened that the work of God might be displayed in his life." ${ }^{8}$

Now when I think of how I fought with God over receiving a child like Joshua ... well, I smile. He has turned out to be an unexpectedly precious gift. "As for God, His way is perfect."? To God be the glory!

${ }^{7}$ Jer 29:11.
${ }^{8}$ Jn 9:3.
${ }^{9}$ Ps 18:30.




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# Responding to The Rape of Cambodian Children 

Steve GOURLEY

Every day of every year, in the villages and communities of Cambodia, children as young as three are sexually assaulted. Many are tricked or sold into prostitution; others end up working in brothels as a result of desperate poverty or similar overwhelming problems. What is not as widely known, however, is that countless more children from all walks of life are being raped in their own homes, villages, and communities, to the extent that rape has perhaps become the most common threat to the well-being of Cambodian children today. Consider these statistics compiled by LICADHO, a non-political, nonreligious human rights organization working in fourteen provinces across Cambodia:' more than half ( $60 \%$ ) of all the cases investigated by LICADHO's child rights department in 1999 and 2000 were rape and indecent assault. The average age of victims was only twelve, while nearly one-fourth (23\%) were committed against children under

[^24]ten; the youngest had only reached her third birthday. In 2001 the situation did not improve, with rape and indecent assault continuing to be the highest reported child rights violation ( 126 cases), followed by physical abuse/torture (48 cases), trafficking (buying and selling children- 16 cases) and murder ( 15 cases).

These statistics refer to the number of cases investigated by LICADHO, and do not prove that the rape of children is on the rise in Cambodia. However, they do indicate that 1) sexual assault of children is not limited to commercial sexual exploitation, and 2) the rape of children in their own homes and communities is a serious issue affecting children all over the country. It may also be true that, since many cases doubtless go unreported, the statistics indicate a growing threat to Cambodia's children. Any such growth could be fueled in part by the increasing availability of pornography (both printed and video), as many perpetrators involved in cases investigated by LICADHO claimed they had watched or were acting out pornographic images they had viewed.

What is clearer is that rape affects children of all ages and from every ethnic, social, and economic background. Those who are most at risk include street children, stepchildren, "adopted" children, physically and mentally handicapped children, and those in prison. However, LICADHO's experience indicates that any child-not only the poor or vulnerable-can become a victim of rape.

If then this is a serious threat to our children, what should we do? Will we allow the rape of our daughters, sisters, and nieces (and in some cases sons and nephews) to continue? What should be our response as Christians, and as parents, family, and community members? This is a difficult question, but we can all begin by being informed of the issue, sensitive to survivors, and proactive in protecting and supporting children.

## Be Informed

"Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my works or swerve from them. Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her and she will watch over you. " As Christians, we are called to seek out knowledge and understanding in order to know the Lord's will and to know how to live safely and wisely in this world. Therefore, the first step in responding to the rape of children is to become wellinformed about the issue.

## What is Rape?

Because rape is a crime involving sexual acts, it is rarely discussed openly and in detail. As a result the definition of rape is often not understood, even among police and other authorities. Article 33 of the Cambodian Penal Code, adopted in 1992 during the UNTAC period, states:
"Rape is any sexual act involving penetration against a nonconsenting person".

Although not specifically defined, the word "penetration" here refers to the insertion of a person's penis, finger, other body part, or other object, into another person's vagina or anus. The degree of penetration (whether deep or shallow) is unimportant; if any penetration has occurred without consent, then a rape has taken place. If a person intends to commit penetration and is unsuccessful for any reason, he is guilty of attempted rape, which is equally punishable by Article $33 .{ }^{3}$

[^25]
## Types of Rape Violations

Rape can occur with a variety of attendant circumstances:

1) Sexual Assault with Violence, Threat, or Weapons: This is rape accompanied by violence such as beating, torture, etc., or the use of verbal threats or weapons to intimidate the victim. These cause further trauma to the victim, and thus can result in harsher penalties for perpetrators.
2) Rape and Murder: In some cases rape victims are killed either as a result of the physical abuse caused by the act, or in order to protect the perpetrator from arrest. In one case investigated by LICADHO, a four-year-old girl was raped and murdered.
3) Gang Rape: A gang rape is one involving three or more perpetrators, again inflicting severe trauma on the victim. Human rights workers believe such cases are on the increase, again possibly because of the wider availability of pornography and/or the growing number of gangs in Cambodia.
4) Rape Involving Accomplices: There appears to be a growing number of women who actively help their husbands, boyfriends, and others trick young girls so that they can be easily raped, possibly in order to prevent these men from going to prostitutes and later infecting their wives or girlfriends.

## Who Are The Perpetrators?

Just as children of all ages and backgrounds can be victims of rape, perpetrators also come from all ages, occupations, and roles in communities. As in child trafficking (buying and selling children for labor, sexual, or other purposes), perpetrators often know the child beforehand, coming from within the family (fathers, uncles, or even brothers), or from within the child's community, such as neighbors or others working nearby. Even the church-both its members and its leaders-is not exempt from harboring potential or actual rapists, and must take steps to safeguard its members. A majority of cases
investigated by LICADHO ${ }^{4}$ have been farmers or fishermen, (30\%), followed by government employees (police, soldiers, or MPs, 17\%), "other" occupations (landlords, moto-drivers, doctors, goldsmiths, etc., $14 \%$ ). Disturbingly, a significant number of rapists are students (14\%), with some as young as thirteen. Combined with the fact that the average age of perpetrators was twenty-five, this indicates that parents, schools, and churches need to give serious and immediate attention to instructing boys and young men about respecting girls and women.

## Laws and Penalties Against Rape

In Cambodia, rape is a criminal offense punishable by law. As such, victims and their families have the right to file criminal charges against perpetrators, both in order to provide justice to the victim as well as to protect other women and children from being raped in the future. Persons found guilty of rape are punishable by imprisonment. According to Article 33 of the Penal Code, punishments for rapists include the following:

> Minimum Punishment: 5-10 years imprisonment
> Rape Accompanied by Fraud, Violence, or Threat: 10-15 years imprisonment
> Rape Committed by a Person in a Position of Authority over the Victim (such as police, employer, etc.): 10-15 years imprisonment
> Rape against a Minor (person under 16 years old): Double the above prison term(s).

## Be Sensitive

Because it is such a little discussed and understood topic, there are many misunderstandings about the causes of rape and its impact on its victims. Thus many people (even parents) often accuse victims of doing something to cause or allow the rape to occur. As a result they are also insensitive to the feelings and needs of survivors, and

[^26]deny them the support they need to recover. As Christian parents, relatives, or church and community members, we of all people should be understanding and compassionate to victims, and know how to appropriately support them. This begins with understanding some of the incorrect beliefs people have about rape and its impact on women and children.

## Four Myths regarding Rape

Myth \#1: Women provoke rape by suggestive dress, provocative behavior, being alone at night, etc.
Truth: No type of dress or behavior gives a man the right to sexually assault a women or child.
This myth wrongly shifts the blame from the perpetrator to the victim, and ignores the fact that young children who are raped do not yet possess the maturity to intentionally dress or behave provocatively.
Myth \#2: Men are unable to control their sexual desires, making rape a spontaneous assault.
Truth: Studies in the United States and England show that most rapes are entirely or partly planned, with only $15 \%$ being spontaneous.
While many believe that rapists are sexually starved, these studies also show that many perpetrators are either married or involved in consenting relationships with girlfriends, prostitutes, etc.

Myth \#3: Most rapists are strangers to their victims.
Truth: The majority of rapes are committed by people known to the victim.
Of the cases investigated by LICADHO, $68 \%$ were committed by someone who knew the victim well (relatives or others living in the household, boyfriends, neighbors, and friends), while only $25 \%$ were committed by casual acquaintances or strangers.
Myth \#4: Many women falsely accuse men of rape.
Truth: Rape is one of the most under-reported of all serious crimes.
A study in the US indicated that only $2 \%$ of reported rapes were false claims. In Cambodia, it is also unlikely that a women or
child would make a false accusation of rape for three reasons: 1) the shame and embarrassment associated with rape and sexual activity in Khmer culture make it embarrassing to admit to family and friends, and put her reputation and chances of marriage at risk; 2) the insensitive treatment of rape cases by authorities make it a difficult experience to file charges; and 3) fear and mistrust of the legal system cause many women to believe they will not receive justice. In light of these difficulties, it is unlikely that a Cambodian woman or girl would lie about a rape. ${ }^{5}$

Because of the above myths, accusations of rape are often not taken seriously within the family, the village or community. However, the fact is that rape is an inexcusable crime and grievous sin against God.

## The Impact of Rape on Victims

This is the true story of "Thany" (all names of persons appearing in case studies have been changed):

In 1999, seven-year-old Thany was invited to play at her neighbor's house by another young girl named "Dara." She was reluctant to go, and said later that Dara's thirteen-year-old brother had raped Thany on at least three prior occasions. Urged by her mother. Thany went with Dara to play. After playing for a while, Dara suggested they go to the pond to wash, and when they finished washing. Thany rushed to go home, but Dara called to her brother that Thany was getting away.

The brother came and caught Thany, covered her mouth and dragged her to some nearby palm trees. He then told Dara to go get a mat and three kramas (scarves). Then the boy called over two of his friends, aged twelve and thirteen. Once Dara laid out a mat, the three boys forced Thany to lie down on it and tied a scarfaround her mouth,

[^27]then tied her hands to the end of a piece of wood which they laid across her chest. They tied her legs apart, then each boy proceeded to rape her, two times each. While this was going on, Dara was sitting a short distance away watching and keeping look out.

The boys then took Thany to the pond and again tied her and raped her two times each. Thany was traumatized by the ordeal and has experienced emotional problems since then. She also suffered injuries to her genital area which required medical treatment. LICADHO investigators intervened to get the police to arrest the boys, who until then were still living freely in the village near to the victim. During the investigation it was discovered that the three boys had been watching pornography at a local video bar, and it appears they copied actions they had seen on video.

Think for a moment about how you would feel if you were Thany: 1) during the rape, 2) after the rape, and 3) while telling family members, police, and the court about the experience. How would you think about yourself, the perpetrators, the friend who had betrayed you, and your future?

Perhaps because of the myths described above and the disturbing nature of the crime, many people do not reflect deeply on how a rape victim may feel. As a result there is a serious lack of understanding about the traumatic effects of sexual assault on the life of a victim, All parts of society must be educated as to the physical and psychological impacts of rape on women and children such as Thany. These can include the following:

## 1. Physical Effects

- Physical injury inflicted by the assailant
- Possible infection of HIV/AIDS
- Other sexually transmitted diseases (gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes simplex, urinary tract infections and polyps)
- Unwanted pregnancy, or pregnancy in very young girls
- Nausea, fatigue, tension headaches, abdominal pain, and vaginal pain.


## 2. Psychological Effects

- Severe anxiety, fear, depression, guilt, self-blame, loneliness, anger, aggressiveness
- Humiliation, shame, embarrassment, lack of self-confidence, helplessness
- Decrease in appetite; chronic bed-wetting,
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide

In 2002, Chenda, an eight-year-old girl was raped twice by a neighbor who told her not to tell anyone or else he would kill her. One day when her mother was bathing her, she noticed something was wrong and questioned her daughter. When Chenda refused to tell her, both her mother and father beat her with an electric cord. She then admitted she had been raped, and was terrified the man would find out and hurt her. Her family says that she is now very scared of other people as. well. and would like her to receive counseling to overcome this.

In 2001, Sophal, a seven-year-old girl, was severaly raped, beaten, and locked in a secret location for several days. When she was found, she was unconscious because she had lost so much blood, and needed emergency hospitalization. Currently she has nightmares and wets her bed at night, is afraid of people (especially men), is scared to go anywhere without her mother, and therefore has not been attending school. When playing with her brothers and sisters, she can suddenly become angry and aggressive. Counsellors who have been meeting with Sophal note that ifshe is not given the opportunity to talk about and express her feelings about being raped, she will express them in other ways, for example in her play.

In 2000. Sophea. a fifteen-year-old girl, was gang raped by fourteen young gang members in her village. She was severely beaten during the rape, resulting in bruises and internal injuries to her genitals. After the experience, Sopheà suffered recurring nightmares, intense fear of being alone; and bouts of crying.

Long-term effects of rape may include personality changes, lack of trust, pessimism about the future, loss of confidence, and distrust
of adults. Community relationships also are affected, as girls who lose their virginity in Khmer culture suffer greatly damaged reputations, putting them at risk of discrimination by friends and neighbors, and greatly reducing their chances of marriage. Studies have also found that rape victims are at a much higher risk of being raped again or to be sold or coerced into prostitution than other girls in the community.

These are clearly life-altering effects upon the victim, and also impact the victim's family. However, even if the above effects are not immediately apparent, it does not necessarily mean they are not there or that she is recovering well. She may be repressing (trying to forget) the experience, or hiding her feelings for fear of being misunderstood. In any case, it is important that we as family, community, and church members are aware of what survivors such as Thany may be experiencing, and show unconditional Christian love, acceptance, and support.

## Be Proactive

To be "proactive". means that you take action to prevent problems before they happen, or if a problem has already occurred, to take personal responsibility for solving it to the best of your ability. With such a sensitive and disturbing issue as child rape, it is easier to deny or ignore it rather than to confront it and become involved in protecting children. But as Christians called to engage with and minister to the world, we are to be proactive and address the holistic needs of children and adults. Blessed with wisdom, spiritual gifts of various kinds and, most of all, love, we have already been equipped by God to respond to the issue of child rape. And all of us, in our roles as parents, relatives, church, or community members, can be proactive in the following ways:

## Parents and Families:

- Discuss with your daughters, in a way appropriate for their age and understanding, about the problem of sexual abuse. ${ }^{3}$ Let them know that it is not right for any adult to touch or molest them sexually, to be wary of going alone to quiet places,
and to run for help if they fear they will be molested in any way.
- Let them know that they are always free to talk to you about their problems, and that if they are ever raped you will be there to love, listen and support them unconditionally.
- Know and watch for any physical or psychological signs that your child has been raped (as listed above), and if you suspect they have been, gently provide them the opportunity to tell you. Do not force them, as this may add to the trauma. Eventually they will tell you or another person they trust if given enough opportunities.
- Consider, after discussing with your child, reporting the incident to the police, the Ministry of Women and Veteran's Affairs, human rights groups such as LICADHO, or other NGOs such as the Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre. ${ }^{6}$ Filing a complaint may lead to the arrest of the perpetrator and prevent other children from suffering the same experience.


## Churches:

- Inform church members of the problem by sharing, in an appropriate way, time and place, the myths, truth, and impacts of rape on both women and children. Reading portions of this article in a small women's group, for instance, and then discussing, is one way to do this.
- Show Christian love and support of various kinds to survivors of rape. Do this without gossiping of their experience or embarrassing them; simply showing the child you love and

[^28]value them is enough in most cases. In this way they will know the church is a place of healing and acceptance, and experience the love of God through their church family.

## Communities:

- Inform your neighbors, community leaders and local authorities of the problem by sharing, again in an appropriate way, the myths, truth, and impacts of rape. After they understand the issue they can join with you in protecting and supporting children.
- Watch out for the children in your community, taking care that they do not place themselves at risk by going alone to distant or quiet places, or by hanging out with suspicious men or youth.
- If you hear that a child has been raped, discuss privately with the child and her parents about reporting the incident to the police, a human rights organization like LICADHO or another NGO working with women or children. Let them know that legal and social assistance is available through them, and encourage them to seek justice and protect other children by filing charges against the perpetrator.
- Again and most importantly, show love and acceptance to survivors in your community by not gossiping about their experience or treating them in any way which would embarrass or demean them. Value them as you would value any child, for God loves all children unconditionally, no matter what they have experienced.

In conclusion, as Christians with wisdom, gifts and faith, we of all people can-and should-be proactive in protecting our children from falling victim to rape, and in loving and supporting victims in their recovery. If we are informed, sensitive and proactive, and involve the Lord in our efforts, we can do this by his power and grace.


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## Confronting

## Pornography: Choosing Life

Glenn MILES

Pornography is one of those things hard for Christians in the West to get upset about. It's a bit like drinking alcohol. Although it is acceptable for an anti-smoker to politely ask someone else to refrain from smoking, a person who admits to being a teetotaler is considered rather uptight. Similarly, if someone says something against pornography he or she might be considered prudish. In postmodern America and Europe, women's magazines increasingly urge women to get used to the fact that their boyfriends use pornography, and not get too upset by it. Viewing "girlie" magazines is considered a normal part of growing up. "Boys will be boys." So fathers are reluctant to educate their children on the dangers of pornography, even if they are aware of the pull and pain it causes even themselves.

Sex sells, and it's here to stay. MTV, spread by satellite and cable to the most remote corners of the earth, not only globalizes a culture of music and fashion, but normalizes a culture in which sex is a commodity that can be demanded.

In many cultures traditional values have kept sex secret, and in many Muslim countries modesty is considered so sacred that the whole female body, apart from slits for the eyes, is covered in a bourdkar. The Western media is horrified, but advocates of the system say that it honors women and provides them a form of protection.

In a country like Cambodia it is difficult to accurately estimate the effect of pornography on the culture, but it could be one of the reasons why sexual abuse and exploitation are so rampant. When I first visited the country in 1990 there were no billboards anywhere that did not promote a political agenda. But now advertising is ubiquitous, and billboards promote cigarettes and alcohol, promising success, health, and sex thereby. Unfortunately for the poor the opposite more likely results, as they use up precious resources. Furthermore the image of a perfect body that even those of us with normal healthy bodies envy is promoted. What must it do to the self-image of a person with a disability? Pornography not only exploits the person being photographed, but the viewer as well.

In the markets of Phnom Penh pirated sex videos are available for two dollars. These include not only soft porn, but portray every conceivable sexual act that most Christians have only known through ,descriptions in the Bible. Vendors make them less or more available depending on whether the authorities are clamping down, but everyone knows that anything can be resolved with some money under the table. Tourists are some of the customers, but more and more young people can be seen rummaging through cardboard boxes of explicit videos and VCDs.

It is difficult to prove that pornography leads to an increase in rape and sexual exploitation, but scripture indicates that it leads the voyeur down a slippery slope. Proverbs describes a set of doors. One is the doorway of a prostitute, where she calls out to those who pass by with promises of secret delights, but the guests who have entered the doorway are described as "dead" and "in the depths of Sheol."

A different doorway can be chosen for those who listen to the Lord. ${ }^{2}$ Those who watch daily at these doors can find wisdom, and "whoever finds me finds life." One door leads to life, the other to death. The passage goes on to describe some of the other consequences of choosing the wrong door--"those who miss me injure themselves, all who hate me love death." Pornography leads to death.

[^32]Christians may convince themselves that pornography is better than adultery because it affects only them, but those who have slowly, unwittingly become addicted to pornography will tell you how it destroyed their marriages and other relationships. I would suggest that missionaries and Christian workers are particularly vulnerable to this misconception and, using the excuse of needing to obtain information from the internet, are vulnerable to entering the private fantasy world of internet pornography.

So what does pornography do to a society? Although it is difficult to prove, I would suggest the following results stem from people wanting to experiment with sexual behavior they have seen:

- An increase in rape and sexual abuse in and outside the home
- An increase in the use of prostitutes
- An increase in the incidence of HIV/AIDS.

At the 2001 Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia Youth Conference, one hundred forty-five attendees completed a survey on pornography, though each respondent did not necessarily answer all the questions. One hundred one males and-forty-four females participated in the survey; forty-four were age 18 or under, fifty-three were age 19-21, and thirty-six were over age 22. Twelve respondents did not state their age.

The survey was completely confidential; completed forms were dropped anonymously in a box. The group was informed that the overall results would be made available to pastors and others involved in sex education after they had been analyzed.

One of the most interesting results of this survey concerned pornography. The number of males who have looked at pornographic literature increased according to age-from $27 \%$ below 18 years, to $38 \%$ at $19-21$ years, to $47.2 \%$ at 22 years or over. However, among the females we find a different but disturbing trend--29.5\% of girls under 18 years say they have read pornographic literature, compared to $6 \%$ for ages $19-21$, and $3 \%$ for ages 22 and over. This may indicate that the aggressive advertising campaigns and lowering costs of literature aimed at girls may be proving successful.

Here are some further results of the survey:

|  | Males | Females |
| :--- | ---: | ---: |
| Have viewed pornographic video | $33 \%$ | $3.5 \%$ |
| Have viewed pornography on the web | $2 \%$ | $0 \%$ |
| Have previously attended a sex education <br> seminar | $28 \%$ | $14.5 \%$ |
| Source of sex education | $34 \%$ | $12 \%$ |
| parents | $19 \%$ | $5.5 \%$ |
| another relative | $50 \%$ | $17.2 \%$ |
| teachers | $28 \%$ | $2 \%$ |
| friends | $43 \%$ | $19 \%$ |
| pastor | $14.5 \%$ | $3.5 \%$ |
| magazines | $35 \%$ | $13 \%$ |
| videos | $16 \%$ | $2 \%$ |
| Know others their age who have had sex <br> before marriage | $4 \%$ | $1.5 \%$ |
| Have had sex outside of marriage before <br> becoming a Christian | $2 \%$ <br> Have had sex outside marriage since <br> becoming a Christian |  |

Comparing statistics in the last two rows would seem to indicate that young people are influenced by their belief in Christianity. However it should be noted that the number of young people who refused to answer the last question was $22 \%$, compared to $7.3 \%$ for the previous question.

It may be instructive to repeat this survey in future conferences, compare results, and note trends. This information could be used in the development of curriculum by the EFC Youth Commission and Servants, both of which are partners of Tearfund.

The results should stimulate pastors both to provide education themselves and to encourage Christian parents to do so. But they should also urge us to do something about the pornography industry.

In Cambodia, the Prime Minister has expressed concern about the growth of pornography, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia is planning a march against pornography later this year. They are also conducting Ruth and Boaz seminars for church youth on sexual awareness and appropriateness in relationships.

One problem with sexual exploitation here is that Cambodians sometimes blame either the UN soldiers in 1993 or today's tourists for the current level of sexual abuse and exploitation. But the fact is that it is happening in average "normal" Cambodian villages. It is probably also happening in Christian churches. It is easy to point the finger at others, but arguably more profitable to first remove the planks from our own eyes.

On an individual level we all need to take responsibility to protect ourselves and others. Internet screening is possible with software and programs that can be downloaded from the internet, e.g. surfonthesafeside.com. We can choose where we go and what we read. We can educate our children about sex before someone else does it for us. We can be role models in our relationships with our spouses and the way that we develop and maintain relationships with the opposite sex. We can lobby against child pornography through organizations such as Childnet (nigel@childnet-int.org). In short, we can choose life.




























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[^0]:    'William Sears, Christian Parenting \& Child Care (Nashville: Broadman \& Holman, 1997), 328.

[^1]:    ${ }^{2}$ Gen 1:27.

[^2]:    ${ }^{7}$ Sears, Christian Parenting, 332.

[^3]:    "Chapman and Campbell, Five Love Languages, 7.

[^4]:    ${ }^{12}$ See Heb 12:10-11.

[^5]:    William Sears, Christian Parenting \& Child Care (Nashville: Broadman \& Holman, 1997), 328.

[^6]:    

[^7]:    ${ }^{\pi}$ Sears, Christian Parenting, 332.

[^8]:    

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[^10]:    'Nigel Poulton of World Concern, personal communication.

[^11]:    ${ }^{3} 1$ Cor 12:22-23, 27.
    ${ }^{4}$ Gen 1:26.
    ${ }^{5}$ Eph. 4:13.
    ${ }^{6}$ Col. 2:9.
    ${ }^{7}$ Nancy Lane, personal communication.
    ${ }^{8} 1$ Cor 1:25-31.

[^12]:    ${ }^{9} E x 4: 10-11$.
    ${ }^{10} 2$ Cor 12:9.
    "Faith Bowers, 1996.
    ${ }^{12}$ Taylor \& McCloughry, 1998.
    ${ }^{13}$ Isa 53:5.

[^13]:    ${ }^{14}$ Helander, 1993.

[^14]:    - Nigel Poulton of World Corncer, personal communication.

[^15]:    * Hartley, Sally, and Sheilah Wirz, 1993.
    
    
    

[^16]:    
    
    90 Faith Bowers, 1996.

[^17]:    ${ }^{99}$ Faith Bowers, 1996.
    ${ }^{2}$ Taylor \& McCloughry, 1998.
    

[^18]:    'Ps 127:3-5.

[^19]:    ${ }^{2}$ Deut 32:4.
    ${ }^{3}$ Rom 12:2.

[^20]:    ${ }^{4}$ Ps 8:2.

[^21]:    ${ }^{6}$ Jas 1:5.

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[^24]:    'Portions of this article have been taken directly from the report "Crimes in the Community: Rape and Indecent Assault in Cambodia" by Diane O'Connell, published in 2001 by The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights--LICADHO.

[^25]:    ${ }^{2}$ Prov 4:5-6.
    ${ }^{3}$ Indecent Assault, on the other hand, is a separate crime, defined by Article 42 of the Penal Code as "touching, caressing or any other sexual act not involving penetration". Here it is understood that the intention was not to penetrate, therefore such an act would not be considered rape or attempted rape. Indecent assault is still a crime, however, punishable by imprisonment of 1-3 years.

[^26]:    ${ }^{4}$ Unless otherwise indicated, all statistics are compiled from cases investigated by LICADHO during 1999 and 2000.

[^27]:    ${ }^{5}$ While thus statistically unlikely that a Cambodian woman would falsely accuse a man of rape, it could happen. Here as elsewhere, any defendant should be presumed innocent until proven guilty, and allowed his or her day in court [ed.].

[^28]:    ${ }^{6}$ National Police Hotline: 023 720555; World Vision Nevea Thmey Centre: 023 880342; Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre: 023982158 or 012 840507; LICADHO: Phnom Penh: 023 360965/217626; Banteay Meanchey: 054 958861; Battambang: 053 952828; Koh Kong: 035936116 ; Kg Cham: 042 941464; Kg Chhnang: 026 988637; Kg Speu: 025 987220; Kg Thom: 062 961292; Kompot: 033 932663; Prey Veng 043 944527; Pursat: 052 951496; Siem Reap: 063 964066; Sihanoukville: 034 933716; Svay Reang: 044 945833; Takeo: 032931360 .

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[^32]:    ${ }^{1}$ Prov 9:13-18.
    ${ }^{2}$ Prov 8:32-36.

