

ELEMENT

MAY/JUN2012

DISPATCH

SEX TRADE IN THAILAND AND HOW THE TAMAR CENTER IS LIVING MISSIONALLY



ISSUE #3

SEXTRADE IN THAILAND

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ISSUE #3

FROM THE
EDITOR

CONTENT WARNING

In this issue of *Dispatch*, we want to share what an overseas ministry is doing in the “sex destination of the world.” In Pattaya, Thailand, there is a group of missionaries who have started a ministry known as the Tamar Center. These people work tirelessly to free women from the degradation of prostitution. Recently, Jaydeen Morris went with a group of ladies to help serve the Tamar Center for a short missions trip, we asked her share to with us what is taking place. So here is my warning: what you’ll read is *real*, it is happening right *now*, and it is frustrating, sad, and *disgusting*. It is a very real need, and maybe you will be moved to help support the Tamar Center in some way.

However, what I hope you see is how the Tamar Center is living missionally... they are not going out to the bars and yelling, “SINNERS, repent!” They are doing what good missionaries do, meeting and understanding the local people while serving the people of that community. They are providing a better way to live by equipping the girls they reach with work skills that will *free* them to new opportunities. There is a process to what they are doing--they are building relationships with the girls. From the “bar ministry,” to the English class, to the jobs in their stores, they are developing a setting that fosters trust. As they show the girls that there is a better way to live, conversation naturally flows from their night job to Jesus Christ, who wants to redeem and restore their lives. Because of the trust that has already been established, they are able to share the gospel and partner with the girls on this epic journey.

At Element, you probably hear us talk about this idea of *mission*. We believe we are called to be missionaries right where God has placed us; in our families, neighborhoods, our jobs, and our community. God has us here and we are to live as missionaries to those around us. Just like an overseas missionary, we have to be strategic in building relationships with those whom God has put in our path. Our goal is to show them and tell them that there is a

**A BETTER
WAY TO
LIVE**

“Beyond them, Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs in front of their house; and next to them, Azariah son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs beside his house. Next to him, Binnui son of Henadad repaired another section, from Azariah’s house to the angle and the corner...” Nehemiah 3:23-24

better way to live. There is more to life than simply living with divorce, or sleeping around, or with addiction, loneliness, anger, stress, unhealthy habits, and self-destructive behavior.

If we’re not intentionally building relationships, we can never get to the point where we are able to meaningfully communicate such things. We won’t see what our neighbors are struggling with or understand how they are hurting. If we do not build relationships we will never be able to identify where their truths do not align with Jesus; and most sadly, we won’t care.

It might seem daunting, it might even seem impossible, this little Tamar Center in the midst of 200,000 prostitutes. How many people can they *really* reach?

Well, how many people can you and I reach individually? We must remember that it is first Jesus’ work, and if we do what we are called to do, together through Gospel-centered community, He can do great things.

Reading Nehemiah, we see an incredible story of a group of people rebuilding a wall around Jerusalem. It takes only 52 days to rebuild the wall and all of the gates because all of the people of the city got out and worked on the wall. They each took a small section of the wall, or of a single gate, and worked on just their portion. Together, *literally next to each other*, they were able to accomplish a daunting task.

This is what we speak of when we talk about living within a Gospel Community, everybody picking up their tools, where they live, and working together to accomplish Jesus’ work: reconciling others to Him.

It starts with praying for God’s heart for the lost. And then, there must be action.

Michael Reed

BUILDING RELATION- SHIPS



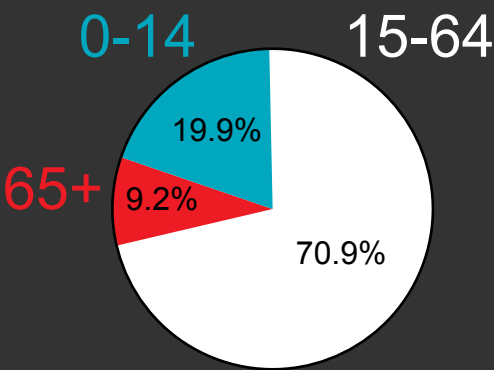
DISPATCH STATS

THAILAND. PATTAYA. SEX TRADE.

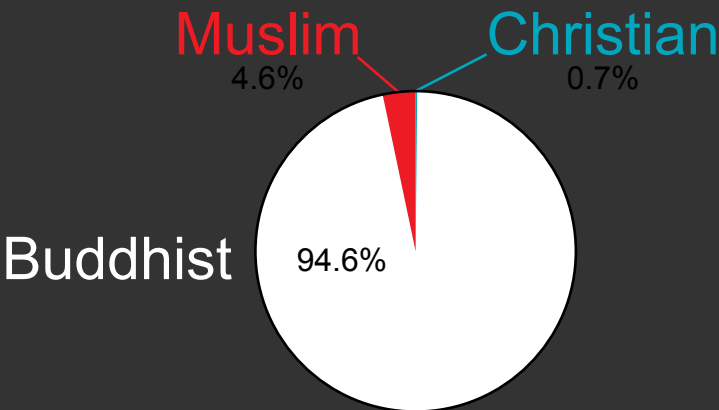
THAILAND

Population: 66,720,153
14.5 million tourists

Ages:



Religions:



PATTAYA

SEX TRADE

of Thailand's Economy

US dollars

Sex workers in Thailand

Women

Adult males

Minors

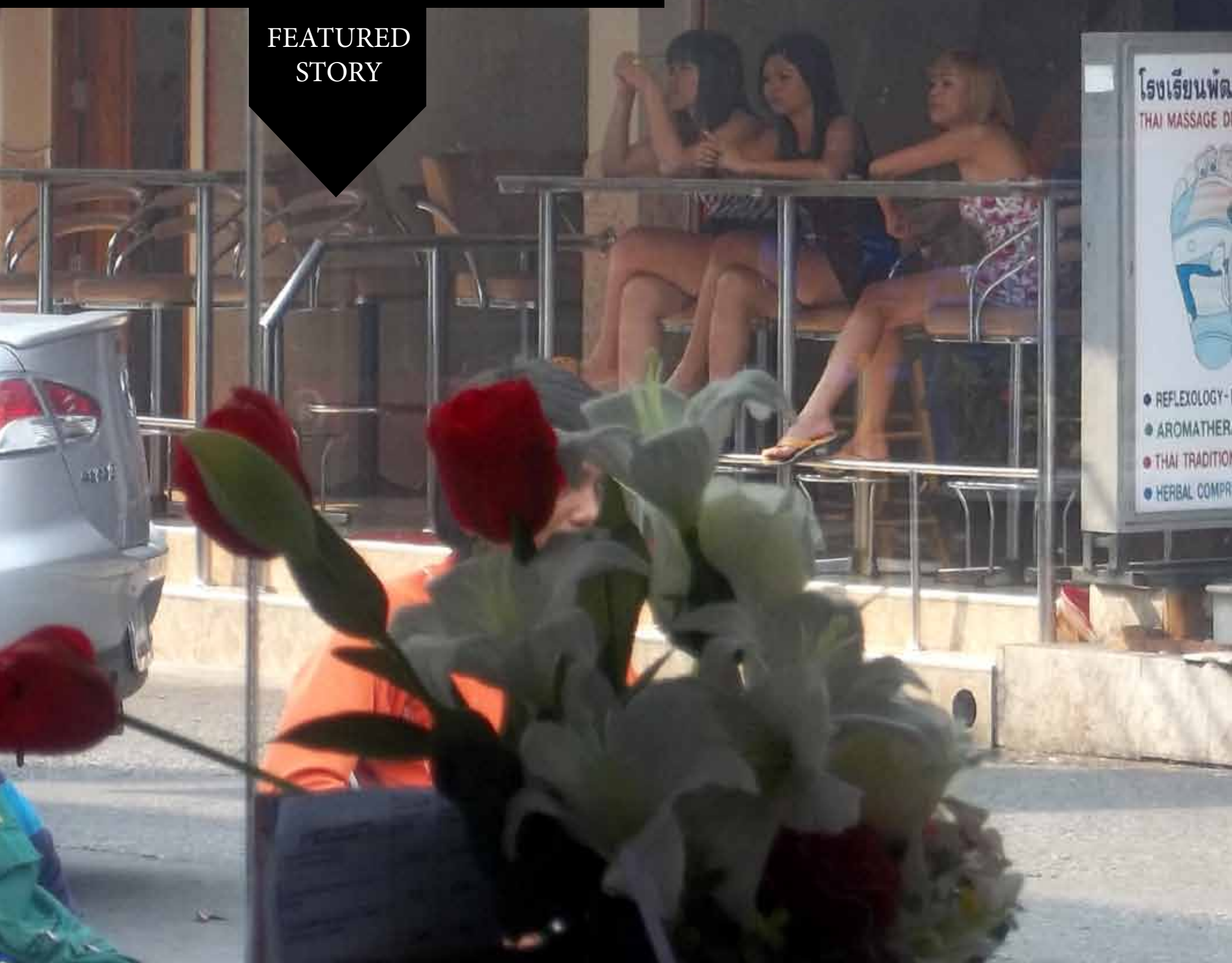
Thai living with HIV & AIDS

40%
4.3 Billion
2,800,000
2,000,000
20,000
800,000
500,000+

SEX TRADE IN THAILAND

Written by Manette Shaver

FEATURED
STORY





The country of Thailand

seems like it's a million miles away from the Central Coast of California. For some of us, it might as well be on another planet because we know nothing about the country or its people. However, when God said, "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation", that includes Thailand. While we are not all called to go to a foreign country to preach, we should be praying for the people and for missionaries of all nations.

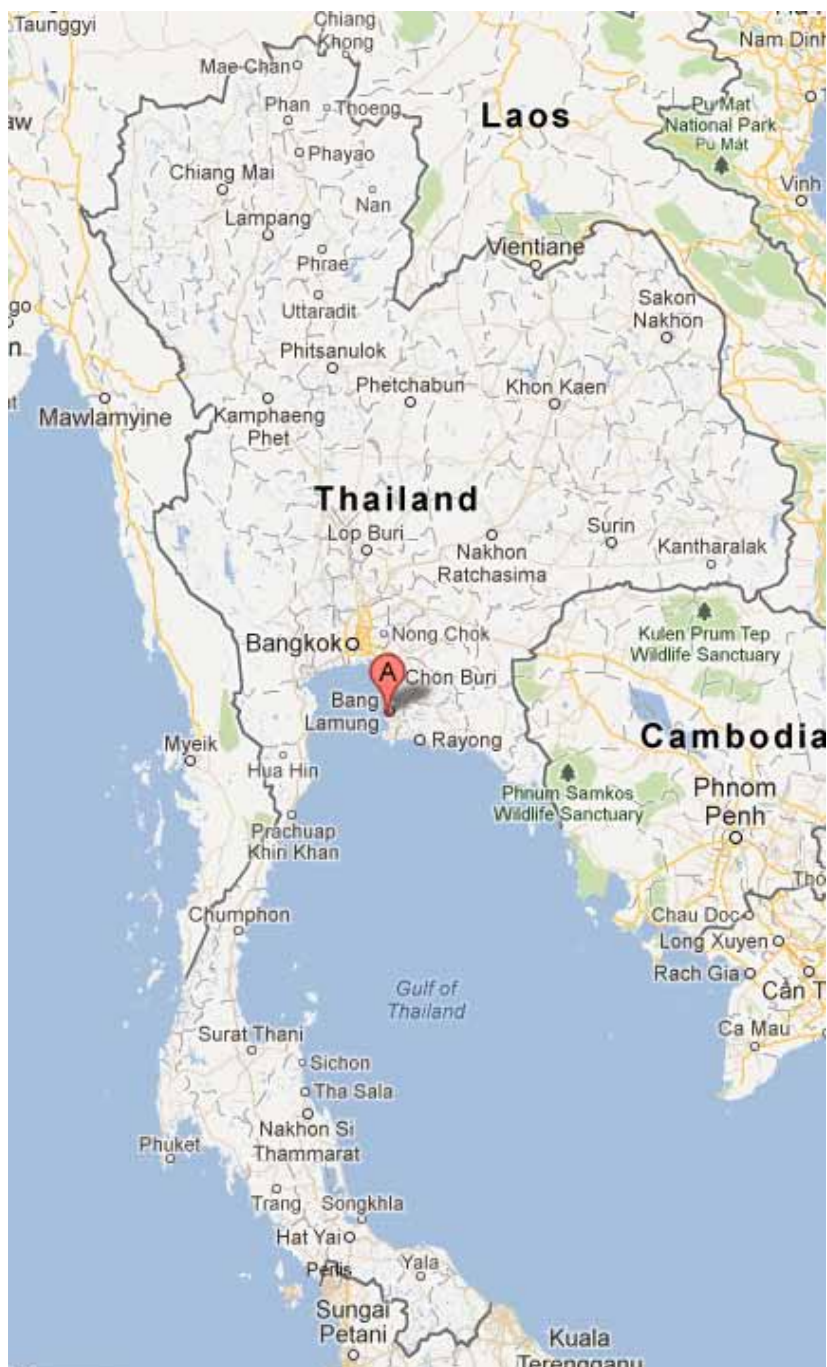
Thailand is an Asian country found in Southeast Asia. As of 2011, the estimated population was nearly sixty-seven million people in an area roughly the size of Texas. A majority of the people, about 95%, follow the Buddhist religion, and less than 1% of the population are said to be Christian. They are a country riddled with disease and infection, more so in the rural villages than in the cities. There are food and water borne bacterial diseases, dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis and avian influenza--just to name a few.

Within most cities in Thailand, there are nearly all the same modern conveniences you would find here in America such as: internet, shopping, running water, and McDonalds. Another convenience, though it may seem completely foreign to us, is prostitution. While not actually legal, it is accepted and is even partially regulated there because it benefits the economy. A study done in 2004 by Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, estimates there are nearly three million sex workers in Thailand, and about eight hundred thousand of those are children under the age of eighteen. Thailand has been coined as the sex capital of the world, and it is estimated that more than ten percent of all tourist dollars (that are reported) are spent on sex.





Left: Ladyboy
Right: Soi 6



Along the eastern banks of the Gulf of Thailand, you can find a small city called Pattaya. It is about the size of Santa Maria and has nearly a hundred thousand people who claim residency there. Pattaya is primarily known for being the sex destination of Asia. It is especially known for its large gay community in an area of Pattaya known as Boyztown and Sunee Plaza. As a result, the nightlife is consumed by gogo bars, massage parlors and hourly rate hotels. While there are only those hundred thousand or so people who claim residency within Pattaya, it is estimated that there are an additional two hundred thousand people living there periodically throughout the year working in the sex industry in one form or another. To give you an idea of how well known it is for its night life and sex trade, the New York Times says, "If Las Vegas is Sin City, then Pattaya is a bear hug from Lucifer himself."

Sex is such a big industry in Pattaya that most of the workers leave their homes and families in villages many hours away from the city to work there. In some cases, they travel ten or twelve hours in order to get to Pattaya. Many of the women resort to this lifestyle not by choice, but rather out of the necessity to provide for their families. If the man of the family passes away or just chooses to leave the family, it is left up to the woman to provide for the children and for her parents, as well. They work for months or years at a time and send the money back to their families.

Pattaya is built on the sex trade industry and forty percent of the entire economy of Thailand is attributed to this city alone. It all began when American soldiers sought fun, sun, relaxation and sex following the Vietnam War, and they quickly discovered this small fishing village provided everything they were looking for. Over the last 40 years, it has grown tremendously. Other in-

dustries within the city, such as the hotel industry and tourism, have grown based on the demand for prostitution with the mindset that sex is a recession-proof enterprise. In recent years, they have quickly found out how wrong they are. With the economy in both America and Europe being in such dire straits, tourism has begun to plummet. Business in Pattaya now realizes that without tourists and their regular western male clientele, their own economy would be in trouble. With the economies of China and India starting to boom, the Thai tourism industry is actively seeking visitors from such countries.

The girls will most commonly stand and wait in bars for a companion. These bars are typically referred to as host bars. Once a girl has been chosen, the client is then required to pay her bar tab. These bars are found all over Pattaya, but are most common on Walking Street, Soi (Street) 3 and Soi 6. Most host bars also have rooms above them that can



Girls waiting outside bar for clients

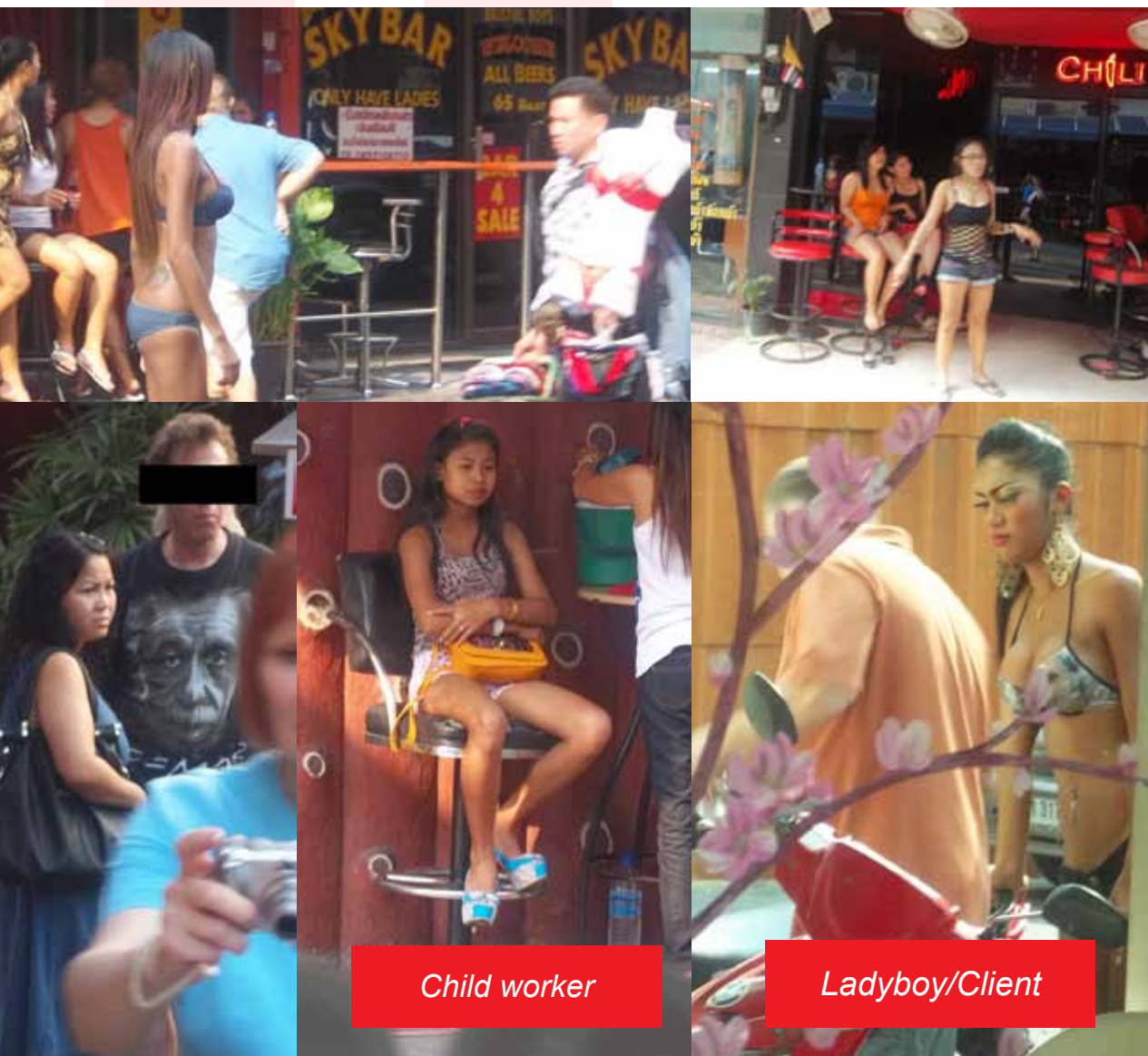
be used instead of hotels. Typically, the girls you will find using these rooms are under the age of 18 because they can't be seen in hotels for the purpose of sex trade. Some girls are also found on the beaches of Pattaya. These girls have no bar tab to pay and are therefore less expensive than the girls in the bars.

Soi 6: The most provocative and morally corrupt street in all of Pattaya. It is littered with host bars,

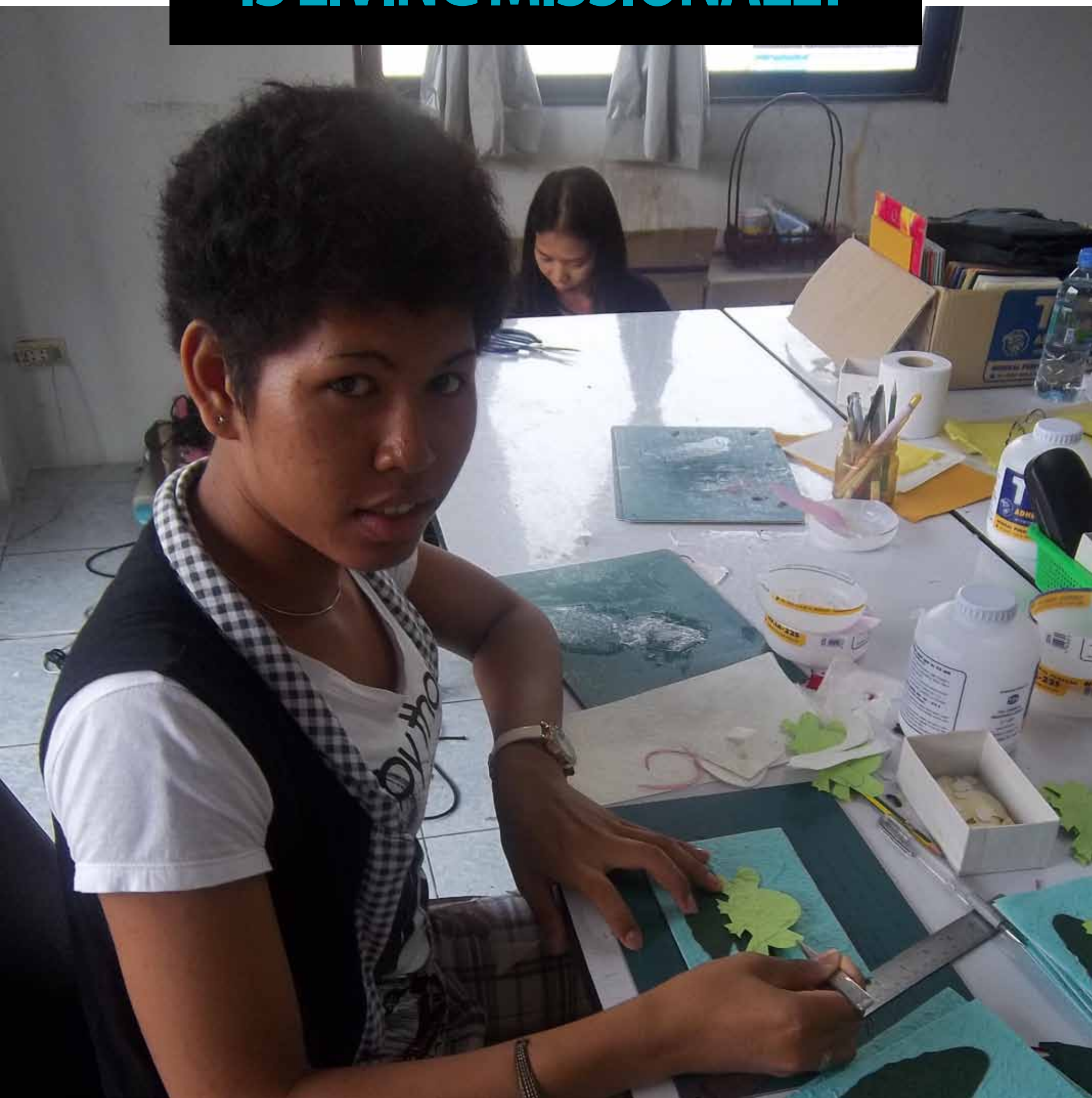
massage parlors, dancing girls, and the ladyboys. The workers on Soi 6 are required to fulfill a quota; therefore, they are pushy and aggressively seek a companion for the evening. Here you will even find young girls, some as young as 15 years old, seeking work. Then, there are ladyboys, who will go to great lengths to make themselves beautiful and pleasing to their clientele, including dresses, make up, and even breast implants. The typical stories of how these ladyboys got into such a demeaning line of work is very similar to that of the women. It all comes

down to needing to provide for their families. Often times, the families are desperate and, if they do not have a girl in the family, they will raise their son as a girl in order for him to work in the sex trade.

Needless to say, there is much despair. It is not a glamorous industry by any means. These women and men are simply trying to survive in any way possible.



AND HOW THE TAMAR CENTER IS LIVING MISSIONALLY



In the midst of such an oppressive city, there is a group of Christians working to show there is a better way...A better way to live, and to survive. They are revealing Jesus to the people of Pattaya by building relationships and equipping them with skills for a better way to provide for their families

Founded in 1999, the Tamar Center is located in the midst of Pattaya directly helping these women get off the streets and out of that life-style. Their goal is to give them new job skills so they don't have to rely on prostitution for income. They are given courses in card-making and English. They are taught skills in a hair salon or in a bakery or other

income-earning activities. Most importantly, thousands of women have been given the opportunity to see Christ's love through the women who are there to help them.

The people who work in the Tamar Center seek out these girls out where they are... in the host bars, in hopes of giving them a better life and ultimately, showing them Jesus. They go into the host bars to talk to the women and spend time with

them briefly and respectfully. If the girl agrees to leave the bar with them, they will then pay her bar tab and often times will take her out to dinner. They use this time to talk about the Tamar Center, what it has to offer them, and life beyond sex trade.

As a way of building relationships with these girls, the Tamar Center offers English classes. This class costs, but is extremely affordable compared to the courses at the local schools. The goal of the English classes is to bless the girls not only in their night

jobs, but also in all areas of their lives. Through teaching them English, the volunteers at the Tamar Center are able to get to know both the women and the men work-

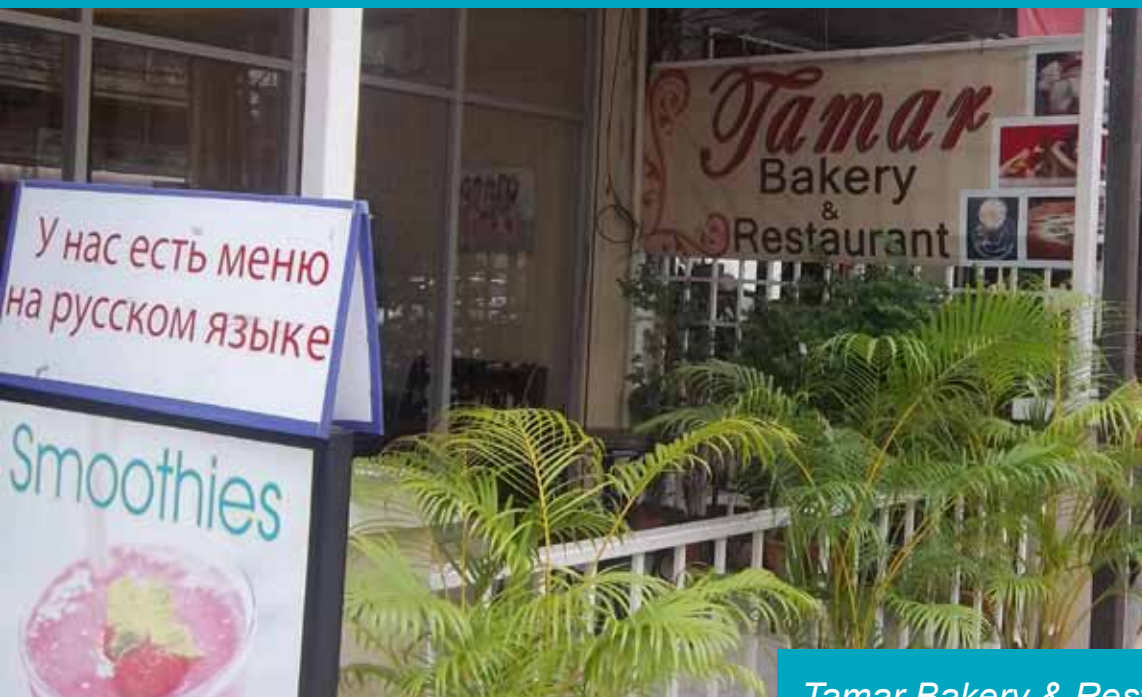


ing in the bars, learn why they do what they do, and offer an easy to understand explanation of the life Jesus calls them to.

From the English class the Tamar Center hopes to transfer some of the people they help into their other ministry opportunities, such as the hand-made card center. In the card center the girls learn the craft of making cards that are then sold by the Tamar Center to help in funding their ministries.



English Class



Tamar Bakery & Restaurant





Card Making



Salon

The Tamar Center is continually expanding and adding new opportunities to serve their community, including planting Tamar Centers in other parts of Thailand and opening Pregnancy Centers to meet a huge need that comes with the sex trade industry.

Recently a small group of women from a few different churches here in Santa Maria went to Pattaya to work at the Tamar Center. Jaydeen Morris was one of the women who God called to go on this two-week long trip to experience a world far different from what she knows here on the Central Coast. Upon her arrival in Bangkok, Thailand, her first impression was that it reminded her of Los Angeles or San Francisco. Even once she arrived in Pattaya, it just felt like a dirtier version of Los Angeles. Although, in contrast to Los Angeles, the people of Pattaya were very friendly and were always willing to help. The people didn't make her feel like she

was in a foreign country because they tend to cater to tourists, and are willing to speak English. Plus, all of the street signs are in both Thai and English.

They spent time during the day at the Tamar Center teaching the English lesson, and helping out in the card center, hair salon or bakery. This allowed them time to build relationships with the girls and to talk to them about Christ, even if it was only for a brief moment and was done with quite a language barrier. They also went out into the bars to talk to the working women. Jaydeen said that they were all very receptive to listening to what they had to say. "They sit

with you and openly share their own stories.” As they walked the streets and watched the girls in the bars, she made an interesting observation: “The girls appeared emotionless, unhappy and just sad.” This just shows the importance of the Tamar Center and bringing Christ’s grace and mercy to the city of Pattaya.

When she first got to Pattaya and was able to see firsthand what these women go through, Jaydeen says she initially felt such anger toward the men. As the days and weeks progressed, she realized that these men need Jesus just as much as the women. As much as she knew the women need Jesus in their lives, she also realized that they want love.

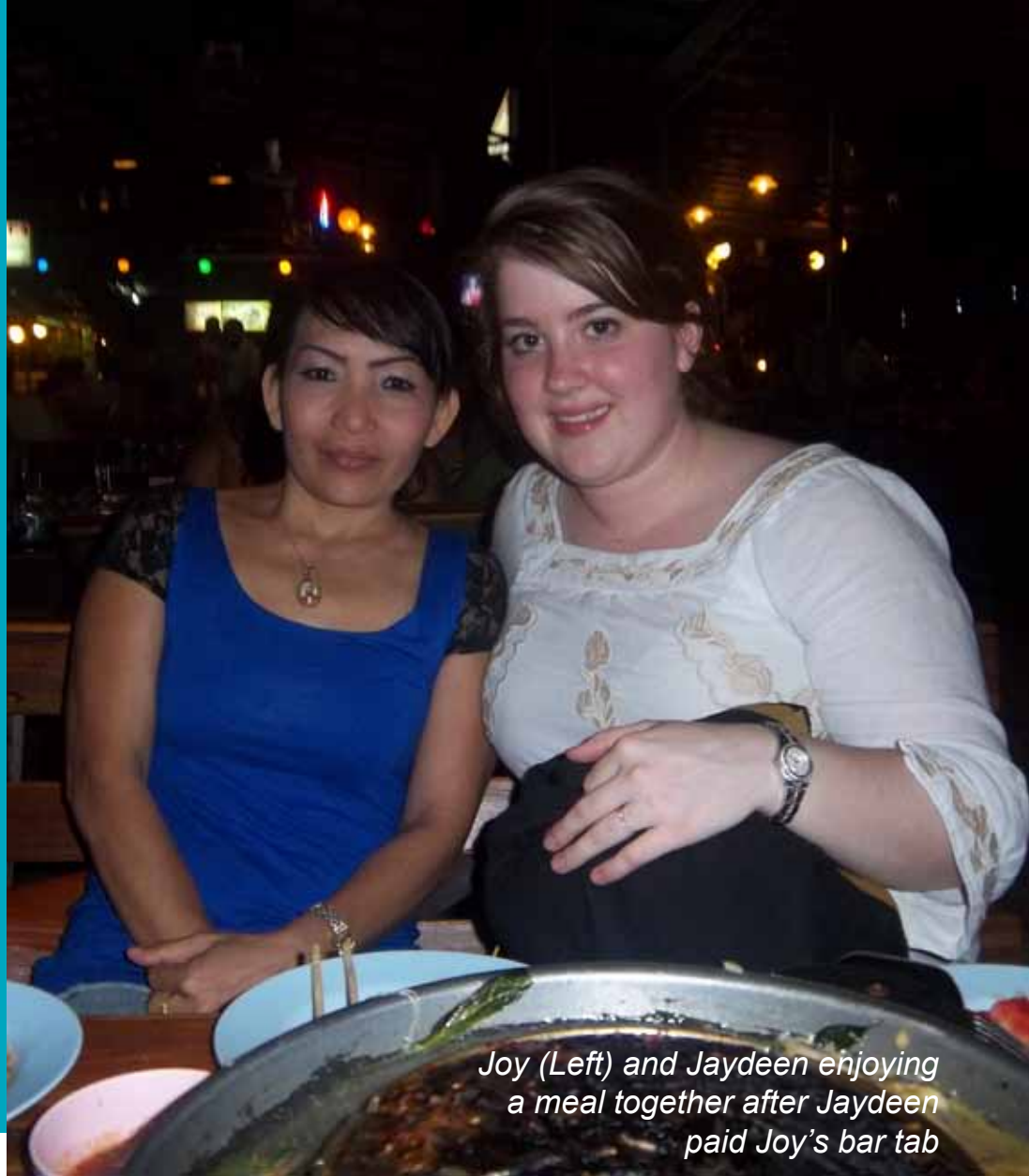
She said the women were so kind and gracious. They would shower her with affection. Anytime she took out her camera, they would immediately hug her and smile for the camera. They openly and willingly accepted prayers. One of the hardest things for Jaydeen was walking away from the women knowing how great their need.



NAME: JOY

AGE: 39

One of the women Jaydeen was able to connect with was a woman named Joy. Before leaving Pattaya, Jaydeen was able to go out into the bars with the intent of meeting a woman working within the industry. Her goal was to meet someone, pay her bar tab, take her out to dinner, get to know and share Jesus with her. Because Joy spoke English, Jaydeen was able to really talk to her. She was open and willing to share her life with Jaydeen. Joy is currently working in the sex trade industry in Pattaya. With no other options, she has traveled 10 hours to provide for her family including her 2 children and her parents following the death of her husband. She has currently been living in Pattaya, sending money home to her family, whom she hasn't seen for two years.



Joy (Left) and Jaydeen enjoying a meal together after Jaydeen paid Joy's bar tab

My trip to Thailand was an incredible experience and an opportunity that would not have been possible had I not received all the support. Thank you to everyone who supported me through my BBQs and rummage sale. It was amazing how God provided for my entire trip through my church community coming together. I really appreciate it. Please continue to pray for the influence of the Tamar Center on these girls. The girls I met will always have a place in my heart and thank you again for providing the way for me to go.

-Jaydeen Morris

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Prayer: For the Tamar Center. For the sex workers and the men who exploit to find Jesus.
- Money: The Tamar Center cannot continue to function without monetary support. Visit their website and buy a card or simply make a donation.
- Go on a short-term trip to help, and see first hand.
- Visit www.tamarcenter.org to find out the other great things they are doing.

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“If” You Want to be God’s Man

Practical Advice For God’s Man

By Jonathan Whitaker

“Three generations of Wesleyan ministers...lie behind me.” When Rudyard Kipling made this statement he was not celebrating his ministerial heritage; he was instead emphasizing that his life would break his family legacy of ministry. Kipling left school at the age of 17 and instead of beginning his religious education as his forefathers had, he headed for India to find himself. Along the way Rudyard Kipling defined his life in terms of humanism and naturalism wrought by the cruel character-shaping forces that accompany both. While he is best known as the author of *The Jungle Book*, his philosophy is more aptly captured in his poem on the topic of authentic manhood, “If”.

In four stanzas Kipling unfurls his

definition of manhood. He paints a picture of a stoic man who weathers life’s storms with a cool head and retains his character come what may. Having read the poem recently, I have to agree on many of his conclusions. Like me, you are probably more than a few years removed from English Lit class, but you will remember the thrilling final verse of the poem:

*“With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run
Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it,
And - which is more - you’ll be a Man my son!”*

The problem is, though Kipling captures the attributes of manhood, he misses the most critical aspect. Authentic manhood, at its core, is not defined by man’s ideals, but is derived from the Creator God.

We live in a world that is enamored with the trappings of manhood. Legitimately, we admire our heroes who risk their lives for others, volunteers who provide fatherly support to children, athletes who push their bodies to the limit of human capability. Of course, we also have countless examples of manhood being used illegitimately through abuse, sexuality and televised macho buffoonery. Somewhere in the midst of our notion of what makes a man lies the truth. The truth is that God is sovereign, and if a man yields his will to God's, he becomes a powerful warrior in God's army.

In our congregation we have real men, God's men. Take Jeremy Denton for example. In his professional life, Jeremy is a firefighter. I think we can all agree, that Jeremy's job alone qualifies him for "man's man" status. Consider this: at some point in this man's life he decided that though running toward a dangerous fire might not be safe, it was necessary. Then he looked around and said, "while others won't, I will." Fire fighting is a manly pursuit, requiring many of the attributes of authentic manhood: strength, calm, bravery, etc.

If you took all of the bravado that goes with fire fighting away from

Jeremy, you would still find a real man, a man that is up to his Heavenly Father's business. I don't purport to have any special insight, maybe just good timing, but God has granted me a glimpse into what makes Jeremy Denton a real man. In Matthew chapter 28, before Christ ascends to join His Father at the throne, He gives us one final command, "go and make disciples of all nations". Every Sunday evening, without much pomp and circumstance, I pass Jeremy in the halls of Pine Grove Baptist Church. What is he doing there, you might ask? Jeremy is dropping off his girls for AWANA club. For those of you unfamiliar, AWANA is an organization devoted to teaching boys and girls how to learn and memorizes scripture, fulfilling the direction of Psalm 119:11. Kids meet weekly to recite memorized scripture and play games, but the real scriptural training is done at home by the parents. Jeremy has taken up the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word

**Jeremy has taken up
the Sword of the
Spirit, which is the
Word of God, and
equipped his children**

of God, and equipped his children with it. Instead of one warrior for God, Jeremy has obeyed the last command of Christ on this earth and now the Lord has three -- Jeremy and his two daughters. Brothers, that is the essence of authentic manhood.

Pastor Tony Evans, recently said that the whole duty of a man is to recreate the character of God in his children (paraphrase). Christ commanded three things of us out of which His whole law was to be fulfilled: Love God with all our heart, soul and mind, love others as ourselves, and make disciples of the nations. The family unit is the fundamental mission field for a married man. To be truly effective in the Kingdom, a man must master this first mission field.

In an effort to support our flock, Element provides excellent Sunday messages for both adults and children. Our Gospel Communities build on the tenets taught at the worship service and allow people a chance to live out their faith in the community. As great as our corporate processes are at Element, they are no substitute for a man as the primary pastor to his family.

As a man walks with God, his character will become like God's. If

I played basketball every day with Michael Jordan, will I ever become Michael Jordan? No. Will I be better at basketball? Definitely. The same is true of walking with God. As we spend time with God in prayer, scriptural study and obedience, His character will start to rub off on us. When you share the characteristics of God, "you'll be a man my son."

Walking with God simply means obeying the three commands set forth by Christ. So, how do you walk with God in that first important mission field, your family? Whether you are a birth father, step father, adopted father or father figure, make no mistake, God has placed your children and wife in your life as a mission. The question is, are you going to abdicate your responsibility to another man?

Without delay, Christian brother, you need to take some positive steps to start or continue your mission in your family's lives. The bravest thing a man can do in this life is to fight to win his family unto Christ's salvation. Keep in mind that your children are never too old for you to implement a mission plan. Remember this is your offering to God, and there is nothing silly or shameful about it. Jesus told us "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them..." (Matt 19:14). Here are

some steps I have personally taken that are simple, obedient to God's commands, and may work for you.

First, train your children in the way they should go, so that when they are older they will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6). Don't be intimidated -- you don't have to be a Bible scholar to train your family. If you can read, comprehend and discuss Scripture, then you can train your flock. Christ said that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will lead us into understanding, so you have a powerful ally to train your family (John 16:13).

In my home we set aside 15 to 30 minutes after our evening family meal to read the Bible out loud. Since my girls are five and three, we use a paraphrased children's Bible. This is ok, even though it is not the ESV, it is easier for their young minds to grasp. Also, since I have read the stories in the full translation, I am on guard for holes in the paraphrased version and can fill in the blanks as needed.

Our Bible story lasts a few minutes, then we get to the meat, the discussion. Your child may learn, memorize and enjoy the story, but you need to help them understand why it is important to their burgeoning faith. Don't underestimate your child; kids often grasp complex

concepts from Scripture that we overlook. As adults we search for deeper meaning and symbolism, but much of the Bible is written literally. You will be amazed the first time your child helps you interpret a scripture through their innocent eyes. If you are longing for a deeper connection with your children, one that will make a lasting impact, start with a daily family Bible study.

The next step that has worked for me is family prayer. I am reminded of a scene from the movie *We Were Soldiers*, when then-Lt. Col. Hal Moore prepares to leave for Vietnam. In the last evening he spends with his family, surrounded by his pajama-clad children, this warrior in uniform kneels down and leads his children in prayer. I consider this the most important scene in the movie, and I am in the military. This is the scene where the critical battle unfolds, the battle for his children's souls. Whether you are running toward the fight or cowering behind the lines, you too are engaged in this battle.

Start by teaching your children to pray the way Christ taught you, "Our father, who is in heaven, hallowed is your name..." (Matt 6:7-14). Pray it with them, kneel down and humble yourself before the Lord, teach them to memorize it. Explain the Lord's Prayer to them, that it is a prayer of

worship, thanksgiving, provision, and repentance.

Next, teach them to talk with God. They will know how to talk to their Savior when they see you do it. Engage God in conversations and don't keep all of your prayers private. Your children need to understand that prayer is not a performance; there is no Christian-ese they have to learn to pray. Talk to God about your heart like you would talk to your wife or a brother in Christ. If you live your prayer life in front of your children, they will understand and practice prayer like an old saint.

My next piece of advice is this: your kids and your wife want you to be their hero, so don't be a wimp. Live out your faith proudly, unashamed of whom your Savior is. Practically, this means a few things. Include God in your family decisions. A real man lets God's will trump his own. When you are having a family discussion about finances, discipline, chores -- you name it -- the man in the family should stand as God's advocate. If you are not a skipping record about "God's Will" in your family talks, then my friend, you need to hip-check the turntable.

Pastor Tony Evans, in his book *Kingdom Man*, suggests that all of God's men learn and practice the

three word phrase, "I've got it". In life, there will be times when your wife, children and others in your care will be laden with a heavy burden. When you say, "I've got it," you assume the burden and take care of the situation. You have to follow up. When you say you've got it, you had better have it. Once your family knows that when dad has it, it stays had, you will have peace in your home. That is what God's man does. God's man handles the business of his Father.

The most authentic expression of manhood in God's kingdom is that of a servant. The men who made the biggest impact for God's Kingdom in the Bible were first made low as servants then God raised them up. Joseph, Moses, Nehemiah, Paul, Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:26-27). Men, you hold a lot of cards in your family. You make money, you have physical strength, you can roar the loudest. But, what good is any of this strength if it is used to subjugate those who are weaker than you in your family? Serve them instead. Humble yourself and serve the little ones that God has entrusted to you.

For each of you, serving your family will mean something different, but one aspect will remain the same: you must deny your ego to do it. If your motive is to appear compassionate, then what good is your service as an

offering to God? Listen to your wife and children and find out what is important to them, then serve them as unto the Lord. Then God will raise you up. For me, and I'm just gonna say it... I clean the cat box. You want to talk about being humbled, clean the toilet of an animal that hates your guts sometime, and you will be humbled my friend. I do this small simple act of service for my wife and my God. Jennifer does not like cleaning the cat box, though she will do it and without much complaint, but if I serve her in this way, it honors her, our marriage covenant, and therefore God. And, someday God may reward me by striking our cat with a bolt of lighting... just kidding.

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God”
(Romans 14:11).

It is just a fact, one of these days we are all gonna be humbled before the Lord. The question is, are you going to humble yourself or is God going to do it? John 20:29 tells us that there are some that believed in the Lord because they saw Him, but Jesus says blessed are those who believe without seeing. Be a joyful servant to the Lord.

Brothers, this is the day that the Lord has made, and He made you to be a man. Caring for God's little ones is by far the manliest thing that can be done. Is your manhood going to be defined by the world or by God? Start small, with family Bible study, family prayer and by living your walk publicly before your children. Don't hide the light of your faith away, instead let it shine in your home (Matthew 5:14-16).

Then, and only then, will you be God's man, my son.

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Staff Picks

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