



# YOU'RE MOVING TO THAILAND TO DO WHAT?

BY KASHMIRA HAUPTMAN



I was in Thailand for the second time on my way to visit an area known around the world as a destination for sex-tourists. "What you see will break your heart..." my Thai friends prepared me, "...so many young Thai woman with older foreign men." They were right and I was grateful for the warning. What I was not prepared for were all of the young Thai men, just as visibly, selling their bodies.

**"Is anyone reaching out to this group? Does anyone care about them?" The only answer I heard was silence.**

Having returned to the United States, I began grappling with the reality of more than 20,000 men working as prostitutes in Thailand with not a single ministry reaching out to them. I wondered if somehow God was leading me to serve this group but doubts filled my mind: "I'm not qualified. Why would these men take me seriously? What do I know about male prostitution? What can I do?"

Clarity came through a mentor. "Does God love these men?" Yes. "Has He given you a heart for them?" Yes. "Do you know of anyone else sharing His love with them?" No. "So...when will you go?"

That was three years ago, and now, I'm back in Thailand with a wonderful husband, Iven, who knew that when he began courting me, he was courting my call to Bangkok as well! We arrived this past December and God is already confirming His call in remarkable ways. While praying and worshipping on a "boys' street," we were befriended by a Thai Christian woman who works there and has many contacts in the male sex worker community. Several weeks later, we met a young man working in one of the "boy bars" who had, in the past, attended some outreach/worship nights led by a YWAM student ministry.

We have no illusions about the long hard road that lies ahead. Pioneering a ministry anywhere is challenging – and this group is especially wounded, confused, overlooked, and in need of the love and healing that only Jesus can bring. Daily I wonder why God chose us for this calling. Still, it is a privilege to finally be here now, and to say with confidence, "Yes, we care!"

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