

AFRIGO

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A QUIET DISASTER

DEALING WITH PORNOGRAPHY

SAFEGUARD THE VULNERABLE

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
IN MISSIONS**

BREAK THE SILENCE

CONTENTS



03 A QUIET DISASTER

Nigerian Ishaku Amah-Kabong reveals the prevalence of sexual misconduct in the work of missions and issues a call to confront the truth.

04 CALLED: A LIFE OF MIRACLES

Nigerian MacPhillips Elisha D., head of EMS of ECWA missions, shares the amazing miracles he has witnessed after he responded to God's missionary call amid criticism.

05 THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Ghanaian psychologist Esther Malm delves into the nature of sexual abuse in Christian circles and its damaging impact on victims

06 BREAK THE SILENCE LOUDLY

From East Africa, Sister Agnes* and Brother Peter* shares how their organization addressed a case of sexual misconduct among their mission team and helpful lessons.

09 SAFEGUARD THE VULNERABLE

Even though we are glad for help on the mission field, Jasper Subramoney reminds us of our obligation to protect those we serve, especially children.

11 NAVIGATING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT CASES

You receive the sad new that one of your missionaries has been involved in sexual misconduct. What do you do? Allan Muchiri from Africa Inland Mission advises on the steps to take.

A QUIET DISASTER

BY ISHAKU AMAH-KABONG



It is no longer news that sex scandals involving ministers of the gospel, dead or alive, have surfaced across Africa and beyond. During a missions conference, a seasoned missionary confessed to a colleague: “More than half of our missionaries and pastors were found to have visited pornographic sites when their devices were secretly checked.” This disturbing revelation reflects a deeper crisis – sexual misconduct and abuse exist within the missions community, often hidden behind spiritual service and a cultural of silence.

Sexual misconduct in missions

Sexual misconduct in missions includes any inappropriate sexual behavior, harassment, exploitation, or abuse committed by or against those involved in missionary work. It may be physical, emotional, or spiritual, and often occurs between missionaries, leaders and subordinates, or between missionaries and the communities they serve. In Africa, where respect for spiritual authority is deeply ingrained, such misconduct is often coercive and manipulative, exploiting trust and power dynamics.

Examples and scope

Some mission leaders abuse their authority by grooming younger missionaries or vulnerable locals. Peer-to-peer misconduct is often dismissed as a “moral failure” rather than addressed as abuse. In rural communities, poverty and desperation make locals easy targets. Tragically, children – whether missionary kids or local youth – are sometimes victims, with stories surfacing years later. Two weeks ago, my spiritual daughter, a trainee missionary in Northern Nigeria, narrowly escaped an attempted rape by the very people she was sent to reach. Thankfully, fellow missionaries intervened in time.

Prevalence and attitudes

Though hard data is scarce, anecdotal evidence and internal reports suggest that sexual misconduct is not rare. Mission organizations often respond with silence, fearing reputational damage or donor backlash. Others spiritualize the issue,

urging repentance without accountability. This culture of secrecy allows abuse to persist and victims to suffer in silence. But Scripture warns us: “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:11).

Why it must be addressed

Sexual misconduct destroys lives, undermines the gospel, and corrodes trust in missions. Victims carry trauma, and communities lose faith in those who came to serve. Ignoring abuse violates biblical justice. “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!” (Jer. 23:1). Mission organizations must implement transparent policies, safe reporting channels, and independent investigations. Training in trauma-informed care, cultural sensitivity, and ethical boundaries should be standard. As a trauma healer, I am currently working on a case involving a mission leader accused of abuse.

A call to integrity

The mission’s community must confront this uncomfortable truth. My late friend, Pastor Solomon John of Living Faith Shandam Nigeria, used to say, “Holiness is not immunity.” Being called to serve does not exempt anyone from accountability; it rather demands a higher standard. “Be holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:16) is not just a call to purity, but to integrity in every area of life.

This editorial is a call to action, not to shame, but to shine the light; not to accuse, but to advocate for healing and justice. The mission field must be a place of safety, not secrecy, and the Church must lead the way in ensuring that those who serve and those whom they serve are protected, respected, and restored. Some ministries are already signing safety acts. May others follow.

In this issue of AfriGO, professionals and mission workers share their thoughts and experiences on the hushed issue of sexual misconduct and abuse in missions. For our Perspective article, counsellor and therapist Esther Malm delves into the psychology of sexual abuse in Christian circles and how

Ignoring abuse
violates biblical
justice.

CALLED A LIFE OF MIRACLES

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEXUAL ABUSE

BY ESTHER MALM

Sexual misconduct is an endemic destructive behaviour that includes sexual harassment, abuse, rape, and violence. Most perpetrators are male – regardless of age and marital status – though some may be women. Likewise, victims may be male or female. From childhood molestations or incest to adult cases of sexual abuse, studies show that perpetrators are often known by the victims and include friends and family members. Another major group are religious leaders.

Sexual misconduct within religious circles is not unique to Christianity. It has existed across faith traditions for centuries, often minimized or shrouded in secrecy. People mistakenly believe that the Holy Spirit is confined to the pulpit, and tend to prioritize “anointing” over moral character. However, Jesus taught us to look for fruit (Matt. 7: 16-20). The biblical narrative of Samson shows that anointing does not negate the consequences of unchecked appetites.

Impact of sexual abuse

Sexual misconduct and abuse create a legacy of collateral damage. The trauma radiates from the survivor to encompass their family, friends, and broader communities. It also impacts perpetrators’ own families and networks. While there may or may not be physical scars, emotional and psychological wounds are deep and may be lifelong for victims. Perpetrators may forget the details, but victims continue to carry the trauma.

When shepherds violate God’s sheep, the injury is profoundly spiritual. By mirroring God’s authority while practicing cruelty, these leaders fundamentally compromise the victim’s ability to trust God. Some withdraw and isolate themselves and many victims

turn away from God.

Religious leaders who are abusers exhibit a set of psychological and behavioural patterns.

Control and charisma: They have a high need to be in control and to receive affirmation and attention. They may struggle with loneliness, insecurity, hidden addictions or a personal history of being abused, but mask these with charisma. They strategically seek ministry roles that provide unchecked access to vulnerable groups such as children and youth, under the guise of providing spiritual guidance.

Limited accountability: Perpetrators typically have few accountability partners or superficial ones. They are less likely to discuss their struggles with the goal of seeking help; rather, they use this to garner

sympathy from unsuspecting targets. For high-ranking leaders, structural isolation increases where leaders are surrounded by subordinates who do not question them. Their peers may ignore problematic behaviour with the claim that “only God can judge.”

Unbiblical honour and reverence: The Christian value of honouring our leaders inadvertently creates room for sexual misconduct. On the mission field, women may be expected to serve male missionaries or stay late at church, creating avenues for inappropriate behaviour. Misapplied scriptures are used to excuse leaders when they violate others. Most church leaders remain silent, leaving congregants to navigate these confusing behaviours alone.

Room to groom: Persons who engage in sexual misconduct know what they are doing. It is rarely an accident. They follow a calculated strategy to desensitize their target (called “grooming”) for eventual sexual gain. Perpetrators often target vulnerable and non-assertive people, and eager believers seeking discipleship.

They may also groom the victim’s family or community to win their trust. Once established as a safe authority figure, the abuser escalates from subtle touches to invasive acts. By this stage, victims are trapped in conflicting emotions of shame, self-blame, and fear of speaking up.

Sexual misconduct policies

Mission agencies need sexual misconduct policies for addressing such behaviours in an objective manner. When policies are lacking, it allows leadership to turn a blind eye when misconduct is exposed. Established misconduct policies may be adapted from institutions that have them. However, policies without effective implementation defeats the goal.

Missionaries are a powerful force in sending the whole gospel to the whole world. Yet, sexual misconduct acts as dangerous “tares” in the mission field. Whether we are funders, trainers, or mission agencies, we bear a solemn responsibility to safeguard both the communities we serve and our staff. Our inaction undermines the gospel we claim to uphold. Read more here:

<https://afrigo.org/articles/sexual-misconduct-on-the-mission-field/>.

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serve in roles that equip and nurture the Body of Christ. She is an associate professor of Psychology at Murray State University, USA and founder of Hope Consult & Counseling Services. She can be reached at horizonhabits@gmail.com or info@hopeconsultpro.com.

**Our inaction
undermines
the gospel.**



BREAK THE SILENCE

LOUDLY

BY KATE AZUMAH

The affair had gone on for months before it finally reached the ears of Sister Agnes* through a whistle-blower. The church already had guidelines for dealing with such matters. She told the whistle-blower she was going to verify the facts from the persons involved. She called each party into a separate meeting and discovered the affair involved three married members on the mission team – a man and two women – entangled in a web of inappropriate unethical relationships. Beyond the sexual misconduct, psychological and financial manipulation was in the mix too. Because the issue had lingered for months, it was affecting their already-unhappy marital relationships. Ministry relationships between colleagues in the missions department were strained, especially among those who were aware of the immorality. Other members of the Church were affected as the web grew. Additionally, one of the party was threatening to get the police involved in the matter, contrary to church membership policy which delays external official involvement until all internal dispute

resolution channels are exhausted, as recommended in the scriptures. (1 Cor. 6:1-7).

Sexual misconduct and missionaries

Sister Agnes serves as the assistant to the head of missions for a church denomination in Kenya. Both she and the head of missions in that same denomination, Brother Peter*, have served in the mission field and agree that those in ministry, and cross-cultural missionaries in particular, can be susceptible to temptation. Why? For one, missionaries are often serving in lonely places with a lack of emotional support. Brother Peter* shares that it took him two years to get the first convert, who then backslid the next year. He found himself frustrated and disappointed as the church back home was waiting for results and he felt a failure. In his situation, he also felt the local people considered him “perfect”, which caused more pressure. Most of all, Satan can particularly attack that which he hates most, which is the message of Jesus going out through his servants.

Brother Peter found himself caught

up in the habit of pornography, and after a period of time he confessed to his wife, who found it difficult to deal with this sin against her. It took some years as she did not have anyone locally to help her. “You can imagine the feeling of betrayal for the spouse when the man or woman moves out in a land very far from home,” he says.

He asks, “How open are we as an organization to help our wounded soldiers? It is very possible to have a holier-than-thou attitude and feel that this person has failed us. We should be willing to help.” Sister Agnes confirms, “When missionaries fall into sexual temptation, we don’t abandon them, but we walk with them so they can be restored.”

Restoring the fallen

After Sister Agnes confirmed the details of the misconduct, her next step was to inform the elders of the church. “We commissioned an inquiry team comprising three elders who were trained in counselling psychology. Their role was to walk with the three people towards reconciliation and healing. Secondly, we asked all of them to step down from their ministry roles in the

church – two of them were leaders in the missions department.

It took several months to address the matter to its conclusion. The circle of enquiry grew bigger because we had to include their families and help them to heal as well. It had to be well-documented. Eventually we had a breakthrough with the two women as we uncovered the root of their problems and peculiar needs. One of them was reconciled to her previously separated husband and both made plans to solemnize their marriage. The second woman and her husband were unable to make amends, but she acknowledged her wrongs, asked forgiveness, and was reconciled to the Lord. The team prayerfully did their best to address issues between the man and his wife, but we were not as successful. We discovered that the man had a history of other illicit relationships beyond the mission field and in the marketplace, making it harder for the spouse to trust him any longer.”

When the inquiry team brought its work to a conclusion, the repentant persons were presented to the church’s departmental heads as representatives of the body for Christ, asked forgiveness and then the church prayed for them and received them back into the fold in accordance with the scriptures in Gal. 6:1-2.

Repercussions of sexual misconduct

Restoration from sexual sin is possible, but its effects can be far-reaching. Sister Agnes explains: “The work of missions is a spiritual activity that the enemy opposes. Sexual misconduct exposes people to attacks in their personal lives and in the ministry. The Holy Spirit is grieved. Sexual sin is like gangrene. If it is not addressed decisively, it spreads to the whole team because people will think that it is approved.” Brother Peter adds, “The mission work suffers because this missionary is no longer able to do his work.

No one is “anointed” to break God’s commands.

Sometimes the sending agency has to come and either evacuate him or make a statement that they are no longer in fellowship with the person and administer discipline. The community may feel that the enemy has won, and they will mock Christianity. Others feel very bad that you have defiled their daughter or their son. Partnerships are affected, funding is affected, discipleship is affected, and everything is affected by sexual misconduct.”

“Churches and mission agencies should not be silent on sexual matters. I think this is the weakest link. We teach and train on how we’re going to do evangelism, crusades, disciple people, etc. but we hardly dedicate time to talking about our conduct. Our Lord Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul said

many things about sexual purity (Matt. 5; Jn. 8; 1 Cor. 7; 1 Thess. 4; 2 Tim. 2) – and we should follow their example in speaking about it too.”

Guardrails against misconduct

Sister Agnes comments, “Feeling attracted to people of the opposite sex is normal. Even as a minister, I have experienced that, but certain attractions that contradict Biblical values are ungodly. To guard against temptations and such attractions, prayer is key (Matt. 26:41). It draws us close to God and his presence becomes a shield around us. Cultivate self-awareness and be open before God about your feelings. Set boundaries for yourself and your relationships – this has been helpful throughout my four decades in Christian ministry. When you find your eyes, a certain touch, or a hug betraying you, avoid it.” Brother Peter recommends a strong foundation in discipleship before missionaries are sent to the field, and a realization that areas where you are weak before you go to the field will continue to be weak areas on the field. A change in title or location does not change the person. Frequent visits from member care people who will ask probing questions can discover problems before they become fatal errors.

Cover-ups, manipulation and silence

Sometimes, people in leadership positions engage in inappropriate sexual behaviours too. Victims may be afraid to expose them because of misunderstood Bible verses such as “touch not God’s anointed.” Cover-ups by leaders may manipulate victims into silence. To these, Sister Agnes responds: “Are we still talking about God’s anointed? No one is anointed to break God’s commands. To anyone in this situation, recognize that such leaders are not the final authority, God is. Run for your life even if it means leaving your jacket behind as Joseph did. This may mean losing your job, position, etc. The more you keep quiet, the perpetrator will approach other victims and molest them for as long as they remain in authority. Sometimes, wives keep silent about their husbands misconduct because they wonder how



SAFEGUARD THE VULNERABLE

BY JASPER JOLIN SUBRAMONEY

My first experience of mission work was travelling through Mozambique in the back of an Isuzu bakkie (pickup truck). We moved through flood damaged towns and showed the Jesus film to thousands of people. I was only twelve years old, and I could not believe how many people, especially children, came forward for the salvation call after watching the film.

We travelled as a family. My dad was a pastor and child trauma specialist; my mom and brother were with us; and together, we lived a wonderful ministry adventure. We reached the lost, lived on food rations, and used outdoor ablutions. Those days opened my eyes to the reality of the gospel and how deeply people longed for Jesus. From that moment I was hooked. I wanted to be a missionary and go to the nations for him.

STORIES AND LOOPHOLES

As I grew older, however, I began hearing difficult stories of sexual abuse of children and the vulnerable in ministry. It seemed as though cases had suddenly increased, but in reality, people were finally reporting them. I often wondered what had really happened behind the scenes and how such failures could occur. Sadly, I would later learn more about the challenges and breakdowns within some mission organizations, churches, and Christian schools.

During one trip to a mission conference in remote East Africa, I realized how vulnerable we truly were. We received almost no instruction or preparation. We interacted freely with children and adults without clear boundaries, accountability structures, or even basic background checks. It deeply unsettled me.

I needed to understand why safeguarding was not a priority. I realized that our leaders were being overly gracious; they welcomed anyone who was willing to serve, even when that willingness was not supported by proper

oversight. When a familiar person joins a mission trip, we may overlook a background check or a mental health evaluation simply because we think we know them well. But at what expense are we making these assumptions? And more importantly, at whose expense? Tragically, the majority of abuse is committed by unvetted workers who harm the very children and vulnerable adults we are called to protect.

GROOMING AND CHILD SAFETY

Here are some insights I have gained from my experience in trauma work and child safety cases.

We must be aware of grooming. Grooming happens when a person slowly builds trust with a child, vulnerable adult, or even an organization in order to cross boundaries and cause harm. Over time, this trust is betrayed in the worst way; and teams are left shocked, saying, "How could they have done this? We knew them so well."

Preventing grooming requires diligence. Background checks with valid references, clear rules, visible accountability, and a firm policy of no private or secret interactions all help create safety. Teams should be trained

to recognize warning signs; and any red flag, no matter how small, should be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

HOW CAN WE DO BETTER?

1. Interview candidates carefully and check references thoroughly. Good recruitment protects the mission and discourages harmful individuals from entering the organization.
2. Every worker should clearly understand the mission's vision, expectations, code of conduct, and boundaries. Training must include simple, practical ways to avoid compromising situations.
3. There should be a simple system that even a child can understand. Everyone should know exactly where to go with a concern; trained responders must be available to listen and act.
4. Concerns, whether small or serious, should be handled by trained individuals with compassion, discernment, and integrity.
5. Wise leadership values the safety and wellbeing of every team member and beneficiary. Safeguarding is not an obstacle to mission; it is an essential expression of the gospel.

DEALING WITH PORNOGRAPHY

BY K. K. BAIDOO

Pornography is any material that gives access to explicit sexual content or sexual stimulation outside of God's purpose for sexuality. It is designed to arouse sexual desire through images, videos, words, or sounds. In Scripture, lust is not merely an external act but an internal posture of the heart (Matt. 5:28).

A young missionary once shared that during his first year on the field, loneliness and cultural isolation drove him to seek comfort online. What began as "just curiosity" quietly grew into a habit that dulled his prayer life and fractured his relationships. His story is not unique; most young people struggle with sexual immorality daily. The church must therefore speak honestly and redemptively about this issue, especially among those called to serve cross-culturally.

Prevalence of pornography

Pornography is pervasive across cultures and demographics. In today's world, it is more accessible than ever. With a few taps on the phone or clicks on the laptop, explicit content is available anytime, anywhere. Mission workers are not immune. In fact, the very tools that enable global ministry – laptops, phones, and the internet – also provide gateways to temptation. Moreover, many mission settings have limited accountability structures, making secret struggles easier to hide. Several factors heighten vulnerability among mission workers:

1. Isolation and loneliness: Being far from family, friends, and familiar support systems can create emotional gaps. Pornography can seem a quick, private escape from loneliness.
2. Stress and burnout: Ministry often involves spiritual warfare, heavy workloads, and emotional strain. When coping mechanisms are weak, unhealthy outlets can take root.
3. Cultural dislocation: Navigating new languages and customs can leave workers feeling inadequate or disconnected. Pornography may become a false source of comfort and control.
4. Privacy and lack of accountability:

Missionaries may live alone, have unmonitored internet access, and lack accountability partners, thereby reducing the external checks that deter sin.

5. Spiritual attack: Scripture reminds us that our struggle is not merely against flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12). Those engaged in gospel work may face intensified temptation.

Dangers or Consequences

1. Spiritual numbness: Habitual sin dulls sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, weakening prayer, worship, and obedience.
2. Distorted view of people: Pornography objectifies others, undermining the biblical vision of human dignity and mutual respect.
3. Relational damage: It erodes trust in marriages and friendships and can isolate the user further.
4. Ministry ineffectiveness: Hidden sins sap integrity and boldness. When a worker's private life contradicts their public message, their gospel witness is compromised.
5. Escalation and addiction: What begins as occasional use can grow into dependency, leading to deeper secrecy and shame.

Practical Ways of Dealing with Pornography

1. Cultivate honest accountability: Mission agencies and teams should foster safe spaces for confession and prayer. Having a trusted mentor or peer to ask hard questions can make all the difference.
2. Set clear digital boundaries: Delete apps or any social media that stir up sexual desires.
3. Develop healthy rhythms: Prioritize rest, exercise, and recreation. Emotional and physical well-being reduces the pull of destructive coping habits.
4. Strengthen spiritual disciplines: Regular scripture meditation, prayer, fasting, and community worship nourish the soul and sharpen resistance to temptation.
5. Address root issues: Loneliness,



6. Practice immediate repentance: When a stumble occurs, respond quickly with confession and a return to God. Shame thrives in secrecy; grace grows in the light.

Conclusion

A redemptive lens is crucial. The goal is not merely avoidance of sin but transformation into Christlikeness. Mission leaders must model humility, acknowledging their weaknesses and dependence on grace. Additionally, the community should move away from punitive responses toward restorative care. When someone falls, the church's role is to restore gently (Gal. 6:1). Victory over pornography is not achieved by willpower alone but by abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:5). As mission workers anchor their identity in God's love and purpose, they find strength to say "no" to counterfeit comforts and yes to holy living. The gospel we carry to the nations must first shape our own hearts, freeing us to serve with purity, power, and joy.

GO! NEWS OF AFRICA'S MOBILIZING CHURCH

AFRICAN MISSIONARY KIDS CONFERENCE BY MASINOLUWA KASHIMAWO

Lagos, Nigeria, October 2025. The Pan-African Conference for Missionary and Cross-Cultural Kids (PACMACK) was a long-awaited answer to a question many children of African missionaries had carried for years: is there a place for my story? Neither the dominant global MK (missionary kid) narrative nor the broader TCK (third culture kid) framework fully told the African MK story, and PACMACK was convened to address the lifelong impact of third culture upbringing on children of African missionaries and cross-cultural Christian workers.

Over 80 participants attended, representing MKs from Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Liberia,



Benin Republic, Ghana, and Ethiopia. Also present were MK caregivers from multiple mission organizations, learning about the African MK experience first-hand and sharing their experiences in MK care. The vision of PACMACK exists to see the

intentional establishment and steady growth of MK care and community across African nations. To connect or learn more, visit www.pacmack.com or send an email to pacmack1.0@gmail.com. See more about the conference at <https://bit.ly/PACMACK>.

MANI

The Movement for Africa Initiatives (MANI) marked its 25-year milestone with the 4th Continental Consultation in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 9–13 March, gathering about 400 church and mission leaders from across Africa and the diaspora.

Under the theme “Present and Future Realities, Challenges, and Prospects of the African Church,” participants reflected on the continent’s gospel mandate and the Church’s role in shaping Africa’s future. Leaders identified six strategic priorities

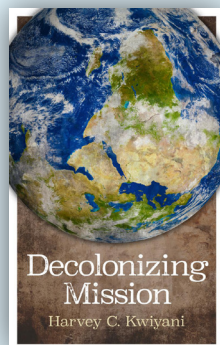
for the next season, including the urgent concerns of church persecution and political instability. For more information and to download conference materials, visit the MANI 2026 link: <https://t.me/+ftPb70YU-IFIM2M0>

BOOK REVIEW

DECOLONIZING MISSION BY HARVEY C. KWIYANI

Harvey C. Kwiyani’s *Decolonising Mission* is a bold and deeply African reflection on the relationship between Christian mission and colonial power. Writing as a Malawian theologian shaped by both African Christianity and Western missionary structures, Kwiyani offers a compelling call for African Christians to reclaim their missional identity with confidence and theological clarity.

The book opens by tracing how,



from the time of Constantine, Christian mission became intertwined with imperial power. This history, Kwiyani argues, produced the enduring perception that mission “belongs” to powerful nations and wealthy Christians. Yet, he avoids simplistic accusations. He honours the sincerity of many missionaries who resisted imperial agenda even as he critiques the systems that often shaped their work.

Some of the most moving

sections arise from Kwiyani’s own family history, including the story of Magomero and the legacy of John Chilembwe. These narratives reveal how mission and colonial power sometimes collided in painful ways – reminding readers why the work of decolonization remains pastorally and historically significant.

Theologically, Kwiyani grounds his vision in Jesus’ ministry under Roman occupation. He presents the gospel as a counterimperial narrative, marked by non-coercive, justice-oriented witness. If mission is to reflect Christ, Kwiyani argues, it must resist every form of

NAVIGATING CASES OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

BY ALLAN MUCHIRI

You hoped this day would never come, but it has. You have received the sad news that one of your missionaries has been involved in a case of sexual misconduct. As a mission leader, what do you do? What are next steps? What key factors should you consider before acting? These are important questions. Adultery, fornication, rape, and pornography are realities we have to deal with. We discuss these with sadness because of the ugliness of sin, but with sobriety and humility because missionaries and leaders are not immune to sin.

Cases of sexual sin are sensitive and need to be handled with care and seriousness. It is important to have a process that can be followed so that allegations are investigated carefully, considered wisely, and dealt with biblically. Careful investigation is the first step. It establishes the actual information or complaint. This means that you need to listen well, and, if possible, ask questions for clarity. Leaders need to also examine the source of information

– is it trustworthy? Anonymous tips can be useful, but can also be unreliable and difficult to verify. Explore other sources that can confirm or clarify the reports. Once a complaint is received, consider sharing it with other mission leaders who may need to know (as per your church or organization’s guidelines), or a small misconduct response team that will assist you in investigations. Be sure to document everything you can in the process.

Once you have gathered information and available evidence, convene your response team and consider wisely the implications and impact of the sexual misconduct. A keen mission leader will need to determine if the evidence points to a clear case of sexual misconduct. A good guide for what constitutes sexual misconduct may be stated in the organization’s policies. Mission organizations may lack such guidelines, especially if they operate in cultures shaped deeply by honour and shame dynamics. The impact of the misconduct also needs to be assessed carefully, as it shapes the course of action

in dealing with any offender. The impact may be felt in broken relationships or marriages, team mistrust and possible collapse, or even legal action. The response team must wisely navigate how to care for any victims, or informants so that they are not shamed or victimized further. All of these considerations should be documented.

The response team should finally decide what actions to take in order to deal with the misconduct and the ensuing impact in a biblical way. If the misconduct falls in the category of a disciplinary action by the organization, then the leaders of the organization should receive a report with such a recommendation. In other cases, it may be fitting to accompany disciplinary action with sending the offending missionary back to their church for discipline and discipleship. In other cases, the organization may be required to report the misconduct to affected parties such as a church, ministry partners, or even to reporting to the police or other authorities for legal action.

To conclude, in the three steps of investigation, consideration and action, confidentiality and compassion are key. We must keep the information known to us confidential. Reports and documents of the case must be stored and passed on safely. Confidentiality protects victims of sexual abuse, informants, and even the person accused. Not all accusations of sexual misconduct are true, and it is wise to protect the reputation of anybody involved because “a good name is more desirable than great riches; favor is better than silver and gold” (Prov. 22:1). Confidentiality upholds the dignity of all parties and so details of misconduct should be known by only those who need to know. Secondly, it is important to remember that those involved are likely struggling internally. We must deal with them with compassion, even when the outcomes are harsh and undesirable.

**Confidentiality
and compassion
are key.**



Photo: HWDI, caption Representative photo credit
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PEOPLE GROUP

THE JAPANESE OF EAST ASIA

The Japanese are an East Asian people group numbering approximately 124 million, living primarily in Japan. The population is highly urbanized, with most people concentrated in large metropolitan areas such as Tokyo and Osaka, while rural communities continue to exert cultural influence. Japanese society has traditionally emphasized community over the individual, valuing harmony, respect, and social order. Families and social structures have long been hierarchical, with strong expectations of responsibility toward one's family and wider community.

Japan is an ancient civilization with a long-recorded history and a strong sense of cultural continuity. Traditions are preserved primarily through seasonal festivals, rituals, and customary practices rather than through formal religious instruction. Cultural identity is deeply embedded in everyday life, shaping manners, work ethic, and interpersonal relationships. Maintaining social harmony and fulfilling

expected social roles are widely regarded as essential virtues.

Most Japanese people participate in Shinto and Buddhism, often simultaneously, alongside other worldviews. Shinto, the indigenous tradition, emphasizes harmony with nature, purification, and respect for spirits associated with places, ancestors, and natural forces. Buddhism, introduced in the sixth century, focuses on suffering, impermanence, and death and plays a central role in funerals and memorial rites. Many Japanese identify as "nonreligious," yet regularly engage in shrine visits, temple rituals, and religious ceremonies.

The Japanese worldview is largely nondoctrinal and nonexclusive, with religion understood primarily as practice and tradition rather than personal belief or allegiance. As such, the Japanese take a more pragmatic approach to spiritual matters and commonly apply Shinto for blessings in daily life, while Buddhist practices address death and the afterlife. Ancestor veneration remains culturally and

AT A GLANCE

- Many Japanese take part in Shinto and Buddhism among other worldviews without seeing any contradiction. Religious affiliation percentages exceed 100 per cent due to overlapping practice.
- Ancestor respect and participation in family rites are viewed as social obligations rather than religious choices.

PRAY FOR

- The Holy Spirit to open hearts and minds among the Japanese to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Boldness, wisdom, and perseverance for Japanese believers as they live out their faith within their families and communities.
- Churches and ministries to grow in depth, unity, and effective discipleship.

Sources: Joshua Project, Wikipedia, www.peoplegroups.org.



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OVERFLOW

A QUIET **DISASTER**

BY ISHAKU AMAH-KABONG

it should be handled. Our Feature story highlights two leaders' experience in dealing with sexual misconduct among members in a mission team. For Training, we bring you two articles on safeguarding children from sexual abuse and dealing with pornography. We hope that you find this issue an encouraging and relevant resource.

Ishaku Amah-Kabong is a missionary and trauma healing specialist currently serving within West Africa. He is an author, a podcaster, a political commentator and an anti-human trafficking advocate. Through his leadership and advocacy, he continues to inspire meaningful changes across communities in Africa and reaching out. Ishaku is married to Martha and they have spiritual and biological children.

BREAK THE SILENCE **LOUDLY**

BY KATE AZUMAH

they will survive if the marriage broke. But God is able to help them. Silence is the enemy's controlling factor and we need to break that silence loudly and clearly."

In this organization, all missionaries and church workers are required to sign a code of ethics which commits them to submit to church authority through the investigation process. If any party is still unsatisfied afterwards, says Sister Agnes, "we don't stop them from seeking legal intervention. When the church handles these situations decisively and thoroughly, the results are more enriching. Those who are involved experience restoration, the team becomes stronger and serves with more confidence because they can trust the leadership. They will also guard themselves against future temptations

because they become aware of their boundaries."

Way forward

To the African Church, Sister Agnes says, "Our annual reporting systems should not focus only on the number of souls being saved and how finances are received and used. They should include guidelines on missionary conduct and processes for reporting and addressing sexually inappropriate behaviours with regular ministering and upgrading such processes with the changing times that are demanding more tolerance for sin. Continually talk about it in your meetings and trainings so people will be clear about what is expected of them in this area.

Brother Peter affirms that restoration from sexual sin has a silver lining – it

is a great opportunity to demonstrate forgiveness and Christ's love. Both Christian and non-Christian observers may say "This person did this and went through discipline and then he was restored". He shares the example of two single ministry leaders in Asia who fell into sin and one became pregnant. Rather than walking away from them, the mission counselled them, assisted them to get married, and disciplined them. Today, this couple is leading that organization in that country.

God is not silent on sexual impropriety, and neither should we be silent, but rather meet the sin and where possible, restore God's children. Brother Peter says: "This shows that sin does not have the last word: Jesus has the last word."

SAFEGUARD **THE VULNERABLE**

These steps may feel overwhelming for smaller organizations with limited resources; but safeguarding is still possible. It begins with simple, intentional decisions and with a heart that refuses

to ignore the risks. Partnering with likeminded organizations and sharing resources are a healthy start.

Protecting those we serve is not separate from our mission; it is central to

it. As we go into the nations, may we carry not only the message of salvation but also the heart of Jesus; a heart that sees, protects, and values every person.

BOOK REVIEW

DECOLONIZING MISSION BY HARVEY C. KWIYANI

domination, whether cultural, political, or theological.

Kwiyani also challenges contemporary mission language, questioning assumptions hidden in phrases such as “cross-cultural mission,” “unreached peoples,” or “white saviourism.” While some critiques may overgeneralise, they raise necessary questions about partnership, humility, and who gets to be

considered a “missionary” in the twenty-first century.

The book concludes with a hopeful vision of mission that is collaborative rather than controlling, rooted in Christ rather than culture, and shaped by a global church in which Africans play a central, Spirit-empowered role.

Overall, Decolonising Mission is a stimulating and provocative book that

will spark important conversations across the continent. It invites African believers to step forward confidently as full participants in God’s mission, while challenging Western partners to pursue humility, reciprocity, and shared learning.

– *Review by Dr Jacob Igba, Africa Inland Mission*

PEOPLE GROUP

THE JAPANESE OF EAST ASIA

personally important and is widely viewed as a family duty. The concept of one exclusive God is unfamiliar to most.

Christianity was introduced to Japan by Portuguese Catholics in 1549, but remains a small minority, with fewer than one to two per cent of the population identifying as Christian. Many Japanese have little personal exposure to

Christ-followers or the Bible. Although religious freedom is protected and Christian resources are widely available, Christianity is often perceived as a foreign religion that does not naturally align with Japanese identity, and concerns about family and social harmony can present barriers to becoming a Christ-follower.

AT A GLANCE

- Most Japanese have never met a Christian personally or heard a clear explanation of the gospel.
- Becoming a Christ-follower is often seen as a serious step that may disrupt family and social harmony.

PRAY FOR

- Opportunities for the Word of God to be shared relationally and received with openness across Japanese society.