

Prisoners of a White God

This documentary explicitly reveals under cover work of missionary agencies and individuals in the destruction of an ethnic group, the Akha people of South East Asia.

It is a picture of evil cloaked in righteousness. Evangelical missionaries come with the Good News of the Gospel, and aid for the poverty stricken mountain people. The reality is division, destruction of family core groups, human rights violations, displacement, forced relocation, theft of land, cultural genocide, racism and power of a majority people group over the indigenous group.

It is a picture of hell on earth despite the coming of so-called Good News, and it is enactment and creation of hell on earth for these tribal people. Kidnapped from their villages, children become "orphans" though they have families. They become the employees on the Christian Missionary tea plantations. "There are no employees," says one man, "we have children." In one place, 60 children take the role of laborer on the boarding school grounds. Worse, they are sold into slavery and sex trade by missionaries and those among the tribes who are on the take.

One missionary states that it would be a terrible revelation if the outside world ever got news of child rape by Christian missionaries. Denial, pretense, and cover-up is necessary for these organizations to continue their work among the People.

Ryska does an excellent job presenting the contrast of hypocrisy and wealth of the missionary, aid, food and clothing, the underworld of child trafficking versus the appearance of cleanliness and holiness, worship done the 'right' way, versus the 'pagan way.' He contrasts land theft, greed for the rich mountain resources, good business versus God's service. He uncovers the fear of eternal punishment versus the joys of heaven, fear of death threats for those who dare expose evil that dwells in the fundamentalist Christian missionary centers, corruption versus holiness, forced relocation, illness, depression, malaria, and prison camps in the lowlands for the unfortunate mountain people. It is colonization all over again.

Ryska himself barely escapes capture and murder at the hands of angry missionaries he deceived in order to gain indicting material. One statement stays with me from the video, "eighty percent of them fuck around..." states one missionary whose identity is concealed for his own protection.

Tomas Ryska who has created this excellent work and Matthew McDaniels, advocate for the Akha people are engaged in true service. They are courageous individuals who deserve our support.