



**A White Paper: *Where Do We Go After the Storm of Abuse – The Issue of Displacement***

**By Gregg Tyler Milligan, Author & Abuse Prevention Advocate  
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<http://www.godmustbesleeping.com/>

When I was removed from one abusive environment, I usually ended up in another one. There was no choice; I had to find another place to live and I had no say in where that would be. The unfortunate reality remains that with all the successes made in the area of improving the child welfare system, it is still a crapshoot when it comes to finding a better home for the abused. The Social Welfare System refers to this as ‘Displacement.’ Displacement describes when a victim of abuse, generally a child, is placed with Child Protective Services. And thus, the search begins to find the abused a safe place for a fresh start.

The goal is clear with displacement to achieve a positive outcome. Yet there is also a large risk faced when relocating a child and/or adult – what if the safe haven is not safe at all? What if it is just a repeat performance of the same, or worse yet, even greater abuse? “*Out of the fire ... into the fire.*” Another risk factor is that even though a child is being removed from an abusive environment, that child is also likely being removed from the only home they have ever known.

So, how do we Protect Displaced People who have been abused; especially, when there is a significant chance that the child and/or adult [could] end up raped, beaten, and otherwise abused after displacement? With increasing developments and advancements made in Abuse Prevention and Treatment Programs, {Displacement} has now been added to agendas of government bodies and social organization as an issue to resolve. Protection from ongoing abuse that occurs post-displacement has placed further emphasis on the seriousness of ‘what happens to the abused after removal from the abusive environment.’

I personally wish that programs to stop post-displacement abuse had been in place when I was removed from my abusive mother. It is just as critical to remove the abused as it is to know what happens to them afterwards. It all seems so simplistic; however those who work within ‘the system’ along with those like me who have been ‘in the system’ will tell you it is far from simple. The fact is the well-being of the abused post-displacement is often overlooked, which results in catastrophic circumstances. So terrible has the gaining environment been that many of the abused return to their former abusive environment. This is easily justified in the phrase, “*It’s bad, but not as bad as where I am now.*”

It is also a fact that there are very positive strides being made by governments and social organizations to ensure the changes made after displacement result in a more functional life for abuse survivors. A significant step forward in this area is in the development of sophisticated monitoring system, which is currently underway. The gains made in helping the abused underscore why funding for responsible organizations is so vital. The sweeping budgetary cuts occurring now are driving the programs backward with grievous and destructive consequences. Entire divisions of abuse prevention and treatment organizations along with a suffering overworked Social Welfare Administration have had their funding reduced by up to 60% in 2013 alone (Source: Child Welfare Information Gateway Organization: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/developing/federal.cfm>, “57 Terrible Consequences of the Sequester,” by Chris Good, Feb. 21, 2013). There must be a concrete plan of action forward that is backed by consistent, adequate funding to ensure proper care of the abused. Without it, displaced victims are merely hostages awaiting their fate, staring down the significant prospect of a life far worse than what they escaped.

The abused seek shelter; those in a position to find it are often faced with the terrible decision(s) that go along with displacement:

- (1) Remove the child/adult from the abusive environment; which for a child, may be the only world they have ever known
- (2) Hope the gaining home is filled with love and compassion

The consequences of failing the latter leaves those responsible devastated, lonely, and their lives a living hell. To hold the responsibility of life and death in your hands while praying you don't fumble is nothing short of ghastly.

Remember, it is the advocate's primary job to find a haven for the abused depending upon them to find a safe environment, one that is far away from famine, hostility, neglect and abuse. Now add to those already daunting tasks, the fact that many of the victims, like me, were sexually abused and/or forced into prostitution. We were exposed, exploited, and abused in every way imaginable and in desperate need of protection. Also still, this may be the first time our situation is actually reported and reaching this point may have taken years; having been brought to the light of day either willingly or unwillingly. Research has proven many victims of sexual violence alone do not report their experiences to the authorities because they fear reprisals from their attackers. In my case, this was true. Also add to the situation the awful weight of shame which prohibits victims from coming forward. Once finally brought forward, the question becomes "*what will be done about it?*" A burning question only the abused fully understand that can end or save our lives.

It is critical to emphasize that due to the efforts of abuse prevention and treatment organizations along with state, local, and federal social programs, numerous abuse survivors find good homes. However, I want to make clear that both the abused and the practitioner do not get 2<sup>nd</sup> chances. It is usually 1 and out when it comes to the victim of abuse.

*Those in the daunting profession of child welfare, abuse protection and treatment, are the 'gatekeepers' controlling the safe passage of the innocent.* And, these gatekeepers are fighting not one, but two battles; to save the innocent and to secure funding. We cannot end abuse, but we can do much to curb this inhumane action. The fact that so much energy must be put into acquiring money in which to maintain staff and resources is disturbing to say the least. Are those holding the pen to approve these budgets honestly that obtuse? The question is obviously rhetorical.

I have personally witnessed organizations pulling out all stops in order to attract greater humanitarian assistance from their own government(s). It is important to note that this is [not] for their own personal benefit – it is for the perseverance of the human race. Those in a position of power, regardless of their indifference and egos, need to realize quickly that they are a member of the same race, although there of those of us who may argue this point. This sarcasm highlights the lack of awareness that is pervasive in these individuals. By refusing and/or removing funding, for whatever reason (including siphoning it off for their own benefit) those in a position of power become by all definitions, abusers themselves. Through both their actions and lack thereof, they cause irreparable and lasting harm – physically, mentally and emotionally to others. I make no apologies for calling out what many find too sensitive to comprehend.

To be fair, I present myself for scrutiny. I donate all proceeds of my books; I also sell them at cost to organizations and universities in which I speak for free, and 100% the monies earned by the resale of my books are given to the gaining organization/university. In addition, I have also developed a program offering open to all, entitled God Must Be Sleeping – Completing the Circle. The program proposal represents the next phase of my abuse prevention advocacy work, which includes the offer to print/republish my most recent book, *God Must Be Sleeping*.

The program is simple in nature and is designed for use of *God Must Be Sleeping* as an educational tool and source of recurring income to support scholarship, community service, and humanitarian causes. The program proposal outlines a plan to utilize the book within the curriculum of the gaining organization and/or university, supported by a business model that produces profit to the gaining institution, its students and faculty, which can then be used to further fund educational and community programs as they relate to the university and/or foundations. As the author of *God Must Be Sleeping*, I have proposed this program with full

rights to print/distribute my book. 100% of the proceeds go to the gaining institution. To put a finer point on the driving reason that is behind this program offering – it is because giving back is my salvation.

We as a human race must remain forever grateful for those who directly work with the abused each and every day and night. They are a special and amazing group whose contributions surpass comprehension when it comes to saving one another. I truly recognize and wish to emphasize that we cannot thank these individuals enough for their selfless acts and compassion.

What I am proposing with regard to displacement is a new government perspective that turns the page on transitional short-sighted failures and provides accountability for protection to the displaced. This new government (the world over) must assemble and act with great acceleration (NOW), in a manner that preserves safety and dignity. There are several competent organizations at-the-ready to take this bold new step forward. As I've stated earlier, the aim of completing relocation of the displaced abused, even with the tremendous challenges of providing assistance and protection, must ensure to the greatest extent that the displaced remain safe and their abuse ends.

Please remember ... *no longer can anyone hide behind the imprudent statement of 'me and my own' ... the abused / the children are [all] of our own.*

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Gregg Tyler Milligan is an internationally-known author and child abuse prevention advocate. He has written two books, A Beautiful World, detailing his childhood and the horrific suffering Milligan endured at the hands of his mother and strangers. Milligan later completed the continuation to A Beautiful World, describing his next eleven years. Both books are published under the same volume, titled God Must be Sleeping. Milligan is a member of the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) Speakers Bureau and continues to spread his message of hope.

In his words, "Please remember, the reason we are here is to save one another – Break the cycle." More information can be found at [godmustbesleeping.com/](http://godmustbesleeping.com/).