

Human Trafficking: Women and Children

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Human trafficking is a horrible epidemic in the world today. Although most people view human trafficking as unethical, many people, nonetheless, participate in the slavery of women and children and find no wrong in doing so. Human trafficking is not limited to third world countries; America is also involved in human trafficking. Society does not flaunt human trafficking; however, it still takes place and ruins the hearts and lives of people who are forced into a life of slavery.

The United Nation Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UN TOC) describes human trafficking as the following:

...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar

to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.... The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation ... shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth (above) have been used. The recruitment, transportation, transfers ... of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth (above).¹

This description helps one understand the repulsiveness that accompanies human trafficking. Women and children are exploited and controlled against their will for the benefit of others. They are deceived or captured, against their desire, and forced into the trade. Some people, however, are sold into the trade as a means of helping the family survive. However, many of these women and young girls will never receive the money promised for entering the sex-slave industry. Nicholas Kristof says human trafficking is the "big emerging human rights issue for the 21st century, but it's an awful term, a convoluted euphemism."² To define it as anything less than slavery is insufficient. The women and young girls thrown into brothels all around the world are expected to have sex with many customers in one night. They may be beaten and bruised if they resist or

protest the situation. Slave owners use many terrifying techniques in order to keep the women and young girls imprisoned.

The full extent of the evil inherent in slavery requires a deeper analysis. Statistics and data regarding the number of people actually being trafficked around the world are shaky. Due to the nature of the problem, it is difficult to pinpoint an exact or even close number.

While no official statistics are available, data suggest that 80,000-100,000 women and children are victims of sexual exploitation or have been trafficked for such purposes each year, many to Malaysia and the Middle East, while others are sent to the capital Jakarta or Kalimantan (Borneo), an island rich in timber, coffee and rubber plantations where large numbers of men live alone. Sex workers are younger than 18, some as young as 10.³

Although most people view human trafficking as a horrible act, the number of people trafficked each year continues to grow. Poverty, divorce, lack of authentic documentation, and lack of information possessed by youngsters may contribute to the continual growth of human trafficking.

While the issue seems hopeless at times, a light shines in the darkness. Many countries, such as Thailand, for instance, have created stringent laws to punish people who violate human trafficking regulations. In China, various segments of society are taking a stand against it; in the Philippines, people are supporting awareness campaigns for the young women and girls.

Countries all around the world are stepping up against the horrors of human trafficking by creating stricter laws will hinder the continuation of human trafficking. In addition, men and women with a heart to help people impacted by human trafficking are creating outreach programs as a means of extending the hand of Jesus to women and young girls affected by this travesty.

Project Rescue, founded by David and Beth Grant, provides housing for the children of prostitutes working in the brothels in India as well as children who have been involved in prostitution. These homes provide a safe place for the children to grow and learn about God and His love. In doing so, the children not only learn about God but are rescued from being thrown into the sex slave trade to which their mothers are subjected. Project Rescue, a wonderful example of the godly ministries which battle the stronghold of human slavery, teaches these victims techniques and traits that will help them succeed in life and leave the past behind.

Jesus is the only hope for breaking through the barriers of human trafficking. Without the gospel, rehabilitation through ministries like Project Rescue moving forward with full force to combat the sex slave industry will not be as effective. Victims of human trafficking experience genuine restoration and healing through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Although human trafficking creates a dark shadow over the lives of many people, God's power shines through where previously hope could not be found.

Kumari's story as a survivor of human trafficking, along with many other testimonies, is available on the Project

Rescue Web site:

I was 16 years old when I was sold by my uncle. I was there for two years. With the help of my friend I came to know Bombay Teen Challenge. I became involved and stayed there for six months. I came to Home of Hope Nepal in 2000. After being at the Home of Hope, I was able to go through different programs like literacy school, vocational training and beautician training. After going through these courses the people at the Home of Hope encouraged us to start up income generating programs that would allow us to survive independently. I wanted to set up my own beauty parlor. With the help of the Home of Hope leader, I am walking closely with God and also running my own beauty parlor to support myself.⁴

Kumari's success story encourages readers as well as people trapped in the slave trade industry and brings hope for

life after prostitution. Her outcome is that desired for all victims of human trafficking. Although she Kumari was scarred through her experience, God has removed those scars of pain and made her life brand new.

The people of God must rise up and follow the example of men and women like David and Beth Grant by taking a stand against the injustice of human trafficking. In so doing, the chains of slavery will be loosed, and the wall of fear will fall down. As Satan tries to move forward with his agenda in these last days, the children of God must take a stand for the innocent and abused.

This crime against humanity must be put to an end—and can be—as Christians around the world move forward to demolish this slavery, shining forth the light and hope of Jesus Christ.

This article was originally submitted to Dr. Deborah Gill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an AGTS course, "Biblical Theology of Women in Leadership."

¹“Human Trafficking,” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html?ref=menuside> (accessed June 28, 2010).

²Nicholas D. Kristof, “The 21st-Century Slave Trade,” April 22, 2007. The Corner: Musings at the Intersection of Life & Me, http://thecorner.typepad.com/bc/2007/04/nicholas_d_kris.html (accessed June 28, 2010).

³David Swanson, “Indonesia: Trafficking Fuels Commercial Sex Work,” IRIN Project Rescue, <http://www.projectrescue.com/assets/files/Indonesia%20Trafficking.html> (accessed June 28, 2010).

⁴Mike Dottridge “Young People’s Voices on Child Trafficking: Experiences from South Eastern Europe.” UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, <http://www.unicef-irc.org/cgi-bin/unicef/Lunga.sql?ProductID=518> (accessed June 28, 2010).