

People in Slavery -- Global Trafficking of Women and Children

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(Compiled, revised, researched, and updated from an article by Dr. Diane Landberg)
All Scripture is taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

God's Word says, "*Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them ...*" (Ephesians 5:11).

"Pure and lasting religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit [care for] orphans . . . in their distress . . . " (James 1:27).

"He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing" (Deuteronomy 10:18).

"Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy," (Proverbs 31:8-9).

In the first century in certain parts of the world female infanticide was not uncommon. Infant girls were killed by exposure. It was permitted by law to leave them outside the city on the dung heap to die. That is about as clear a judgment of "worthless" on a human life as can be made.

There was, however, a group of people who thought the judgment was very wrong. Rather than accepting the culture's assessment regarding the value of females, they went outside the city to the dung heaps to find and rescue the abandoned baby girls. The decision was both risky and sacrificial. It required standing against the mainstream and making a judgment that ran counter to the culture of that time. It meant the giving of time and goods to save the life of someone else's discarded baby girl. It meant extending the circle of one's responsibility. It meant being devalued and disdained for stooping so low as to treat what was deemed worthless as precious instead.

Who were these people? They were the church, the body of Jesus Christ. They followed the Lamb of God who went outside the city gates to make the ultimate sacrifice and give His life as a ransom for many who were deemed worthless. By His death, He considered them precious. His first-century body [the church] followed Him outside the gates to the garbage heaps to rescue baby girls.

The call that our first-century brothers and sisters answered is not unlike a call that is now before us in the church today. The challenge of the church today is to follow the Lamb to the garbage heaps of the world. It must pursue and rescue those found worthless in the eyes of this world and sacrificially work among them because they are precious in His sight.

The Extent of Abuse

According to Amnesty International, one in three females worldwide - nearly one billion - are beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in their lifetime. One in three; think about that statistic the next time you sit in an airport or walk through a crowded marketplace or sit in

church. In the United States, though reports vary, many studies estimate that one in four females is sexually abused by the age of eighteen.

The rates increase exponentially if you look at worldwide statistics. There are no overall statistics, but a minimum estimate would place the casualties of female infanticide in the hundreds of thousands. Sex-selective abortions also count for an even higher number of missing girls. Demographics suggest that between sixty and one hundred million females are missing.

Trafficking

One of the most brutal and large-scale destructive forces against girls and women in the world today is that of sex trafficking. This is defined as "commercial sexual acts induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or when the person induced to perform such acts has not attained eighteen years of age."

One Trafficking Victims Protection Act states that trafficking involves recruitment, harboring, transportation, or obtaining a person for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Commercial sexual exploitation simply means that a sex act is performed in exchange for something of value such as money, clothes, drugs, food, or shelter. Included are prostitution, pornography, child brides, stripping, and live sex shows. Trafficking victims can be found in brothels, massage parlors, saunas, escort services, nightclubs, and the streets.

The U.S. State Department estimates that approximately **seven hundred thousand women and children are trafficked annually** across international borders. Of that number, 80 percent are female, 70 percent are trafficked for sex exploitation, and **50 percent of them are children.**

Though as an underground activity sex trafficking is very difficult to measure accurately, it is thought that in order to supply this global sex trade, a woman or girl is sold in the developing world every ten minutes. It is reported that about **fifteen thousand victims** are trafficked each year into the U.S. (others say as high as fifty thousand).

Some organizations estimate about **two million child prostitutes** globally. UNICEF estimates **ten million child prostitutes worldwide.** Whatever the numbers, we are facing a staggering, global problem.

Victims enter the trafficking world in one of four ways: they are kidnapped, coerced, sold, or they leave home voluntarily with the promise of a better life elsewhere. Girls and women are considered a commodity to traffickers. They run low risks for big money. In most countries the penalties for sex trafficking are less severe than those for drug trafficking.

Who are the purchasers of trafficked victims?

There is no specific profile for a user. Customers cut across every division such as age, social and economic status, ethnicity, or profession. In essence, "every man" is a potential user. We tend to delude ourselves into thinking we can discern who such people might be. To paraphrase a British law enforcement official: There are three components to sex trafficking: an endless supply of girls and women, an endless supply of ruthless traffickers, and an endless supply of clients and customers.

The Abused

What factors make a woman or girl vulnerable to becoming trafficked? Obviously, gender is primary. Those who are **orphans, refugees**, have experienced prior sexual abuse, **widows** or **ethnic minorities** are very vulnerable. **Poverty** is also a major factor. **Violence** against females is a global human rights scandal. It is one of the most pervasive and ignored human rights violations around the world.

A Canadian journalist by the name of Victor Malarek wrote a book on sex trafficking called *The Natashas*. In writing about the trafficking of girls from Eastern Europe into the rest of the world, he says that female flesh is one of the top three commodities on the world's black market. The sex industry is a big business well-entrenched in both national and international economies.

More Statistics:

-There are at least **30 million victims of modern day slavery** in the world today (US Trafficking in Persons Report).

-Each year it is estimated that there are **1 million new victims of human trafficking** (The US Department of State).

-Estimates as high as 80% of trafficking victims are **women** and over 50% in slavery are **children** (US Government).

-“...Experts say that at any given time, some **2.5 million people are being trafficked ...**” (<http://www.makewaypartners.org/effects.html>)

-**The USA is the number one country of destination for trafficked victims.** The land of the free and the brave has become the receiving country for sex-slaves and forced manual workers. Run-away or kidnapped children are also sold and exploited within USA borders and Internet child pornography or solicitation is thriving. (<http://www.makewaypartners.org/effects.html>)

-A child goes missing every 40 seconds in the USA. That is more than 2,000 a day and more than **800,000 every year**. Another estimated 500,000 disappear without being reported. For most, these bodies are never found. What happens to them? (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)

-1.3 million **runaways** and 2.8 million **homeless youths** living on America's streets are two of the most at risk populations for exploitation. (PR Newswire)

-**1 in 7 teenagers in the USA run away from home.** Living on the streets, one out of every three teens will be lured into prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home. And the longer they are gone, the more likely they are to engage in "survival sex." After three months away from home, 90 percent of children will turn to sex. (National Incidence Studies of Missing, Runaway and Throwaway Children)

-In the US, \$10 billion is derived from the initial “sale” of individuals (*Stop the Traffick*).

The Economics of Trafficking

Human trafficking generates about **10 billion dollars** in annual revenue. The United Nations has said that in the last thirty years more than **thirty million people have been trafficked in Asia** alone. About 14 percent of the gross domestic product of Thailand was supplied by the sex industry. In the Philippines, prostitution is estimated by some to be the fourth largest

source of the gross national product. Estimates say there are a half million involved in prostitution in that country and that at least one hundred thousand of those are children.

India is said to have 2.3 million females in the flesh industry, and according to a UN report 40 percent of those are under the age of eighteen. Victor Malarek and many others are calling the trafficking of females **the human rights issue of the twenty-first century**. He says, "The issue of trafficking desperately cries out for firm, committed leadership; it has to be made a global concern."

What does God say: Keeping the stories and the statistics in mind, listen to the voice of God speaking to His people down through the centuries:

"Learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:17).

"Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free and break every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6)?

"Wicked men are found among My people They know no bounds in deeds of evil; they judge not with justice the cause of the fatherless ... they do not defend the rights of the needy" (Jeremiah 5:26, 28, esv).

"[The LORD our God] ... executes justice for the oppressed; [He] gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free ... the LORD raises up those who are bowed down ... the LORD protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow" (Psalm 146:7-9).

Listen to Christ

The church has a Head, the Lord Jesus Christ who has called us to follow Him. The Bible says, *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners ... to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:1-2).*

God says to seek justice, break every yoke, defend the orphan, set the prisoner free, and care for the widow. This list is also a match for the list regarding who is vulnerable to trafficking. The list of God's commands, the list describing our leader, and the list describing those vulnerable to trafficking are virtually identical. Christ asks us to pursue those vulnerable to trafficking. The body of Christ needs to lead the way in this world regarding such issues as rape, incest, violence, HIV/AIDS and sex trafficking. The church has led the way in works of compassion throughout history and we must continue in these desperately dark days!

Going outside the camp to rescue trashed children and females is one of the church's clarion calls. Those in power are preying on females and children around the world. The girls, women and little children of this world are dying on the dung heaps of Manila, Mexico City, and Moscow.

World's Largest Mission Field. Females make up approximately one half of the world's population. Between sixty million and one hundred million are missing. If we take the plagues of abuse, incest, rape, and trafficking seriously, then those females who are being so violated comprise one of the largest mission fields in the world.

When you think of the phrases *mission work* or *mission field*, do you ever think of children, girls and women as being one of those fields? Should not the church begin to train and send men

and women into their communities and around the world to protect, educate, nurture, share the Gospel, and rescue women and girls in the name of Jesus?

We who are the body of Christ often pour our money into all kinds of things while women and children die. We work hard for fame and success in our ministries while they are trafficked. We fly around the world and build more buildings and drive newer cars while they give birth in bullock carts and garbage carts in back alleys.

We condemn the poor for their immorality while AIDS increases exponentially or their children die in their arms from starvation. All the while the voice of our Savior is calling us to crawl all over the dung heaps of this world, searching for the abandoned, neglected, dying, abused, and trafficked females of our century.

Christ has called us to go to the poor, the afflicted, the broken, the needy, and the imprisoned. He invites us to go where humanity is broken in pieces, maimed, and shattered. He asks us to follow Him into prisons, places of little light and restricted movement, places without hope. He leads us into places of worthlessness and decay-places that appall and horrify us.

The abuse, prostitution, and trafficking of women and girls is not new. Many courageous people, mainly Christians, have followed after our first-century brethren by working selflessly to rescue the females of their day. Many of these "modern church heroes" are working throughout Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe.

Organizations work around the globe rescuing girls and women from sex trafficking: setting up homes for the care of girls rescued from brothels, helping them heal and become skilled so they are not vulnerable to the traffickers. They need the active intercession and the support of the church community.

Many of those working with needy children have learned something of the depth of evil in this world and in the hearts of human beings. We have seen how serious sin of any kind, our own included, damages not only individuals but the body and name of Christ as well. We have gotten glimpses of the meaning of the cross of Jesus Christ and the overwhelming nature of what He bore there. And God has given us "a front row seat to redemption" because as we have walked into the darkness of abuse and torment with the Gospel and compassionate care, we have seen God's love and grace poured out and lives transformed to the glory of God!

What to do?

What do you suppose would happen if collectively we as Christians obeyed God in reaching out in this need? What might occur if the church around the world truly recognized the plight of children and females in this world today? There are several action steps: pray, read, work, look and speak out.

Pray

We should pray for the global church to hear the cries of the largest mission field in the world. Most countries have trafficked females and children in them. We should pray for the churches worldwide that sit side by side with the trafficked. We should pray for the girls and women who are suffering and dying without hope. Pray asking for discernment to know what to do for the widows and orphans, the vulnerable females and children of this world, of *our* communities. Pray that many missionaries will be called of God to take the Gospel and compassionate care to these women and children.

Read

We should also read books like *Not For Sale* by David Batstone, *A Crime So Monstrous* by E. Benjamin Skinner, *True Grit* by Deborah Meroff, *The Devil's Bedroom* by Dawn Herzog Jewell, *Stop the Traffick* by Steve Chalke and *Beyond the Soiled Curtain* by David & Beth Grant. Read so as to understand the issues and be able to work with our churches, NGOs, and governments, calling them to be courageous in their stand against trafficking. We should especially challenge our government leaders not to allow politics to destroy humanitarianism.

Work

We should work in our communities to get children off the streets and to help support local law enforcement, calling them to integrity rather than corruption. We would educate our churches and our pastors so they would teach others concerning the justice of our God, and challenge the church to care for the vulnerable and speak out against incest, rape, and sexual abuse as sin.

Look

We should lift up our eyes to see the vast field of need and provide resources to the body of Christ around the world ministering to a great company of women and children. We would look and learn that girls and children who are protected, educated, given economic alternatives, and loved are not easily recruited by traffickers. So we would actively work to offer resources to the females and children in our spheres of influence. We would teach parents how to provide homes that are safe for children to grow up in.

Speak Out

We should speak out and educate others about domestic violence and sexual abuse. We should develop church social services and safe shelters to care for those who have been abused or trafficked and for those who are vulnerable to being trafficked. The church of Jesus Christ exists in the same world as a global network of traffickers. That church has a mandate from its Master to seek justice, reprove the ruthless, and defend the helpless.

As we go to the human trash heaps of this world, seeking those who are considered worthless by this world, the glory that will be ours as the body of Christ will far exceed the inadequate substitutes we so often pursue. It will be the glory the Lord Jesus Christ has prayed for us to have: *"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them ... so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me"* (John 17:22-23).

Let us pray that those who follow us in future centuries will point to us as an example of the servant body following its servant Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, because we have gone out to the trash heaps to rescue women and children for whom He died and thereby eternally called precious. May we be known for a bold stand for truth, but also for leading the way in protecting, defending, and nurturing the abused and violated females and children of this world.

"The wicked hotly pursue the afflicted ... his mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression ... he sits in the lurking places of the villages ... he lurks to catch the afflicted; he catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net" (Psalm 10:2, 7-9).

"Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach," (Hebrews 13:12-13).

"These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, " (Revelation 14:4).

In Closing, let me ask a simple question: As we seek to rescue women and children, should we pray for God's judgment on the traffickers, abusers and murderers of women and children?

On one occasion in Africa, my wife Margaret and I witnessed some of the 30,000 children, toddlers to age 17 years, walking to the northern Uganda city of Gulu to sleep on the streets, in makeshift shelters, in dirt floor school buildings, and on hospital grounds.

They came to Gulu nightly to try to escape the killing and kidnapping by the demonic, blasphemous terrorist rebel group, the Kony Demonic Army (KDA), headed by the satanist Joseph Kony. Over the last 25 years, the Kony terrorists have slaughtered thousands in northern Uganda and abducted an estimated 35,000 children.

There are many other terrorist and rebel groups worldwide who use varying degrees of violence. The Kony terrorists, however, **specifically target children**, murdering and kidnapping them for child-soldiers, slaves, and concubines.

Would it be right for God's people worldwide to pray Psalm 35:1-8 in regards to the wicked Kony terrorist; to pray on behalf of the war-torn children of northern Uganda for the glory of God?

(vs. 1) *"Contest, O Lord, with those who contend with the [children of northern Uganda]. Fight against the [wicked demonic Kony terrorist] who fight [kidnap, rape, and slaughter] against the [needy children]."*

(vs. 2) *"...rise up for [the children's] help."*

(vs. 3) *"Draw the spear ... to meet [the Kony murderers] who pursue [the children]."*

(vs. 4) *"...let those [wicked terrorists to children] be turned back... who devise evil against [the children of Uganda and the Congo]."*

(vs. 5) *"Let ways [of the violent demonic Kony rebels] be dark and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them on."*

(vs. 8) *"Let destruction come upon [the wicked Konites] unawares ... into that very destruction let [these slaughterers of children] fall."*

Oh God, please stop these wicked child terrorists for your glory!

Whether or not you feel like specifically praying the above, please pray for the terrified, suffering children of northern Uganda, the Congo and the world and pray that the wicked Joseph Kony and others like him, who are the *"slayers of widows ... and murderer of orphans"* (Psalm 94:6) will be brought to an end; *"O Lord, God of vengeance, shine forth."* (Psalm 94:1).

Overwhelming needs. What can we possibly do? As the little boy gave his five loaves and two fish to Jesus, who then broke it, blessed it and multiplied it, let us do the same with our lives and our all. Someone once said, "Don't let the immensity of the task deter you, but let it drive you to do something about it to the glory of God!"

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All Scripture is taken from New American Standard Bible (NASB).

Note: The statistics in this paper were mainly taken from the following:

www.actioninternational.org;

www.humantrafficking.org;

www.state.gov;

www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2003/issue2/0203p34.html;
www.ecpat.net;
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www.ijm.org
www.chaste.org.uk;
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Confronting Kingdom Challenges by Samuel T. Logan Jr., Crossway Books, pages 65-79.
Stop the Traffick (People Shouldn't be Bought and Sold) by Steve Chalke