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God's Woman: Then and Now
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Human Trafficking: Woman And Children

Human trafficking is a horrible epidemic in the world today. Although most believe human trafficking to be unethical, many participate in the slavery of women and children and find no wrong in what they are doing. Human trafficking is not only a problem in third-world countries but is an issue in America today. Human trafficking is not flaunted as acceptable in society; however, it still takes place and still ruins the hearts and lives of those who are forced into the lifestyle.

The UN TOC Convention 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).

This definition helps to understand the repulsiveness that accompanies human trafficking. Women and children are exploited and controlled against their wills for the benefit of others. They are deceived or captured against their desire and forced into the trade. However, many are sold into trade in order for their families to receive money to eat and survive. Many of these women and young girls would never see the money that they were promised for entering the sex trade.

Kristof writes, "Human trafficking is the big emerging human rights issue for the 21st century, but it's an awful term, a convoluted euphemism"(Kristof 4). He goes on to

write that human trafficking is slavery and to define it, as anything less is insufficient. Human trafficking is wrong and all people should stand up against it.

The women and young children who are caught in the whirlwind of human trafficking and who are 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 attest or protest the situation. In the story of Meena, a girl who worked in an Indian brothel, breeding among other things was required of her. Kristof writes, "Meena's owners also wanted to breed her, as is common in Indian brothels. One purpose is to have boys to be laborers and girls to be prostitutes, and a second is to have hostages to force the mother to cooperate" (Kristof 4). However, deeper analysis must be done to understand the full evil that this slavery possesses.

The statistics and the data are shaky. However, there are estimations and assumptions to the number of people who are actually being trafficked all around the world. 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. An estimated 30 percent of all female sex workers are younger than 18, some as young as 10" (Swanson 6). This quote exhibits the evil and unbalanced thinking behind human trafficking. It is also disturbing to see the young ages of the girls who are being dragged into this sex trade for the satisfaction and pleasure of men.

Though human trafficking is seen by most as a horrible act, the numbers are growing and more and more women and children are becoming slaves. There are a few reasons why this seems to be happening in the country of Indonesia. "Poverty is the

driving factor," Diyan Wahyuningsih, coordinator of Genta, a local NGO, in Surabaya, which also runs one of two shelters in the city for trafficking victims, said. Conditions are particularly bad for young people, but even more so for girls, with fewer opportunities for education and job opportunities. Many see the bright lights of the cities as an escape, but without the necessary knowledge and skills to survive many are exploited" (Swanson 6). Wahyuningsih says that the young people do not know the seriousness of human trafficking in Indonesia and get caught up in it because they do not know how to survive. "A vast majority of the young respondents said that at the time they were trafficked, they did not know how to recognize the risks of exploitation and abuse, including trafficking, or how to control these risks. For all of these children, the trafficking experience represented a painful learning process" (Dottridge 2). This shows that parents or the role models in these families may not be teaching their kids about human trafficking and how they must be careful or they can be sucked into it.

Another reason as to why the numbers of those who are trafficked seems to be growing is because of the lack of authentic documentation that is possessed. "According to UNICEF, 60 percent of Indonesian children under-five do not have birth certificates. "If that first protection right - your birth certificate - is not in place, it is very easy to manipulate somebody's identity. You can then present someone as being older than they really are," Byrne said. "This is why you have young girls being trafficked. These girls should not even be allowed to migrate abroad because of their age," she said" (Swanson 6). The lack of proper documentation allows those who are trafficking women and children to make-up lies and manipulate others into thinking that a child is a different person. Therefore, girls of young ages are transported who should not be.

The practice of divorce in Indonesia seems to add to the number of those who are being trafficked. "Other issues include the continued practice of debt bondage in some places, as well as early marriage and early divorce - all having a contributory effect.

According to UNICEF, about 12 percent of women in Indonesia are married at or before the age of 15” (Swanson 6). When the females divorce young, they have no money or support. The result of this is that women go to the brothels, thinking they will be jobs that will help them support their families and themselves. However, it turns out to be something they never dreamed of and then it is too late for them to get out. Many are deceived and lied to about the true conditions and jobs they will be receiving.

Finally, the Project Rescue website, which is a group created to provide safe houses to the daughters of prostitutes in the brothels, writes this about how women are brought into slavery and trafficking. The description writes, “Each victim has a different story. Many poor families sell their daughters for extra money, believing that the girls will be given a great job and better life in the city and that the money paid for them is a "sign-on bonus" of sorts. Some girls are lured or kidnapped right off the street or in a public place, such as a shopping mall or street market. Other victims go with a trafficker to escape poverty, believing in the promise of a better life and job in the city. As soon as the girls reach the city, they are taken to the brothel, beaten into submission, and forced to stay there and work” (PR 5). These quotes and examples seem to display the truth that these young women and girls are very uneducated to the real facts about the human-sex trade. Although it is so prevalent in their communities and countries, they seem to know little about it. The ignorance of those involved helps fuel the fire of this trade. Captors know this and try to keep it as quiet as possible.

It is easy to generalize the causes of human trafficking to divorce or poverty. However, when the family units that trafficked victims come from are examined, many small issues begin to come to light. The various issues may be one of the main causes of human trafficking.

A study conducted by Mike Dottridge helps shed light on the dynamics of the family. The issues Dottridge focuses on are “poverty, work, violence and abuse, and their parents’ addiction to alcohol meant in their daily lives”(Dottridge 2). The disturbances in the family show great reason for runaways and the idea of being forced into slavery. Some of these runaways find themselves in situations they do not understand and were not aware of. Due to this fact, many runaways were tricked into being involved with teaffickers. The following quote comes from a girl who was poor and pressured to bring money into the home to sustain the families living. She says,

“Starting with the age of 16 my life turned to disaster. We had no money for bread but a lot of small debts to neighbors. My mother started pressuring me to go to the city and ask friends for money. Meanwhile, I met another girl who, at the disco, introduced me to all kinds of boys. All the money I earned was brought home and the entire family lived on it. My mother pretended to know nothing. But she did not ask me where the money was coming from, when should it be paid back, etc. And instead, she put pressure on me to bring more” (Dottridge 2).

The testimonial explains that life was hard for this young girl and she was expected to bring in the financial support. The pressure of the family was laid to rest on her shoulders. Her family turned their heads the other way when they knew what their daughter was taking part of. This shows the worth and appreciation for women in this culture. As long as the female was bringing in money, it really did not matter how she completed this task.

Another story regarding the violence in a home went like this,

“My father caught me hanging around with some guys in a bar so he beat me badly and burned my hair, and then I ran away from home. Later on, I woke up again because my father was trying to rape me, but since I refused he beat me up and raped me. He would shut my mouth with his socks and he threatened me that if I tell anybody about this he would kill my mother and sister. He didn’t rape me again but he beat me up many times” (Dottridge 2).

Another story concerning alcohol addiction would be read like this,

“My mother died when I was 10 years old. I lived with my father and my elder brother. Often my father got drunk and everything they earned was spent on drinking. My father treated me badly very often. He called me bad names and sometimes beat me” (Dottridge 2).

These stories exhibit the dysfunctional family that some victims are coming from. A lot of these women and young girls ran away because of the horrible conditions in their families. After running away, they were lured into brothels. If they were not lured and deceived, they were kidnapped from their homes and forced into the sex-slave industry.

Most of the time, the traffickers are people that the young women or girl already knows and has some sort of connection with. “Only eight children were trafficked by a ‘stranger’, someone they had not met before. Most of the children interviewed (21), knew their traffickers. In some cases the exploiter was identified as a boyfriend or lover; in three cases it was a neighbor; in three others, a cousin” (Dottridge 2).

Dottridge identifies 5 different strategies that the traffickers use to keep those who have been trafficked under control and obedience. He listed these as: Threats and intimidation, beatings, rape and other forms of violence, physical restraints, such as constant surveillance or keeping the child locked up, depriving the child of identity papers and keeping the child high on drugs and alcohol. These techniques are used to keep the power in the hand of the trafficker. A victim may be subjected to any one of these methods. This is an example of a victim, who was beaten in order to obey,

“I lived with 20 girls in the trafficker’s apartment. I was beaten many times. They told me if I ran away they would find and kill me, would come to my village and kill my mother.... Then he sold me to a woman. They took us by maxi taxi to the place where we were sold. We were sold to the clients, three to four girls per night. A woman took the money. We were always supervised. We were beaten for any little thing. We ate only pasta. Several girls ran away, the trafficker caught them and beat them hard in front of us. They told us that the same will happen to us if we run away” (Dottridge 2).

This quote shows the abuse, selfishness and lies that a victim went through in order to survive,

“In the beginning, it was nice. He kept me for himself, he bought me clothes, cosmetics, he was treating me nicely. Then, an ex-girlfriend of his arrived and, for the time, this one stayed with him and he sent me to produce [make money]. My sister was jealous of me because she was making money together with the other girls and I was kept only for him. At that time, we patched things up as I went to make money, too. When his ex-girlfriend left, he kept me for himself again. He was rather old but nice. Only that he used to hit me, to curse me if I didn’t obey him and I didn’t go fetch something (for instance beer from the fridge). I had to be obedient and do the work around the house”(Dottridge).

Traffickers were able to keep victims in submission by acting on these strategies. The methods terrified the victims who received them. The methods also traumatized many victims and had lasting affects on their lives.

Although the issue of human trafficking seems hopeless, there is still a light shining in the darkness. The human trafficking laws are starting to become stricter. In Thailand, laws are become much more severe on those who violate human trafficking regulations.

“Thailand is the first country in the region to pass laws that impose greater penalties on

customers than on sellers for involvement in commercial sex with underage partners” (Kristof 4). Also, in China, many groups of society are doing their part to combat human trafficking. This can be found in the quote, “Provinces infested by the crime, leading functionaries from the police, the office of the procurator, the courts, the civil departments, the media, schools, women's federations, trade unions, and the Communist Youth League each play their own role in combating trafficking” (Kristof 4). Lastly, the Philippines have supported and backed-up awareness campaigns for the young women and girls that live there. “In the Philippines, GABRIELA, which is the National Alliance of Women's Organizations, is actively involved in massive awareness campaigns to prevent the trafficking of women and girls from the Philippines. Its strategies consist of seminars and information dissemination to NGOs and Government Agencies and awareness campaigns at the community level” (Kristof 4). It is wonderful to hear that countries all around the world are stepping up against the horrors of human trafficking and creating laws that will hinder the trafficker from trafficking.

More and more people of influence are recognizing how horrible this trade is and are fighting to have it demolished and stopped at every side. Also, men and women who have a heart for the hurt and captive have created programs that are reaching out. These people are extending the hand of Jesus to hurting people.

For example, Project Rescue, founded by David and Beth Grant, out of the need for safe houses by K.K. Devaraj, house and home the children of prostitutes who are working in the brothels in India as well as children who have been involved in the prostitution themselves. These houses provide a safe place for these children to grow and learn about God and his love. In doing so, the children not only learn about God and are

looked after, but they are saved from being thrown into the same slavery that their mothers have been subject too. Project Rescue is able to teach these victims technique and traits that will help them to be successful in life and leave the past behind them.

Project Rescue has many different locations in India that it currently provides these services too and plans on moving outside the country of India to help those who are in other countries. “Today, Project Rescue's presence has expanded to include eleven such havens where sex workers' young daughters find compassion, transformation, and a new meaning in life. Through these shelters and other efforts, our multi-dimensional rescue ministry has brought freedom to over 1,000 young women and girls in India and Nepal” (Grant 3). It is encouraging to know that this many young women and girls have been saved from the evil of human trafficking and working inside the brothels. There are many more who need to be saved from this dark practice, and even more importantly, be saved with the Gospel. Project Rescue is doing a wonderful job and working aggressively to make sure this takes place.

According to Beth Grant, there are 3 truths that this ministry stands by and find necessary while working with those who have been and are still involved in human trafficking and the sex-slave industry. The first truth is *No true “rescue” can take place without the love and transformational power of Jesus Christ.* Grant goes on to say,

Many good social, legal and political organizations are engaged in physically rescuing victims from sex slavery. But only Jesus can free a woman or child emotionally, mentally and spiritually from the bondage of exploitation. A supernatural work of healing through Christ Jesus is the only hope for transforming a young girl exploited for years in prostitution into a courageous woman of God. Without this, rescued survivors find themselves back in slavery within months, if not weeks. (Grant 3)

This statement shows how necessary Godly ministries are while battling the stronghold of human slavery. Jesus is the only thing that will break through the barriers of human trafficking. Thankfully, ministries like Project Rescue are pushing forward full

force to combat the enemy. Dastidar writes, “Rehabilitation and repatriation continue to be a sticky area in the discourse on trafficking in developing countries. For the State is unable to offer viable livelihoods to the rescued individuals, who often go back to sex work simply to ensure a steady income. If the State and the NGOs were better equipped with an infrastructure of shelter homes and self-employment schemes, most stories of trafficking could have had happy endings” (Dastidar 1). His writings confirm what Grant is saying about the Gospel. Without the Gospel truth, rehabilitation will not be as affective.

Grant continues with her second truth, which says, *for compassion ministry to be life changing, word and deed must go hand in hand.*

Giving food, water, education or aftercare for the sexually exploited is interpreted differently around the world depending on the recipient’s worldview, religious tradition and political ideology. For example, for the Muslim tsunami victim in Indonesia, relief supplies given were frequently viewed as politically motivated to convert them to Western culture or religion or to win political favor. Compassion ministries are not a substitute for proclamation. Both are integral to biblical mission as taught and modeled by Jesus. Together, they are a powerful living statement of the life-changing Word! We determined that Jesus Christ would be openly at the heart of everything we do. If we take the message and person of Jesus away, lives may be touched momentarily, but they will not be transformed. (Grant 3)

And finally, Grants third truth that must be part of the ministry in helping save those who been connected to human trafficking is, *no social action is value free.*

Christian ministries should not be apologetic or defensive because our social action is shaped by our Christian values and faith. All social action is shaped by the political, social and religious ideologies of the individuals or organizations behind it. Whether Christian, Hindu, Muslim, atheist, liberal or feminist, none are value free! Our compassion grows out of our relationship with Jesus Christ, and acts of compassion are a natural extension of his work in our lives. The church has a great opportunity today to connect our faith in practical ways with the world’s most gripping social needs. In the case of human trafficking and HIV/AIDS, government leaders, criminal justice agencies and social services are looking for answers. In the area of aftercare for survivors of sex trafficking, few programs offer qualified care, and among those that exist, non-faith-based programs have a poor success rate. What an opportunity for the church to bring new life, healing and hope where little or none exists! (Grant 3).

When the Gospel is used to help mend and restore the lives of human trafficked victims, real healing is found. Even though human trafficking is a dark shadow over the lives of many, God’s power shines through where hope could not previously be found. The truths that Beth Grant believes in show that there is still hope beyond the statistics.

Here is the story of Kumari, a survivor. Her story can be found on the Project Rescue's website with many more testimonials.

"I was 16 yrs 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 program 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" (Dottridge 2).

Kumari's story is an encouragement to those who read it and to those who are still slaves to the industry. Her story brings hope and the excitement for life after prostitution. She speaks of the many trades she has been able to learn while being at the Home of Hope and how she eventually was able to open her own beauty shop. Namari's success story is the life that all around the world would like to see for victims of human trafficking. Although Namari's life had been scarred from a time involved in human trafficking, God has removed those scars of pain and made Namari's life brand new.

As the people of God follow the examples of men and women such as the Grants, and stand up for injustice, they will see chains loosed and walls fall down. As the enemy tries to move forward with his agenda in these last days, the children of God must also push forward. Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. This crime must be spoken about and action must take place in order to stop such slavery in the modern world.

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