Slavery in the 21st Century

Jeffrey Erskine
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Modern Day Slavery in the Modern Day World

By Jeff Erskine
**Human Trafficking across the Globe**

There are an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 children, women and men trafficked across international borders annually.\(^1\) Second to drug dealing, human trafficking and the illegal arms industries are the second largest criminal enterprises in the world today.\(^2\) Human trafficking is the fastest growing.

There are numerous regions world-wide where human trafficking is prevalent. The majority of victims trafficked for sex to the U.S. come from the poorer regions of the world such as: Central America, Asia, Eastern Europe, and South America.\(^3\)

“Trafficking in persons, or human trafficking, have been used as umbrella terms for activities involved when one person obtains or holds another person in compelled service.”\(^4\) Both women and men are trafficked in large numbers. However, the amount of children held in slavery is staggering. Worldwide, there are nearly two million children forced into the commercial sex trade.\(^5\) In India alone, there are an estimated 1,000,000 children held in slavery for India’s thriving sex trade.\(^6\)

With an increased awareness in what is going on in the world, how do men, women, and children end up as slaves in the 21st Century? Why don’t we see these problems on the local news at 6:00? How are these traffickers getting away with these atrocities? Force, fraud, and coercion are

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6. Not My Life
the three elements that seem to be in common in deceiving victims into slavery. In Cambodia, traffickers will cruise up and down the Mekong River looking for children to exploit. They will either trick the parents by offering their children a job in the bigger cities like Phnom Penh, or they will simply purchase the children from the children’s own relatives. Another way that traffickers procure children for their brothels is by lending money to families that the families are never able to repay. Once the family defaults on the “loan” the “lenders” take the children to fulfill the “payment”. The children then become the property of the “lenders” and find themselves in the local brothels.

So how can these oppressors force the young girls to do what they want? How can someone force a young girl to perform unspeakable acts before they are even at an age where they can understand them? Often times the traffickers will kill one of the victims to terrify the others into submitting to everything the traffickers subject them to. The traffickers will either shoot the victim, or light them on fire and burn them to death. They will do this in front of the other victims as a “warning” not to run away, and not to look for help. One 8-year-old girl in Cambodia refused to take on 10-15 clients a day. Her oppressors withheld food from her, threw urine at her, and finally resorted to electrocuting her until she obeyed their demands. These are

7 http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview
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just a few of the ways that children are forced to do the terrible things that their captors subject them to.

Traffickers also use psychological coercion techniques to force the (mostly) women and children commit these horrific acts. They make victims dependant on them, or give them alcohol or drugs to keep them submissive. They use the drugs and alcohol to develop a dependency that they then supply to them. These dependencies also keep the victims from escaping since they are not fully competent while under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

So who is committing these atrocious crimes? Traffickers come in all shapes, sizes, and forms. They come from all over the world. In some countries, the people involved in human trafficking have ties to local law enforcement. In December of 2012, the former chief of the Phnom Penh Municipal Anti Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Police was sentenced to seven years in prison after being found guilty as an accomplice to an aggravated procurement of prostitution. This was a historic ruling in that he is the first officer from an anti-trafficking police unit to be convicted of trafficking in persons. If the chief of police in charge of preventing human trafficking in his city is an accomplice in the actual trafficking of persons, who can the local citizens turn to for help? Fortunately, there are many non-government organizations around the world that combat human trafficking.

**Human Trafficking in the United States**

18 http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/
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In the United States, we think of child slavery as the world’s problem, not ours. We think that trafficking children could never happen in the United States. We abolished slavery in the 19th Century. We have fought war after war to promote freedom and democracy around the world. Unfortunately, when we look at the problems in our own country, sometimes we do it with blinders on. There are over 100,000 underage girls trafficked in the United States today. How does this happen? How is this even possible? The United States has some of the best law enforcement agencies in the world. We have the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Justice, Sheriffs, Highway Patrol, Anti-trafficking task forces, Central Intelligence Agency, and excellent local police departments. So how is it possible to have 100,000 underage girls trafficked in the United States? The more important question to ask is, what is our government doing to stop this from happening?

There has been an increase in awareness of human trafficking over the last few years. In 2000, the United States Government passed the Victims of Violence and Trafficking Protection Act. The Victims of Violence and Trafficking Protection Act grants the President of the United States the authority to “establish and carry out programs to increase public awareness, particularly among potential victims of trafficking, of the dangers of trafficking and the protections that are available for victims of trafficking.” In January 2012, President Barak Obama declared the month to be National Human Trafficking awareness month. President Obama chose January as a symbolic month, which commemorates the month that President Abraham Lincoln signed into

23 ID
24 Public Law 106-386-Oct. 28, 2000
The Emancipation Proclamation in January of 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves who were in the southern states of the United States. However, people are still being bought and sold all over the world, and even in the United States. This needs to be addressed on a national level. In late 2011, President Obama stated that the United States Government would combat human trafficking “by coordinating our response across Federal agencies, we are working to protect victims of human trafficking with effective services and support, prosecute traffickers through consistent enforcement, and prevent human rights abuses by furthering public awareness and addressing the root causes of modern slavery”. The Attorneys General have united to battle human trafficking by creating the National Association of Attorneys General. The Attorneys General have united to bring the perpetrators of human trafficking to justice across the United States.

How Are Slaves Trafficked Into the United States?
Belen Gomez, a former employee of The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), a California based non-profit organization that combats human trafficking in Los Angeles, says that the children who are trafficked into the United States are almost always used as sex slaves. A lot of times they come from families that cannot take care of them because of the extreme poverty that they are in. This, combined with the pull of the United States (land of opportunity, jobs, and education), make it easy for traffickers to lure young children away from their parents. Traffickers usually come from the same community that the slaves come from. The traffickers do the recruiting on the ground level and the families of the children who are trafficked usually

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know the trafficker. There is almost always a personal relationship between the trafficker and the children who are trafficked. This makes it easier for the traffickers to lure the children away from their parents because the parents think to themselves that since they know the trafficker (or the trafficker’s family), that they would never do anything to hurt their children. They also believe that “knowing” someone in the U.S. will benefit them, and that is how the traffickers trick the older men and women into travelling into the U.S. with them.

The following chart lists each state that contains a large number of trafficking victims. The chart explains where the majority of the victims in that state are trafficked from.
Non-Profit Organizations Battling Human Trafficking

“International Justice Mission (IJM) is a human rights agency that brings rescue to victims of slavery, sexual exploitation and other forms of violent oppression.”  

IJM is a human rights agency, they rescue men, women, and children from sexual exploitation, slavery, and other forms of violent oppression. They were founded in 1997 by Gary Haugen, who was working as a lawyer for the U.S. Department of Justice. “IJM confronts aggressive human violence: violence that strips widows and orphans of their property and livelihoods, violence that steals dignity and health from children trafficked into forced prostitution, violence that denies freedom and security to families trapped in slavery.” IJM’s vision is “to rescue thousands, protect millions and prove that justice for the poor is possible”. IJM has a four step process for helping victims: (1) Relief for the victim, (2) Holding the perpetrator accountable, (3) Aftercare for the survivor, and (4) Transforming communities from within to help combat abuse. The four step process has not only led to thousands of men, women, and children being rescued from violent oppression, but it has also helped integrate victims back into their communities through counseling, aftercare, and healing. IJM has also brought numerous perpetrators to justice by working with local law enforcement, judicial systems, and even governments. This four step process has become the model for other organizations to follow in combating human trafficking.

(1) Relief for the victim

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30 http://ijm.org/who-we-are
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35 http://www.ijm.org/our-work/what-we-do
Relief for the victims starts the moment they are rescued from their captors. Numerous operations to rescue children from the global sex trade are carried out annually. So how does IJM get victims out of their abusive situations? During investigations, IJM does covert interviews and inspections. They have lawyers on staff who study the existing local laws. Then they create a plan that ensures the victims will be taken out of their situation and the slave owners will be prosecuted. Then they team with local police and offer advice on how to conduct a successful raid. After the raid, one by one they document each case of bonded slavery. This assures everyone that the slaves will be set free.

(2) Holding the perpetrator accountable

According to the United Nations Trafficking in Persons report, the data they were able to collect from participating countries shows the number of prosecutions and convictions between 2004-2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prosecutions</th>
<th>Convictions</th>
<th>Victims Identified</th>
<th>New/Amended Legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6,885</td>
<td>3,026</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>6,178</td>
<td>4,379</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,808</td>
<td>3,160</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5,682</td>
<td>3,427</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5,212</td>
<td>2,983</td>
<td>30,961</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5,606</td>
<td>4,166</td>
<td>49,105</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6,017</td>
<td>3,619</td>
<td>33,113</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36 Terrify No More, p.23
37 ID
38 ID
39 ID
40 ID
41 ID
42 http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/
As the previous data states, the number of prosecutions far outweighs the number of convictions. Also, the number of successful convictions for sex trafficking far outweighs any other type of human trafficking convictions.

(3) Aftercare

What happens to children once they are taken away from their captors and set free? They need a lot of healing, love, and compassion. Where do they go, and who helps them? Children who are abused sexually exhibit “a variety of traumatic stress symptoms: anxiety, depression, withdrawal, stomachaches, nightmares and flashbacks”. Organizations like IJM have implemented a proven model that helps children who are sexually assaulted through the recovery and healing process. Children often blame themselves for the atrocities that they have encountered. However, IJM staff encourage the children to talk about their experience, and then confront the lies they believe head on. They tell the children that it is their captor that is to blame, not the children.

Some organizations that help heal these broken children were started by former slaves. The Somaly Mam Foundation (SMF) not only rescues the child victims in Southeast Asia, but they also put them through a healing process. SMF provides the victims with food, shelter, medical and psychological care that the children desperately need. SMF has provided these services to thousands of sex trafficking victims across Southeast Asia. Somaly Mam was a victim of

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48 http://www.somaly.org/programs/rescue_recovery
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sexual slavery before starting SMF. She was tricked by a man who posed as her grandfather, who sold her into a life of torture and rape on a daily basis. After being forced to watch her best friend brutally murdered, she escaped and started a new life and a non-governmental organization to help young girls escape from the life she was forced into.

(4) Transforming communities

In order to change the way communities deal with human trafficking issues, sometimes it has to start with the judicial system. In October 2011, IJM Rwanda took 35 judges and prosecutors and trained them on how to handle cases of child sexual assault. The staff held different sessions on techniques for interviewing, how to collect evidence, investigations, and the importance of medical evidence in cases of sexual assault against children. The training seemed to work as the judges and prosecutors stated they felt more equipped to handle cases involving children who are sexually abused.

The Gates Foundation gave International Justice Mission $5 million to create a model that all organizations could follow to combat sex trafficking and slavery. Organizations like the Gates Foundation keep the hope alive that we really can fight against modern day slavery.

**How does someone get involved in anti-trafficking?**

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Tamiko Chacon is the Pastor of Social Justice at Pomona First Baptist. Tamiko recently started Traffic Free Pomona (TFP). I asked her what TFP does in the community to combat human trafficking. She told me that their focus is on: (1) Raising awareness about the issue of human trafficking in Pomona (both in churches and throughout the rest of the community); (2) Preventing sexual exploitation (sex trafficking) of minors in and around Pomona; and (3) Responding to the needs of survivors.

So how does TFP do accomplish these goals?

1. **Raising awareness about the issue of human trafficking in Pomona**

   Chacon started a Human Trafficking Awareness Sunday at PFB. TFP also partners with other churches for awareness events in January (human trafficking awareness month). TFP hosts Free Trade Chocolate Fondue parties to raise awareness about slavery and chocolate. They also had an awareness campaign at the LA County Fair at the Pomona Fairplex.

2. **Preventing sexual exploitation (sex trafficking) of minors in and through Pomona.**

   TFP currently has an awareness poster campaign in all Pomona Unified middle schools and high schools. They also hope to present some prevention curriculum in the future to middle school boys and girls.

3. **Responding to the needs of survivors**

   TFP gives Freedom Bags to survivors, distributed directly to a local shelter and also through the FBI and local law enforcement. Freedom bags are bags that the church members put together for the victims. They include basic essentials, like toiletries, snacks, and clothes. When people are
rescued from slavery, most of the time all they have are the clothes on they are wearing. Also, once a month members of TFP volunteer at two shelters (La Verne, CA and Riverside, CA).

Chacon informed me that anyone in the community could start an anti-trafficking division of their church, school, or any other place where they could gather support. She recommends doing a “Human Trafficking 101” where a group of interested parties meet to get a crash-course on how to combat human trafficking.

**Who is Buying These Children?**

There has to be a demand or there would be no need for the supply. If there weren’t any child molesters abusing these children, there would be no need to traffic children for prostitution. So where do these people (mostly men) come from? What would possess someone to purchase a child for sex? The answer is not simple. These child molesters come from all over the world. However, the children rescued by Agape International Mission unanimously reported that American men were the most brutal, violent, sadistic men they ever had to encounter.  

Psychiatrists classify pedophilia into DSM-IV and DSM-IV-TR. DSM-IV and DSM-IV-TR define pedophilia as “recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving activity with prepubescent child or children (generally 13 years or younger)”. Most sexual attacks against children are done by men, although women make up .4 to 4% of convictions in the United States for child molestation. Some common traits for pedophiles are:

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58 Not My Life
59 http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/display/article/10168/1420331?pageNumber=1
60 ID
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impaired motivation and inhibition, impulsivity, cognitive disorders, psychopathy, lower IQs, motivational or inhibitory dysfunctions, and neurobiological abnormalities.\textsuperscript{62} In a random study of men living in a pedophile community, it was discovered that men who reported multiple events of sexual contact in their own childhood were 40 times more likely to have sexual contact with children who are 13 years or younger.\textsuperscript{63} Finally, the majority of sexual crimes against children were premeditated (70-85\%).\textsuperscript{64}

The term child sex tourist sounds like something made up in the movies. However, it is a very real person who goes abroad for the sole reason of molesting children. There are numerous websites to “guide” the pedophiles to places around the globe where they can engage in their despicable acts with impunity. To combat this problem, the United States passed the PROTECT Act of 2003. The PROTECT Act increased prison sentences to 30 years for convicted sex tourists, criminalized people and organizations that organize sex tours, and modified the burden of proof requirement to help convict offenders.\textsuperscript{65} This Act by Congress makes it possible to convict pedophiles who molest children abroad, even if they go abroad without intending to hurt the children.\textsuperscript{66}

From a legal standpoint, what laws do we, as Americans, have in our laws to protect people from becoming slaves? To answer this question, we need to start with the United States Constitution. The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution abolished slavery in the United States. The 13th Amendment was passed by Congress on January 31, 1865 and ratified

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on December 6, 1865. The 13th Amendment provides that “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” However, slavery has existed in America from the earliest days of our history, up to the present day. So what has been passed recently to combat the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world? On January 17, 2012, the state of New Jersey passed the “safe harbor” law. This law provides that minors, who are victims of human trafficking, cannot be prosecuted for prostitution. This law makes sure that the minors are not treated as criminals, but rather that they are treated as the victims that they really are.

**Tougher Prison Sentences**

In order to combat human trafficking around the world, tougher prison sentences are needed. With light prison sentences in some countries, traffickers are able to destroy countless lives, while spending only a few years in prison. If they are caught, tried, and convicted, some of them are free in a short period of time. This gives them the opportunity to destroy more lives. In Romania, there are bigger penalties for drug dealing than for dealing in humans. Someone convicted of selling 13-14 year old girls only receives around seven years in prison. With good behavior, they are out of prison in around four years. In January, 2012 in Rwanda, a local businessman was sentenced to only 15 years in prison for sexually assaulting a 2-year-old girl.

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67 U.S. Const. amend. XIII, §1
68 ID
70 ID
71 ID
72 Not my Life
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74 ID
That 2-year-old girl had her life destroyed only 2 years after it started, yet the man who destroyed her life will only serve 15 years in prison. Then what happens to her family? They might be forced to relocate due to pressure from local government, or even their own neighbors. How is this justice? The young girl still won’t be of legal age (according to American standards) when he gets out of prison. Will the perpetrator go right back into the community where he abused this little girl? If he does, what protection does she have from him? We have Megan’s Law in the United States, so we know where the sex offenders live and they have to register with the database. However, what happens when they do not have a law similar to Megan’s Law? Who do the victims turn to? In November, 2011, a brothel owner in India only received a total of nine years in prison for selling women held in slavery to customers there. This man was able to destroy countless lives and profit from it, but only received nine years in prison for all the damage he did. In October, 2011, a man who continually sexually abused a 5-year-old girl was sentenced to only 9 years and 3 months in prison.

Fortunately, with recent human trafficking legislation enacted into law, some countries are actually levying tougher prison sentences on the “people” who abuse these women and children. In November 2011, a man in Guatemala City was sentenced to 52 years in prison for the brutal sexual assault of an 8-year-old girl. In December, 2011, a man in Rwanda was not only sentenced to 20 years in prison for sexually assaulting a 16-year-old girl, but he was also ordered to pay damages to the young girl he abused. This was a historic decision in Rwanda as the

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77 http://www.ijm.org/news/two-convictions-ijm-guatemala-cases-both-clients-bravely-testify
78 http://www.ijm.org/news/archive/201111
perpetrator was ordered to pay damages both under the criminal and civil cases, as well as a 20 year prison sentence.\textsuperscript{80}

\textbf{Conclusion}

There are numerous organizations to help you get involved in the anti-trafficking movement. If you cannot find one near you, please start your own organization by using the model stated above from Traffick Free Pomona. You can also check the Polaris Project’s website for a list of anti-trafficking organizations in your state, and even the legislation enacted in your state involving human trafficking.

Please take the initiative, and join the battle against the mass-exploitation of the vulnerable women, children, and men around the world. They need your help.
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20. The Road to Traffik (Guggenheim + Girvin Pictures Production, 2008) (Documentary)

http://www.somaly.org/programs/rescue_recovery


27. U.S. Const. amend. XIII, §1

