



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Presbytery of Tropical Florida

Minute for Mission Sunday - January 10th, 2010

Human Trafficking

Leader: *Human Trafficking* is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” or “sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age.”¹

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The Scope and Nature of Modern-Day Slavery

“The common denominator of trafficking scenarios is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit a person for profit. Traffickers can subject victims to labor exploitation, sexual exploitation, or both. Trafficking for labor exploitation, the form of trafficking claiming the greatest number of victims, includes traditional chattel slavery, forced labor, and debt bondage. Trafficking for sexual exploitation typically includes abuse within the commercial sex industry. In other cases, individuals exploit victims in private homes, often demanding both sex and work. The use of force or coercion can be direct and violent or psychological.

A wide range of estimates exists on the scope and magnitude of modern-day slavery. The International Labor Organization (ILO)—the United Nations agency charged with addressing labor standards, employment, and social protection issues—estimates that there are at least 12.3 million adults and children in forced labor, bonded labor, and commercial sexual servitude at any given time.”² “[O]ther estimates range from 4 million to 27 million.

Annually, according to U.S. Government-sponsored research completed in 2006, approximately 800,000 people are trafficked across national borders, which does not include millions trafficked within their own countries. Approximately 80 percent of transnational victims are women and girls and up to 50 percent are minors. The majority of transnational victims are females trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation. These numbers do not include millions of female and male victims around the world who are trafficked within their own national borders—the majority for forced or bonded labor.”³

¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2009* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2009), pp. 6-7.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

³ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2008* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2008), pp. 7-8.

“Human trafficking is a multi-dimensional issue. It is a crime that deprives people of their human rights and freedoms, increases global health risks, fuels growing networks of organized crime, and can sustain levels of poverty and impede development in certain areas.

The impacts of human trafficking are devastating. Victims may suffer physical and emotional abuse, rape, threats against self and family, and even death. But the devastation also extends beyond individual victims; human trafficking undermines the health, safety, and security of all nations it touches.”⁴

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All: “May God give us ears to hear.”

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Leader: We’ve just heard the numbers: every year, literally millions of women, children, and men “in forced labor, bonded labor, forced child labor, and sexual servitude at any given time.” Through outreach and education programs, we are becoming aware of tens of thousands of people being trafficked into the United States. Slowly, we are understanding that thousands of people are being trafficked into our own communities, *right here* in southeast Florida—St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties—the areas covered by our own Presbytery.

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Every year, on January 11th, the United States observes the “National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness.” Two years ago, the Presbytery of Tropical Florida launched the Presbytery’s “Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative.” Since then, we Presbyterians have been learning more about human trafficking with information gathering, literature distribution, and educational programs and workshops held with individuals and congregations all across our region.

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Today, we continue our participation in the “Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative” with this Presbytery-wide “Minute for Mission”—to mark the U.S. “National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness.” Throughout this year, we will continue our efforts in congregations, at mission festivals and elder training events, and with other groups. As Christians all across South Florida, we continue to learn about the extent of the problem and about what we can do to stop the scourge of this modern-day form of slavery. In order to help us prepare for discernment, action, and participation, we encourage you to take part in one of the workshops that will be held in the coming months.

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All: “May God protect and bless the victims of human trafficking, and may God give us courage and strength—to recognize the problem and to take action to stop it. Amen.”

⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2009, op. cit.*, p. 5.