

## Action

In Isaiah 1:17, God calls us to *learn to do good, to learn to rescue the oppressed*. If ever there were a clearly oppressed population in the world, it is those sold into human bondage.<sup>13</sup> What will you do with what you have learned?

- Raise funds for, donate to or start a group to raise awareness and/or provide education, outreach and direct services for trafficking victims, survivors and at-risk populations.
- If you suspect human trafficking in your community, contact the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 888-3737-8888, or call 911. Do not try a rescue yourself. Human trafficking situations are often dangerous and unpredictable. Learn more at [www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking).<sup>14</sup>
- Report suspected instances of worker exploitation to the U.S. Department of Justice's toll-free line at 888-428-7581.
- Learn about fair food and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers' antislavery campaign at <http://ciw-online.org/slavery>.
- Organize a panel in your community to raise awareness. Include members of law enforcement, lawyers and judges, social service professionals, survivors, health professionals, legislators and nationally recognized experts in trafficking issues.
- Find PC(USA) resources at [www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking](http://www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking), the *Toolkit for Action: Modern Slavery* at [www.pcusa.org/resource/toolkit-action-2015-modern-slavery](http://www.pcusa.org/resource/toolkit-action-2015-modern-slavery).
- Read *Horizons* and *Presbyterians Today* for articles on human trafficking.
- Connect with anti-trafficking services in your area to request or host a training.
- Support groups that sell products made by survivors (Center for Global Impact and ECPAT-USA, e.g.).
- Lobby for "safe harbor" laws in your state (shifting criminality from victim to trafficker).
- Organize a Bible study using the Thoughtful Christian's publication on sex trafficking ([www.thoughtfulchristian.com](http://www.thoughtfulchristian.com)).

- Host a film screening (e.g., *Human Trafficking* or *Not My Life*); [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org) has a list, as well as lots of other resources.
- Learn about The Code: [www.thecode.org](http://www.thecode.org).
- Advocate for U.S. ratification of CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).
- See [www.notforsalecampaign.org](http://www.notforsalecampaign.org) for action ideas and the documentary *Not for Sale*.
- The PC(USA) Office of Theology and Worship has a worship resource on trafficking at [www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theologyandworship/human-trafficking](http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theologyandworship/human-trafficking).
- See the Lenten resource created by the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the PC(USA)'s Human Trafficking Roundtable; <http://wrc.ch/resources/justice>.

### \* For example

- On Eagle's Wings, a PW mission partner in North Carolina, ministering to young women who have been trafficked: [www.oewm.net](http://www.oewm.net)
- The Lifeboat Project, an initiative of Jill Cohen, PW from Central Florida Presbytery: <http://thelifeboatproject.org>
- Ecumenical Women's Coalition Against Human Trafficking, founded by Nadine Hill, PW from Whitewater Valley Presbytery: [www.facebook.com/ewcahumantrafficking](http://www.facebook.com/ewcahumantrafficking)

### Notes

1. International Labor Organization, "A global alliance against forced labor" (2005), 55.
2. "Human Trafficking: It Happens Here," Indianapolis Protection of Abused and Trafficked Humans (IPATH), 2011.
3. U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2013*, [www.state.gov/i/tip/rls/tiprpt](http://www.state.gov/i/tip/rls/tiprpt).
4. ILO, "Global Estimate of Forced Labor," 2012.
5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.
6. Heather J. Clawson, et al, "Human Trafficking Into and Within the United States," 2009.
7. Teresa Lockhart Stricklen, "Human Trafficking Awareness Worship Resources," PC(USA) Office of Theology & Worship.
8. Greg Zoeller, "Pillars of Hope," Attorneys General Unite Against Human Trafficking, 2011.
9. Zoeller and IPATH.
10. State Dept., "Identify and Assist," [www.state.gov/i/tip/id](http://www.state.gov/i/tip/id).
11. Office of Theology and Worship, "Human Trafficking."
12. Office of Immigration Issues, "Human Trafficking: The Sale and Trade of God's Children," [www.pcusa.org/immigration](http://www.pcusa.org/immigration).
13. Office of Theology and Worship.
14. Office of Attorney General of Indiana, "Human Trafficking 'Red Flags,'" [www.in.gov/attorneygeneral/humantrafficking](http://www.in.gov/attorneygeneral/humantrafficking).



# Together in Action

## to end human trafficking

Rise up, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand; do not forget the oppressed.

—Psalm 10:12

Presbyterian woman Nadine Hill was volunteering at a community center on the east side of Indianapolis when a 9-year-old girl was snatched from the playground and sold by her 14-year-old cousin to a pimp for \$1,200. The girl has never been found. Police believe she was trafficked out of state. Imagine if this were your child or grandchild.

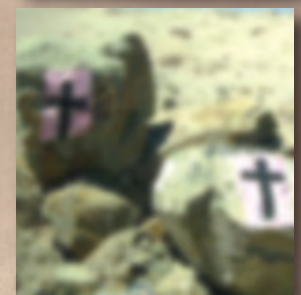
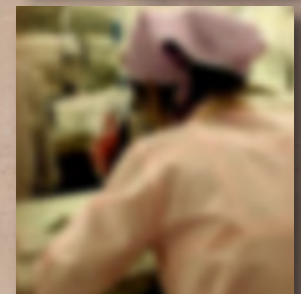
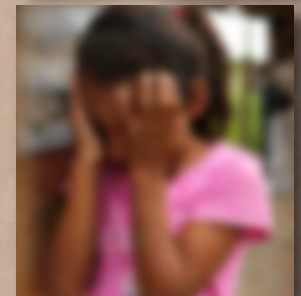
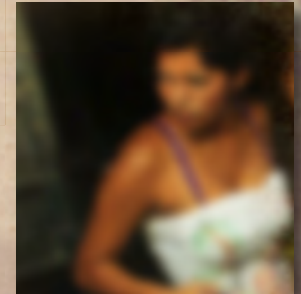
Tens of millions of vulnerable children, women and men are captured, sold and held against their will worldwide for forced labor, including sexual services. This is human trafficking, which is the **second largest** and **fastest growing** criminal industry in the world, generating roughly \$32 billion per year.<sup>1</sup> Human trafficking occurs when people are recruited through force, fraud or coercion to work or provide services. By definition of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, there are two types of human trafficking: sex trafficking and labor trafficking.<sup>2</sup>

### Risk factors

Youth  
Poverty  
Homelessness  
Unemployment  
Desperation and/or a need to be loved  
Residence in a country torn by war, political upheaval or natural disaster  
Family history of violence and abuse  
Immigration status  
Marginalized status (e.g., LGBTQ, indigenous)

What makes victims vulnerable? Poverty, low self-esteem, innocence, few or no alternatives, substance abuse, lack of security . . .

What happens to them? Beatings, prostitution, addictions, a life of servitude, many of them killed. None of God's children deserve this.





## Myths about human trafficking

- It only happens in other countries, not the U.S. **Fact:** It happens in most countries.
- It only happens to people who are impoverished. **Fact:** Victims can be any age, race, nationality, socioeconomic group or gender.
- Human trafficking is only sex trafficking. **Fact:** Forced labor happens not just in the sex trade; it is found in sweatshops, agriculture, restaurants, hotels and domestic service.
- Prostitutes choose that lifestyle. **Fact:** Most women in prostitution were either coerced, duped into service, beaten or drugged.
- Individuals must be forced or coerced to be a victim. **Fact:** Anyone under the age of 18 performing commercial sex acts is considered a victim of human trafficking, according to the U.S. federal government.
- Human trafficking and human smuggling are the same thing. **Fact:** Human trafficking is exploitation-based and does not require movement across borders. Smuggling can become trafficking if the smuggler coerces or holds those being smuggled against their will.
- Human trafficking victims are able to seek help when in public. **Fact:** Victims are usually either afraid to come forward, fearing retribution and violence from their traffickers, or lack documents that identify them and their country of origin.

The fact is, human trafficking is modern slavery and one of the worst forms of violence against humanity. It takes many forms, including but not limited to, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery and the use of children as soldiers. The victims are held by coercion or are trapped in unjust systems and, in millions of cases, are moved around to escape discovery and satisfy markets.

## Tens of millions exploited

- An estimated 27 million people are considered to be victims of human

trafficking at any given time.<sup>3</sup> The International Labor Organization says 5.5 million of them are children.<sup>4</sup>

- Human trafficking happens in 161 of the world's countries (including the U.S.); 104 countries have no laws or regulations prohibiting human trafficking.<sup>5</sup>
- The average age of entry into sex trafficking in the United States is 12–14.<sup>6</sup>
- In countries (*and* states) with laws, the victims are often treated as the criminals, arrested over and over and released to the streets, instead of being rescued.

All of us are part of unjust systems of commerce and exploitative patterns of life that feed human trafficking. Cheap clothing is possible because of garment workers held in slavery, fast food is inexpensive because poorly paid tomato pickers workers are trapped by their poverty, landscaping and domestic services are available in many areas because workers are virtual slaves to bosses who threaten deportation if there are complaints.

Recognizing this can also give us a place to begin working with God to build relationships, policies, and practices that make us accountable to one another and help us love our neighbor in all that we do.<sup>7</sup> Attorneys General are mobilizing to hold traffickers accountable with antitrafficking laws in all 50 states, mobilizing communities to care for victims and reducing demand with public awareness.<sup>8</sup>

## Industries that enslave people

- Sex trade (prostitution, pornography, massage parlors, escort services, adult bookstores, strip clubs)
- Factories, restaurants and hotels
- Health and beauty industries
- Agriculture and construction
- Domestic service (housekeepers, nannies, servants)

## Key indicators<sup>9</sup>

- A victim typically has someone with them at all times who seems very controlling and tries to speak for the victim. If the victim does speak for themselves, their answers appear to be scripted and rehearsed.
- The individual is not free to come and go as he or she wishes, and is not allowed to hold their own personal documents.
- The individual may be fearful of retribution or distrustful of others, and may appear anxious, depressed or submissive, and avoid eye contact.
- The victim may be living at their place of business, and there is usually extra security around a home or place of business where victims are held.
- The victim probably lacks health care and has few or no personal possessions. The victim may not know where they are or why they are there. The victim may have a "brand" or tattoo of the trafficker's name.
- Victims may not admit that they are victims and may not ask for help. "Traffickers' use of coercion—such as threats of deportation and harm to the victim or their family members—is so powerful that even if you reach out to victims, they may be too fearful to accept your help."<sup>10</sup>
- There are signs of physical, sexual or psychological abuse—bruises, broken bones, cuts, burns, scars, malnourishment, fear, mistrust, submissiveness, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, post-traumatic stress, or no emotion at all (flat affect).

## Questions to ask

- Can you leave your job if you want to?
- Can you come and go as you please?
- Have you been hurt or threatened if you tried to leave?
- Has your family been threatened?
- Do you live with your employer?
- Where do you sleep and eat?
- Are you in debt to your employer?
- Do you have your passport/ID? Who has it?

## For prayer and study<sup>11</sup>

The spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners. —Isaiah 61:1

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. —Isaiah 1:17

Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In arrogance the wicked persecute the poor—let them be caught in the schemes they have devised. For the wicked boast of the desires of their heart, those greedy for gain curse and renounce the LORD. —Psalm 10:1–3

Review Exodus and reflect on God's desire to liberate God's people from bondage. Read what the Bible teaches regarding the dignity of humanity in these passages and surrounding verses: Genesis 1:27; Galatians 3:28; Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:15. In what ways does the practice of human trafficking violate the will of God?

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. —Isaiah 1:17

Love the LORD, all you his saints. The LORD preserves the faithful, but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily. Be strong, and let your heart take courage . . . —Psalm 31:23–24

**Pray:** Holy God who hears the cries of the oppressed, we come to you as if we were the ones in held in slavery. There seems to be no light in this darkness, no hope for our future. Allow someone to see me, to look beyond the outward appearance and into my eyes. Give them the courage to ask, to help, to save me from this captivity. God, turn the hearts of those responsible for my slavery and help the leaders of countries around the world ensure that this does not happen to another person. In the name of One love, One hope, we pray. Amen.<sup>12</sup>