What is Human Trafficking?

Human Trafficking occurs when a person is recruited, harbored, transported, obtained, or maintained by means of force, fraud, threats, or coercion, for purposes of involuntary labor, debt bondage, or sexual services.

Human trafficking is **modern slavery**. It occurs when someone is forced to work without the freedom to leave.

**Forms of Human Trafficking:**

Worldwide, victims are being trafficked for purposes of military conscription, harvesting of organs, sham marriages, and begging rings. But the vast majority of victims are trafficked for **forced labor** or **sexual exploitation**.

**Human Trafficking Statistics:** (as of December 21, 2016)

- 21-27 million people are currently enslaved across the globe
- 79% of the trafficking industry involves sexual exploitation
- 71% of victims are women and girls
- 33% of victims are children (between 100,000-300,000 in the United States)
- The fastest growing criminal industry in the world - $150 billion annually

**Safe Harbor Laws:**

**Anytime** a person younger than 18 years of age is involved in a commercial sex act, that person - by law - is a victim of trafficking, and proving force, fraud, or coercion is **not** necessary.

**Anti-Trafficking Organizations:**

**National**
- US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Office (TIP)
- **National Human Trafficking Center Hotline # 888-373-7888**
- Shared Hope International [www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org)
- Polaris [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)

**State**
- North Carolina Coalition Against Human Trafficking
- North Carolina Stop Human Trafficking
- NC Human Trafficking Commission

**Local**
- Partners Against Trafficking Humans in NC [www.pathnconline.wordpress.com](http://www.pathnconline.wordpress.com)
- Project FIGHT of the Salvation Army [www.projectfightnc.org](http://www.projectfightnc.org)
- Hope4Freedom [Hope4Freedom@gethope.net](mailto:Hope4Freedom@gethope.net)

**Victim Services:**
- Hope House: [www.oneagleswingsministries.org](http://www.oneagleswingsministries.org)
- Anchor House: [www.restoreonelife.org/the-anchor-house-1](http://www.restoreonelife.org/the-anchor-house-1)
What Can I Do?

1. Learn the indicators of human trafficking so you will be in a position to identify an active or potential trafficking situation. Keep the National Human Trafficking Center Hotline # (1-888-373-7888) in your cell phone.

2. Be well-informed. Set up a web alert to receive current human trafficking news.

3. Sign up to receive the newsletter of an organization that shelters or supports trafficking victims. (Go to www.oneagleswingsministries.org to sign up for their Impact Freedom newsletter.)

4. Get human trafficking awareness training through Shared Hope or Polaris or another anti-trafficking organization, or better yet, sponsor a human trafficking awareness training at your church or on your campus.

5. Check out the resources available through Shared Hope International, The Polaris Project, CNN’s Freedom Project, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Thoughtful Christian and use these to start a conversation in your church school class, youth group, campus ministry, or other group.

6. Be a conscientious and informed consumer. Use this link to discover your slavery footprint: www.slaveryfootprint.org. Check out the Department of Labor’s List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor. Encourage companies to take steps to investigate and prevent human trafficking in their supply chains and publish information for consumer awareness.

7. Meet with or write to local, state, and federal government representatives to let them know you care about combating human trafficking. Ask what they’re doing about it. Advocate for stricter criminal penalties for both traffickers and buyers. Ask your state to require that the human trafficking hotline be posted in public places. And join the Attorneys General in 47 states who have appealed to Congress to amend the Communications Decency Act, which is the legal shield Backpage.com has successfully wielded for years to avoid responsibility for trafficking on its website. An article on how to join this appeal is also included in this resource packet.

8. Explore how you or your congregation can support a particular victim service provider in your vicinity. Join the New Hope Presbytery Human Trafficking Roundtable by contacting us @ htr@nhpresbytery.org.

9. (NC) Encourage schools to partner with students to implement the legislation passed in September of 2015 making human trafficking awareness and prevention mandatory in all public schools. If you live outside of NC, find out what’s being done to address sex trafficking prevention in your schools. Above all, be aware of how traffickers target school-aged children.

10. If you’re a student, consider doing one of your research papers on this topic. Establish a club or student group to raise awareness and initiate action.

11. And above all, PRAY... Use the prayers, Readers Theater, liturgy, and Minute-for-Mission in this Resource Packet to plan a worship service that highlights the issue of human trafficking and calls on God to direct and empower our efforts on behalf of all who are enslaved.

“You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know.”

~ William Wilberforce, in his speech before Parliament to abolish the British slave trade (1789)
RESOURCES

A Toolkit for Action: Modern Slavery - a downloadable 40 page packet available through the Presbyterian Mission Agency (www.pcusa.org/humantrafficking)

“Chosen” - a 20 minute video and discussion guide, focusing on sex trafficking of minors. One of many resources available from Shared Hope International. The Chosen: Faith in Action Kit is available for preview from the NHP Human Trafficking Roundtable. Contact us at htr@nhpresbytery.org for more information.

Human Trafficking: It Happens Here (2 minute video) by Polaris - available on YouTube.

Human Trafficking 101- training video on the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

The Dark Side of Chocolate - a documentary about child trafficking on the Ivory Coast and how it fuels the worldwide chocolate industry - available on YouTube.

The National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking and Renting Lacy - both available on the Shared Hope International website.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Good Morning. My name is ___________ and I want to speak to you on behalf of over 21 million people worldwide who are modern day slaves. I’m talking about Human Trafficking, and I can imagine that some of you may wonder why we would be focusing on that here - in our city, in our church. Would it surprise you to learn that the great state of North Carolina is considered a Destination Spot when it comes to human trafficking? We’re currently ranked #7 in the country for labor and sex trafficking. And in over 50% of cases in North Carolina, the victims are United States citizens. Also, sadly, 33% of victims are under the age of 18.

This is not something that happens far away. It happens all around us. Victims may be children, women, or men, most looking to make a better life falsely promised by traffickers. But recently, the bait traffickers have perfected is the lure of a validating relationship - something every single person longs for. And largely because of the internet and social media, human trafficking has become the fastest growing criminal industry in the world, with an income of over $150 billion in 2016.

17 years ago, in 2000, human trafficking became a federal crime in the United States. Since then, numerous organizations have emerged to fight trafficking in persons. I am proud that our presbytery has emerged as one of the local leaders in confronting this modern slavery. It isn’t just a huge human rights issue. It’s a major kingdom of God issue. (Insert any further information - such as announcing a study group or training, pointing to a bulletin insert or display, etc.) Thank you.
The following prayers and Readers’ Theater may be used alone in a worship or small group setting. For an entire worship liturgy or a contemplative prayer guide, contact us at htr@nhpresbytery.org

PRAYER 1:

God of love, God of peace...
Create within me a heart for people.

This fractured world cries out in pain, and we cry out against the evils of trafficking. Send friends for the lonely, rescue for the enslaved, and healing help for the broken. Make real your promises to fill victims with a love that is tender and good, and send the exploiters away empty-handed. Awaken our hearts and deepen our commitment to work for a world where every person is free and able to live their lives fully and joyfully.

God of love, God of peace...
Create within me a heart for people.

Give us grace, O God, to do the deed which we know cries to be done. Let us not hesitate because of concern for our own ease or security or self-image. Mighty causes are calling us, but they call us with voices that mean work and sacrifice and a willingness to risk failure. Mercifully grant us the spirit of Esther, who said: “I will go unto the King, and if I perish, I perish.”

God of love, God of peace...
Create within me a heart for people.

God of all peoples, we pray for conversion of heart for traffickers and for strong laws that protect victims. Help us to grow in our awareness that we are all connected. We remember that Jesus was once a child, that poverty stole his bread, that tyrants sought his life, that his mother tasted tears. Help us to share our possessions, leave our comforts, lend our voices, and love people, not out of pity or guilt, but because we want to love others as you love us.

God of love, God of peace...
The pain of the world burns deep into my soul, challenging me to make a difference. Soften hearts of stone, beginning with mine. Then send me where I can be used for your glory, until my work on earth is done. Amen.

PRAYER 2:

Merciful God, our minds can barely comprehend the stories of greed and exploitation we are hearing. We cry out against human trafficking in all of its forms, and we pray for it to end. Make real your promises to work with those who are doing the difficult and dangerous work of apprehending traffickers, gaining the trust of victims, changing the minds and hearts of policy-makers, and confronting the offenders who create the demand. We recognize that no one can receive your gift of freedom unless their hearts have been made ready to receive that gift. So we pray for the conversion of hearts, beginning with our own.

Fill us with your love, O God, and take away our fear. Amen.