



## Justice for Women

Tapestry Thread

Devotion for Week 3 - October 16, 2022

*By Sylvia Eley*

The ecumenical church addresses the issue of sex trafficking through a theological theory founded on missional theology and social ethics. This theological theory should be glocal in nature. The term "glocal" refers to a global construct with an impact on local communities (Engelsviken, Lundebj & Solheim 2011: viii). A glocal theological theory is then necessary as the issue of human trafficking is simultaneously a global and local challenge. There needs to be both the creation of a global life-giving mission through the ecumenical church, as well as the creation of a customized local life-giving mission with key concepts derived from the global initiative, as the Christian God invites his church into a life-giving mission for all (World Council of Churches, henceforth WCC 2012:4). Christians around the world are of one mind that human trafficking is wrong and should be eliminated.

### *Interfaith Statement to End Trafficking*

Together, in honor of our faith traditions, we acknowledge that child trafficking and modern-day slavery violate the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and deserving of the same freedom, respect, and dignity. In solidarity with victims and survivors, we are determined to inspire spiritual and practical action by all global faiths to end the abuse, exploitation, and trafficking of all children everywhere.

The ELCA's social message on "Commercial Sexual Exploitation" seeks to raise awareness of an industry that sexually exploits vulnerable people, especially women and girls. The message addresses the businesses of prostitution, pornography, and stripping, among other activities of exploitation, which are built on the exchange of money for sexual activity. It highlights the system of sexual exploitation as a manifestation of social sin. Turning sex into a commodity magnifies the social injustices that undermine human dignity and tends to dominate people who are created in the image of God. This message calls us to engage in many forms of action to curb sex trafficking, challenge major corporations that profit from pornography and give particular attention to preventing youth from becoming captives and victims of sexual exploitation.





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What does Islam say about human trafficking? In the perspective of the social history of Islamic law, trafficking in any form is prohibited in Islam for violating human rights and dignity. In June 1999 when over 130 religious leaders signed a statement of conscience calling on Congress to pass federal anti-trafficking legislation. The statement explained that “The God-given dignity and integrity of everyone compels us to take action to combat this evil” (Schleicher 1999, p. 17; See also Carnes 2000). “God commands justice, the doing of good, and kindness to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and abominations and oppression: He instructs you, that ye may remember.” – Ah-Nahl 16:90

Churches of Scientology sponsor roundtables and seminars on human trafficking to raise public awareness and get effective action taken to eradicate this international scourge. Scientology Churches around the world sponsor the largest non-governmental information campaign the world over, which has made the Universal Declaration of Human Rights known to more than 900,000 people through public service announcements, booklets, and petition drives.

The Jewish Coalition to End Human Trafficking (JCEHT) was created to broaden the understanding in the Jewish community regarding the crime of human trafficking/modern-day slavery and to work toward its eradication. A confirmation class curriculum on human trafficking is offered at some temples.

The Catholic Church has condemned human trafficking and established social services to help its victims. At the same time, she has called for laws against human trafficking and changes in social systems to address the root causes of human trafficking. The Fathers of the Vatican II, reaffirmed the Church’s historic concern about forced labor, stating that “slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, [and] disgraceful working conditions where [people] are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons” are “infamies” because they are an affront to very nature of the human person. In more recent years, Pope Benedict XVI, Pope John Paul II, and representatives of the Holy See have strongly condemned human trafficking as an intrinsic violation of human dignity that all governments must address. Bishop conferences around the world responded by putting increased pressure on governments to enact new laws and enforce existing prohibitions on human trafficking. The U.S.





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Conference of Catholic Bishops played a key role in getting the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 passed and implemented and has contracted with the federal government to provide services to the victims of human trafficking. Vatican's Handbook on Combatting Trafficking, the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Vatican has released a set of guidelines to help the Catholic community eradicate human trafficking. The publication, Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking, offers Catholic dioceses, parishes, religious congregations, schools, and universities an in-depth reading and comprehension of modern-day slavery to serve as much needed encouragement to anti-trafficking ministries. The publications' points can be leveraged in homilies, education, and media.

Southern Baptists continue to fight against human trafficking worldwide as the issue is acknowledged by the United Nations on World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. Southern Baptists have a huge role to play in the prevention of trafficking in New Orleans. The Baptist Friendship House in New Orleans, LA, has served New Orleans for more than 75 years by fight against trafficking in their community. The Friendship House will provide out-of-state transportation to survivors who are in danger, and houses survivors who need immediate shelter and safety. Triad Ladder of Hope in North Carolina is dedicated to eradicating the exploitation, sale and enslavement of men, women, and children. They focus is on awareness, rescue, restoration, and re-entry. The latter three areas involve helping bring people out of trafficking situations, providing them with a safe place for counseling and creating "a safe and healthy environment for survivors to rebuild their lives." Twelve representatives from the Ohio Woman's Missionary Union visited the Friendship House. Jean DiFilippo, president of the Ohio WMU, explained that Ohio ranks in the top ten for the number of calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. The group plans to travel two by two (two representatives together) throughout their convention educating others on the awareness of Human Trafficking.

What does the United Methodist Church say? The 2008 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 61 states that United Methodists "deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sex, with their consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. To lose freedom and be sold by someone





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else for sexual purposes is a form of slavery, and we denounce such business and support the abused and their right to freedom. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible.

The involvement of the ecumenical church---- As followers of Jesus Christ and a belief in a God that values human life, the global ecumenical church cannot be disconnected from the world they live in (Gibbs & Coffey 2001:47) Churches are unified in their efforts along with both the government and nongovernment sectors, as well as the local communities and Nonprofits. The churches involvement is about more than finding a feasible way to reintegrate these victims back into society; it is to restore life in fullness to them. The church must counterbalance abuse in life and work together on prohibiting these acts of violence. God is the source of all missions, and the church needs to discern where God's Spirit is at work in the world to join Him in His mission (Balia & Kim 2010:223). Christians are to follow in the path of Jesus Christ in proclaiming freedom for the oppressed and to be representatives of that freedom. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;"- Isaiah 61:1.

*Heavenly Father, we come to You in prayer. In Your Name we pray for strength, fortitude, wisdom, integrity, and vision for Christians working to address sex trafficking. God, we pray for You to comfort all who are held in slavery and awaiting rescue and for the full restoration of those who have been rescued. We pray that through the actions of the ecumenical church help bring an end to human trafficking.*





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