

“Human Trafficking”

According to the website A21, human trafficking is: 1) the illegal trade of human beings; and 2) the recruitment, control, and use of people for their bodies and for their labor. The types of industry affected by human trafficking include service industries and exploitation. There are an estimated 49.6 million people enslaved right now.

The International Labor Organization estimates that the human trafficking industry generates \$31 billion in revenue, making it a fast growing and lucrative. The United States is a destination country for exploitation.

I recently moved to Arizona from Minnesota, but I stayed in touch with the situation there. In late 2023, the Minnesota Star Tribune ran a four-part series of the horrific trafficking of Bobbi Larson. It is a heart-wrenching series of articles that detail the lure of drugs and the abuse by pimps. Unfortunately, Arizona is not immune to the problem. According to one estimate, the number of human trafficking victims between 2007 and 2021 increased by 142%.

Because the church must “seek the welfare of the city” (Jer. 29:7), human trafficking is one area that the Christian church must address. The wickedness of human trafficking denies the importance of being created in the image of God. It treats people as commodities to be sold and bought. Wholesome laws of a nation should be laid down to guard against unholy and ungodly practices, such as taking someone captive to sell into slavery (1 Tim. 1:10). Human trafficking also destroys God’s good design for sexuality. What is intended as an expression of commitment and love between a husband and a wife is now used as a tool for violence.

What can the church do? While this is not an extensive list, there are a few ways the church can help. First, the church can support ministries that work to stop human trafficking. Look around and you will find good ministries. Second, believers can live out God’s good design for marriage, family, and sexuality. Marriages must be strengthened. Fathers and mothers must complement each other to nurture, train, and protect children. This also includes a clear and strong stance against pornography. Third, believers can support law enforcement and promote good laws against human trafficking. The Christian church is called to be a light to the world. By God’s grace, the Christian church can courageously be the light that fills up the darkness.

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