

Project HELP: Human Exploitation WMU's Critical Issue: 2010–2012

Background

In the fall of 2008 a planning team for national WMU® met to determine the WMU emphasis and critical issue for 2010–2011. In that meeting the decision was made to focus on **human exploitation** as the next social and moral issue through WMU's Project HELPSM.

In 2004–2005 WMU began what became a six-year focus on poverty. Human exploitation is a good follow-up to that emphasis. Often exploitation is a result of poverty.

Planners began to delve into a subject that is huge. After reading, exploring, and listening, it became evident that there was much to be done. An understandable message and challenge would need to be developed for churches and associations.

Exploration of the topic helped planners determine that focus on more than one area would be needed. They would also have to find ways to interpret it for all age groups.

Throughout the year the range of issues will be highlighted in WMU magazines and curriculum. They include: bullying/cyberbullying, sexting, verbal abuse, modern-day slavery, land exploitation for personal gain, pornography, current media and the exploitation of families and children, abuse and abuse of power, abuse and keeping children safe, religious persecution, prejudice that leads to exploitation, and the major issue of human trafficking.

Adults and students can grasp the subject of human trafficking (sex trafficking and forced labor). Although human trafficking is very much an international issue, WMU has chosen to focus most of its attention on what happens on US soil and closer to home.

Human (sex) trafficking has already been introduced to WMUers. The International Mission Study 2007 included a focus on unemployment in Moldova which forced many women to look elsewhere for work. Unknowingly, women were trafficked to other parts of the world. *Missions Mosaic* has touched on several related issues. October 2008 featured an article on human trafficking as modern-day slavery.

Another connection is through WMU's WorldCraftsSM ministry. WorldCrafts began when missionaries in Thailand found a way to release girls from prostitution by helping them find other means of income. Thai Country Trim was born. Now WorldCrafts has created the Set1Free campaign. The campaign will aid artisan groups working to free women trapped by human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Definition of Human Exploitation

From several resources a definition of human exploitation for use by WMU was formed.

Human exploitation is *the unethical, selfish use of human beings for the satisfaction of personal desires and/or profitable advantage.*

A definition for human trafficking was also needed. Human trafficking means *the commerce and trade of people, legal or illegal, for modern-day slavery, forced labor, and servitude.*

Scripture

This passage of Scripture will help you think about God's direction in dealing with the issues that enslave people.

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn” (Isa. 61:1–2 NIV).

What Can You Do?

- Look for opportunities to educate others and be educated yourself.
- Seek understanding of the issue(s) and the people involved (victims, perpetrators, law enforcement, families, etc.).
- Respond to God when He calls you to act.

Facts and Figures

Facts and figures have a way of grabbing our attention. Let the following information soak into your mind and heart.

“Current statistics show that more than one-third of the visitors to all adult (porn) Web sites are women and that more than 9 million women visit adult Web sites each month.” (*The Alabama Baptist*, August 16, 2007.)

“Cyber Bullying is social terror by technology . . . and it's on the rise.” (Love Our Children USA Web site, June 30, 2009.)

“According to US Government estimates, 800,000 to 900,000 victims are trafficked globally each year and 17,500 to 18,500 are trafficked into the United States. Women and children comprise the largest group of victims.” (The Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, “Fact Sheet: Distinctions Between Human Smuggling and Human Trafficking,” January 2005, www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/smuggling_trafficking_facts.pdf.)

“Human trafficking is a dehumanizing crime that reduces people to commodities.” (US Department of State, “The Three P's: Punishment, Protection, Prevention,” www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009/123127.htm.)

What Can You Do in Your Association?

- Make prayer a priority. Pray before, during, and after an activity.
- Provide information about Project HELP to your church WMU leaders. Direct them to the WMU Year Book (current year), Missions Plan Book (current year), *Missions Leader*, and WMU age-level magazines.
- Begin research on your own about what is happening in your area. Find ways to share the information with your churches. Ask them to pray. Pay attention to local news.
- Involve your director of missions. Talk with him about the project. Get his input on ideas and possible contacts.
- Connect with your state WMU office or convention. Your state Baptist convention office may have someone responsible for the area of ethics. Your state WMU may already be involved in an area of ministry.
- Provide an informative night. Invite law enforcement officials to provide orientation and training.
- Offer a film night. Invite someone who can help participants debrief or lead a discussion. Consider including a law enforcement official.
- Provide the workshop on human trafficking as outlined in this section (section 3) of this leader tool.
- Encourage your associational Acteens or Youth on Mission consultant to offer book studies for girls and guys. Invite students and ministers of youth to participate. Use New Hope books such as *Great Love (for Girls): Truth for Teens in Today's Sexy Culture*; *Great Love (for Guys): Truth for Teens in Today's Sexy Culture*; *Priceless: Discovering True Love, Beauty, and Confidence*; *Body. Beauty. Boys. The Truth About Girls and How We See Ourselves*.

Church Plan

In the first year of this emphasis the major focus is on education, awareness, prayer, Bible study, and action. Year two continues with education and prayer and a step up to more aggressive action. Recognize that where you can bring light there will be darkness—the darkness of evil. You will face a spiritual battle for you will be entering places where evil does not want you to go.

Information about the topics which each of the WMU age-level organizations will feature can be found in the WMU Year Book.

Prayer

You can begin to pray and lead your churches to pray for the following:

- Individuals to find their place in this issue
- Victims of human exploitation
- Victimizers/perpetrators
- Helpers
- Law enforcement
- Lawmakers
- Helping agencies/groups
- Church leaders

RESOURCES for PROJECT HELP: HUMAN EXPLOITATION

The following list is only a beginning list of resources available for the topics related to human exploitation. You may know of others to add to this list—topics related to modern-day slavery, pornography, bullying, media exploitation of children and families, human trafficking (sex and labor exploitation). Watch your local newspaper for articles related to any of these topics.

Web sites

Most of the following Web sites focus on human trafficking.

- US Department of Health and Human Services, Campaign to Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking at www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking.
- US Department of State, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000: “Trafficking in Persons Report 2009” at www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009
- US Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at www.state.gov/g/tip.
- US Department of Justice:
www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/trafficking.html.
www.ovc.gov/help/tip.htm.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, Investigative Programs, Crimes Against Children at www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/crimesmain.htm.
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at www.ncmec.org.
- Polaris Project at www.polarisproject.org.

Films (slavery and human trafficking)

- *Taken* (2009)
- *Amazing Grace* (2006)
- *Human Trafficking*. A two-part miniseries starring Mira Sorvino and Donald Sutherland. A gripping presentation that does much to educate the public on the realities of human/sex trafficking.
- *Sex Slaves*. A PBS documentary. *Frontline* presents a unique hidden-camera look at this world of sexual slavery, talking with traffickers and their victims, and exposing the government indifference that allows the abuses to continue virtually unchecked.
- *Children for Sale*. An MSNBC program.

Recommended Reading (human trafficking)

Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade—and How We Can Fight It,
by David Batstone.

The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade, by Victor Malarek.

Child Soldiers

Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Uganda's Children, by Faith J. H. McDonnell and Grace Akallo (A Shades of REaD book selection).

Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade—and How We Can Fight It, by David Batstone.

Articles (sexting)

“Picture Imperfect,” *Living with Teenagers*, September 2009.

Books from WMU/New Hope

- Prepare spiritually to walk into the darkness of human exploitation.

Strong Walk: Becoming a Lifestyle Spiritual Warrior

Randy Sprinkle

This study is a practical tool to help believers learn and practice basic, successful spiritual warfare so they can follow Christ boldly in their daily Christian walk.

- As you identify places where God needs to move, prepare by studying this book.

Follow Me: Becoming a Lifestyle Prayerwalker

Randy Sprinkle

This 6-week Bible study is a tool for transforming the willing believer into an effective prayerwalker.

- Prepare hearts and minds by first understanding God's love and that even though He does not love what they do He still loves those who are involved in exploiting others.

Compelled by Love: The Most Excellent Way to Missional Living

Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation

This book challenges believers to understand fully the love of God; the Commission of the church; and the loving, willing acts of submission that follow when believers are compelled by their understanding of God's love and His mission.

- Help teenagers/students understand who they are as creations of God. Use these resources in retreats or other gatherings of youth. Encourage individual reading.

Great Love (for Girls): Truth for Teens in Today's Sexy Culture

Chandra Peele and Aubrey Spears

In a candid, relevant approach, this 4-week Bible study for teen girls presents a response to the world's distorted view of sexuality.

Great Love (for Guys): Truth for Teens in Today's Sexy Culture

Chandra Peele and Aubrey Spears

In a candid, relevant approach, this 4-week Bible study for teen guys presents a response to the world's distorted view of sexuality.

Priceless: Discovering True Love, Beauty, and Confidence

Chandra Peele

This 6-week interactive Bible study helps teen girls know that they are priceless—and that their best self is found in a relationship with Jesus.

Body. Beauty. Boys. The Truth About Girls and How We See Ourselves

Sarah Bragg

A candid, down-to-earth, and empathetic perspective on how girls can learn to see themselves the way God sees them.

• Resources that can be used with victims of trafficking, abuse, etc.

A Woman with a Past, A God with a Future: Embracing God's Transforming Love

Elsa Kok

This 12-week interactive Bible study guides women to allow God to gently shine His light on their past and craft their scars into something beautiful. Use with women coming out of a human-trafficking situation.

A Woman Who Hurts, A God Who Heals: Discovering Unconditional Love

Elsa Kok

Written for women ready to move beyond a painful past, this 15-week Bible study helps readers apply God's healing to the wounded places in their lives. Use with women coming out of a human trafficking situation.

Wounded by Words: Healing the Invisible Scars of Emotional Abuse

Susan Titus Osborn, Karen L. Kosman, and Jeenie Gordon

In *Wounded by Words*, the authors explore how emotional abusers isolate, disorient, and indoctrinate their victims and how their unkind words leave lasting scars. Sharing personal stories of people from the Bible and from contemporary life who have suffered verbal abuse, the authors offer tested, scriptural advice for breaking the cycle.

DISCLAIMER

National WMU wants to connect you with resources we believe are good. However, because of the nature of human exploitation, WMU cannot be held responsible for any Web sites other than what are recommended. This includes sites that may be linked without our knowledge.