

Still With Us!

There are more people in slavery today than at any time in human history. This is most evident in the human trafficking trade, which is rife throughout the world, and even in Australia.

The Trade of Human Beings

Human trafficking is the trade of humans, mostly for the purpose of sexual slavery, forced labour, forced marriage, forced military service, and organ harvesting. With constantly shifting patterns, human trafficking occurs within a country and trans-nationally. It is not the same as people smuggling where those being smuggled pay others to take them to a new place. It is a crime because, through coercion and deception, trafficked people are denied the right of movement so they can be exploited. Women and children are particularly vulnerable. Victims are often left with long-term physical, psychological and emotional disabilities.

Human trafficking is thought to be one of the fastest-growing activities of trans-national criminal organisations. It represents an estimated 40 to 50 billion dollars of international trade per annum, half of which is made in industrialised countries. Human trafficking is condemned by many international conventions as a violation of human rights.

Human trafficking in Australia is illegal, yet an estimated 300 to 1000 people are trafficked each year. To date, the majority identified by Australian authorities have been women working in the sex industry. However, in recent years cases of men and women exploited in other forms of slavery have been identified.

We See it in the Bible

The first book of the Bible records a heart-rending story of human trafficking. A 17 year old Israelite lad

named Joseph was sold as a slave by his older brothers for twenty shekels of silver to a group of Ishmaelite traders. They were passing by in a camel caravan on a major trade route. Joseph was then trafficked to Egypt and sold as a slave to an Egyptian household.

The Israelites, though they as a nation had experienced generations of cruel slavery in Egypt, had slaves in their society. But under Hebrew laws, slaves were treated differently from slaves in other nations. Hebrew slaves were treated as humans, not property, and were allowed to work their way to freedom. A person could become a slave because of poverty, debt or even crime. They were seen not as animals but as human beings created in the image of God with inherent dignity and worth. Nowhere does the Bible condone slavery, but it recognises its existence.

An Inhuman Traffic

For much of Christianity's history slavery has been considered an unavoidable feature of the economy. In the eighteenth century however, in the context of the particularly savage and rapacious African slave trade, the abolition movement took shape among Christian people across the globe.

British parliamentarian William Wilberforce and other abolitionists could not stand by idly and see those made in the image of God, abused. Thinking that if only the British people could see the cruelty of the African slave trade he said, *"I firmly believe they would themselves abjure (renounce) that inhuman traffic."* His fiercely unpopular crusade against the trade ravaged his health and cost him politically. But through his persistent efforts the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was finally passed by the Parliament in 1807.



William Wilberforce as depicted in 'Amazing Grace'

For the United States it took President Abraham Lincoln and a costly civil war in the 1850s to bring an end to slavery there. Lincoln hated slavery and in one of his speeches said, *"Yes, gentlemen, to all His creatures, to the whole great family of man ... nothing stamped with the Divine image and likeness was sent into the world to be trodden on, and degraded, and imbruted by its fellows."*

Slavery in Queensland!

Human trafficking again raised its ugly head in the 1860s to meet the demand for labour in the sugar cane fields of Queensland. Known as *'blackbirding'* traders 'recruited' black natives from the nearby islands of Melanesia. The Government tried to regulate this trade of humans requiring every ship carry a government observer to ensure that labourers were recruited willingly. But they were often corrupted and did little or nothing to prevent sea-captains from tricking islanders on-board or otherwise engaging in kidnapping with violence.

A Growing Global Atrocity

For atheistic nations things were much worse. Historians, for example, say Soviet authorities trafficked about 15 million people to labour camps or gulags between the 1930s and 1950s. Considered as

'economic units' a great many never returned to their homes.

Today with globalisation human trafficking is growing rapidly. The huge worldwide demand, use of internet, and modern means of travel by international crime has made it a global atrocity.

Father in Heaven, *In Your Word we are reminded that "whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 John 4:21). We cannot therefore love You while neglecting to love those created in Your image. We therefore enter the battle against slavery, especially in the guise of 'human trafficking', today being fought on many fronts. Help us to pray and be advocates for those who are victims of human trafficking and slavery. We stand against the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. For our adversary is bent on destroying all who are made in your image. Thank You that You sent Your Son Jesus "to proclaim freedom for the prisoners" (Luke 4:18). We pray for the dissolving and dismantling of this trade of human beings who bear Your image. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*

About 'Image of God' Leaflets

In the Bible we read that God "*created man in His own image*" (Genesis 1:27). Many maintain that all human history revolves around this truth. The Judeo-Christian belief in the unique dignity of human beings is at the very foundation of Western civilisation.

The 2010 Canberra Declaration therefore states:
"We believe that all human life, being made in the image of God, has intrinsic and equal value from conception to life's natural end."

'Image of God' leaflets relate the doctrine of man as created in the image of God to various issues we face in Australia today.

The 21 leaflets in SERIES ONE are dedicated to Sophie Scholl who was martyred at the age of 21 in World War II for writing and distributing leaflets.

You can download other 'Image of God' leaflets at The Canberra Declaration website.

Please:
READ & SIGN
The Canberra Declaration
to Protect

- **Religious Freedom**
- **Marriage and Family and**
- **Human Life**

in Australia

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SERIES ONE Leaflet 14

Human Trafficking



and the
**Image of
God**