

Human Trafficking Notes for Churches in North Bay

*The following information was gleaned from an Engage Freedom
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What is Human Trafficking?

Human Trafficking is the exploitation of vulnerable persons (mainly women and children, but also boys) who, through coercion and deception, become victims of the sex industry or forced labour. It is a crime and has been described as modern-day slavery. According to the United Nations, it is estimated that there are 2.5 million victims worldwide.

Child victims of trafficking are often exploited for sexual purposes including prostitution, pornography and sex tourism. They are also exploited for forced labour including domestic servitude, sweatshop factory work and migrant farming.

Traffickers maintain control over their victims through the use of force, fraud, deception and/or threats of violence to the victim or someone known to them.

What does the Gospel have to say about this?

Matthew 25: 36-40

Matthew 19:14

Matthew 18:10

Jesus is the Healer.

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.

Jesus is the One who sets captives free.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu: “To remain neutral in situations of injustice is to be complicit in that injustice.”

Why does the Church need to know?

Human trafficking is widespread throughout Canada and generates millions of dollars for criminal organizations. It is prevalent in Ontario and is occurring daily in our cities, towns and local communities. It is happening in our hotels, schools, businesses and churches. Victims need so much— rescue, support, acceptance, unconditional love, and healing. The buyers and perpetrators of this heinous crime also are in great need of transformation and mercy.

This horrific crime is now gaining increased focus and attention from government, police services and community partners. The Church stands poised to be in the forefront and make a powerful impact in the battle to eradicate human trafficking.

Crime Stoppers implores, “Don’t close your eyes to human trafficking.” The Church can be a strong leader in having eyes to see the reality of human trafficking and the complexity of factors that lead to it. It can play a key role within the community by its commitment to ‘love our neighbours’ Leviticus 19:18, Mark 12:31 and to “seek and serve Christ in all persons”, and “to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.” The Church has a history and forum for being a voice and standing up for the oppressed.

Survivors, as well as social service agencies committed to their care, report that between 85-90% of survivors said it was their faith that sustained them whilst a slave of human trafficking. The Church must not “close its eyes”.

What can the Church do?

Pray. Add “human trafficking” to your prayers in church; engage people to pray about this issue

Preach and teach, make congregations aware of human trafficking. Educate by adding inserts into church bulletins, placing posters in church halls, showing videos

Offer church buildings to host events or presentations for the community, invite a survivor to speak

Host fundraisers, bake sales, suppers, silent auctions, etc. to raise funds to support safe places helping survivors recover

Be informed of the various programs and initiatives in which the Church is involved worldwide

Stay current, if applicable for your denomination, as to what the Canadian Council of Churches are working to accomplish/achieve

Be a key stakeholder in the community.

Determine what assets the Church has that can help fill the gaps that exist in social service agencies

Connect and build networks, be engaged in action

Collaborate/coordinate. Find out what other churches, faith groups, and organizations are doing to make a contribution. Share ideas and projects with one another

Give unconditional love to the victims who suffer from shame, guilt and blame.

Prepare Care Kits for victims

Offer assistance and support for migrant workers

Be leaders and examples in the healing of Indigenous people

Liaise with other groups committed to fighting human trafficking

Resources

- Ontario Government's confidential Human Trafficking Helpline 1-833-999-9211 TTY 1-888-340-1001
<https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/humanTrafficking/index.aspx>
- RCMP resources are available free at:
<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ht-tp/publications/index-eng.htm#1>
- Shared Hope <https://sharedhope.org/about-us/contact-us/>
- The Clewer Initiative <https://www.theclewerinitiative.org/resources/>
- There are numerous resources for faith groups that can be downloaded by searching online **Interfaith Toolkits on Human Trafficking** – or download one here www.umcjustice.org/documents/43

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