

WOMEN'S

PERSPECTIVES

Editorial

By June Campbell



In This Issue...

January 2010, Issue 75

Editorial	p. 1
by June Campbell	
Caught in Traffic	p. 3
by Sharon Tidd	
Freedom	p. 4
by Marion MacInnis	
Human Trafficking: Modern Day Slavery	p. 6
by June Campbell	
What Can You Do?	p. 7

I have marveled at the ability of so many servants of Christ to deal directly with the worst possible conditions and still be whole and radiant people. Since researching human trafficking during this past year and a half, I have realized, at times, for the sake of emotional survival, that I am getting closer to the answer.

Dr. Glory E. Dharmaraj of the United Methodist Church encouraged diaconal ministers to “keep one eye on the shalom of God and one eye on the pain of the world”. That’s it, isn’t it? - the age-old answer of dwelling in God through Christ, literally by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Editorial cont.

We are exhorted to “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn”. When we have found the secret of how to truly follow that seemingly self-evident instruction, we are well on our way to becoming whole persons, and then we are more ready to be of use in this world.

There is so much more to know about this horrendous subject than can be presented. The challenge, therefore, is to become knowledgeable through resources mentioned here as well as through the Salvation Army website, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada website for their comprehensive report on Human Trafficking, through Victor Malarek’s book ‘The Johns’, notice increasing reports in newspapers of attempts at luring young people, of charges re pornography on internet and so on. It would seem we live not only in a secular society, but an increasingly sexualized society.

From this position of knowledge, education of others and advocacy to governments at all levels can take place as we agree to join the battle with so many other faith-based and secular organizations to prevent, prosecute where necessary and protect the victims in our midst and abroad.

In all of this, let us also enter into intentional prayer for the deliverance of victims of human trafficking. (But, remember! Prayer is a dangerous business! Who knows where that will lead?!)

June Campbell, from early childhood, has lived in the Barrie and surrounding area and has deep ties to family, friends, church and community. She has served the Women’s Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada as President of Essa Road Church group, Barrie Presbyterial and CNOB Synodical. June completed a 6-year term on WMS Council in May 2009 and continues work in her church choir and on the Worship & Music Committee

June presently represents the WMS on Justice Ministries Advisory Committee of the PCC. She was 'grabbed' by the mention of little children being used in trafficking at the May, 2008 WMS Council Meeting by Lorette Noble, then President of Catholic Women's League of Canada, and this has lead her to research and share her concerns.



‘The increase in North American sex tourists travelling to developing countries, pornography and the internet has made human trafficking the greatest human rights problem of the 21st century’

- Victor Malarek

By Sharon Tidd

The Olympics are coming to Canada once again. Have you, like me, always dreamed of being part of the excitement and energy of the Games? Not as an athlete necessarily, but certainly as a spectator. Well, our time has come and that's reason for celebration. But sadly, for many a visit to the 2010 Olympics won't be cause for celebration. Experience tells us that many women and children will be coming not as spectators or athletes, nor by choice, but as victims of human sex trafficking - a known reality in Canada; one experts anticipate will increase with the hosting of the Games. Their destiny won't be the stands or the medal podiums. Their destiny will be the brothels, massage parlours, hotel rooms and streets of Vancouver where they will be bought and sold in BC's sex trade. The Christian community is working to prevent this. With dogged determination we are saying "No" to increased sex trafficking.

In Fall 2008, The Salvation Army British Columbia launched its "The Truth Isn't Sexy" Campaign to raise awareness of this injustice. The Campaign will continue through 2010. The ads portray trafficking realistically from the victim's perspective. These are women and children subjected to physical beatings, starvation and drug-ging. They are pimped repeatedly each day, exposed to life-threatening infections, traumatized, and trapped in debt-bondage. What if they were our own sisters or brothers, daughters or mothers? Would we be silent? Canadians need to rise together in protest against this crime against humanity. Canadians need to protect the women and children trafficked domestically (many from First Nations reserves) and internationally for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

A Citizen's Summit on Trafficking and the Olympics comprised of faith groups, academics and social service providers presented to government and community leaders on March 26th at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. Their joint message was that one victim of trafficking is one too many. Each agency, in turn, shared their determination to see the end of human trafficking in Canada. The hosting of the Olympics is proving to be a catalyst for change. It is creating unique opportunities to increase awareness, to push for action, and to establish the support systems needed by those escaping trafficking. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's April 2009 Report, "Human Trafficking - A Report on Modern Day Slavery in Canada", calls for three responses to this social injustice: prevention, prosecution, and protection. These same needed responses were the primary demands of the

Citizen's Summit. The Summit is continuing to meet with and appeal to known stakeholders in the fight against trafficking.

The More Than Gold network (churches and agencies planning for outreach and service during the 2010 Games) is also focusing on this issue. On May 22nd, 2009 an awareness campaign called "Buying Sex is NOT a Sport" will be launched in Vancouver with t-shirts, buttons, posters and postcards. Forums will be hosted in churches, universities and community centres to provide citizens with an opportunity to learn more, hear first-hand stories from those who escaped from sex trafficking, and respond with positive action steps intended to reduce the demand and increase the opportunity to free and care for victims.

Many Christian organizations already offer safe houses for victims of trafficking and that will increase as February 2010 approaches. These safe houses offer care and compassion to victims coupled with practical, holistic supports like translation services, legal counsel, immigration services, medical treatment, trauma counseling, drug detoxification, healthy meals and a good night's sleep. Enhanced partnerships with police, immigration and border services personnel are helping to connect victims with these advocacy services.

There doesn't have to be a dark side to the hosting of the Olympics! The Christian community is pushing for a Games that is free from the stain of sex trafficking. As Major Brian Venables of The Salvation Army says, "We want to tell visitors that when they come to Vancouver, they'd better be here for the Olympics, because if they're here for illicit sex, we're aware of it - and we're going to protect those women and children."

*Reprinted with permission from the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. First run in WICC's publication **Riding the Waves**, June 2009 issue. Sharon Tidd is the Vancouver/Whistler 2010 Olympic Outreach Coordinator for the Salvation Army British Columbia Division. She lives in Port Moody, British Columbia.*

**Did You Know there is a
Senate Committee on Human
Rights with a Sub-committee
on Sexual Exploitation of
Children in Canada?**

By Marion MacInnis

It was a hot July day and a young woman that went by the name of Madame Lang was visiting my village which was located just east of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. She was going door to door offering various jobs to the younger women, and exclaiming the great benefits that would come to our families if we went back with her to Phnom Penh. My village was poor and the thought of a better income was in great demand. When Madame Lang arrived at my home that day, she told me and my mother that I could work at the local flower shop with my best friend Tau. This idea seemed quite marvelous at the time so we came to a conclusion that I would go back to Phnom Penh with Madame Lang and Tau. So without much thought Tau and I and a couple other girls made the small journey back to Phnom Penh with Madame Lang.

When we entered the city an older man who looked to be in his mid forties was waiting at the bus station. He made a gesture towards Madame Lang signaling her to come over. They exchanged a few words and she exclaimed to us that this man was to take us to where we were going to live for the next couple of months. A younger man pulled up in a black van and told us to get in. We drove for what seemed like hours. Night had fallen and everyone was beginning to get tired. Suddenly we turned onto a road full of potholes. The van turned down a steep, bumpy hill. When we came to the bottom we jolted to a stop. The older man opened the door and told us to get out. What looked to be tiny shacks were actually run down garages that lined a back alley. Girls in tight clothes wearing bright red lipstick filled them. One of the older girls sashayed over to the van. I looked at Tau with horror in my eyes and reality suddenly hit me in the face. I knew right then and there that we were not going to be working at a flower shop that we had been sold to a brothel owner and that I would probably never see my parents again.

The older girl whose name was Yau motioned for us to follow her. Tau still stood in shock and refused to move. The younger man who had driven the van struck her violently across the face with a metal rod, causing her to cry out in anguish. I took her hand and guided her to where Yau was taking us. She led us down a small dark stair case where the smell of sweat filled the air. At the bottom, we came to a small locked room. She pushed us all inside and locked the door. Four stained mattresses stood in front of us and a small bucket by the door. The walls were yellow but you could see that they had once been white.

Tau sat on the floor cradling her face in her hands and let-

ting out small sobs, she spoke of our village and the memories that we shared. Suddenly the door swung open and a big man with a gun came in. He threw a bag of clothes on the floor and ordered us to put them on and shortly after four older girls came in and started to do our hair and make-up. The man spoke with a harsh tone. He told us that we work for him now and that if there is any misbehavior we would be punished.

That day would come to be known as the day I lost my soul. I was no longer a person, but a lifeless body made to endure the most horrific acts of inhumanity. Days and months passed as we all waited and hoped that we would soon be rescued. Each day I woke to the thought, "Will this be the day someone saves me from this hell?"

One day a man in his mid-thirties visited the brothel. He bought Tau and me for 15 days. The things you must endure during this time are usually worse then when you are staying at the brothel, emotionally and physically. The man led us to his car; it looked very expensive and foreign. Tau and I got into the back seat, the man spoke to us in broken English but never once did he try to touch us. We drove throughout the whole day and into the night and by mid-morning we had gotten to our destination. The man drove through a rusty gate and onto some kind of compound. A young woman came through the front door of the building greeting us with a big smile. This was a strange experience for us, it had never happened before. The man got out of the front seat and walked towards us. He opened our door and took us both by the hand. He led us through the front door of the building and through the back entrance into a back yard. The yard was filled with children some as young as five, playing, singing and dancing, all had a smile on their face. The lady bent down on one knee facing us and she spoke the words that I had been waiting to hear for three years: "You're free now."

Marion MacInnis is 17 years old and wrote this story on the topic of her choice for her Writing Craft 12 course at Barrie North Collegiate. It is based on research she has done, but is a work of fiction. Marion enjoys writing and is a compassionate young woman hoping to go on a Mission Trip to Nicaragua with Bethel Community Church in January 2010.

Human Trafficking: Modern Day Slavery

By June Campbell

Trafficking is a term we most often associate with some illicit or illegal product. We talk of drug traffickers or trafficking of stolen property or illegal weapons. Too many people don't know that human trafficking is at least as serious a problem as the drug or weapons trade. Perhaps the worst part of human trafficking is that women and children are being treated and used as commodities. They are denied basic dignity and are sold to the highest bidder.

The modern trade in human beings is not very different from the African slave trade of the 16th and 17th centuries. Victims of human traffickers are coerced, recruited under false pretences, or physically abducted, and transported to a place where they are kept, against their will, and forced to do whatever the traffickers decide. Human trafficking is not just 'regular migration', nor is it even smuggling people. Migration and smuggling both result in people moving to a different area, but they remain in control of their own lives. People who travel or are smuggled across a border often pay steep fees to help them escape to a place they believe will offer them a better life. People who are trafficked are bought and sold and used. They are never free.

If we have heard of this problem at all in Canada, we have thought of it as a problem for Asian countries where 'sex-trade tourism' is a major industry. As difficult as it may be for us to believe, human trafficking is a huge problem, and it is not just happening 'out there'. In 2009, the RCMP estimates that 800 to 1,200 people are trafficked in Canada per year. Some people who are working to address the problem suggest that the number is probably closer to 15,000.

Many of us will be even more distressed to know that in 2009, trafficking women into Canada rose as those involved brought more women into the country ready to be used in Vancouver during the Olympics. The women and girls were brought in this year to avoid what is expected to be heightened security measures that will be put in place closer to the Olympic celebrations.

While there are other reasons for human trafficking, such as collecting 'donors' for human organs or forced labour or military service, the vast majority of human trafficking is for sexual exploitation. The underlying causes of human trafficking are a combination of extreme poverty (including deplorable conditions in many aboriginal reserves in Canada), criminal greed and perverted sex drives.

An examination of the causes and implications of human trafficking requires a significantly more extensive venue than a single article in our mission magazine. Some might wonder if the topic even belongs here. To this I would emphatically respond: "Evil prevails when good people do nothing!" This subject came before WMS Council at Creeff Hills in May 2008 when Lorette Noble, President of the Catholic Women's League told us of their advocacy work with government concerning this and other social justice issues. It was followed up at Council in May 2009 with a half-hour presentation on Human Trafficking. The response to that presentation was very positive, and led to the suggestion that it be on the agenda for the Fall 2009 executive meeting of WMS Council. Justice Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada has given the mandate to the Women's Missionary Society for any action which might be initiated within our Church.

There are many efforts currently being undertaken to combat this horrific situation. Joy Smith, MP for Kildonan-St.Paul, Manitoba has been steering a private member's bill through Parliament which seeks to amend the Criminal Code to include a minimum punishment of five-year imprisonment for offences involving trafficking of persons under the age of eighteen years. It is almost astonishing to know that other countries have recognized the seriousness of this crime by legislating minimum sentences for convictions of five (Thailand) to ten (USA) years. Currently there is no minimum sentence for people convicted in Canada of this crime.

The bill received good support. More than 14,000 names were collected on petitions that were circulated throughout Canada. Many WMS members were involved in collecting these signatures. The bill passed third and final reading in the House of Commons on September 30. This is a surprising and welcome accomplishment for a private members bill. It is now before the Senate. A new petition is being circulated to encourage the Senate to pass the bill. I have a list of 20 organizations, most of them faith based, within Canada who are involved in this battle.

The Religious Conference of Roman Catholic Orders has published "A Lobbying Guide to the Laws Relative to the Trafficking in Women and Children". This publication is a good place to start, especially the second section 'Canada Must Do More to Protect Victims'. You will find helpful

Human Trafficking: Modern Day Slavery cont.

information which can be used if you wish to write to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Justice Minister and Attorney General of Canada, your local MP, and/or your local newspaper. You can also write to your local provincial legislator to ask what your province is doing. The provinces are responsible for health care, child protection and transition houses: all these services are needed by the victims of human trafficking.

Isaiah 42:22 states “This is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in pits, or hidden away in prisons. They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them; they have been made loot, with no one to say ‘Send them back’.” This is an apt description of today’s situation for too many of our sisters and little children. Ephesians 4:11 instructs us to have nothing to do with evil— the fruitless deeds of darkness but rather expose them to the light. Shall we or shall we not make a start to advocate for Church/community awareness and comprehensive government action concerning human trafficking? We are told in Psalms that the stones will cry out in praise to God if we humans do not do so. Surely the very stones will cry out in outrage to God if we sit still and make no attempts to prevent these crimes against the most vulnerable in our society, our world.

By June Campbell

**The mailing sent to all WMS groups in early fall contained an information piece and a copy of the petition related to the private members bill. For further copies of these resources, contact the WMS office.*

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June Campbell is a current member of the Justice Ministries Advisory Committee and a recently retired member of WMS Council. She is active in the Barrie Presbyterial, and enjoys family activities, singing, reading, and writing.

**“I am only one, but still I am one.
I cannot do everything, but still I
can do something.
Because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the
something I can do.**

**A vision without a task is but a
dream.**

**A task without a vision is
drudgery.**

**But a vision with a task is the
hope of the world.”**

Edward Hale (1822-1909)

Public Domain

- **Become informed. Raise awareness in your community.**
- **Search/research websites, articles and documentaries for information and share the knowledge.**
- **Student research for school projects.**
- **Speak out against gender inequality.**
- **Contact a local anti-trafficking group.**
- **Lobby your members of parliament to continue their work to combat the trafficking of persons.**
- **Report suspected cases to authorities.**
- **Help eradicate poverty.**

**Courtesy of the
Sarnia-Lambton Committee Against Trafficking Women & Children.
– June 2009 issue**

Challenge

'There is a challenge coming before the courts to legalize prostitution. Read Chapter 14 of "The Johns", Victor Malarek's book 'A Gift to Johns' and follow it up with letters to the Prime Minister, to the Justice Minister and your local MP.

Women's Perspectives (WP) strives to keep women in touch with each other and share their theological perspectives, biblical insights, special interests, joys and concerns with the whole church. WP is published 6 times yearly. It is written by guest editors and overseen by WP Committee, in co-operation with the Women in Ministry Committee.

These committees are connected with the office of Ministry and Church Vocations, the Life and Mission Agency, The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). Views expressed in WP are not necessarily endorsed by the WP Committee or the PCC.

Readers comments and contributions are welcome at womensperspectives@presbyterian.ca

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Editorial Committee: Judee Archer Green, Joan Homewood, Sheila Lang (administrator), Pat Martin (layout), Fairlie Ritchie, Maureen Walter