

TRAFICKING IN HUMANS:

A VIOLATION

OF

CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

By

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In the light of Christian anthropology, this paper exposes the trafficking of young women who are sold into Sex Slavery in Australia today. It details the ways in which a particular group within the Catholic Church has addressed this concern and its implications for the wider Christian community.

Human Trafficking and slavery exist in Australia, in 2012! Although this claim is startling, it is sadly true. People from impoverished situations, predominantly in Asia, are trafficked into capital cities in Australia, including Melbourne and even country Victoria. These people are brought here to work in industries such as agriculture, hospitality, construction and prostitution, where they treated as slaves. Victims of labour trafficking may also be subjected to domestic servitude.¹ In this paper I will concentrate particularly on the women trafficked into prostitution, in Australia.

I first became aware of this serious abuse of human dignity in our own neighbourhood through viewing the film “ The Jammed”, which was released in 2007. This film is a social thriller that tells the true story of a group of young women who are sold into sex slavery and who work in illegal brothels in Melbourne and Sydney. The plot reveals their work within the sex industry and the gross abuse they suffer as the victims of this sinister

¹ “Anti-Slavery Australia” <http://www.antislavery.org.au/resources/fact-sheets/104-fact-sheet-3-what-is-human-trafficking.html> [accessed 7 August 2012]

crime.² The devastating impact on the Chinese mother who searches for her 'lost' daughter is also explored. The film highlighted for me the contradiction between Christian anthropology and the actual lived experience of people who have been trafficked. I was shocked, disgusted, saddened and angry: concurrently. Although I saw this film two years ago, the issue of human trafficking and the plight of its innocent victims has stayed with me, moving me from complacency to involvement in raising awareness and to writing this paper.

Trafficking of women and their subsequent abuse is wrong on many levels including: moral, ethical, legal, spiritual and religious. This practice would be shocking anywhere in the world but in a civilized, educated and developed country such as Australia, the contrast between visible main stream society and the clandestine world of trafficked women sold into sex slavery is quite disturbing. Whilst the Australian Federal Police, the State Police Officers, the Australian Red Cross and several Non Government Organizations (NGOs) are proactive in this field and the media has published articles and screened documentaries, the community at large appears to be unaware of the abuse of human rights occurring through trafficking in Australia today.

Both secular and government organizations have seen the desperate need to rescue the trafficked women and support them in re-building healthy and meaningful lives. Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Human (ACRATH) works actively in this field as a visible presence of the Catholic Church. Their motivation is to right the grave injustice inflicted on trafficked women through their work in awareness raising,

² The Jammed <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0791178/> [accessed 7 August 2012]

advocacy, lobbying the Australian government with respect to the prosecution of traffickers and compensation for the trafficked people as victims of crime. They are also involved in the counseling and accompaniment of women rescued from trafficking.

Although the ACRATH organisation is endorsed by Catholic Religious Australia, the peak body for 190 religious orders in Australia, representing 8000 religious sisters, brothers and priests³ there are also lay members who work beside their religious colleagues. These people both religious and lay are committed to addressing the inconsistency between their belief concerning the ideal human society, as defined in scripture and Roman Catholic teachings, and reality for trafficked women.

Trafficking in humans stands in stark opposition to human rights and in violation of 'Christian Anthropology'. From the Scriptures we learn that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26). This is the greatest compliment God could bestow on humanity and consequently affords people, everyone, innate dignity. Being created 'in the image God' also means that people are created as loving because "God is love"(1Jn 4:7) and free, having autonomy concerning their own lives, as described in the story where Adam and Eve choose to disobey God (Gen 3). People should therefore be free to love and be loved without coercion and enslavement. Victims of trafficking are denied the "gift of human freedom,"⁴ the basic, yet intrinsic God given right of freedom affords people choice regarding their location, actions and lifestyle. Freedom allows

³ "ACRATH Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans Website"
<http://acrath.org.au/> [accessed 7 August 2012]

⁴ John Sachs, R. *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*. (Minnesota: Collegeville 1991) 27

individuals the capacity to choose who they are going to be and how they will spend their lives.⁵

Both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures speak of how communities should live and how people should treat one another. Initially in the story of God's relationship with humanity the Israelites, God's chosen people are given the Ten Commandments as a means of living harmoniously with each other. (Ex 2-18) In particular adultery was not to be permitted in the society envisioned by God. (Ex 2:14) It would follow then that women trafficked into the sex industry is an abomination to God's plan. The Old Testament prophets constantly remind the people to rescue those who are oppressed (Is 1:17), not to abuse a widow or orphan (Ex 22:22) and live justly and mercifully (Mic 6:8). Respect for human dignity is expressed by the way that communities treat the people who live within them.⁶

God's most significant message to humanity concerning interpersonal relationships was delivered through the life and mission of Jesus. Jesus extended the invitation for humanity to live in relationship with a loving God who asks them to love God with their whole hearts and to love others as they love themselves. (Mat 22: 37- 39) Christians can reciprocate God's love for them, through their expressions of love for others, demonstrated by their actions. However society treats their most vulnerable members is the way that they treat Jesus. (Mat 25:40) At the time of final judgment Jesus will identify himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked and the imprisoned.

⁵ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 29

⁶ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 35-36

(Mat 25:40) and those who have offered a helping hand will be rewarded with eternal life. (Mat 25: 46)⁷ Care for others is not an optional extra in God's plan for humanity, but as an imperative for living within a community.

During Jesus' earthly ministry, he went in search of the sick, for instance: 'The Woman with a Hemorrhage' (Mk 5: 25-34), the outcasts in, 'The Cleansing of the Lepers Story' (Lk 17:11-19), and the lonely, 'Zacchaeus' (Lk 19: 1-9) to mention only a few. Examples of this type are scattered throughout the Gospels. In his own mission statement, Jesus quotes the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor... release to the captives, ...to let the oppressed go free" (Lk 4:18). Jesus taught his disciples using the 'Beatitudes' (Mat 5:3-11) also as a mandate for Christians to follow his example in working with compassion for justice and the dignity for all who are suffering. Human Trafficking stands in opposition to Christian anthropology and Jesus' dream for human life: "I have come that you might have life and have it in abundance". This dream of a dignified and abundant life wasn't just for a favoured few, but for all.

The story of 'The Woman with the Hemorrhage' mentioned earlier, is just one illustration of Jesus' countercultural attitude to women. In first century Palestine restrictions applied to the free movement of women within society unless they were accompanied by male

⁷ John Paul II, "Opening Address at the Puebla Conference" 1979
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP791228.htm> [accessed 28 September 2012] 111.2

chaperones. The woman with the hemorrhage would also be considered ritually unclean.⁸ Lack of personal freedom and subordination to men would still be a reality for women in some cultures today. Jesus is undeterred by this unclean woman who is in very proximity to him. In fact on realizing that someone in the crowd had touched him, Jesus asks the person to come forward in order to confirm for the woman that her faith had made her well. (Mk 5:34) The trafficking in humans disregards the message of respect that Jesus communicated through his own relationships with women.

The Catholic Church has emulated the scriptural orientation for ministry to the poor through its documents, endorsing that integral to the evangelizing mission of the Church is her “action for justice” and the progress of all people. The Church acknowledges the strong links between anthropology, theology and love.⁹ If the Church fails care for the poor and defend their rights she will be unfaithful to the Gospel. Pope John Paul II frequently spoke of the Church’s social mission and its clear link to Scriptural anthropology stressing his concern for the whole person.¹⁰ Three clear themes summarise the Church’s position concerning the nature and purpose of human life these are: “the dignity of the human person, the centrality of community and the significance of human action.”¹¹

⁸ Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmeyer, Roland Murphy, eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (U.S.A.: Prentice Press 1990), 608

⁹ John Paul II, “Opening Address at the Puebla Conference” 1979
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP791228.htm> [accessed 28 September 2012] 111.2

¹⁰ Gerald Twomey, “Pope John Paul II and the Preferential Option for the Poor”
<http://www.stjohns.edu/media/3/97fd56419dcf4870803f29285db89f4f.pdf> [accessed 30 October 2012]. 327

¹¹ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 8

Catholic Social Teaching promotes the ethics of human dignity, common good and solidarity. Human trafficking and its consequential exploitation of people contradicts each of these values. Any form of injustice to the human person is an act of selfishness that considers only the greed and power of the individual. Consideration for the common good acknowledges the great human strength that eventuates from people working together for good to benefit of each other. Christians are therefore, challenged to read the signs of the times' using the 'see', 'judge', 'act' method that Cardinal Cardjin made popular in young Christian workers' and students' movements.¹² They are called to emulate these ideals in their daily lives, critiquing society, advocating for justice and acting against any undignified treatment of people.

In the 'Spirituality of Liberation' that originated in South America, championed by Archbishop Oscar Romero, Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez, and others, in a situation of abject poverty, are lessons that can be applied to human trafficking in Australia and internationally. Romero worked tirelessly for the dignity of the El Salvadoran people in an environment of outrageous abuse of human rights and persistent violence. His famous words: "aspire not to have more but to be more"¹³ remind people that pre-occupation with material possessions is not the lifestyle taught by Jesus or reflected in Catholic Church

¹² "Catholic Social Services Australia"
http://catholicsocialservices.org.au/Catholic_Social_Teaching [accessed 28 September 2012]

¹³ Oscar Romero. "Fourth Pastoral Letter of Archbishop Romero, Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, 1979" <http://www.romerotruster.org.uk/index.php?nuc=content&id=12> [accessed 31 October 2012] 18

teachings. Instead there is urgency, in both in South American poverty and the oppression of human trafficking for courageous action to redress these situations. Christians are called to act tirelessly for justice on behalf of their fellow human beings who are denied liberation, advancement¹⁴ and dignity by the oppression that they face.

The vocation of every human person is to love.¹⁵ Human beings are created in the image of the Trinitarian God (Gen 1:26), whose relationship is as a community of love. Christians are called to mirror this relationship through their own lives. God created human persons, both male and female, in partnership and as social beings, to live in interpersonal relationships.¹⁶ It follows then that, “only in community with others can we (individuals) be fully human,”¹⁷ living meaningful lives and reaching their maximum capability. An individual cannot realize their personal identity and full potential unless another person empowers them through loving support and affirmation.¹⁸

¹⁴ John Paul II. “Opening Address at the Puebla Conference” 1979
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP791228.htm> [accessed 28 September 2012] 111 #7

¹⁵ John Paul II “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church”
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html#Trinitarian%20love,%20the%20origin%20and%20goal%20of%20the%20human%20person [accessed 31 October 2012] 111a #34

¹⁶ Paul VI, “Gaudium et Specs,” Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world December 7, 1965
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html [accessed 8 October 2012] 35

¹⁷ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 9

¹⁸ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 37

Christians have a Gospel commission to “love one another, as I have loved you” (Jn 13:34), given by Jesus to the disciples during the Last Supper. It would seem natural for contemporary followers of Jesus to do likewise in an act of reciprocal love towards the God who loves them with unlimited generosity. The Gospel of Matthew records Jesus as saying that the poor in our midst reveal Jesus himself (Mat 25:40). Humans who have been trafficked constitute one group of the least or the poor within our contemporary and geographical milieu. Jesus’ message encourages Christians to protect the poor and work towards improving their living conditions.

Pope Benedict in his encyclical writes that charity is at the very heart of the Church’s mission and cannot be separated from “proclaiming the word of God” and “celebrating the sacraments”,¹⁹ which are at very heart of the Christian faith. The justice and compassion promoted in the Scriptures, as the Christian way of life is also the relationship that is celebrated with God in the sacraments. The sacraments celebrate the active presence of God in human lives. A Christian who fails to reach out to others, especially those in need, is inconsistent with the life and mission of the Church. Faith unaccompanied by good works is lifeless. (Jas 2: 17)

“Our experience of life is profoundly paradoxical”.²⁰ There is much goodness in our world and I am constantly astounded by courage and selfless generosity of ordinary

¹⁹ Benedict XVI, “Caritas in Veritate,” Encyclical Letter
<file:///Volumes/UserData/Users/Jane.Branigan/Desktop/%22Caritas%20in%20veritate%22%20-%20Encyclical%20Letter%20of%20His%20Holiness%20Benedict%20XVI.webarchive>
 [accessed 28 September 2012] 25

²⁰ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 6

people. Members of St. Vincent de Paul and ACRATH are just two examples. Experiences of solidarity, hope and love express human strength in adversity and promote a sense of meaning and purpose in life, which is gained through working for a better world.²¹ However, listening to the evening news or reading the newspaper is a constant reminder of the presence of evil within our local communities and the world. Trafficking in humans is one example of evil present within Australia and beyond.

Human Trafficking means the movement of a person or people who have been recruited by abduction, coercion or deception, for the purposes of exploitation, probably through prostitution.²² Australia is usually the destination of women trafficked from South East Asia and China. The majority of these women are sourced from Thailand and South Korea. Although less common, women are sometimes trafficking from Europe and Latin America.²³ Due to Australia's geographical isolation and strong border control the numbers of humans trafficked to Australia are thankfully low. However, the Australia government is committed to and combating trafficking in humans and consequently is committed to working with other governments to indict traffickers and to defend and look after trafficked persons.²⁴

²¹ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 6

²² "Project Respect: Women Matter"
http://projectrespect.org.au/our_work/trafficking [accessed 7 August 2012]

²³ "Project Respect: Women Matter"
http://projectrespect.org.au/our_work/trafficking [accessed 7 August 2012]

²⁴ Australia Government Attorney- General's Department. "People Trafficking"
<http://www.ag.gov.au/Peopletrafficking/Pages/default.aspx> [accessed 28 September 2012]

Poverty is one of the major reasons behind human trafficking as women who are economically poor²⁵ are vulnerable to deception through the promise of a better life including guaranteed work, high income or improved living conditions. Consequently, the lack of educational and economic opportunities for women in developing countries feminises poverty.²⁶ Some of the women may have worked as prostitutes before and have agreed to leave their homeland without realizing the severity of the exploitation they will endure in the country into which they are trafficked.

Another significant reason behind human trafficking is the simple business model of supply and demand. Unfortunately some people are prepared to buy sexual intimacy and the illegal sex industry is a lucrative business. Some other factors that cause demand for trafficked women are rising poverty, globalisation and its impact on developing countries, fewer rights for workers, wealthy countries demanding exploitable labour, few legal opportunities for immigration, natural disaster including war, corrupt governments and ineffective responses to violations of human rights. During times of economic recession it is expected that human trafficking will increase.²⁷

²⁵ Iris Yen, "Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation"
http://streetlightucson.com/images/page_images/resources/Of%20Vice%20&%20Men%20Reducing%20Demand.pdf [accessed 26 October 2012] 657

²⁶ Yen, "Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation," 657

²⁷ "ACRATH Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans"

Women who are trafficked into Australia are most likely to become prostitutes. The reasons behind this appear to be that insufficient Australian women are prepared to act as prostitutes, and customers demand women who are seen as compliant and towards whom they can be violent.²⁸ The legalization of prostitution in Victoria in 1984 has intensified the problems within the sex industry that it intended to minimise.²⁹ Legalising prostitution created an increased demand that could not be supplied with Australian women so, consequently evil entrepreneurs solved the problem through the criminal and inhumane activity of trafficking women to work in prostitution.³⁰

This raises a serious moral and ethical dilemma regarding societal values that would tolerate and even legitimise the purchasing of commercial sex as a ‘necessary evil.’³¹ A culture of ignorance that perpetuates the myth that prostitution is a ‘victimless crime’³² compounds the problem especially when the prostitutes are the victims of trafficking. The reality is that in paying for sexual acts the client demeans themselves and causes misery for the prostitute and others within the surrounding community.³³ Sexual slavery causes

²⁸ “Project Respect: Women Matter”

²⁹ Yen, “Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation,” 680

³⁰ Yen, “Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation,” 681

³¹ Yen, “Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation,” 686

³² Yen, “Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation,” 660

³³ Yen, “Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation,” 686

abuse and exploitation to some of the most vulnerable members in our society.³⁴ There is compelling evidence available advising that greater effort is required to eliminate sex trafficking and the demand that ensures business for the traffickers.³⁵

Unfortunately, few programs have been developed internationally to reduce the demand for illegal prostitution.³⁶ This is especially true in Australia. In Sweden the purchase of commercial sex acts was criminalized in 1999 as prostitution is considered to be a gross violation the dignity and human rights of women.³⁷ This has significantly reduced their problem,³⁸ although neighbouring countries such as Finland and Norway report an increase in the trafficking of women to supply their markets.³⁹ Legal restrictions are an integral part of addressing the situation but as an educator, I believe that teaching and learning is paramount to achieving any real solution. Educating first time adult offenders has been tried across the United States and Canada⁴⁰ emphasizing that men have the

³⁴ Yen, "Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation," 686

³⁵ Donna Hughes, "Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking" http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/demand_sex_trafficking.pdf [accessed 27 October 2012] 6

³⁶ Hughes, "Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking," 2

³⁷ Hughes, "Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking," 25

³⁸ Hughes, "Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking," 26-27

³⁹ Yen, "Of Vice and Men: A New Approach to Eradicating Sex Trafficking by Reducing Male Demand through Educational Programs and Abolitionist Legislation," 680

⁴⁰ Hughes, "Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking," 31

choice and responsibility to promote “egalitarian relationships without coercion or violence.”⁴¹

North American initiatives, such as the Californian Christian faith based recovery program for “people impacted by sexual sin”⁴² and the Salvation Army’s project in Nebraska address this issue within a Church environment. The programs that they have developed harnesses spirituality in addition to counseling in their approach to the rehabilitation of men who purchase sex acts.⁴³ Human freedom allows these individual’s the opportunity to completely change their mind and heart⁴⁴ and to choose to commit to a new future of justice, compassion and integrity. Placing sexual sin in the context of spirituality is appropriate because it acknowledges the role of forgiveness from God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, in transforming the lives of those who are impacted.

Catholic Schools are in a prime position to educate students through the acquisition of knowledge concerning injustices in our world, in particular trafficking in humans. It is also important to endorse respectful relationships within the context of personal spirituality. Education concerning respect for oneself and others should begin in the home, from birth and continue into adulthood. It should be supported and extended within school settings, comprised of age appropriate knowledge concerning human

⁴¹ Hughes, “Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking,” 33

⁴² Hughes, “Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking,” 45

⁴³ Hughes, “Best Practices to Address the Demand Side of Sex Trafficking,” 46

⁴⁴ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 27

anthropology and the inhuman crime of trafficking in humans. For Catholic schools there are imperatives within Scriptural and Church documents (as outlined previously) that promote education for a society liberated from both the commercial sex industry and human trafficking.

The organization of Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) plays a significant role in advocacy for victims of trafficking and raising public awareness concerning this issue. ACRATH ensures that the needs of trafficked women in Australia are met. These needs include housing, re-training, access to financial compensation, accompaniment and counseling. ACRATH collaborates with other groups and individuals, to advocate on human trafficking issues in Australia and in our region, especially with the Australian Red Cross.

Their mission statement reads: “ACRATH is committed to working together towards the elimination of human trafficking in Australia, in Asia, the Pacific and Internationally.”⁴⁵

Human Trafficking stands in opposition to Christian anthropology as explained earlier and Jesus’ dream for human life: “ I (Jesus) have come that you might have life and have it in abundance” (John10.10) which ACRATH quote as an inspiration for their work. They also affirm the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights article four which states that “nobody has the right to treat you as her or his slave and you should not make anyone your slave” as part of their mission statement.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ ACRATH, <http://acrath.org.au/index.php?s=Mission+statement&submit.x=0&submit.y=0>

⁴⁶ ACRATH <http://acrath.org.au/index.php?s=Mission+statement&submit.x=0&submit.y=0>

ACRATH is also involved in the physiological assessment and counseling of women that have been rescued from trafficking. Through their membership, they also provide accompaniment to the victims. The person accompanying the woman becomes a friend and provides assistance socially, in gaining employment and general personal support. Sr. Therese Power currently accompanies two young women who had been trafficked into Sydney and were forced to work in prostitution.

Sr. Therese first met the two women at a Melbourne hotel where they stayed immediately after their rescue from Kings Cross, Sydney. They had been tricked into coming to Australia with the promise of education and employment. Therese's initial challenge was to develop a rapport with the girls, which was difficult, as they knew very little English. As one of the young women is a Catholic Sr. Therese, who is a Sister of Mercy, took them to Mass as a familiar experience at least for one of the girls, and as a gesture in establishing a relationship of trust in a safe environment. Naturally, as a result of the exploitation these young women had suffered, their self-esteem was very low. It was originally and continues to be important to reinforce their dignity and goodness. In the beginning Sr. Therese visited the girls weekly and is still in contact once a week though not necessary as face- to -face contact. Therese teaches them English. She has supported them in identifying their personal goals and in planning for the future. Becoming friends and maintaining the relationship is the most important role of the accompanier because the rescued girls need to know that this person is caring and reliable.

Both of these women are now in supportive, one-to-one relationships. One has a clerical job, the other is studying for a tertiary qualification. The girls have permanent visas and will become Australian citizens in 2013.

Sr. Therese's inspiration for her work is Catherine McCauley founder of the Sisters of Mercy who once said: "The poor need help today not next week."⁴⁷ Women rescued from trafficking fit this brief for Therese. From my interview with her it is clear that Sr. Therese is empathetic towards the degradation that the young women have suffered, is very generous with the time that she devotes to them and is pragmatic in addressing their holistic needs. Her wisdom and persevering approach have been very beneficial in re-establishing these rescued girls within society. Sr. Therese impressed me as the other members of ACRATH that I have met, have done. The commitment and positive action of this group of older religious women inspires me greatly. I am moved by their passion and very active sense of mission because they could easily have seen human trafficking, especially the trafficking of women into sex slavery as too unpleasant and as something clandestine. Instead, they have taken these women into their hearts and have embraced the challenge of advocating for the victims of trafficking at the Federal Government level.

ARATH has a positive relationship with the Department of Immigration due to their intervention and past lobbying. Their advocacy for the victims of human Trafficking has taken them to Canberra, this year and annually for the last five years, to meet with

⁴⁷ Mercy International Association. <http://www.mercyworld.org/> [accessed 10 September 2012]

politicians who have the power to increase the likelihood of prosecuting the traffickers and ensuring that as victims of crime, the rescued people are afforded the necessary services and the financial means required to re-establishing themselves in society. During August 2012, a deputation of fifteen experienced ACRATH members held meetings with individual parliamentarians raising the issues detailed below:

“ACRATH particularly wishes to encourage Members of Parliament to support the new legislation Crimes Legislation Amendments (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012. ACRATH supports the Bill because

1. ACRATH is particularly pleased to see the forced and servile marriage aspects of the Bill
2. ACRATH asks that resources follow the passing of this legislation to ensure its efficacy
3. ACRATH believes the Bill does not go far enough with respect to the availability of reparations to victims of these offences. The ability to access compensation for survivors of trafficking is something Australia committed to in signing the Palermo Protocol to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime.”⁴⁸

Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, the Special Rapporteur for the United Nations, visited Australia during November 2011. As part of her report she highlighted the strong commitment Australia

⁴⁸ Carolan, Christine and Marsh, Maree. *Media Release Canberra* (Australia: 16th August ACRATH 2012)

has demonstrated in combating human trafficking through ‘civil society organizations.’⁴⁹ ACRATH is one of those organizations, that when seeing a need has taken the initiative to form a group and become proactive in working to eradicate trafficking in humans and to redress the suffering of its victims.

The Pastoral Care needs of the women who are rescued from trafficking into the sex industry are extremely complex. They usually require an interdisciplinary approach, involving health professionals, legal assistance, pastoral care and accompaniment in order for healing to eventuate. The deception and exploitation that the individual has suffered could be damaging in any or all of the following areas: physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially.

Important considerations and ethical principles for working with trafficked people include the ability to understand and protect their rights and safety. The negotiation of informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and the provision of appropriate professional referrals are also significant in this field. As the women are often from Asian backgrounds the provision of culturally appropriate services is essential. The providers of these services may also require protection. People working with victims of trafficking also need skills in responding to subpoenas and other requests for information and

⁴⁹ Joy Ngozi Ezeilo. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children* (Human Rights Council: United Nations 2012) Summary

adequate training in supporting witnesses during court proceedings.⁵⁰

After trafficked victims have been rescued, some will need intense professional support, others will work with their accompaniers. One of the professionals who works with these women is Sr. Maree Marsh who is a psychologist. Maree is quite optimistic concerning the eventual healing that these women may experience as she believes that “emotional healing is always possible.” (see Appendix) Among the many variables that may impact the outcomes of intervention are the personal resilience and courage of person who has been trafficked. The economic and family environment from which the women were taken, the means of deception to entice movement and the level of exploitation that they have experienced, all impact of the degree of damage to the person, the level of intervention required and the completeness of the eventual healing.

In addition to dealing with the physical and mental abuse of sex slavery, some of women who are trafficked into the sex industry will also have been forced into using drugs. After their rescue, they may face the challenge of drug addiction, HIV and/or other serious medical conditions. Women, who have been proactive in achieving their own freedom, for example running away, experience a real sense of satisfaction, which provides a very positive beginning the healing process.

⁵⁰ “Anti-Slavery Australia,” <http://www.antislavery.org.au/resources/fact-sheets/208-fact-sheet-11-what-are-the-key-principles-for-working-with-trafficked-people.html> [accessed 7 August 2012]

A team of professionals and including police, Immigration Department, other government officials, doctors and psychologists are required to support rescued women. The quality of support they offer can either intensify the trauma or contribute to the healing. Some of the difficulties that may compound the suffering include: obtaining Protection Visas, mistrust in the victims story or failure to obtain compensation.

The most effective way to achieve healing is place the rescued woman in a loving and supportive environment. It is important to allow individuals to verbalise their emotions whilst respecting the implications of the trauma that they have experienced. Quality and holistic counseling, sensitivity in working through the women's experiences and re-establishing trust are essential in working towards healing. Some women 'move on' to establish positive relationships and fulfilling lives, despite hurtful memories. Other survivors will experience financial and emotional hardships, some will return to the sex industry in order to earn a living, still others retrain in search of different employment opportunities.

During my research for this paper one of the most compelling quotes that I read is the following statement from two women who had been held captive in a situation of domestic servitude. They had been kept in slave-like condition in an Australian Consulate. After being rescued, "the young women have expressed surprise that Australians are concerned that they are the victims of a crime; their case worker suggests that this affirmation of the young women's rights has been a significant milestone in their

healing journey.”⁵¹ Again, I am astounded that any person could treat these young women in this inhumane manner and no less confounded that these women would be surprised by the compassion of their rescuers. Hopefully their process of rehabilitation will demonstrate to them that there are many good people who are concerned for the welfare of others.

The deepest human desires are for life, dignity, freedom, relationships and fulfillment. Freedom enables a person to “reach beyond themselves” embracing others through love.⁵² These are the basic tenants of Christian Anthropology. The human person is created as communal being, for relationship with other people and with God. The greatest human desire and freedom lies in people’s capacity for God, for God alone is life and unsurpassable fullness.”⁵³ Christian Pastoral Care aims to fulfill these outcomes achieving holistic wellbeing for those it serves.

Christian Pastoral Care is designed to communicate the compassion and care of a creative and sustaining God. It is concerned with the growth and development of human potential, health, well-being and human good.⁵⁴ Pastoral care concerns itself with rehabilitation and transformation of individuals, realizing that it is “the redemptive power of God”

⁵¹ Maree Marsh, *Proceeds of Crime Progress Act 2002 Progress Report Two June 2012* (Australia: ACRATH 2012) 7

⁵² Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 31

⁵³ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 32

⁵⁴ Donald Browning, *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling, Vol.,1 of Introduction to Pastoral Counseling* ed. Robert J Wicks, Richard D. Parsons and Donald Capps (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press 1993) 9

working through the counselor that enables the rescued woman to begin the healing process.⁵⁵ In the extraordinary moments of interpersonal connection where a Christian accompanier or a counselor recognizes their role in the emotional healing process they have experienced the grace of God.⁵⁶

In Jesus crucifixion, we see human suffering at its worst and in contrast, the resurrection displays the omnipotence of God who is able to transform the darkest moment into renewed hope for humanity. For Christians human suffering such as that experienced by women sold into sex slavery can be seen in the light of Jesus' Crucifixion. Suffering then can find its fullest meaning and value in the new life God creates through resurrection.⁵⁷ God who is able to resurrect Jesus and heal, as revealed in numerous gospel accounts, is mediated through the accompaniment and counseling of ACRATH members who, open to God are able to pass on the love of the divine that brings humanity to fulfillment.⁵⁸ Within the context of ordinary everyday life it is possible to discover the depth of the Divine and the unique capacity of transcendent persons to develop the liberating relationships desired by God⁵⁹, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

People naturally feel the desire to love others genuinely because the vocation to love is planted within the human heart and mind by God. Through the life of Jesus Christ,

⁵⁵ Browning, *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling*, 9-12

⁵⁶ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 73

⁵⁷ L. Rulla, *Anthropology of the Christian Vocation*. Vol. I (Rome: Gregorian University Press. 1986) 61

⁵⁸ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 57

⁵⁹ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 57

humanity sees the potential for loving relationships, which fulfill God's ultimate dream for humanity.⁶⁰ One of the distinct features of the human person is the ability to delight in, appreciate and care for other creatures including people.⁶¹ Naturally this translates into the desire to alleviate the suffering of others and become a means of healing to the victims of Human Trafficking.

My involvement in this issue to date has been in the educational setting. As Director of Faith and Religious Education at Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) College, Benalla, I have been able to harness my passion for raising awareness regarding Human Trafficking. I have included this issue in the Year Twelve, Religion and Society Ethics, Curriculum, where students study Human Trafficking as a contemporary ethical issue in stark contrast to Christian beliefs concerning the nature of human life and relationships. In the Years Seven and Nine I have included Seminar days where respect for others, particularly in the areas of gender and sexuality is the key focus. I have mentored the teachers who were directly involved but have not spoken formally on this topic before my presentation at Catholic Theological College, August 2012. I have however, shared my concerns regarding human trafficking in Australia, with my family and friends.

The importance of education cannot be overestimated. As an educator in a Catholic secondary school, my role in raising the students' awareness of human trafficking within Australia is significant. Students who are outraged by the injustices they study will share

⁶⁰ Benedict XVI, "Caritas in Veritate," Encyclical Letter (2009) n.1

⁶¹ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 209

their knowledge with their family and friends. Greater community awareness, in general, will promote the identification of illegal situations and therefore the possibility of prosecuting traffickers. Education regarding the dignity of human life, empathy with the other and understanding human connectedness has the potential to change community perceptions. A woman trafficked into prostitution is a person who experiences suffering in the same manner as any other person does. She is someone's daughter or sister.⁶² Ultimately the goal of both education and advocacy is, I believe, to eliminate the demand for paid sex as trafficking arises from a sense of financial greed, power and a corruption. Education also plays an imperative role in increasing empathy towards victims of trafficking.

When society is in decline the true strength and values of people often play a redemptive role restoring the injustice through self-sacrificing love.⁶³ A Christian group such as ACRATH, takes this initiative making a significant difference in the lives of women rescued from trafficking. In his first Encyclical Letter, "God is love" Benedict XVI writes: "everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it. Love is God's greatest gift to humanity, it is his promise and our hope."⁶⁴ I would like to conclude by endorsing these remarks with respect to human trafficking. The intervention and healing work done by ACRATH, as I explained earlier, has its origin in God's love. The future of trafficked women and the degree to which they

⁶² "ACRATH Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans."

⁶³ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), 55

⁶⁴ Benedict XVI, "Caritas in Veritate," Encyclical Letter (2009) n.1

will be healed is I believe, largely dependent on the quality of the intervening counseling and accompaniment that they receive. The greatest gift they receive is the affirmation and love of those supporting them and is certainly their hope for the future.

When confronted with abuse of human dignity, which I have described above one can choose to ignore the issue, to be informed and support others in their address of this grave injustice or to become personally involved. I have chosen later option because incensed by this wrong I can play my part reducing the future impact through education. Education has the potential to achieve a ripple effect within the community where once informed, a person will go on to inform others. ACRATH has chosen advocacy, awareness raising, accompaniment and counseling. When Christians work together to overcome violations of Christian anthropology they begin to reflect the image of the Trinitarian God who is a community of love.⁶⁵ Christians are called to a discipleship in concrete dimensions⁶⁶ through practical and spiritual ways and by opening themselves in love⁶⁷ to the oppressed and abused. Relationships of selfless, genuine love are the only solution to injustice in the world because it is God's way. God is love. (1Jn 4:8)

⁶⁵ John Paul II "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church" (2004) 111a #34

⁶⁶ Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity Basic Christian Anthropology*, 105

⁶⁷ Rulla, *Anthropology of the Christian Vocation*, 35

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Interviews

Dr. Maree Marsh ACRATH Psychologist (see Appendix)

Dr. Therese Power R.S.M. ACRATH Accompanier

APPENDIX

Interview with: **Dr. Maree Marsh ACRATH Psychologist**

Jane: *Do you believe that mental (emotional) healing is possible for women who have been rescued from trafficking into Sex Slavery? What are the most significant obstacles to their healing?*

Maree:

I would always say that emotional healing is possible. I have seen incredible resilience and courage in some of the young women and men I have met. However, for many of the survivors it is a very challenging journey. A few survivors manage to get on with life and live full productive lives in good relationships, albeit knowing that there is painful part of their life that will always be with them. Others struggle financially and emotionally. Some continue in sex work as this is the only occupation they know - and it pays quite well. Others re-train but know they carry a vulnerability that every now and again shows itself.

There are many variables in the healing process. Some of these variables are obstacles to their healing.

These include factors in the individual's emotional makeup and personal resiliency. Childhood experiences including poverty, level of deprivation, parental support, family security/safety and alternative job opportunities are variables in the healing process. If childhood has been very challenging the healing is compounded as the individual faces healing from childhood experiences as well as sex slavery.

Factors surrounding the original drawing into sex slavery are another variable. Some of these factors include the level of deception: whether the individual was tricked into believing the job was to be a kitchen-hand, waitress, nanny etc or whether the individuals knew they would be working in the sex industry.

Others variables relate to the living conditions of their slavery and/or whether drug taking was an enforced practice in their captivity. For those who have been forced into drugs the journey towards healing is much more difficult. Not only do the survivors have the challenge of managing the addiction they may have HIV and/or other life threatening illnesses. Healing may also depend on the length of time the individual was in sexual slavery. However, this is not always the case as some individuals who spent one or two months in sexual slavery can be as deeply traumatised as those who spent one or two years.

Other variables relate to the level of personal agency in leaving the slave-like conditions. For individuals who, despite great danger, take the opportunity to run away, there is a

feeling of great pride in freeing themselves from their captivity. This type of agency provides a platform for support people to build upon and can assist in the healing process.

Another factor is the quality of support the individuals receive, whether the support is from those in the immediate environment, the police, Immigration, other government departments or from doctors/psychologists etc. Sometimes agencies that are meant to provide support can be experienced as secondary trauma especially if it is a difficult journey towards a Protection Visa. Not having the story believed or being unable to access government supports or compensation can severely inhibit healing.

Jane: *What have you found to be the most effective ways to achieve healing?*

Maree:

Personal support from those immediately around the survivors of trafficking is the single most important ingredient in recovery. This environment needs to be loving and supportive, allowing for opportunities to express all kinds of feelings, without minimising the experience of trauma.

Second to this is quality counselling which can address whole of life issues including the obstacles to healing. Quality support which involves a gentle processing of the trauma, helping the individual to learn how to express the range of emotions - and legitimising them - and rebuilding trust in people are all integral to the healing processes.

Just as each person's story is different, each person is different and the pastoral/psychological support has to be "tailor-made" to suit the individual.