

**ORPHAN-CAUSING ISSUE: PEDOPHILIA**

Ponder back to some of your favorite childhood activities and imagine having few, if any, fond memories of your childhood. How would your life look different if you never had the chance to run and play, as children should? What if instead of reminiscing about the fun days of hide and seek and playing “house,” all you had were nightmares of abuse and being forced to have sex with men you did not even know?

Tragically that is the reality for hundreds of thousands and even millions of children across the globe. According to World Bank, approximately **1,800,000 children** are involved in prostitution and pornography and 28,000 to 30,000 child prostitutes are under 10 and **half of them are 10-14 years old.**<sup>1</sup> One of these young victims was a girl named Lucilia. Working as a prostitute by age 13, Lucilia’s story is surrounded by horrendous abuses against her that are results of pedophilia being a far more common issue than we would like. Repeatedly raped and abused by her 17 year old brother until she could take it no more, Lucilia ran away from home at age 12. Alone and vulnerable, she was abducted by men who offered to take care of her. But instead of a safe haven, her horror escalated as they used her for sex and found it amusing to make her drink and smoke weed with them. Eventually she was placed in the hospital after the men drugged her. Then Lucilia was returned to her mother whom she only stayed with a few months before her mom beat her. Lucilia left once more, but this time it was for good. The rest of the story continues on this cycle of being subjected to pedophiles and abusive situations. When she finally escapes a life of prostitution she is treated as a criminal. And to the surprise of many, this all happened in suburban communities in the state of New York. This becomes regrettably less surprising, however, when the numbers are put into perspective. Up to **300,000 children in the United States** are at risk for sex trafficking **every year.**<sup>2</sup> But American child sex offenders do not stop at just domestic children.

“... according to the Central Intelligence Agency, more than **10,000 foreign children** are brought here annually as sex slaves or indentured laborers. Whether they work in strip clubs or sweatshops, these boys and girls are victims of human trafficking. A \$9.5 billion-a-year industry, human trafficking is on the rise and has been reported in all 50 states.”<sup>3</sup>

It is astonishing to think that 10,000 children were being brought in from other countries as prostitutes without many taking much notice. Perhaps this is because some of the thousands are disguised under the hoopla of one of the most popular American traditions. Every year during the NFL Super Bowl, the largest operation of bringing these foreign children into the States occurs. The setting of the big Super Bowl game gives it just the right formula to equal such numbers. Not only is it a hot spot for businessmen with cash to burn, but law enforcement officials are too preoccupied with maintaining the order of the masses to notice the horrific pedophilic crimes occurring right under their noses.

Though the presence of pedophilia and the issues it causes are visible in the United States, most tend to associate it more as an international child sex trafficking issue. Sadly, this assumption is all too true. We live in a world in which two children are sold worldwide every minute.<sup>4</sup> This is made possible by pedophiles contributing incredible sums of money to child sex

tourism, making it a booming industry. Without the money, maybe fewer would be willing to subject children to sexual exploitation. An estimated **\$12 billion a year** is made in the global market of child trafficking.<sup>v</sup> Among the countries in which this billion-dollar industry is more prevalent are Brazil, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Thailand. In fact, 2-14% of the gross domestic product of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand derives from sex tourism.<sup>vi</sup> To break down demographics even further, of the 1,800,000 young victims, 750,000 children are in Latin America and Caribbean are involved in prostitution or pornography, 590,000 are in Asia, 420,000 are in developed industrialized economies, and the other 50,000 are in Africa.<sup>vii</sup> The locals in these countries are the majority of customers, however, **25% of child sex tourists are American citizens.**<sup>viii</sup> The convenience of easy travel has not only fueled this modern form of slavery but escalated the number of participants in sex tourism exponentially.

Child victims of pedophilia are not always exploited just physically but are put on display in the form of child pornography. Once again the convenience of modern technology makes this all the more prevalent. The Internet has made accessing child pornography easier than ever before, and other improved technologies such as digital cameras and editing software have made it simple to produce and distribute.<sup>ix</sup> The anonymity associated in viewing child pornography increases motivation for pedophiles who may be ashamed of actually asking for a child prostitute but will view such explicit images on their computer without anyone knowing.

We must not ignore pedophiles, as abandoned and orphaned children are extremely vulnerable to their demented behavior. Their victimization can also lead to early, unplanned pregnancies that are dangerous for young girls to endure and leaving those babies to fend for themselves like their mother was. The overarching issue of pedophilia is only one of the spokes in the cycle of the orphan that needs to be put to a stop.

What does this injustice mean for those who are followers of Jesus Christ? First of all, as it says in Psalm 97:2, "Clouds and thick darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne," Jesus' whole rule is founded on **justice**. Clearly it is something God values, and we are commanded to carry out His justice, "Learn to do right; seek **justice**. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow" (Isaiah 1:17 NIV). By refusing to fight against the injustices of child trafficking we will be ignoring the Lord's plea in Deuteronomy 24:17-18, "Do not deprive the foreigner or the **fatherless of justice**... Remember that you were slaves in Egypt as the Lord redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this." We were all once slaves and must stand up for the young lives inflicted in slavery. The Lord fights such evil by moving in the hearts of His people to have pure hearts of compassion for these children. He reiterates this in James 1:27, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." Let's play our part in pursuing justice to keep the abandoned and orphaned of being polluted by the horrors of sex trafficking.

\*\*\*Short Videos on Child Trafficking:

Watch one child's story who was victimized in Cambodia- <http://vimeo.com/7893904>

Urgency against injustice:

<http://vimeo.com/7868015>

Puts it in perspective:

<http://vimeo.com/11013582>

\*\*\*Documentary about Trafficking in America:

Very Young Girls (2007):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myzVv2rsY-o>

\*\*\*Organizations working against this particular issue:

Traffic Jam- <http://trafficjam.org/>

LOVE146- <http://love146.org/>

As Our Own- <http://asourown.org/>

Traffic 911- <http://www.traffick911.com/page/what-is-human-trafficking>

<sup>i</sup> World Bank.

<http://www.worldbank.org.29> January, 2008.

<sup>ii</sup> "The Issue." Streetlight PHX. 21 Apr. 2011. <http://streetlightphx.com/learn/>.

<sup>iii</sup> Ginty, Molly M. "Protecting the Powerless: Child Trafficking in the United States." NCJW. 21 Apr. 2011. <[http://www.ncjw.org/content\\_236.cfm](http://www.ncjw.org/content_236.cfm)>.

<sup>iv</sup> Love146. <http://love146.org/slavery>. 21 April, 2011.

<sup>v</sup> Stop Child Trafficking Now. [www.sctnow.org](http://www.sctnow.org). 18 April, 2011.

<sup>vi</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/ceos/sextour.html>.

<sup>vii</sup> World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org>. 29 January, 2008.

<sup>viii</sup> World Vision.

[http://www.worldvision.org/get\\_involved.nsf/child/globalissues\\_stp?Open&lid=main.29](http://www.worldvision.org/get_involved.nsf/child/globalissues_stp?Open&lid=main.29) January, 2008.

<sup>ix</sup> Forum on Public Policy. <http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/archivespring08/loftus.pdf>. April 21, 2011.