

**News and Current Events :: Modern Slavery: A Christian Issue****Modern Slavery: A Christian Issue - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/18 15:42**

“Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.” Amos 5:15

This scripture links the restoration and revival of God’s people with obedience in the area of social justice. I wonder - how does that relate with modern day slavery? There are twice as many slaves today as there were in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Today millions of adults and children are being treated as cheap commodities – to work in the production of items which you and I enjoy and take for granted. There are also slaves in our own countries.

Of course we rejoice over those who confronted slavery in the past - like John Newton and Wilberforce. We are also thankful for secular governments and organizations today which attempt to reduce slavery – like rescuing the children in the cocoa plantations in the Ivory Coast. I would like to know more about how modern believers fit in to this picture. Do we have our modern day Wilberforce’s – for whom we can pray and support? This is, after all, one of our Christian duties:

“This is what the LORD Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another.’” Zechariah 7:9

Here are two of many clips that serve to heighten our awareness about modern slavery:

1) Kevin Bales: How to Combat Slavery on TED.com. Very informative! In this brief video Bales explains why slavery proliferates today, and what can be done about it.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUM2rCIUdel>

Slavery in the Chocolate Industry. In this video you see the evidence of disturbing ignorance or denial among those who could be most helpful.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNpwlzeyjKQ&feature=related>

I rephrase Bale’s final statement and apply it to the Christian community: If we have been given glorious freedom in Christ, but cannot use it to help liberate slaves, then ARE WE TRULY FREE?

Diane Eaton

Re: Modern Slavery: A Christian Issue - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/19 7:08

Any modern Christian emancipation stories/missions?

"He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners..." Is. 61:1

Diane

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2012/4/19 10:25

A dear woman at our church, Millie McCarty, heads up an organization called Compassionate Care International, that is engaged in helping former victims of child trafficking to find restoration and wholeness again. She is traveling to Rwanda next week with a team to help establish ministry counseling teams for a precious village that is home to orphans of that countries awful genocide.

Millie is a remarkable spirit filled woman, who shows that vision and compassion never retires, but always inspires.

<http://compassionatecareint.org/>

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/19 13:29

Thank you Mike for posting this link. I am encouraged in seeing this ministry - truly led by God through the life of one who was willing to be used by God. I pray that many victims of slavery will find new hope through Compassionate Care International. And may God raise up more workers. In this field the harvest is plentiful!

Diane

Re: More on modern slavery - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/20 12:58

I found a Christian ministry online that deals with modern slavery: The North American Baptist Woman's Union is addressing human trafficking - the sex trade. <http://www.nabwu.org/Action.html>

I don't know much about this denomination..... But I do know that two dynamic Spirit-filled Christian women are coming as speakers at an event in my area. (I'm preparing an announcement for Sunday in church) They are aboriginal women who were once sex slaves. One of them was bought and sold in brothels all over Canada from the time she was 12. She was on a one way path to self-destruction, incarceration, and eventually her own death.

BUT GOD (!).....

I will provide some testimonial content later.

For now, here's a brief online excerpt on the issue of sex trafficking:

It happens to thousands daily — women and young girls are kidnapped, sold, or lured by traffickers who prey on their dreams of employment abroad for positions such as nannies, models and actresses. They're then exported to Europe, the Middle East, the U.S. and elsewhere, where they're sold to (...)

This has become the fastest growing form of organized crime in Eastern Europe, with Moldova and Ukraine widely seen as the centers of the global trade in women and girls.

May God show us how he is setting these captives free (many of them hidden away in our own nations). May God empower the modern church to be partners in God's operation-liberation.

Diane

Re: Project Hannah - Trans World Radio - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/21 6:22

<http://www.projecthannah.org/about/>

Here is a site that describes an exciting gospel ministry to women entrapped in slavish conditions around the world. It is an arm of Trans World Radio. <http://www.twr.org/>

I include that link too – for your blessing. This is an outstanding website in many ways – and if you are a technically minded, you can see the evidence of highly skilled and creative mission workers. On one of the pages you can even watch the world population figures as they change by the second.

Be blessed!

I paste here the home page information for Project Hannah.

Around the world, women are hiding. Some hide behind veils so thick that not even their eyes are visible. Others are hiding in their homes, afraid to come out for fear of being raped or killed in time of war, or disfigured just because they dare to go to school. Hundreds of women have been burned alive by their own relatives in the name of “family honor.” Still others hide inside themselves, beaten down by daily abuse and neglect which hollows out the joy in their eyes, leaving only a sense of duty to keep them alive.

Project Hannah’s founder, Marli Spieker, saw an Asian woman one day, covered head to toe in a black veil as she walked through 100-degree heat. Anger welled up in Marli and she felt God telling her: “Do you see that black veil? It is not only over her head. It is over her mind, her heart, her family, her spirit, her whole life! This woman lives in darkness.” Marli responded, “Whatever I can do, I will do, to bring her to the light!”

But how can the light reach a woman who is hidden away, too isolated by culture, religion or fear to come in contact with the believers who can help change her life forever?

Where circumstances create walls, Trans World Radio is breaking through in the form of Project Hannah (PH) and the Women of Hope radio program. Every day, listeners are learning about the God David writes of in the Psalms: “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Ps. 34:17-18).

Project Hannah seeks to meet the needs of the whole woman, providing practical advice, spiritual guidance and an international prayer movement.

God expresses in His Word the great love He has for the widows, orphans and oppressed in the world. He calls each one of us to provide these precious ones with the opportunity to hear the Word of God through the voice of love. We are His vessels to carry healing to the brokenhearted.

Mission Statement

Project Hannah is a ministry of TWR, offering compassion, encouragement and hope to suffering women worldwide through prayer, awareness and radio programming.

Project Hannah’s purpose is:

• to raise awareness and empathy for the plight of women worldwide.

• to pray for women who are being abused emotionally, physically or spiritually.

• to broadcast the gospel of Jesus Christ to women around the world, encouraging them to:

1. experience God’s love, freedom and power as they face life’s daily challenges.
 2. embrace their God-given destiny and glorious inheritance in Christ Jesus, whatever their cultural, social or economic situation.
 3. pass on to their children a legacy of faith, wisdom and godly character.
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Re: - posted by deltadom (), on: 2012/4/21 8:05

I have no problem with the slavery issue as I am thoroughly against it as we in the UK have people like Steve Chalke and Beth Redman and others proclaiming that it should stop

I think it is abhorrent but my problem is that they do not link it to say Islam which wholeheartedly believes in slavery and then at protesting or singing songs about it can stop it to some degree I have no problem with that but when it gets higher than the Gospel.

As it was the gospel being proclaimed, I can say that about any issue if it gets above Christ.

We are fighting an issue that the power of the gospel can only stop,
As why should Slavery be wrong if you are an Atheist or a Hindu or a Muslim, in the quran it says that slavery is fine and Mohammed actually thought there was nothing wrong with it.

I am for Christians fighting say abortion and even slavery, poverty even Christians in politics but that does not denigrate from the fact that should not us stop from proclaiming the Gospel and getting on our knees in prayer

If we take for example the Slaves in Sudan it is because of their Islamic background and that having Christian slaves.

One Issue that I despise is that people use issues such as Slavery when they may be teaching heresy and the issue is raised above Jesus as Christ will not give his glory to another

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/21 8:21

Quote:

----- One Issue that I despise is that people use issues such as Slavery when they may be teaching heresy

Deltadom, I understand. This is also true for environmentalism. A problem is created and exaggerated in order to provide a platform for a political agenda. Likewise campaigns to raise slavery-awareness can be merely money raisers with little actually being done to benefit the slaves. Do you think this may be true in the links I provided in the first post here? It would mean a lot to me if you watched them and gave your thoughts on them per se. And, you may also have some other helpful suggestions - connections, etc.

Diane

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/4/21 10:21

Hi Diane,

Thank you for bringing up an interesting topic.

Deltadom says:

Quote:
-----We are fighting an issue that the power of the gospel can only stop,
As why should Slavery be wrong if you are an Atheist or a Hindu or a Muslim, in the quran it says that slavery is fine and Mohammed actually thought there was nothing wrong with it.

What do you (anyone) say to Muslims, Atheists and Hindus that point to our Bible and say Yahweh promoted slavery in the OT and in the NT, Jesus and the Apostles did not preach against it?

Lev 25:44 Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

1Tim 6:1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and doctrine be not blasphemed.

Eph 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Eph 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Eph 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

Eph 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether bond or free.

Eph 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

It would be helpful to know how you answer these.

I abhor slavery, too, but slavery was very prevalent in Paul's day and I think Paul did not want to be seen as instigating rebellion against men's laws. I think he was demonstrating that though we may be in bondage to men in the flesh, we can be free in the Spirit. People today like to use Jesus as their example of Pacifism (Jesus was no Pacifist) and that you can rebel "peacefully" against man's laws, refusing to work, protesting, sit-ins, etc. But Jesus and the Apostles never demonstrated Pacifism.

In many ways we are all slaves to our governments because they tax the fruit of our labors and let us keep enough so that we can stay alive and keep working for them. Reminds me of Pharaoh and the Hebrew children.

What do you think?

Pilgrim

Re: - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2012/4/21 13:44

It seems to me that Paul decided to work from the inside out rather than to try and fight a huge operation (The Roman empire soon had more slaves than free men). In other words, be a true Christian whether you are a slave or not. He did call slavery a work of the flesh (see 1 Tim. 1:10). KJV calls this "manstealers" which is from a Greek word meaning to enslave. It is wrong. Where man intends it for evil, God can turn it into good, as in the case of Joseph. In Philemon he admonished him to treat his Christian slave as a brother, not as a slave. He told Onesimus to return to Philemon and exhibit Christ to him.

Though slavery is a moral evil, Christians are to try and reach each one for Him. K.P. Yohannon has a good article about human slavery

<http://www.gfa.org/news/articles/dalit-liberation-the-true-answer/>

Here's another good link on modern slavery:

<http://www.freedomcenter.org/slavery-today/>

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/4/21 13:57

That's good, JB. That's kind of the angle I come from too.

Preaching the Gospel changes men's hearts which in turn changes some aspects of society. Since men make up society, their hearts must change first. However, many are in positions of influence and power (Esther) where they can effect certain kinds of change through decree.

Pilgrim

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/22 16:50

Thank you all for sharing your good thoughts. We can see that the issue of slavery has many dimensions.

Quote:
----- What do you (anyone) say to Muslims, Atheists and Hindus that point to our Bible and say Yahweh promoted slavery in the OT and in the NT, Jesus and the Apostles did not preach against it?

A fair question. Of course, in such a situation the burden of proof is not on me. I would shift the gears and draw attention to biblical focus of responsibility towards one another. It's not merely a matter of established social order, but of treatment towards others, and responsibility to their well being, as required by God. That's a high calling – established in both testaments. Also, it might be appropriate to draw attention to another kind of slavery: the slavery of sin, and the need for freedom in Christ. After all, it is only in Christ where one finds empowerment to treat others with care – regardless of the social order. A true Christ follower is careful not to dominate, exploit, or misuse their advantaged power.

Here I agree with Yohannan: Apart from Christ centeredness in our mission, we will never truly set slaves free. Still I think that we should guard our cynicisms against secularists - pagans or whatever, who show evidence of compassion and are truly making a difference. There is always the possibility that these "Good Samaritans" have a more acute sense of responsibility to the afflicted than the people of God have. And to be honest, if my child was trapped in slavery, I would be grateful for any of these to liberate to him.

How do we approach the problem of slavery? I think that is an issue for us all. We can't fix it. But there is always the danger of keeping our conscience at distance through such strategies as theological/theoretical debate on the matter, focusing on logistics or criticizing the false motives of those involved. There is the danger of objectifying the slaves, like viewing them more as statistics than real people who are suffering. On the other hand, there are always those charities which exploit our compassion to make money for themselves. We don't want to get used – so there is the temptation to shield ourselves.

As I listen to the real stories, and see how slavery happens, I also see how the gospel in any society is so crucial. If people trust God for their needs, they will be able to resist the lure for false promises of income.

The Hannah Project, which I posted earlier is a good example of grass roots empathy that truly makes a difference. And it is Christ-centered. By equipping and teaching through their radio programming, this mission work helps oppressed women rise above their former predisposition to exploitation and slavery. Here is a worthy ministry to donate to, I believe.

Meanwhile.... I do like my chocolate. Should I stop eating it because I know that child slaves are used in the chocolate industry?

Diane

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2012/4/22 22:11

Hello Deltadom,

Quote:
----- What do you (anyone) say to Muslims, Atheists and Hindus that point to our Bible and say Yahweh promoted slavery in the OT and in the NT, Jesus and the Apostles did not preach against it?

God never once promoted, nor even permitted the kidnapping, wrongful imprisonment, molestation, physical and emotional abuse, and forced drug addictions that constitute the dehumanizing sexual slave trade thriving in many parts of the modern world. In fact, God has always condemned these things without equivocation.

Consider these verses.

Exodus 21:16 Anyone who kidnaps someone is to be put to death, whether the victim has been sold or is still in the kidnapper's possession.

Deuteronomy 23:15-18 If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand him over to his master. Let him live among you wherever he likes and in whatever town he chooses. Do not oppress him. No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the Lord your God to pay any vow, because the Lord your God detests them both.

Furthermore, even within the primitive context of ancient mid-east warfare, sexual objectification of women or sexual slavery was not permitted by God whatsoever.

Deuteronomy 21:10-14 When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife. If you are not pleased with her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

I hope this is helpful to your question.

MC

Re: - posted by JB1968 (), on: 2012/4/22 22:25

Good post. God does not approve of slavery. Some of the slavery in the OT was those who could not pay their bills and would work off the debt. Regardless, God still expected high standards from masters to their servants. Slavery is evil, and no people can survive with its practice. Thankfully England outlawed it. The US went to war to end its awful practice.

Re: More Bible texts related to slavery - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/23 6:58

The Bible also teaches that ill treatment of others is symptomatic of hardened hearts and rebellion against God. So any one who uses scripture to justify slavery, would need to abide by the full counsel of God, or else their justification is merely cause for divine judgment – NOT divine approval. After all, using scripture as an authority and then defying it is a cause for divine judgment.

If I understand correctly, the radical Muslim has far less respect for our wishywashy form of Christianity than for a serious stand of our faith – even if he resists it. From that perspective, the following passages will surely bear down on his conscience:

Woe to those who make unjust laws,
to those who issue oppressive decrees,
to deprive the poor of their rights
and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people,
making widows their prey
and robbing the fatherless.
What will you do on the day of reckoning,
when disaster comes from afar?
To whom will you run for help?
Where will you leave your riches?
Isaiah 10:1-3

See how each of the princes of Israel who are in you uses his power to shed blood. In you they have treated father and mother with contempt; in you they have oppressed the foreigner and mistreated the fatherless and the widow. You have despised my holy things and desecrated my Sabbaths. Ezekiel 22:6-8
They trample on the heads of the poor as on the dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed. Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name. Amos 2:7

Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue. Daniel 4:27

And if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. Isaiah 58:10

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Isaiah 58:6

Defend the weak and the fatherless;
uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Psalm 82:3

I am wondering: From God's perspective, how faithful is the Christian community in this calling? Where do I/we fit in here? We surely have some role to play in modern slavery.... lest our fastings, prayers, and tears for revival be fruitless.

Diane

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2012/4/24 4:59

Thank you for your responses. I raised this topic as a way of soliciting your thoughts.

I have some upcoming public duties that relate. One of them is the National Day of Mourning for workers killed, disabled, injured or made unwell by their work. As a speaker, I represent the moral voice.

This event is now recognized worldwide on Apr. 28 each year. But slavery happens to be a "workplace" too. While it is vital to uphold the moral obligation to protect our own workplaces, we must also recognize this as a privilege which millions around the world will never know. That calls for gratitude.

There is also the moral issue of greed which will always threaten the welfare of workers - not only those near, but also those far away. (Our own life style is going to affect a lot of other people.)

"Godliness with contentment is great gain" - on many levels.

Diane