

Film Challenges Christians to Combat Human Trafficking

When spoiled, self-centered Caden throws a dart at the wall to choose his next vacation, the dart lands on a city that's about to rock his sheltered world: Hyderabad, India.

In the movie *Not Today* and in real life, Hyderabad is a stunningly beautiful city with an ugly underground world where children are bought and sold like animals.

Caden, played by Cody Longo, is a 20-year-old American who collides with India's sex trafficking industry. He repeatedly ignores a starving father and daughter who are Dalits, or outcasts, in the Indian culture.

Yet, his heart sinks when he realizes the father has unknowingly sold his 9-year-old girl into slavery after sex traffickers convinced him they would give her an education and a better life. The rest of the movie follows Caden's race through gritty, dangerous slums of India to rescue the girl from a brutal life of forced prostitution.

'Like Drinking from a Fire Hose'

Not Today is a feature-length film produced by Friends Church of Yorba Linda in Orange County, California. The goal of the movie is to get Americans, particularly Christians, to see what's happening in India and around the world and then do something about it.

Movie producer and pastor Brent Martz says his eyes were opened in 2007 when he visited India for the first time.

"I was totally unprepared for the fact that God was going to completely change not only the life of our church, but my life as well," said Martz.

Like most Americans, he had never heard about the Dalits, the most trafficked people group in the world.

“They’re the outcasts,” said Martz. “They’re raised to believe they’re worthless.”

Martz says learning about the Dalits and the magnitude of the human trafficking industry in India was “like drinking from a fire hose.” He was overwhelmed.

It’s estimated that 90 percent of India’s human trafficking victims are Dalit, which means “broken” or “crushed.” Even though India’s ancient Hindu-sanctioned caste system is officially illegal, harsh discrimination against the Dalits is proof that the caste mindset is still alive.

Wanting to help the Dalits and take a bite out of the trafficking industry, Friends Church teamed up with the Dalit Freedom Network to build hundreds of schools for Dalit children. The schools not only help protect children from the sex trade. They teach them that they are not worthless, but created in the image of God and precious to Jesus.

Proceeds from the movie will go towards building more schools in India to raise up the Dalit people and, consequently, help stop trafficking before it starts.

The Light of the World

In their commitment to be a light in the darkest parts of India, the people of Friends Church share a common goal with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

In November 2011, at the invitation of 1,800 Indian churches, Franklin Graham held a Festival in Hyderabad that drew nearly 300,000 people to hear the Gospel. Several key players who helped bring the message of Christ to Hyderabad in 2011 are also frontrunners in seeking to abolish slavery in India.

Martz believes the Church should lead the way when it comes to

ending the horrors of human trafficking.

"I have high hopes that the Church is going to stand up and respond," said Martz. "Jesus was about justice. If we don't get involved, we will miss an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus."

'What Love Can Do'

When *Not Today* producers approached Grammy-nominated Christian recording artist Kari Jobe about singing a song for the movie's soundtrack, she jumped at the opportunity.

Jobe has been involved in the fight against human trafficking for six years, since she first heard about the crisis.

"I was baffled," said Jobe. "I thought, 'What? That's happening right now?'"

She immediately got involved with the A21 Campaign, a nonprofit organization dedicated to abolishing slavery. Through her travels with A21, Jobe has seen the dark world of human trafficking up close. On a trip to Greece, she toured a red light district that's known for its exploitation of underage girls.

"I was just sick to my stomach," said Jobe. "We had seen probably 100 brothels within about five minutes, and you're just thinking, 'There are girls on the other side of those walls that need to be rescued.' It just makes it more real to see it with your own eyes."

While Jobe witnessed what she called "horrible darkness," she also saw a glimmer of light.

"We went to the safe house the next day and met some of the girls that have been rescued," said Jobe. "They're just so grateful."

In the safe houses, trafficking survivors learn who God says they are—beautiful, precious daughters who can find true love

through a supernatural relationship with Jesus.

In the song, *What Love Can Do*, Jobe sings of that redemptive love and calls believers to action.

"It's a perfect song for this kind of movement," said Jobe. "We're doing this in tandem with the heart of God."

'Now You Know'

As *Not Today* opens in 20 U.S. cities, the cast and crew pray the story of Caden, and his mission to save one little girl, will inspire a nation to rescue millions of real-life trafficking victims.

"Everyone can do something," said Martz. "No matter who you are, where you are, or what your resources are, you can do something."

By raising awareness of human trafficking, the people behind the movie hope to not only snatch children out of the hands of evil in this world, but also in the next.

"We know ultimate freedom comes from Jesus Christ," said Martz.

He hopes the Church will continue to lead the way to freedom in India and around the world.

"Now you know," said Martz. "And once you know, you're responsible."

Not Today opens April 12 in the following markets:

Los Angeles (Orange County), Calif.

Houston, Texas

San Diego, Calif.

Dallas, Texas

San Jose, Calif.

San Francisco, Calif.

Columbus, Ohio
Seattle, Wash.
Denver (Littleton), Colo.
Washington, D.C.
Nashville, Tenn.
Portland, Ore.
Sacramento, Calif.
Virginia Beach, Va.
Atlanta, Ga.
Colorado Springs, Colo.
Orlando, Fla.
Akron, Ohio
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
West Palm Beach/Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

To learn more about *Not Today* and the fight against human trafficking, visit .

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