

How Do We Put an End to Sex Trafficking Once and for All?

In the aftermath of the Super Bowl, authorities announced that they rescued 16 minors in the New York City area from sex traffickers. In addition, more than 50 women who were also coerced to work as prostitutes were saved. Police from more than 50 law enforcement agencies spanning New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Connecticut arrested 45 pimps in a two-week run up to the Super Bowl.

Before the Super Bowl, *The New York Times* reported that the NYPD had already made 298 prostitution-related arrests this year through Jan. 26, a 30 percent increase over the same period in 2013. CNN also reported on a New York City high-end drug and prostitution bust last week.

U.S. Rep. Christopher Smith, R-N.J., has cited numbers from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that 10,000 women and girls were trafficked to Miami for the 2010 Super Bowl. The New Jersey attorney general's office ramped up for this year's Super Bowl by setting up a sex-trafficking task force. Months of investigative work and training of law enforcement personnel, hospitality workers and airport employees paid off in the recent rescues.

Time reported that to date, the FBI and its partners have recovered more than 3,100 children and have convicted 1,400 pimps.

While the issue of sex trafficking gets much more visibility around a major sporting event like the Super Bowl, we must be aware that it is an ongoing problem that scars thousands of lives every day.

U.S. Rep. David Reichert, R-Wash., said in a hearing last week, "The prevalence of this problem at the Super Bowl allows

us to focus national attention on it. But it is a problem seven days a week, 52 weeks a year for the children who are caught up in it. We owe it to them to develop real solutions.”

If we are to develop real solutions, we must know what we are up against. Here are some facts compiled by the Covering House about sex trafficking:

- Human trafficking generates \$9.5 billion yearly in the United States (United Nations).
- Approximately 300,000 children are at risk of being prostituted in the United States (U.S. Department of Justice).
- The average age of entry into prostitution for a child victim in the United States is 13-14 years old (U.S. Department of Justice).
- A pimp can make \$150,000-\$200,000 per child each year, and the average pimp has four to six girls (U.S. Justice Department, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children).
- The average victim may be forced to have sex up to 20-48 times a day (Polaris Project).
- One in three teens on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home (National Runaway Hotline).

Sex trafficking will not be eliminated until the demand is eliminated. The demand will not be eliminated until the roots of disordered sexual desire are eliminated. One of the biggest causes of disordered sexual desire is porn viewing and porn addiction.

A documentary on sex trafficking, *Rape for Profit*, sent the message home: “Prostitution is the main act, and porn for these men is the dress rehearsal. They see it and then they go and act it out. ... When a society is demanding more porn, it’s demanding more prostituted women.”

A number of studies show the link between sex trafficking and pornography. Here are some of the findings:

- From a 2008 study: “Those who were the most frequent users of pornography were also the most frequent users of women in prostitution.”
- From a 2005 journal: “Repeat users reported greater participation in all aspects of the sex industry than did non-customers. They were much more likely to report having purchased sexually explicit magazines or videos, and they were more than twice as likely to have visited nude establishments.”
- From a 2001 “Sex Trafficking of Women in the United States” study: “Fifty percent of the international women stated that pornography had been used to ‘educate’ them into prostitution. One international woman stated that her pimp made her watch pornography in the beginning. Another reported that she had to watch pornography, because ‘my clients asked me to do as they did it on the screen.’”

An all-male led film documentary called *Hearts of Men* seeks to address the root of the problem. One of the men who speaks in the film admits, “We’re the root of this, and if we’re the root of this, we have to figure out what has to change. It has to start with us.”

Another man states, “One of the best things we can do for women is to get the hearts of men healthy. ... The way that we stop sex trafficking is by disciplining middle school boys. I mean, really, if you think about it, the average age of exposure to pornography is 8. If we get the guys, if we get the girls at a young age and we invest in them, we can see systemic change.”

This modern-day slavery has an even deeper slavery: an enslavement and addiction to sexual sin. Pornography enslaves men physically and psychologically, and this enslaves women

and children literally via sex trafficking. Pornography is the gateway to sex trafficking. Men create the demand; women and children are the supply. If we transform the demand side, the supply side will also cease.

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