

Spirit-Led Christians Rise Up to Combat Human Trafficking

Violence, lies and threats are the tactics used to facilitate the sexual exploitation of persons in every state in America. But there is good news. The Holy Spirit is leading Christians to rise up and meet the needs of victims taken captive in the sex trafficking trade.

The Samaritan Women, a nonprofit organization based in Baltimore, Maryland, is a pioneer in this work, helping victimized young women escape the clutches of their predators and go on to lead a life that affirms their value as human beings created by God.

Jeanne Allert, founder of The Samaritan Women, has found a bright spot in the dark world of human trafficking.

“We live in this very very dark world, but we also live in a constant state of encouragement because what we are seeing across the United States is the incredible uprising of the church, which is nothing short of exciting and necessary,” Allert says. “We see across the country that it is the faithful who are primarily leading the efforts in community awareness, and who are beginning to look at the connections with other social problems, for example, where we are with foster care, where we are with runaway youth, where we are with abuse in the home and childhood sexual abuse, and the interconnectedness of all those conditions. We’re seeing that the church is really in the forefront of ministering to those who have been victimized.”

Allert notes that “about 85% of the shelters that currently exist in America that are serving this population are being established and run by people of the Christian faith. So we are definitely forerunners in this work.”

But there's one thing Allert wants to make very clear, and that is the fact that there is much more work to be done.

"The field is ripe for harvest, and the workers are few, and we hope to inspire people who feel called to step into this kind of darkness to be ministers to those who need healing. Now is our our time," she says.

In confronting this societal scourge, The Samaritan Women has found greed to be what's really feeding industry-insatiable appetites.

"To a large degree, I think the sin of greed and the sin of gratification create this cultural presumption that that we can buy anything we want—and that includes sex from a child or anybody. Sin is at the root of all of this, and it's a pretty dark root to address," says Calvin Fanning, director of Shelter Mentoring at The Samaritan Women's Institute for Shelter Care. "But that's what we as the church are called to do, to point out the truth of the situation, and the truth is that it's driven by greed."

It seems the church, in large part, will be the solution to this victimization. With fewer than 200 shelters nationwide and less than 1,500 beds providing specialized care and necessary housing for this population, The Samaritan Women is calling on the church to fill in the gaps and meet the needs of trafficking survivors.

"We truly think that it's the call of the church to make those services available and to offer that compassionate, qualified care," Fanning says.

Allert points to abuse early on in a child's life that lays the groundwork for becoming a victim of trafficking.

"Survivors come to us with a lifetime of wounding," she says. "The number one shared characteristic of sex trafficking victims is that they have also suffered childhood sexual

abuse.”

Trafficking victims not only suffer in body, but in mind and heart as well.

“It is in many tragic ways a reenactment of those early traumas,” Allert says. “That’s why dealing with this population can be really complex.”

But hard doesn’t mean impossible. And we as Christians know that with God all things are possible. Through programs like The Samaritan Women, victims are finding their way out of victimhood and learning that they, too, have value and worth beyond their bodies.

Listen to this interview with The Samaritan Women founder Jeanne Allert to learn how to spot the signs of a person who is vulnerable to human trafficking. [Go to](#) to learn more about the work of The Samaritan Women.