

The Wicked Connection Between Human Trafficking and Abortions

Abortion and human trafficking are evils every thoughtful Christian should oppose. Virtually all evangelicals would agree with that statement.

What is not always considered, however, is the troubling relationship between these things and how they build upon one another in a growing cascade of moral horror.

A 2011 report notes that, “**Abortion** is often used as a tool by sexual predators and human traffickers.” NBC News tells the harrowing story of “Consuelo Carreto Valencia, a 4-foot-10, 61-year-old grandmother” who lived in New York. In July 2008, she pled “to smuggling dozens of women from Mexico and violently coercing them to perform sex acts.”

Obviously, this wrongdoing is sufficiently disgusting in itself. But the story doesn’t stop there: “Prosecutors said that Valencia was the matriarch of an extensive prostitution ring based in Mexico. The victims were compelled to perform sex acts 12 hours a day and were subjected to beatings, rape and forced abortions, they said.”

Multiply this out thousands of times, and you’ll have a sense of the grim reality faced daily by coerced “sex workers” throughout the country. Estimates vary; Shared Hope International estimates that minimally, “100,000 American children are being exploited through pornography or prostitution every year.” A leading anti-trafficking initiative, the Polaris Project, received nearly 20,000 calls in 2011 alone.

Where do they work? In brothels, on the street, at truck

stops, massage parlors, strip clubs, in pornographic films, bars—anywhere a vulnerable young woman can be preyed upon.

There is no question that abortion is common among women who are bought and sold like chattel for sexual purposes. **Planned Parenthood** Federation of America, the nation's largest abortion provider, has shown a willingness to aid and abet in this deviant, abusive enterprise. After viewing LiveAction's undercover filming of underage abortion at PPFA clinics, Dottie Laster, an expert on child trafficking, wrote:

"After viewing the Planned Parenthood video my first thoughts were of the victims I have served over the last eight years. Specifically the women and girls—their horrendous statements of rape, gang rapes, torture, branding, starvation, extortions, assault and their reports of repeated forced abortions and miscarriages due to the trauma they received. I have often wondered where these multiple abortions took place and how medical professionals had not seen the extensive trauma to their bodies, spirits and souls."

The **Obama administration** has done some good work in stopping trafficking. Late last month, the FBI rescued more than 100 teens (the youngest is 13) and arrested 159 traffickers and "pimps" in a nationwide sting operation. Yet in 2011, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' extensive outreach to sexually trafficked women and girls was denied continued federal support by the Obama Department of Health and Human Services. Why? "The USCCB lost funding for its refusal to provide abortions, sterilizations and artificial birth control in their anti-trafficking programs, as these services are all immoral, according to Catholic teaching."

This is disgraceful. Steve Wagner, who directed HHS's Human Trafficking Program from 2003-2006 and led the USCCB's initial program for sexually trafficked persons, observes:

"If someone is being trafficked—which is to say, under the

domination of a pimp/trafficker—she is by definition unable to provide informed consent to an abortion or to a regime of contraception. The victim has no voice in this decision. Indeed, providing such services to a victim of sexual trafficking benefits only the trafficker by getting the victim back out on the street and making money sooner.”

There are a number of evangelical ministries to people who are sexually trafficked in the United States and around the world (learn more about them here). My organization, the Family Research Council, recently published a booklet called “Modern Slavery: How to Fight Human Trafficking in Your Community,” by J. Robert Flores, a former Justice Department official who has been active in the battle against trafficking for years. We have also hosted lectures and Webcasts drawing attention to this crisis.

One thing is clear: Those of us committed to the sanctity of unborn life should be alarmed by the forced abortions occurring throughout our country due to **sexual slavery** and by the horrible abuse suffered by tens of thousands of women and girls annually in the U.S. Fighting human trafficking is a pro-life, pro-human activity, and should be a priority for all conservatives as we work together to defend the right to life.

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