

National Prayer Initiative Targets Sex Slavery, Human Trafficking

The National Weekend of Prayer to End Slavery and Trafficking is a coalition of abolitionists and prayer leaders, whose mission is to mobilize prayer in America and to encourage awareness of the issue of human trafficking.

The Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC), the nation's largest Christian Hispanic organization, will preside as the honorary national co-chairman of the 2013 Weekend of Prayer, taking place Jan. 11-13.

Yuri Mantilla, director of the National Hispanic Evangelical Justice Coalition, an NHCLC Initiative, said, "Human trafficking is a crime against humanity. This modern form of slavery not only violates the dignity and integrity of innocent victims, but also destroys families and targets the most vulnerable members of society.

In the 21st century, the existence of this unspeakable crime is unacceptable. The commitment of the NHCLC to contribute to the struggle against human trafficking, and the leadership of Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, as honorary national co-chair of the National Weekend of Prayer, are important steps to encourage the Christian Hispanic community to become active in the cause for the defense of the victims of human trafficking, one of the most important human rights issues of our times."

A 2007 U.S. Senate resolution proclaimed Jan. 11 as Human Trafficking Awareness Day, a day of awareness and vigilance for the countless victims of human trafficking around the world. Additionally, in 2010 President Obama proclaimed January as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention

Month.

Tomas Lares, founder and chair of the annual National Weekend to End Slavery and Trafficking, said, "A major sign of the times is the injustice of human trafficking as it continues to grow and is now the fastest-growing organized crime in the world. God is calling people of faith to stand and say, 'NOT ON MY WATCH.' We believe God is waking up His people to pray and take action about the injustice of modern day slavery."

In cities across America, a coalition of abolitionists and prayer leaders will gather for the National Weekend of Prayer to create awareness for modern-day slavery and to pray for the victims and the survivors of human trafficking, the "customers" who are creating the demand and for the traffickers.

The National Weekend of Prayer to End Slavery and Trafficking includes prayer gatherings facilitated across the nation, webcasts of prayer gatherings from several major cities and concludes on Sunday with congregations praying for the end of modern-day slavery in their communities.