



Human Trafficking & Church Engagement (U.S. Focus)

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking is crime in which both children and adults are bought and sold into forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation through force, fraud, or coercion. It is a global problem that affects people in almost every country in the world, including the United States. Victims include men/boys and women/girls, and they cross all racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR ENGAGEMENT

Human trafficking dehumanizes people, turning them into commodities. As the church, we believe every person is made in God's image and is, therefore, valuable and worthy of dignity (Genesis 1:27). Our hope is to see people restored into the fullness of who God created them to be. The Church of the Nazarene has endorsed the Wesleyan Holiness Consortium's [Declaration for Freedom](#) (available in the Resources section of ncm.org/trafficking).

WAYS YOUR CHURCH CAN ENGAGE IN ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Pray together. Human trafficking is an evil that we can't fight on our own. Lead your congregation in praying for individuals affected by human trafficking. You can find resources at ncm.org/FreedomSunday.

Learn to recognize the signs. See Polaris Project (polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/recognize-signs) or the Department of Homeland Security (dhs.gov/blue-campaign/materials/human-trafficking-101).

Report suspected cases of trafficking. Call (888) 373-7888 (open 24 hours a day, with translation available), or text BeFree (233733). Consider creating small cards with this information for people to keep it in their wallets.

Educate leaders and volunteers. Train youth and children's ministry leaders in trafficking awareness, and teach youth and children to protect themselves from exploiters.

Teach children to be safer online. [Netsmartz](http://netsmartz.org) (netsmartz.org) offers good guidelines.

Minister to youth in the foster care system, who are targeted by traffickers because of their need for love and protection. Contact a foster care agency and ask what your church can do to help youth, especially those who are aging out. Consider getting involved in ministries such as Safe Families for Children (safe-families.org).

Engage in ministry to at-risk groups. Traffickers prey on and exploit those who are most vulnerable. Ideas for ministries that helps to lessen vulnerability include these:

- Engage in mentoring programs that work to support at-risk youth in your area.
- Create after-school ministries that become safe places for children.
- Do job skills training to increase opportunities for people who are unemployed.
- Partner with organizations that minister to at-risk children, youth, or adults, such as homeless shelters.
- Build relationships with local law enforcement and ask how you can support efforts to fight trafficking.
- Designate a member or team to coordinate anti-trafficking volunteer opportunities.

Understand trauma. Becoming a trauma-informed congregation will help your church know how to minister to anyone who has experienced significant trauma, including survivors of trafficking as well as children and youth whose trauma may put them at increased risk for being trafficked. Helpful resources include [ACEs Too High](http://acestoohigh.com) (acestoohigh.com) and [ACEs Connection](http://acesconnection.com) (acesconnection.com).

Partner with like-minded organizations. Ask emergency shelters or residential homes for survivors about ways you can support. Ideas include these: Do a gift card drive or put together care packages (based on specific needs); offer to sponsor an event for residents of a restoration home; encourage members to donate services, such as medical or dental care, legal assistance, tutoring, or life skills training.

Fight the demand. Human trafficking is a big-money business fueled by greed. Our actions can drive demand for slave labor and commercial sex.

- Learn about the connection between pornography and sex trafficking at pornharmresearch.com.
- [The Defenders USA](http://TheDefendersUSA.org) (sharedhope.org) and [The X3Network](http://TheX3Network.com) (x3pure.com) help fight the demand for commercial sex trafficking by addressing the struggle with pornography or sexual addiction.
- Learn how our consumer choices fuel labor trafficking at GlobalSlaveryIndex.org and ProductsOfSlavery.org.

WHAT ARE NAZARENE CHURCHES DOING?

[Nazarene Compassionate Ministries](http://ncm.org/trafficking) (ncm.org/trafficking) partners with local churches in anti-trafficking efforts that range from prevention and education to protection and rehabilitation. NCM-supported ministries include these:

- **India Drop-In Center.** A church-led center in a red-light area offers a space space for children and vocational training so that women being exploited can experience a different future (ncm.org/hope).
- **Protecting Children in the Philippines.** Churches in the Philippines are protecting at-risk children and youth through education, as well as partnering with others toward ministering to children who have been rescued from online exploitation.
- **Moldova Mobile Intervention Clinic.** Volunteers offer services for women being exploited, including medical services, psycho-social support, and referrals for organizations that can help them get off the streets.
- **Moldova Freedom Business Incubator.** In Moldova, the church partners with a transition home for orphaned teens who are at high risk for being trafficked, helping them start businesses so they won't be vulnerable to poverty-induced trafficking.

[Rest Stop Ministries](http://reststopministries.org) (reststopministries.org). Birthed out of the Hermitage (Tennessee) Church of the Nazarene, Rest Stop is a two-year residential program, following a "housing-first" model for survivors of sex trafficking.

Point Loma Nazarene University's [Center for Justice and Reconciliation](http://plnu.edu/cjr) (plnu.edu/cjr) has established the "Beauty for Ashes" scholarship to support the education of trafficking survivors.

RESOURCES

- **Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.** You'll find church-focused resources at ncm.org/trafficking. If you have questions or are looking for ways to connect with other Nazarenes engaged in anti-trafficking, email info@ncm.org.
- **Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST).** Find free church toolkits, Bible studies, and more at FaastInternational.org.
- **Engage Together.** Download a free church toolkit or purchase a video curriculum at EngageTogether.com.
- **Department of Homeland Security.** Download or order free resources at dhs.gov/blue-campaign.