

Human Trafficking

Nepal – October 2009

Look closely at the beautiful young woman to the right. She is a competent, driven young Nepalese lady in her early 20's. Her name is Promila. She is recently married to a fine young Christian Nepali. Promila travels internationally, speaks to groups in Brazil and the USA. She leads a group home in Kathmandu that rescues children. She manages a beautiful estate home that houses more than 30 young women. She negotiates with Nepalese government officials. Less than 8 years ago, Promila was enslaved in the sex trade in India.



More than 10,000 children are taken from Nepal each year in what is referred to as human trafficking. Visit certain villages in the western hills and you will find *no female children above the age of 8 years old.*

These children are taken to the great cities of India and employed as sex trade workers. They travel with either forged passports or passports that are immediately confiscated. They are truly slaves and have no way of escape. The depravity of their lives is beyond description. They are forced to service 10-20 'clients' per day, their lives descend into indescribable horror. Most die before they are 20 years old. AIDS and STD's are rampant.

A Brazilian pastor named Dr. Jose Rodrigues was visiting Mumbai, India and saw a young girl lying dead on the sidewalk. This is not unusual in the large Indian cities. I have seen trucks filled with corpses. Trucks and carts come around daily and take bodies to the crematoriums. They did not take the body of this young girl. A child, made in the image of God, was left to be disposed of in the trash. The rationale is that someone so degraded by taking part in this 'profession' was not worthy of cremation.



Dr. Rodrigues, deeply moved, determined to do something about it. He shared the need with his congregation back in Brazil. Christians responded and Brazilians were sent, fully funded, from Brazil.

Several homes were set up to provide a shelter for these young women as they were rescued and brought back to Nepal.

It sounds like an easy process, but when evil is this deeply ingrained, huge obstacles must be overcome. The girls have no papers and cannot be taken across borders without government approvals. Corruption and bribes are rampant and the human traffickers often have more money. Permits to repatriate these kids must be obtained from the Nepalese government. The traffickers use all their resources, including violence, to stop the repatriation of the children who bring them profit.



There is a wonderful organization called International Justice Ministry, comprised of lawyers who do the legal work to rescue some of these children; prosecute the traffickers and those who break laws from the west by using these children. They need local organizations to care for the children once they are rescued. If they are not counselled, trained and cared for, they inevitably fall back into the same patterns in order to survive. They are outcasts to their own families who counted on the regular support

from their work and they are societal pariahs.

It was the last day in Nepal and we made contact with the group in the city who works with children at risk. The director's name was Silvio Silva, a Brasileiro (Brazilian) from Bela Horizonte, Brazil.

Partners International is developing a similar home in Calcutta. I wanted to meet these people and see how they operated in Nepal.

I confess I was nervous in anticipation of meeting these girls who had been so terribly abused. I wondered how they could ever recover and trust anyone. How could someone from the west who could not even imagine what they had been through, possibly relate?

Imagine visiting the most beautiful homes in Kathmandu, decorated and painted in bright wonderful colours filled with laughing, happy confident young women and children! It was astonishing to see the depth of joy, purpose and healing. Young girls rescued from this nightmare just a few years ago are leading the ministry, in charge of the homes and dealing with the government officials as leaders, while only in their early 20's. The Brazilians told me that they are far more competent and passionate than they. Silvio told us that they could not shut the girls up from talking about Jesus, even to Hindu government officials. The government is not happy that they are becoming Christians and does not help financially, but provides permits to enable them to return to Nepal. The Brazilians were worried about offending Hindu officials who until a few years ago, would not even legalize a Christian gathering.

More than 117 young women are housed and cared for until they are able to enter society fully capable of functioning fully. They can stay as long as they need to and are taught trades, crafts and how to hand weave carpets.

117 girls is a drop-in-the-bucket in relation to the problem, so the team also visits the rural villages and expose the intent and danger of these traffickers to illiterate rural people.

Partners' Nepali leader Bhim Lal comes from the very Tamang tribal area where the problem is most severe. It was exciting to see this relationship develop and plans made to cooperate with Bhim's wide network of churches to introduce the Rescue ministry to the church leaders in the hills.

We came close to missing our flight out of Nepal. The Lord has given these girls a special anointing and relationship to Himself. They have experienced the deepest darkness the world has to offer and yet it is clear their relationship with the living God is real, contagious beyond our experience.



We are looking forward to seeing the same ministry established in Calcutta. It has been amazing to see how the Lord has provided even before we knew how we were to be involved in the ministry. It convinces me that this type of ministry is very close to the heart of God.

Funds were given to PI and a facility purchased in Calcutta before we even asked. A church in Orlando, Florida visited the site and heard of the ministry and committed to raise enough to cover the staffing cost for one year. Upon returning to Orlando, the congregation responded during very bad economic times, and the result was not one, but three years support for the staff! Partners International has to raise the amount to cover the facilities operation and management. International Justice Ministry and Partners International have entered into an agreement to provide continual care at the highest level.

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