

Can the Church Rise Up in Ethical Leadership?

Ethical behavior: actions conforming to moral standards. The Bible reveals it like this: “*Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God our Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the world*” (James 1:27) and “*...to the extent that you did it to the least of them, you did it to Me*” (Matthew 25:40).

I have just put down a profoundly disturbing book by Victor Malarek. **The sex trade is a global, twelve billion dollar a year industry. On the world’s black market, human flesh is one of the top three commodities.** This book tells the story of the thousands of women and girls from all over Eastern Europe who are sold for sex by networks of organized crime. They are lured with the promise of jobs and then sold into prostitution as human chattel in an epidemic of modern slavery. Nations, governments, and institutions are turning a blind eye while everyday hundreds of thousands of women and girls are being raped in brothels around the world. Surely, the “*earth is corrupt in the sight of God and filled with violence*” (Genesis 6:11).

Malarek says, “*The issue of trafficking desperately cries out for firm, committed leadership; it has to be made a global concern.*” **He and others state that it is *the* human rights issue of the 21st century. Seeing it firsthand in Myanmar and Southeast Asia this past year, I would agree. However, when you look at the record you see darkness and corruption everywhere—money, power, and politics speak louder than the crushed lives of thousands of women. Governments have not answered the call.** And though there are many organizations working tirelessly in this area, Malarek is correct when he says it must be made a global concern. The scope of the problem is so vast that a worldwide response is necessary.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH? She is global and she has a long history of confronting plagues and freeing captives. It is clear from the verses quoted above that God has called her to serve as a humanitarian force in this world for those who are without help and resources. If Wilberforce and other Christians could stop the African slave trade in the 18th and 19th centuries, why can’t we follow their example today? What if, in one of the darkest hours on this planet, the global church rose up united and became known for her charity to those who are being sold like chattel?

The Church exists in every country side by side with this heinous crime. She who is called to live unstained by the world can surely rise above the divisions of politics and culture in order to obey her Lord who came to set the captives free. Why should she wait for or rely on governments to do her work? If the late Pope, John Paul II, had waited on his government in Poland for moral leadership the world would look vastly different—be vastly darker—than it is today. God has called the Church to diffuse her light. She is not to keep her privileges to herself, but to throw them over the wall; spread them abroad. Whatever she has she holds in trust for the world, and what she has been given is to be used for the service of mankind to the glory of God. She is not to be swayed or silenced by money or power. She is not to fear the darkness, evil, and chaos. She is called to descend with Him into the lower parts of the earth, pass through dark places and lie buried with the dead. She is called by her Savior to be like Him, seeking and saving the lost ones. Who could possibly be more lost, more dead, than a young girl sold into the sex slave trade?

What do you suppose would happen if the Church in every part of this world fell down on her face and pleaded with God on behalf of those women and girls? What if she began to seek out what He would have her do for these females? What if *she* became the global, committed, ethical and moral leadership that is needed to fight this battle?

It is true she would have to crucify her pride, her love of comfort, and her selfishness. She would have to pause from her infighting and proliferation of book signings to sacrificially bend down to bring good news to the afflicted, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim freedom to the prisoners. But if she did, perhaps rather than the corruption and violence it now holds, the earth would be *“filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea”* (Habakkuk 2:14). And if she did, perhaps then the world would look and say, *“They have been with Jesus, for like Him, they walk the way of those who are ready to perish.”*

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