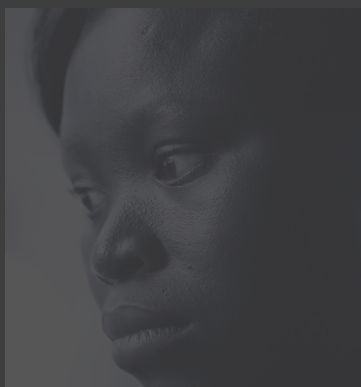




FACES OF INJUSTICE

A PRAYER GUIDE





FACES OF INJUSTICE
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This book is dedicated to all those
in the fight against modern day slavery.

*"Do not lose heart...
I have overcome the world."*
~ Jesus, John 16:33 (NIV)

* Quotes are kept in their original format for spelling.

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Introduction

Injustice has many faces: from a very young Middle Eastern girl crying out, aware that her father is arranging for her to marry a much older man she does not know or love; to a ten year old African boy, trained to kill or be killed as a rebel soldier; to a tired and broken old man who has laboured years to fulfil a debt he will never repay; to a scantily-clad European woman with vacant eyes waiting for the next man who will purchase and abuse her. Face after face after face is marked by fear, hurt and shame.

These are the ones of whom God speaks:

"Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise," says the Lord; "I will place him in the safety for which he longs."

Psalms 12:5 (AMP)

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free."

~ Jesus, Luke 4:18 (NIV), quoting from Isaiah 61

Author and Holocaust survivor Elie Weisel was a strong advocate for human rights and throughout his life spoke out for victims of oppression all over the world. On accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, he said:

There is so much injustice and suffering crying out for our attention: victims of hunger, of racism, and political persecution, writers and poets, prisoners in so many lands governed by the Left and by the Right. Human rights are being violated on every continent. More people are oppressed than free.

There is much to be done, there is much that can be done. One person—one person of integrity—can make a difference, a difference of life and death. As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our lives will be filled with anguish and shame. What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs.

The information in this book will not be easy to read. In fact, you will likely come "face to face" with realities that may be easier to turn away from. However, we believe it is God's time to open our eyes and our hearts.

"Be warned. Passionate prayers not only change the world, they have a way of transforming the people who pray them. As God channels His concerns through you, you may find yourself responding in unexpected ways."

~ Deborah Merrof, from her book SOS: Save Our Sisters

It is our hope that as you encounter each "face" within this book, you will be moved—not only to stand up and become their voice, but to kneel down and fight for them in prayer.

We must understand injustice is primarily an issue with spiritual roots; therefore, we need to remember the battle is also spiritual. It is not people (flesh and blood) that we are called to stand against:

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)

Therefore, our weapons must also be spiritual:

"For though we walk [live] in the flesh, we are not carrying on our [spiritual] warfare according to the flesh and using the weapons of man. For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds [fortresses]."

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (AMP)

For this reason, we have created a "HotSpots" graphic that depicts areas of the world where each injustice is the most prevalent. We believe that fervent, intercessory prayer will cause walls of injustice to crumble. We pray for many lives to be transformed by the hand and the love of God.



Limited or No Access to Education

"Girls' education is both an intrinsic right and a critical lever to reaching other development objectives. Providing girls with an education helps break the cycle of poverty: educated women are less likely to marry early and against their will; less likely to die in childbirth; more likely to have healthy babies; and are more likely to send their children to school. When all children have access to a quality education rooted in human rights and gender equality, it creates a ripple effect of opportunity that influences generations to come."

~ UNICEF

The lack of education in underdeveloped countries has turned out to be one of the most vicious, seemingly unending cycles in the world. As poverty inhibits access to developing education, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and southeast Asia, children grow into adulthood with little or no power to affect change for the next generation. And so the cycle continues, as *Humanium.org* reports, with more than 72 million children around the world not in school and an estimated 750 million illiterate adults worldwide. Even for those who do have access to education in developing countries, understaffing, crowded classrooms (60+ in one room) and lack of specialized attention inhibit proper learning.

While illiteracy may be the most evident result of inadequate schooling, the consequences are far-ranging, as poorly educated children and adults often turn to desperate measures for income. Particularly in southeast Asia, poverty and low education rates combine to force children into slave labour just to feed their families. With insufficient effort to improve education worldwide, poverty-driven labour has become the norm.

In most parts of the underdeveloped world, girls experience an added disadvantage. In countries where the social value of women is low and many do not have rights,



few steps—if any—are being taken to promote education for females on any level. Primarily unnoticed by their culture, some are even sold into sexual slavery as a result. With little or no hope of proper training, children around the world continue to experience the same academic regression as their parents, potentially extending the cycle of poverty and oppression.



How to Pray

- It's not just the poor who have limited or no access to education: disabled, displaced and refugee children in conflict or disaster zones are also greatly disadvantaged. Pray for local and international solutions to address these issues.
- Caregivers (e.g. parents) with low education don't always see the value in sending their children to school. Pray they are not afraid to see the benefits structured learning brings both now and in the future.
- Where gender discrimination plays a role in illiteracy, pray for changes within the culture so females are also allowed equal access to education.
- Secondary school completion rates remain low around the developing world. Pray for financial and human resources to be intentionally invested into this void.
- In places like sub-Saharan Africa, malnutrition contributes to learning deficits, even if there is local access to education. Pray for sustainable programmes to address these issues.

"Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: Wisdom preserves those who have it."
Ecclesiastes 7:12 (NIV)

Limited or No Access to Healthcare

Bryan, from North America, was denied a certain medical test because he couldn't pay for it. As he waited for governmental help, his condition worsened and eventually, after almost three years, Bryan died at the age of 33. Sadly, financial assistance arrived a week later. *Name changed*

In 2015, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published its first annual global healthcare report, estimating that at least 400 million people worldwide lack access to essential healthcare services, which helps shed light on high mortality numbers in certain areas of the world. Treatable and preventable diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, run largely unchecked in the poorest parts of the world. Most malaria cases and subsequent deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa, although Asia, Latin America, and some parts of the Middle East are also affected.

While increased prevention and control measures have significantly reduced mortality for many communicable diseases, wherever proper healthcare remains underdeveloped, even a simple pregnancy can put a mother's (and child's) life in jeopardy. If a child does survive birth, high mortality rates within the first year are often linked to poor healthcare and lack of immunisation schemes. UNICEF estimates that a treatable condition such as diarrhoea has killed more children in the past decade than all the people killed in armed conflicts since World War II.

Even in more developed parts of Africa and Asia, access to healthcare remains minimal for those living in poverty. The WHO also reported that for those living at or below the poverty line, healthcare costs accounted for more than 25% of all household expenses. For those living on less than \$2 USD per day, the cost remains too high for consideration.



Lastly, culture might also be a contributing factor, as many ethnic groups are persuaded to rely on “traditional” medicine (fuelled by spiritualism and rituals) with little or no regard for practical medicine even if it is available. The inclination, when faced with disease, is not to seek medicinal help but to look to local healers for spiritual remedies.



How to Pray

- Pray for control measures and strategic prevention schemes for simple diseases to reduce mortality rates and the need for urgent healthcare.
- Malnutrition, coupled with improper healthcare, leads to the preventable deaths of millions of children every year. Pray for national and international assistance to reach those most in need.
- Limited medical staff in developing countries need encouragement when facing situations where huge numbers of people await healthcare and resources are scarce. Ask God to help them prioritise well and make wise use of inadequate supplies.
- Pray for effective strategies to address issues in western countries where socio-economic situations influence a person's ability to get proper medical assistance.

“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

1 John 3:17-18 (NIV)

Limited or No Access to Basic Provisions

"Thousands have lived without love, not one without water."

~ W. H. Auden

*"For many of us, water simply flows from a faucet,
and we think little about it beyond this point of contact.*

We have lost a sense of respect [...] for the intricate web of life that water supports."

~ Sandra Postel

In the Gospel of John, Jesus, in need of a drink, takes up a conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well. Through the course of their exchange, Jesus draws a parallel between her situation and His divine authority: "...whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst" (John 4:14a, NIV).

For those in developed countries who can open their refrigerators or turn on the tap for fresh water, the metaphor makes sense as an abstract concept. But for nearly one billion people worldwide who lack access to safe water supplies, it's real.

Lack of water isn't confined to arid, desert terrain; droughts are capable of draining water supply anywhere in the world. For example, since 2014, a continuing decline of rainfall has resulted in a worsening drought across South America, particularly in the Amazon rainforest. Parts of sub-Saharan Africa are also drought-stricken, which leads to food shortage.

While water is just one of many basic provisions that large areas of the world struggle to access, it often carries the most urgency, since a lack of clean water shines light on the critical necessity of such a commodity. Food scarcity, which leads to malnutrition, often accompanies water shortages—and more so as droughts continue.



Food and water shortages are most often associated with poor living conditions. However, awareness also continues to grow concerning inadequate sanitation systems around the world. UNICEF reported in 2016 that nearly one million children under the age of five died from diarrheal diseases—a result of a combination of factors, including a lack of safe water and basic sanitation provisions.



How to Pray

- Pray that water safety plans being executed by groups like the World Health Organisation will be effective and target the populous that needs clean water the most.
- With climate change (droughts, floods, natural disasters), basic commodities are reduced, driving demand and raising prices. Pray for the effect this has on developing countries, including malnutrition due to food shortages.
- Sometimes “systemic injustices” (injustices built into a country or culture’s system) result in inadequate or restricted support for the marginalised or oppressed: females, widows, elderly, orphans, lower castes, disabled, etc. Pray for advocates to address these injustices and for changes within societies.

“Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to poverty will be cursed.”

Proverbs 28:27 (NLT)

Based on Gender

"More girls are killed in this routine 'gendercide' in any one decade than people were slaughtered in all the genocides of the twentieth century."

~ William Petrocelli

Genocide is the mass murder of a particular people group, often marginalised for political or religious reasons, as witnessed in Rwanda in 1994. These atrocities are horrific, leaving a devastating wake of destruction and prolonged process of recovery. But there is a lesser-known or reported slaughter of innocent lives taking place every day: *gendercide*—the silent elimination of females, young or old, through sex-selective abortion, infanticide and gross neglect. For elderly women, this can mean lack of access to food and shelter, primarily by being denied within their culture.

Gendercide is commonplace in countries like India and China, where the birth of a baby girl is rarely celebrated. In India, sons are preferred above daughters, as a son can provide for the family and carries on the family name. In China, the one-child policy instituted in 1979 (phased out in 2015) gave way to a culture that preferred sons over daughters; consequently, under the one-child policy, it is estimated that 1.1 million baby girls were aborted every year in China. In Asia, sex determination tests are sometimes carried out with or without the consent of the pregnant mother. By using ultrasound equipment, the baby's sex is determined; if it is a baby girl, couples often choose to abort the baby or midwives will strangle/smother the infant when she is born (with or without the consent of the parent).

The killing of a baby below the age of 12 months is called infanticide. Although it used to be more common, today there are still reported cases of infanticide, particularly against young girls (called female infanticide or foeticide).



Due to the oppressive society and prejudiced view or attitude toward women in many cultures, the injustice of gendercide continues. In the past decades, more than 100 million baby girls have been routinely aborted or killed at birth in India and China alone. Due to the decrease of females and the increase of males in these societies, other injustices such as human trafficking, forced prostitution, child brides and dowry killings have increased significantly.



How to Pray

- Pray for a shift in the oppression of females and the negative view toward them that still persists in many cultures.
- Pray for laws to be reformed so that unborn or baby girls are protected.
- Pray for mothers who desire to keep their female babies to have the courage, strength and community support to insist on being able to raise their daughters.
- Pray that ultrasound equipment will not be used by medical staff to inappropriately predetermine the sex of infants. Pray for doctors and midwives to actively protect the lives of female infants.
- In south Asia, the act of throwing acid into the face of a woman is another injustice that is intended to disfigure, torture or kill. Pray for this gender-based violence to be stopped and for innocent lives to be spared.

"You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed."

Psalm 139:13-16 (NLT)

Based on Race

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate. And if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."
~ Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa

Prejudices—and the injustices that arise from them—are almost as old as time itself. Discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their race or ethnicity does not easily fall under a single definition and cannot be attributed solely to colour. The ideology underlying racist practices often includes the notion that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different in their social behaviour, and that they may be subtly classified as inferior or superior.

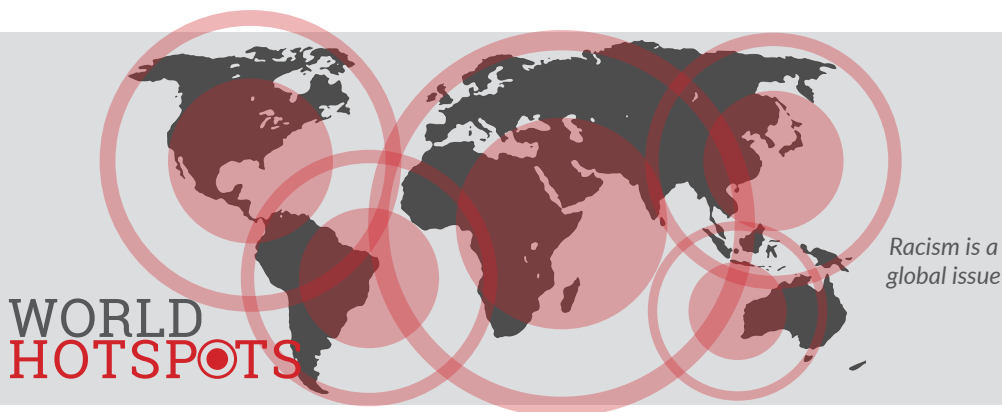
The “bitter end” of racism can lead to murder, as the well-documented relationship between the Hutu and the Tutsi people groups in Burundi and Rwanda has shown—a tension that has marked their interactions for decades. In fact, scholars and historians alike have searched for differences between the two people groups, finding nothing of significance that would evoke the approximate 1 million (some say 2 million) needless deaths over the 20th Century.

While the motive to eliminate the other race is ambiguous, the conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi stands as a stark illustration of racial tension that exists across the world. Not every country has a racial history as grim as Rwanda and Burundi, but varying degrees of racial conflict have existed in almost every culture.

Whether the Holocaust in Europe, slavery in America, apartheid in South Africa or discrimination between the Malays and Chinese in Malaysia, examples of racial disparity abound worldwide. But the injustice of racism extends beyond mass murder and slavery. Injustices linked to racial inequality take on many forms, including, but not limited to, opportunities for education and employment. When language barriers and social exclusion limit minority races, those who dominate a culture continue to



oppress—if not explicitly, certainly through such social advantages. An understanding of the nature of racism is essential to recognise and counter it successfully. Racism is a global phenomenon that is influenced by a range of historical, social, political and economic factors. It takes different forms in different contexts and, as a result, has been defined in many different ways.



How to Pray

- Pray for philosophies and stereotypes, which directly or indirectly lead to discrimination within cultures or societies, to be transformed at their roots.
- The Bible says that as a man “thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7, NKJV). In other words, the actions reflect the thinking patterns. Pray for the heart of mankind, especially Christians, to be convicted and renewed to “think as God thinks,” so that actions reflect righteous character.
- Pray for those who have been hurt by injustices related to race; ask God for a way forward to both heal and forgive.
- Recently, racial tensions have heightened in the USA and also in Europe with the influx of refugees. Pray for wisdom and peaceable solutions that are fair to all.

“Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”
Colossians 3:11 (NIV)

“But if you show favoritism, you sin...”
James 2:9a (NIV)

Based on Religion

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die."

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

"The best helping hand you can give us is to have praying hands."

~ Persecuted Christian, Open Doors International

On Easter Sunday in March 2016, Christians gathered in Lahore, Pakistan's Gulshan Iqbal Park to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. As some joined the queue for a train ride through the park, an explosive blast ripped through the crowd.

Responsibility for the suicide bombing, which killed more than 70 people and injured hundreds more, was claimed by a splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban. While most of the victims were Muslim, the extremist group affirmed they were specifically targeting Christians.

While the bombing shocked the world on a grand scale, the Christians in Pakistan (numbering more than two million) were sadly not unfamiliar with this type of oppression. They remain marginalised and unrepresented in the country, which is more than 95% Islamic.

Religious persecution is essentially the systematic mistreatment of an individual or people group, based primarily in response to their religious philosophies and affiliations. Open Doors estimates that over 100 million Christians worldwide are persecuted, reaching record highs in recent years. Discrimination based on religious beliefs is not limited to Islamic oppression of Christianity, however. Muslims, as well as Christians, face oppression from the vast Hindu population of India and from those seeking complete political control of the country.

Religious oppression can take on a violent face, but more often it comes in the form of social prejudice, wherein religious minorities find themselves unable to live in certain areas, access public services, or function as contributing members of society.



It can be as subtle as hostile attitudes and verbal harassment, or as demoralising and extreme as beatings, torture, rape and imprisonment. Additionally, in countries where high percentages of the population identify with one religion, such as Hinduism or Islam, the minorities find themselves with little or no governmental protection and representation.



How to Pray

- Christians often struggle with the theology of persecution, and yet God often uses it to build His Kingdom. Pray for persecuted Christians to stand strong in the face of such injustice (1 Corinthians 16:13).
- Pray for oppressed followers of Christ to experience peace in the suffering and grace to: love their enemies, bless those who curse, do good to those who hate and pray for those who persecute (Matt. 5:43-48, NKJV).
- Pray for the children and families of victims who have been imprisoned or martyred. Pray for churches whose pastors are in prison.
- When a Christian is released after years of torture and imprisonment, there is usually a long road to recovery. Take time to pray for this need and anything else God lays on your heart for injustices related to religious persecution.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven..."
Matthew 5:11-12a (NIV)

Based on Status

"After centuries of marginalization and neglect [...] we need to fight, tooth and nail, for equity in all areas of social life. One point to make clear, ethnic and racial minorities are not looking for scraps or a handout from the old paternalistic system but an equitable, stable, and leveled playing field."

~ Martin Guevarna Urbina, Author

In 2016, a Dalit woman in India and her three children were murdered by locals in her community, while her husband managed to escape. The woman and her daughter were raped before being killed, and their bodies were left in a canal. Despite the family's protests against discrimination in the events leading up to the murders, they could find no justice. Following their deaths, protests broke out in response to discrimination against the Dalit people. The protests opened the door for global awareness of injustice toward India's social outcasts.

Social stratification (the categorisation of people groups within a culture, based on social status) has existed since the dawn of civilisation. In the context of fallen humanity, division will always occur among groups of people. In certain parts of the world, however, such divisions have led to favouritism and discrimination, sometimes with violent consequences, as was the case with the Dalit woman and her daughter.

One of the most recognisable and most polarising forms of social inequality comes from countries where the caste system divides societies into groups. The Dalits of India, known as "untouchables", fall at the bottom of the social scale or even outside the caste system. The term Dalit means "oppressed", "broken" or "crushed", which is representative of their lost identity. While certain groups in the caste system command an elite status (most notably the Brahmins), injustice falls on the Dalits, who hold "dishonourable" jobs with minimal pay. While some Dalits are able to pursue education and make a good living despite their social status, discrimination comes in the form of little or no political and legal representation.



India's social system is just one example of cultural injustice; many people groups suffer similar divisions in other contexts. Women, for example, are often marginalised in their cultures just because they are female. Injustices are perpetuated when those who enjoy greater community status, for whatever reason, oppress or ostracise those of lesser societal position. (This could even be in our own backyard!)



How to Pray

- In lands where oppression due to social status abounds, pray for the Church to be biblically counter-cultural.
- Pray for governments to take notice and begin to protect the marginalised, proposing changes to systems within their culture that continue the cycle of injustice.
- Pray for effective programmes, which are well-resourced through people and finances, to be able to address the educational and employment needs on behalf of the oppressed, such as for the marginalised in India (e.g. self-help groups and micro-loan business ventures).
- The Roma (Gypsy) are a traditionally nomadic ethnic group widely marginalised in Europe. Pray for creative strategies to reach them with the gospel.
- Pray we can see our own blindspots and ways in which we marginalise others.

“...Therefore I command you,
‘You shall open wide your hand to your brother,
to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’ “
Deuteronomy 15:11b (ESV)

Child Brides

"My elder sisters were pulled out of school and married off, but I was lucky that teachers intervened in my case. I was performing well, so teachers wanted to keep me in school."

~ Peris Tobiko, Kenya's first Maasai woman elected to Parliament

To appreciate the significance of Peris Tobiko's election to Kenya's Parliament, one must understand her difficult upbringing. She grew up in a culture where a girl's education was not valued, and it was normal for parents to marry off their daughters at a very young age. Moreover, Tobiko had to put up with dirty tricks from competing male Parliament-hopefuls during the election process.

The practice of child marriage is difficult to define globally due to constantly changing laws and customs; however, millions of girls under the age of 18 are married—usually forcibly—each year around the world. Many instances of child marriage come from poverty-stricken cultures in developing nations, most often where social and religious norms dictate such practises.

Girls Not Brides estimates that the number of females married under the age of 18 will grow to 1.2 billion by the year 2050 if no global action is taken. Children are most notoriously early brides in the Middle East and South Asian countries like India. However, in recent years, India joined a list of countries that have reduced the number of reported child marriages. Though India as a nation has prohibited marriage for females under the age of 18, the government has received widespread opposition from Muslim communities in the country, where Sharia law allows for the marriage of girls as young as nine years old.

Sharia law, based on the marriage of the Prophet Muhammed to a six-year-old girl (consummated three years later), has instigated back-and-forth cultural and legal disputes in the Middle East and northern Africa. In many countries governed by Sharia law, child marriages are still customary, despite various laws that have been passed (and subsequently challenged and revoked) limiting the minimum age for marriage to anywhere between the ages of 13-18.



The negative effects of child marriages are sobering: child mortality rates rise drastically as teenage girls succumb to pregnancy when their bodies are not prepared to bear children. Miscarriages and stillbirths are also far more common. Obstetric fistulas also develop—a hole between the vagina and rectum or bladder that is caused by prolonged labour— usually leaving a young woman incontinent and socially shunned because of her smell.



How to Pray

- Education is one of the most powerful tools to help prevent early marriage; the longer a young girl stays in school, the less likely she is to be espoused and have children. Pray for girls to be allowed to stay in school in cultures where education is not deemed important for females.
- A woman with an obstetric fistula is often rejected by her husband and pushed out of her community due to the foul smell from the hole in her rectum and/or bladder. A simple medical procedure fixes this devastating condition, and yet a million women are estimated to still be living in humiliation. Pray for greater awareness and medical assistance to be available for these women.
- Pray that “mail order” schemes to “purchase” a bride will be exposed and brought to justice.

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin,
it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung
around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.”
Mark 9:42 (ESV)

Honour Killings

"Isn't it time we asked ourselves, 'Are we willing to accept any behavior codified within religious or cultural practice? Is there no line to be drawn?' If honor killings are okay, then why not virgin sacrifices or cannibalism or sex with children outside the church? We have perversely taken our notion of tolerance to such extremes that we've become tolerant of intolerance."

~ Bill Maher

Remaining one of the world's greatest injustices toward women, "honour killings" mean death for an estimated 5,000–20,000 women each year. Though the actual number of killings is unknown, researchers have suggested the number is higher than reported, since many deaths are made to look like accidents or suicides.

By definition, honour killings occur when a family conspires to murder a relative who has supposedly brought shame and dishonour to the family name. It is perpetrated as a way to restore dignity to the family in the face of the perceived damage, like sexual impropriety (including homosexuality) or inter-ethnic marriages. Those responsible for committing the killings can be parents, husbands, siblings or extended family members. Although men can be the victims of honour killings, the vast majority (93%) target women, mostly focusing on sexual behaviour. Additionally, women who are the victims of sexual assault face potential death for "adultery," and those who seek divorce likewise risk being killed. In many cultures, even the assumption that a woman has acted dishonourably can provoke an honour killing, and actions perceived as defiant can also result in death. For example, in 2016, a Pakistani woman was publicly stoned to death by her family for marrying a man they did not approve of.

Though honour killings are primarily associated with cultural (not religious) traditions, the practice is most common among Muslims, where patriarchal societies limit opportunities for women and show leniency toward men who carry out a killing. In some cases, boys under the age of 18 are requested to perform an honour killing on behalf of the family, to reduce or completely eliminate any legal consequences.



Nevertheless, honour killings are not limited to predominately Islamic cultures. The practice ranges from southeast Asia to Africa, and incidents have been reported throughout Europe and in the United States. Regardless of the location, killings for the sake of a family's honour claim women's lives through brutal acts of shooting, drowning, suffocation and by being burned alive.



How to Pray

- In truth, there is no “honour” in murder. Pray for more people with influence to advocate on behalf of this issue.
- Laws regarding crimes of “honour” seem to be in violation of international justice standards. Pray for lawmakers to bravely interpret and enforce just legislation.
- Since many of these crimes are culturally driven, pray for communities to question these acceptable norms and practices, recognising honour killings for what they are—murder.
- Pray for Christian women, who may be in danger of being killed for their faith, to be protected from harm.

“Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?”

They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, [...] They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” [...] When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” “No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.” John 8:4-11 (NLT)

Female Genital Mutilation

“My grandmother called it the three feminine sorrows: the day of circumcision, the wedding night, and the birth of a baby... the three feminine sorrows!

Now hear my appeal: appeal for dreams broken, appeal to all peace loving people.

Protect and defend the innocent little girls, so trusting and obedient to their parents and elders. Help them live in a world of love, not a world of feminine sorrow!”

~ Dahabo Musa, “My Grandmother Called it The Three Feminine Sorrows”

Female genital mutilation (FGM), sometimes referred to as “female genital cutting” or “female circumcision”, is a procedure practiced mostly in central Africa and some parts of the Middle East. It is defined by the World Health Organisation as any procedure involving the cutting or complete removal of the external genitalia of a woman by altering or injuring the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Today, more than 200 million women from about 30 countries around the world suffer the lifelong and oftentimes debilitating effects of FGM. Young girls are most at risk between infancy and about the age 15.

In its simplest form, FGM can involve the partial or complete removal of a girl’s clitoris in an attempt to “subdue” her sexual desires, promote fidelity to her future spouse and remove what is regarded as an “unclean” part of her body. In about 15% of instances, however, the procedure is far more involved—and appalling—than this. Girls who are subjected to infibulation are held down, often without any form of anaesthesia, while all external genitalia (both the inner and outer labia) are cut or scraped away with a scalpel, blade, scissors, piece of glass or simply a sharp rock. The girl may then be “sewn” back together again, without proper suture thread or with acacia thorns. Sometimes her ankles are tied together for several weeks until the tissue is bonded together again. A small hole is kept in place by inserting an object, such as a twig or rock-salt, between the two sides of the wound until the area has healed. It is through this small hole that urine and menses (menstruation) are forced to leave the body.



It takes weeks or months for a girl to recover from the catastrophic event—should she manage to survive it at all. While the procedure and its immediate effects are terrible, the long-term effects of FGM are equally horrific. Women face a lifetime of issues such as incontinence, bladder and urinary tract infections, cysts, infertility and an increased risk of childbirth complications and newborn death.

FGM is perhaps one of the most extreme forms of discrimination towards women, reflecting deep-rooted and culturally-accepted beliefs about their inferiority and inherent impurity. While global awareness of female genital mutilation is increasing and major humanitarian organisations recognise it as a violation of human rights, members of communities who practise it continue to embrace the custom. In fact, dedicated families are performing the procedure on their daughters at younger ages than ever before, even within the first few weeks or months of birth in order to avoid detection from the authorities. As a way of controlling young girls, the older women in these communities are often the staunchest supporters of the practice that caused them irreparable harm.



How to Pray

- Pray for the complete eradication of FGM in all practising nations and communities. Pray that the underlying negative attitudes about women, which are justifications for FGM, would be changed.
- Pray for women who have already been subjected to FGM to see their worth through God's eyes and experience healing from the physical, emotional and spiritual affects of FGM.
- Pray for those who advocate against FGM, both internationally and in local communities; pray they would be heard and the truth would bring change.
- Pray for the midwives, doctors (including witchdoctors), and community leaders who routinely perform FGM to be convicted about the damage they are doing.

"You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you."
Song of Solomon 4:7 (NIV)

Ceremonial Circumcision

"Imagine that you live in a world where innocent young boys are dying, eaten by a cultural practice gone wrong. They die, sometimes get amputated and lose their manhood, but certainly all the time they take with them a baggage of physical and psychological trauma, for life...Imagine that this demise of your children troubles you and many others in society, as it should, but none of you are allowed to comment about this, because of cultural prescription. So the loss of your children is met with silence, your silence. Imagine that your current and past governments have not and still do not save those lives. They are silent, too... Perhaps, in your imagined world, not all these youths die. Some of the survivors get ostracized from their community because they did not complete the rite of passage in the expected way. They too, because of their supposed failure, hide in silence, as though silence was a sanctuary.

Well, you need not brood on this too much; it's here, it's happening in your real world... You are part of a world with a culture that's been killing, and continues to kill, innocent young boys, who only wanted to be men. You are part of a world where those responsible for the death of young people go unpunished. You are, indeed, part of a world whose silence has given license to a culture to kill, and kill some more; and so, [you're] part of a world that watches while the innocent are dying, needlessly..."

~ Thando Mggolozana, *A Man Who Is Not a Man*

We begin with this long introduction, because male ceremonial circumcision is a rarely-spoken about injustice, mainly in tribal cultures. In more advanced societies, circumcision is commonly associated with Islam, Judaism, and as an acceptable North American practice for baby boys at birth, but the little-known practice involving tribal initiation rites has a devastating effect on many young men.

Circumcision is common practice among many cultures, especially throughout Africa. However, in societies such as the Xhosa people of southern Africa, severely unhygienic circumcisions, coupled with physically demanding initiation or "coming-of-age" rituals, often result in disease and death. Ulwaluko, the initiation rite of the amaXhosa people, involves not only circumcision, but also food restriction and a one-month



period of solitude. A doctor's report in 2016 revealed that nearly 1,000 participants in the ceremony have died from complications since 1995, and almost twice that have suffered lasting physical damage. Ceremonial circumcision is “manhood at a price”.

While one report indicates as many as 10 million men in Africa have undergone voluntary circumcision, often in unsanitary environments, the greater injustice comes in the form of forced circumcisions, for example, as a requirement to convert to Islam. Though social and political action has reduced the number of forced conversions and circumcisions in the last decade, many observances go unreported.

Due to the possible use of one blade for all initiates, the ritual also contributes to the spread of HIV and Hepatitis B. Efforts to reduce disease and virus transmission through sanitary and affordable circumcisions have produced noticeable results throughout the world. Still, many people groups suffer from lack of governmental intervention, basic education and medical training.



How to Pray

- The underlying issues related to this type of circumcision are lack of competence, supervision and regulation. Pray for brave advocates to speak up for and help protect young boys from unnecessary mutilation.
- Pray for governments to step in and regulate tribal initiation rites, especially when innocent youth are at risk of disease, maiming or death.
- Pray for men who have experienced botched circumcisions (and consequently need whole or part amputation) to find physical, emotional and spiritual healing.
- Pray that the veil of secrecy would be lifted and more people would become aware of this unsafe, life-endangering ritual.

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves;
ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up
for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.”

Proverbs 31:8-9 (NLT)

Genocide

"If the pictures of tens of thousands of human bodies being gnawed on by dogs do not wake us out of our apathy, I do not know what will."

**~ Undersecretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan
in 1994 on the Rwandan Genocide**

The history of national mass murder is well documented. From genocides such as the Holocaust or the horrors in Rwanda, to lesser-known events specific to the countries in which they took place, the systematic extermination of certain people groups has left trails of desolation throughout past generations.

The magnitude of genocide makes this type of evil almost surreal—death tolls in the hundreds of thousands, or even millions, are difficult to comprehend. Social movements and modern technology give humanity a glimpse of global events. The reality of mass genocide is sometimes literally right in front of our faces.

Still, the scope of certain atrocities goes largely unnoticed. The world's most recognised genocide is the ongoing chaos in Darfur, Sudan. It began in 2003 when regional non-Arab Darfuris resisted the Sudanese government because of oppression, opening the door for an "ethnic cleansing" campaign by the government. This campaign resulted in the death of 400,000 Darfuris and the displacement of 2,500,000 more, the United Human Rights Council reports. Along with high numbers of murder victims and refugees, widespread reports of violent rape darken the already ominous events.

Because of the definition of genocide—the attempt to eradicate whole people groups often by oppressive government regimes—it is difficult to predict and combat this injustice. Indicators come from analysing factors that have caused previous genocides in order to evaluate when a specific people group is at risk of being victimised on a mass level. Although no easy answers are available, putting an end to genocide begins through diplomacy and foreign relations between countries, specifically those with more influence in global politics.



"I once spoke to someone who had survived the genocide in Rwanda, and she said to me that there was now nobody left on the face of the earth, either friend or relative, who knew who she was."

~ Christopher Hitchens, *Hitch-22: A Memoir*



How to Pray

- Pray for the people and organisations who play a role in the process of recovery, reconciliation and sustainable peace in countries that have been devastated by genocide.
- Pray that God would convict nations who have been complicit in genocide, either through sins of commission (actual killing) or sins of omission (failing to intervene).
- Pray for the Church to arise and be the Church she is supposed to be: one body in Christ and a light to the world! May there be a willingness to show solidarity with those who suffer and to give generously to those in need.
- Pray for widows and orphans who must continue to survive despite their losses.
- Women are often raped for the purpose of “ethnic cleansing”. Pray for the children who have been conceived/born through this injustice as they are often marginalised or ostracised.

“...and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.”

Isaiah 61:3-4 (NIV)

Child Soldiers

"The villages that we captured and turned into bases as we went along and the forests that we slept in became my home. My squad was my family, my gun was my provider and protector, and my rule was to kill or be killed."

~ Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*

Captors can come at any moment. In countries torn by war, no child is safe. Children, most often taken forcibly from their homes during times of civil war or strife, have no choice in the matter. Estimates put the number of child soldiers around the world above 250,000; attempts to run away are thwarted, often with dire consequences. Sometimes, recruited children are forced to kill or injure a member of the community in an effort to break ties.

Youth are handed weapons as big as they are tall. Not meant to be held with skilled hands, they are the kind of guns anyone with two arms can point and shoot. Even so, most children, particularly those as young as ten years old, cannot endure the rigorous training of war. Most are given the immediate task to kill in order to begin desensitising them; sometimes it might even be a family member they must murder.

Single boys fill several roles as soldiers—from cooks to spies or for sex—though the majority are trained in combat. Girls, who make up an estimated 40 percent of child soldiers, suffer a much more terrifying fate. Those who aren't trained for combat are given as "wives" for male soldiers, a thin mask for sexual slavery. A high percentage of girl soldiers contract HIV or other diseases. Many are left with the burden of caring for children they have given birth to, who are also stigmatised.

It's clear that the most severe casualties are the children themselves. Western militaries are disadvantaged when fighting against these radical combatant groups like the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in central Africa. Any killing in war is a harrowing prospect, but killing children is even more disturbing, and many soldiers won't fight if youngsters are spotted.



WORLD HOTSPOTS



- Burundi
- Colombia
- DRC
- Liberia
- Myanmar
- Uganda

How to Pray

- The use of child soldiers has spread to almost every region of the world, but many governments continue to deny they exist. This is why we have the term “invisible soldiers” or “invisible children”. Pray the media would give more attention to this issue and for more international pressure on governments. Pray for people to be moved into action, even if it is uncomfortable.
- Pray for an end to the exporting of arms to countries that kidnap and exploit children as soldiers. Pray for communities to know how to protect children at risk.
- Pray for NGOs and Christian organisations to combine their efforts and establish rehabilitation programmes that are biblically sound. Pray for compassionate counsellors, gifted to facilitate healing.
- Pray for wholeness and dignity to be restored to each young life that has been crushed and disillusioned by the horror of atrocities they were forced to witness or commit.
- Pray for those who continue to use children in this appalling way. Pray that they would be spiritually transformed through salvation in Christ.

“Indeed, this is what the Lord says, ‘even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, and the tyrant’s spoils of war will be rescued; for I will contend with your opponent, and I will save your children.’”

Isaiah 49:25 (AMP)

Rape as a Weapon of War

"When I asked [Lila] if she would give me an interview about what happened to her, she responded, 'I will do anything to speak up and tell the truth of what they did to me and all the women in my community [in Iraq].' When asked if she would give me a full account despite cultural reservations about sharing the details of rape she said, 'My anger at what they did to me is bigger than anything else. I must speak...' When I asked Lila how she's doing now, she said, 'I have no past and no future at the moment. I am stuck in my anger and pain at what [the terrorist group] did to my family, my community and myself.' Lila must not be forgotten by the world."

~ Zainab Salbi, Women for Women International

The phrase "weapons of war"—especially concerning international terrorism—typically evokes images of guns and explosives. While a gun or bomb is dangerous, such instruments of death are just one example of weapons used to terrorise people groups. Yet there is another weapon—one that "erodes the fabric of a community in a way that few weapons can", a report by UNICEF states: rape.

While rape is an injustice no matter when or where it takes place, the scale and aftermath is particularly severe in times of war. Whether a woman is raped at gunpoint or trafficked into sexual slavery by an occupying force, such as a terrorist cell, the sexual abuse will influence not just her own, but her community's future for years to come. "Survivors face emotional torment, psychological damage, physical injuries, disease, social ostracism and many other consequences that can devastate their lives", says Amnesty International in their *Lives Blown Apart* report. "Women's lives and their bodies have been the unacknowledged casualties of war for too long."*

We tend to associate the horrors of rape with the emotional trauma it inflicts on the victim. In cultures where sexual impurity of any kind, willingly or unwillingly, brings shame, mass rape during times of terrorism or war compounds the widespread destruction brought on by combat. Indeed, when armies have moved on and the threat of artillery is past, the effects of rape remain permanent: sexually transmitted diseases, displacement, illegitimacy and suicide.



Mass rape, part of the “spoils of war”, often results in fractured families and communities. Even whole cultures may be impacted, often leading to people fleeing their homes. This is particularly true in instances where rape results in pregnancy—thus, in the minds of enemy soldiers, “cleansing” cultures for future generations.

**see reference on page 53*



How to Pray

- Since raped women are seen as impure, often no one will marry them; they end up shunned, abandoned and treated abominably by families and communities. Pray for others to walk with them through the journey of recovery and restoration to find self-worth.
- The physical pain and emotional trauma women suffer is long-lasting and devastating. Pray for a miraculous work of healing that restores women. Pray they will learn to know the God who loves them—scars and all—and desires to release them from pain.
- Pray the rules of warfare are changed so this evil is not allowed to continue. Pray for the hearts of men to be transformed by coming into a relationship with Christ.
- In some Muslim societies, rape against Christian girls is a form of jihad or “holy struggle” (war) against the enemies of Islam. Pray these girls are protected from such atrocity.

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes;
there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.

There shall be no more pain, for the
former things have passed away.”

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)

Displacement and Refugees

*"Refugees are neither seen nor heard, but they are everywhere.
They are witnesses to the most awful things that people can do to each other,
and they become storytellers simply by existing.
Refugees embody misery and suffering,
and they force us to confront terrible chaos and evil."*

~ Arthur C. Heldon

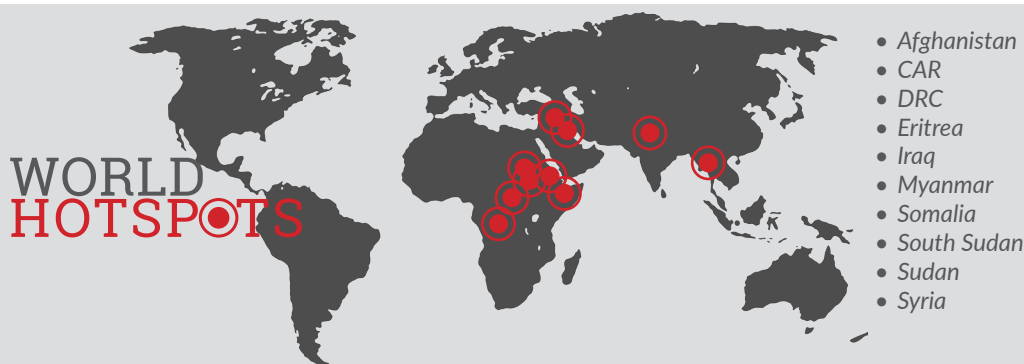
According to the World Evangelical Alliance, refugees, by definition, "are people who have been forced to flee their country due to war and/or persecution. Most countries have developed systems that make it nearly impossible for forcibly displaced people to prove their case for refugee status. No one knows how many genuine refugees are rejected by these countries every year, leaving them vulnerable for exploitation and deportation".

In March of 2011, civil war broke out in Syria. Two months later, no more than 300 refugees had registered in Turkey. At the beginning of 2017, with the conflict still escalating, the U.N. estimates the number of Syrians needing humanitarian assistance exceeded 13 million, with 2.7 million in Turkey and 6 million internally displaced still in Syria. Men, women, and children poured into these surrounding countries with little more than the clothes on their backs. Some are doctors, lawyers and other business professionals, once rich but now poor. It is a distressing yet accurate picture.

This is not a holiday. Refugees usually flee from their homes in the face of complete destruction. Whether their flight is the result of an oppressive government or war, becoming a refugee rarely leaves time to pack a suitcase. Even with the goodwill of countries who take refugees in, supplies are rarely sufficient for the thousands or millions of additional individuals who need shelter, food and clothes. United Nations High Commission for Refugees also reported that recent years have seen dramatic increases in the number of child refugees. Many lose access to education and other basic needs, which increases their risk of being trafficked or sexually exploited.



The clash in Syria—and the resulting exodus of millions of refugees—has shed light on the scale of global displacement. But the grim fact is that Syrian refugees account for a small percentage of an estimated 60 million displaced persons worldwide—a number unprecedented since World War II. Of those 60 million, only one third are registered as refugees. The others are internally displaced, forced out of their homes while remaining in their native country.



How to Pray

- Pray that God would, by His grace, provide for the essential needs of security, shelter, water, food and medical care.
- Times of crisis often make people more open to spiritual matters. Pray for the Church to see each refugee crisis as an opportunity to share the love of Jesus at a time when people are needy and open to hear the hope of the gospel.
- Pray for the protection of refugee children, now at higher risk of trafficking. They are also at risk for delays in their education.
- Pray that God would raise up mediators and bring peace to countries where wars, violence and persecution are forcing people from their homes.

“But the stranger who dwells with you shall be to you as one born among you; and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”
Leviticus 19:34 (AMP)

Human Trafficking

"It ought to concern every person, because it is a debasement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at our social fabric. It ought to concern every business, because it distorts markets. It ought to concern every nation, because it endangers public health and fuels violence and organized crime. I'm talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking, which must be called by its true name—modern slavery."

~ Former US President Barack Obama

"Trafficking" is a buzzword that has circulated the globe in the past decade, becoming so familiar that it has almost lost its power. While the term "human trafficking" typically encompasses a broad range of more specific examples, such as sexual enslavement, forced labour or the recruitment of child soldiers, its definition—the trading of human beings as property—still carries a heavy weight from one end of the earth to the other. However, all forms of international injustice involving adults or children, whether sexual or industrial, include trafficking to some degree, particularly as one person or people group takes control of another for personal gain.

Widely regarded as the fastest growing criminal enterprise, the overwhelming statistics of the trafficking industry seem unconquerable. The 2016 *Trafficking In Persons* (TIP) report stated that an estimated 45 million men, women and children are sold into slavery around the globe each year, creating a \$150 billion illicit human trafficking industry. No country is immune. Even the most advanced cultures can turn a blind eye to kidnapping and enslavement within their borders.

Typically, human trafficking focuses on the international sex industry, as women and children are sold into prostitution and other forms of sexual bondage. A United Nations report in 2012 indicated that approximately 80% of trafficking crimes at any given moment are related to sexual slavery; however, there is also a high demand for children as cheap labour. *Manna Freedom* reports that the average lifespan of a child sold into sexual slavery is just two years.



As awareness has spread globally, many countries have developed political action groups to combat human trafficking. Sadly, however, the industry continues to morph and change, remaining a powerful international force that continues to exploit millions of men, women and children each year.



How to Pray

- Pray the supply chains that lead victims into slavery (from recruiters to consumers) will be shattered. Pray for networks to be exposed and for predators to be brought to justice.
- Often people are lured into trafficking schemes at the hands of someone they know. Pray for communities to be aware of the warning signs and trained to report, and to learn to take action. Social media is a common tool widely used by perpetrators.
- Countless people work tirelessly in prayer and action to see victims freed on all levels. Pray for all those involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of a survivor: law enforcement, social workers, skills trainers, medical staff and volunteers.
- Illegal trade in human beings is the top human rights issue. Pray for governments and the Church to take a courageous stand against this contemptible crime.
- In some Middle Eastern countries, Christian girls are forcibly taken and made to marry Muslim men. This is a form of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Pray they maintain their faith and influence the people around them until they are freed.

“If a man is found stealing one of his brothers of the people of Israel, and if he treats him as a slave or sells him, then that thief shall die.

So you shall purge the evil from your midst.”

Deuteronomy 24:7 (ESV)

Sexual Exploitation

"It's hard to describe the exploitation—it was just everywhere; it was just a part of life. Girls would come to the corner I was working beat up or looking downcast because they had been emotionally abused by their pimp. There was this girl who tried working my corner, we got into a huge fight, and then I realised how young she was. I tried to protect her; she was supposed to be in a foster home, but she was being pimped out. Then one day, she just disappeared. I saw her pimp a few weeks later and asked him where she was. He just laughed and said, 'She's gone. I sold her at a truck stop.'"

~ Trisha, in Canada

Every culture continues to deal with sobering numbers of sexual exploitation victims. No country is immune to this globe-spanning offense. Though most commonly thought of as a danger for women and children, victims can be any age and any gender.

Sexual exploitation manipulates and/or coerces someone into having sex with the promise of receiving something in return—something they believe they need. In one context, it may be sexual coercion by a teacher for a better grade in school. In another, it may be sex in exchange for food. It all comes with a potential of some reward: gifts, money, drugs or alcohol, even the hope of a caring relationship. Unfortunately, once a person is victimised by sexual exploitation, he or she is caught in an endless web of continued physical and emotional abuse.

Often, sexual exploitation begins long before sexual activity. In many cases, perpetrators will develop relationships with their victims, trapping them over time until the man, woman or child is too emotionally invested to resist. For this reason, children from homes with broken relationships, or those in situations of poverty, are especially susceptible to exploitation. But what begins with "affirmation" to draw the victim in quickly turns to threats of physical control, violence and, in some cases, addiction to drugs and alcohol.



Extreme cases of exploitation can end in death for those who are victimised, particularly when the manipulation leads to forced prostitution. Drug addiction and sexually-transmitted diseases carry the risks of premature death. However, even in cases where the victim is able to escape his or her situation, the emotional weight of the experiences brings lifelong torment.

For people in underprivileged cultures, sexual exploitation is stark and blatant, as the perpetrators offer a seemingly ideal means of escape from poverty. In developed cultures, exploitation can be more hidden. Beginning in the dark corners of online social communities and social media, predators seek to develop relationships with their targets. Once drawn in, victimisation begins.

WORLDHOTSPOTS

Sexual exploitation happens everywhere.



How to Pray

- Survivors of exploitation share stories of daily degradation; often isolated and intimidated, they live under constant risks of emotional and physical harm. Many suffer severe trauma, including symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and disassociation. Pray for complete healing and a new way to support themselves.
- Women forced into prostitution routinely earn more money for sex without condoms, which leaves them at greater risk of contracting sexually transmissible infections, including HIV. Pray they would have access to safe and effective healthcare.
- In India, temple slaves—or devadasi—are exploited until the priests tire of them and then sell them to the highest bidder as child concubines. Pray for additional shelters for these children, to provide them with a safe and protected environment.
- Sexual brokenness is also at the heart of the individuals who purchase sex. Pray for them to find healing and salvation so they are also set free.

“Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun: I saw the tears of the oppressed—and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors—and they have no comforter.”

Ecclesiastes 4:1 (NIV)

Child Pornography

“The ritual sacrifice of children has been taboo for thousands of years. Yet tragically it is practiced every day across our world. We sacrifice children on the altars of our most destructive sins. When the sickness of pornography has run to its most evil and destructive end, it takes the form of child pornography.”

~ Wess Stafford, former president and CEO of Compassion International

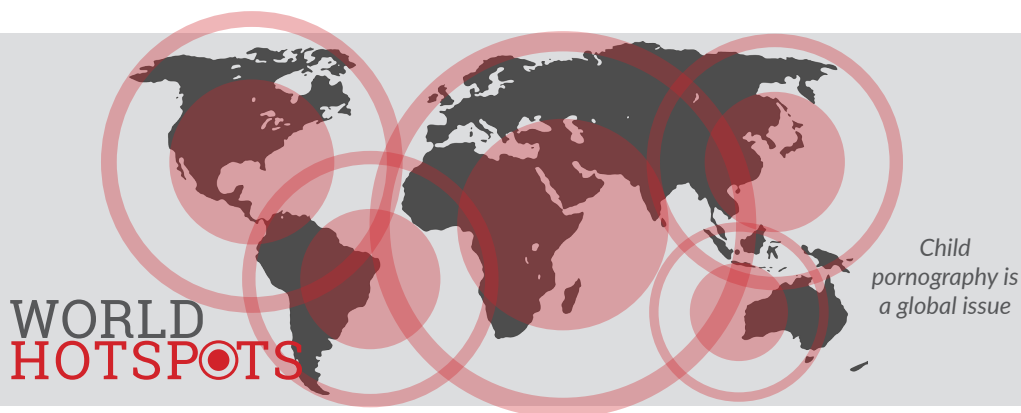
Coerced child pornography is one of many outlets for child abuse—an outlet that has, since the invention of the World Wide Web nearly 30 years ago, grown exponentially. The National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children’s Cyber Tipline reported a 5,000 percent increase in the distribution of child sexual abuse “imagery” (pornography) from 2007 to 2013.

This is simply one dark outcome of child abuse and injustice worldwide. Child pornography has opened avenues for abuse and injustice toward children that previously were closed to the most developed countries in the world. With the advent of the Internet, the distribution and demand for child pornography has elevated the practice to an estimated US\$3 billion industry. The Internet has facilitated two methods of distribution: commercial circulation and sharing among offenders through social networks. What makes the business of producing, selling and distributing sexually explicit material involving children such a dreadful industry? It is not the profit, but the lives that lie behind every dollar. Once released, the content is distributed internationally, never to be fully eradicated.

The “end result” of sexually explicit content involving children may be viewed in a moment, but the devastation transcends time. The abuse of the child often goes back long before the pornographic content is produced, and the victims bear the scars for the rest of their lives. Additionally, the negative, long-term effects on users’ brains have also been well-documented, especially for teenagers. In fact, it is medically verified



that pornography alters brain pathways and chemicals, creating a dependency similar to that of drug addiction. This fact should raise concern on many different levels for victim, offenders and users.



How to Pray

- Pray for pornography networks to be stopped and perpetrators to be brought to justice. Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of those who are addicted to pornography and convict them of its destructive influence.
- Pray for the pornography industry to lose its grip! Pray for people, especially men, to deal with the root issues and not be controlled by lustful desires that lead to the degradation and objectifying of women and children.
- Pray for increased networking, unity and cooperation among groups tackling this issue. Pray for boys and girls who have a long journey of recovery from such abuse.
- Repent on behalf of your nation for allowing pornography to enter homes and churches. Ask for forgiveness for the objectification and abuse of children for profit and the idolatry of sexual sin.

"If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Matthew 18:6 (NIV)

Slave Labour

"I can feel the burning on my cheeks as she slaps me. It is night and her kids have gone to sleep. Grasping me by the hair, she bangs my head into the wall and throws me to the floor. She kicks me and hits me with a broom. If I scream or fight back, she will kill me. So I bite my lips to bare the pain and then I pass out.

This is my daily routine, the life of a slave."

~ Beatrice Fernando, End Slavery Now

A young woman leaves her home—where no one knows what their next meal will be or where it will come from—to earn a living for her family's sake. A well-dressed, professional man promises a wage good enough to support her family. She arrives on location only to find that her working conditions are no better than a prison: around-the-clock labour, little or no food, stifling heat, and no natural light. After weeks in the oppressive environment, she realises a dark truth: the wage she expected will never come. She is trapped.

It is a far too common story, and not restricted to the underdeveloped world but also widespread throughout first world nations. It is a disturbing fact that an estimated 21 million people are victims of forced labour, 11.4 million women and girls, and 9.5 million men and boys. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) reports that "three out of every 1,000 people are victims of forced labour across the world, trapped in jobs which they were coerced or deceived into and which they cannot leave". About 5.5 million (26%) are below the age of 18.

Most forced labourers are exploited in the private economy, by individuals or enterprises. Of these, almost one fourth are victims of forced sexual exploitation. The remainder are victims of exploitation in economic activities such as manufacturing, domestic work or agriculture. Slaves are often used to harvest tea, coffee beans, coco beans (for chocolate) and much more. The fishing industry in Thailand is a billion-dollar business and major hub for human rights abuse and trafficking, in spite of recent arrests and the threat of boycotts.



Slave labour remains an oppressive environment with little or no hope of escape. For those who come from poverty, the pressure of providing for their families compels them to continue. The fate of those who are sold or kidnapped and then trafficked into forced labour is even bleaker. Many are threatened or beaten if they try to leave.



How to Pray

- The desire to produce a profit (often driven by greed) is the largest motivating force behind slavery. Pray for greater awareness of the need to make ethical choices about what we buy (e.g. Fair Trade) to avoid consuming products that are grown, produced or developed by slaves.
- As long as there is poverty, there is the potential for slave labour. Pray for business initiatives that will transform communities and break the cycle of poverty.
- In North America, illegal migrant labour, usually from Central and South America, is rampant. Pray for tighter border controls and awareness of this abuse.
- The legislation protecting children from forced labour exists but is often ignored. Pray for stricter local and global enforcement of these laws.
- Children are often required to work to support their impoverished families. Pray for viable employment opportunities for parents so their children can go to school and enjoy a normal childhood.

“In that day, declares the Lord Almighty,
‘I will break the yoke off their necks
and will tear off their bonds;
no longer will foreigners enslave them.’”
Jeremiah 30:8 (NIV)

Bonded Labour

"They have been bought and traded as property and that is how they see themselves. They don't know how to show emotions. They can't smile or frown or express grief."

~ Roseann Rajan, a counsellor with International Justice Mission

Bonded labour is an injustice with many names, including "debt bondage" and "pawn slavery". The ownership of one human by another in exchange for the payment of debt is prohibited by international law, yet it is still called "the most widespread... form of slavery in the world" by Anti-Slavery International. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has labelled bonded labour "the principle form of slavery" in South Asia, where the harsh conditions of brick kilns employ many debt slaves.

Dating back thousands of years, bonded labour continues to enslave humans, even though most governments prohibit it. ILO reports indicate that bonded labour claims approximately 18 million victims worldwide, the majority of which (approximately 9.5 million) come from India, Nepal and Pakistan.

While forcing a man, woman or child into labour to pay off a debt remains a common injustice, the effects are often cyclical, since the "debt" between one person and another continues on from one generation to the next. Loans for medical treatment commonly start the cycle of debt bondage within families. Often, bonded labour is directly connected with social status, with higher classes preying on the weak and taking advantage of lower social groups, like the Dalits of India.

Indigenous peoples throughout Latin America have historically laboured under debt bondage, and the suffering continues to this day. Wages can be nonexistent or so minimal that there is no money for basic needs. Workers become indebted to their owners, who pay them in food and clothing at high prices, assuring the debt continues, perpetuating the cycle of bondage.



While bonded labour of one human by another is evil enough, the injustice goes further when a child—particularly the child of a widowed woman—is forced into debt bondage on behalf of another, often a relative. A young boy or girl is far more easily ensnared in the never-ending cycle of bonded labour than an adult, and the effects are far more damaging.



How to Pray

- Pray for healing of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual trauma of those caught in the never-ending cycle of forced labour to repay debt.
- Pray for children, the innocent victims of generational debt.
- Pray for better laws and legislation regarding labour trafficking and labour violations around the world. Pray for enforcement of these laws.
- Pray for the continuing development of disadvantaged nations. Pray that a decent standard of living would be established so debts are not incurred.
- Pray people would have opportunities for education and employment, escaping the hopeless circumstances that leave them impoverished and in debt to others.

“But this is a people plundered and looted,
all of them trapped in pits or hidden away in prisons.
They have become plunder, with no one to rescue them;
they have been made loot, with no one to say, ‘Send them back.’”
Isaiah 42:22 (NIV)

Organ Harvesting

"My condition, daily, was I was ashamed I couldn't find a job," he said. "I couldn't steal, could I? The money wouldn't be Halal. So I sold it, my body. I didn't use the money for myself. I just wanted to make my parents happy."

~ Dasep (age 24), from Indonesia, sold a kidney for \$7,500, a decision driven by his family's deep poverty.

Selling organs: it seems more like science fiction than reality. The United Nations public health body estimates that 10,000 human organs—more than one every hour—are harvested, sold and traded on the black market each year.

Due to the enforced illegality of the process, organ harvesting is the most underground form of trafficking worldwide. From beginning to end, most cases of organ harvesting include securing the victim (for payment or by kidnapping), harvesting the organ, transporting to the place of surgery and transplanting into the recipient—all steps taking place off the radar.

The highest demands on the harvesting black market are kidneys, accounting for approximately 75% of all organ transactions. The rise in obesity, heart problems and diabetes in developed countries has generated a higher demand for kidneys than the legal supply can keep up with. And while recipients pay up to US\$200,000 per organ, the donors usually receive less than US\$5,000 in exchange for their supply (if they are paid at all). The rest of the profit is lost in the web of transporting, surgery and lining the pockets of the perpetrators.

Even in the best of circumstances, organ trafficking is dangerous. It carries the risk of disease, failed surgery and rejection of the organs by the host. The darkest side of this already shaded industry comes in the form of forced harvesting, in which victims are tricked or kidnapped and their organs forcibly removed, often at the cost of their lives.



Locations for forced harvesting include Asia, South America, Africa, and Eastern Europe. The organs are then transported to developed countries for use, the most popular being Australia, Canada, Japan, United Kingdom and the USA. Global steps to regulate the sale of organs have not done much to eradicate this form of human trafficking.



How to Pray

- Pray for organ-harvesting schemes to be discovered and brought to justice.
- Pray for a reduction in the demand for illegal kidneys and other organs.
- Pray for advocates who have the courage to reach out and assist those who have been wounded by the practice of organ harvesting, as many hide in shame.
- Each life is precious in the eyes of God. Pray that the human dignity of every life will be restored and honoured.
- Pray for an end to the cycle of poverty that leads people to desperate measures of selling their own body parts.

"In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.
I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those
who are treacherous without cause."
Psalm 25:1-3 (NIV)

Baby Farms

In 2015, a Ghanaian undercover journalist travelled to Nigeria to investigate a dark secret that centred on the manipulation of vulnerable men and women. Known as baby farming, the practice involves paying women or girls—often involving emotional pressure—to give birth to babies as surrogates for couples who are incapable of having their own children.

~ Taken from Al Jazeera Media Network

Also referred to as “baby factories” or “child harvesting”, on the surface the intent behind baby farms may actually seem honourable. In fact, in the late Victorian Britain era, “baby farming” was an accepted practice whereby a child or infant was taken in exchange for payment. Today, with stigmas surrounding infertility and unwed pregnancy in developing countries, the assumption is that two families can be helped in this process. However, like other illegal operations, baby farming remains an underground industry for one primary reason: greed. Young, pregnant women, in conjunction with desperate, childless couples provide an excessive profit into the hands of traffickers, who often pose as doctors to capitalise on the suffering of others. For those couples who are desperate enough to purchase a baby, traffickers can bring in up to US\$5,000 per birth.

To keep up with varying supply and demand, traffickers often house these purchased (or trafficked) women and impregnate them. Once born, the babies are ready to be sold at a moment's notice. The constant circulation of babies and customers has resulted in a lucrative business for traffickers. The living conditions for pregnant women may be bleak. The suffering of young mothers and their children is of no concern, however, to the traffickers, who view people as a commodity for profit.

“Baby farmers” will use drastic measures in order to continue their practices, especially when working with couples who are struggling to conceive but are opposed to buying a baby. Al Jazeera's investigation reported that some traffickers, posing as doctors,



would inject unaware women with hormones to give an appearance of pregnancy. After nine months, the “doctors” would mimic a Caesarean birth, presenting the woman with a baby they have taken from a farm and secretly kept hidden until the “birth”. These women do not realise the baby is not naturally their own. This sinister practice deceives many, financially lining the pockets of the perpetrators.



How to Pray

- Baby factories have been primarily discovered in Africa and East Asia. Pray that God will expose these “farms” and rescue those entrapped.
- Ask God to protect young girls from being lured into this industry and other forms of slavery.
- In 2017, four women were rescued from a “farm” in western Africa. As in every case, it’s complicated for law enforcement and rescue workers when dealing with the women and their babies who have been conceived through rape. Pray for wisdom in helping these traumatised women and for the babies to grow up in good homes.
- Pray that the desperate need to overcome poverty would not cause more women to be used as baby manufacturers.
- Despite the baby’s origin (potentially unknown to the adoptive parents), pray that God develops bonding in families created in this deceptive manner.

“At that time,’ declares the Lord,
‘I will be the God of all the families of Israel,
and they will be my people.’”
Jeremiah 31:1 (NIV)

Conclusion

“Rescue the perishing; don’t hesitate to step in and help. If you say, ‘Hey, that’s none of my business,’ will that get you off the hook? Someone is watching you closely, you know— Someone not impressed with weak excuses.”

Proverbs24:11-12 (The Message)

You have taken a hard journey as you read through the pages of this book, confronted with information that is often appalling and inexcusable. In our introduction, we warned you that it would be easier to close your eyes or turn aside. We are thankful that you did not. The question remains: what will you do now—now that you have seen the faces of injustice?

*“You may choose to look the other way,
but you can never say again that you did not know.”*

**~ William Wilberforce, 1759-1833, leader of the abolition movement to
eradicate the slave trade in England**

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transforming lives
and communities

*"He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners..."*

Isaiah 61:1b (NIV)

Why is OM concerned about a hard-to-measure concept like justice?

First, because God is serious about justice, and we want to reflect Him in all we do. Second, because there is so much injustice in our world, we must move from lamenting or ignoring it to winning it for one person at a time.

Advocating for justice is concerned with the deeper, often invisible forces in societies, not only their consequences. Behind child labour is a lack of systems for children's rights, and women caught in prostitution often have no alternatives for income.

Working for justice involves showing compassion to the oppressed and wronged in practical ways, such as skills training or pursuing legal campaigns to raise awareness in the world and among God's people.

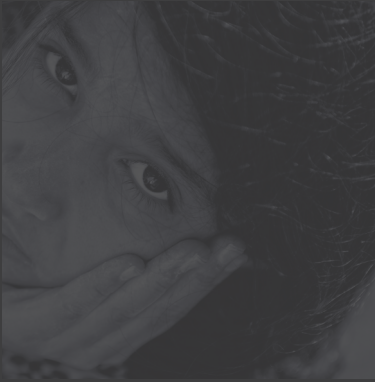
You may have a deep passion to help those suffering injustice. Perhaps you feel called to legislative intervention or other means of identifying and confronting underlying issues. You may have the ability and platform to speak out on behalf of the voiceless. All these talents and more can be used to fight for justice, because everyone has the dignity of being made in God's likeness.

It's time to stand up for those who cannot defend themselves. What part will you play in seeing the walls of injustice break down?





FACES OF INJUSTICE



Injustice has many faces: from a very young Middle Eastern girl crying out, knowing her father is arranging for her to marry a much older man, to a ten year old African boy, trained to kill or be killed as a rebel soldier.

The information in this book will not be easy to read. In fact, you will likely come “face to face” with realities that may be easier to turn away from. However, we believe it is God’s time to open our eyes and our hearts to those most vulnerable.

Join us as we pray for the walls of injustice to crumble.

