



Freedom Challenge Prayer Meeting Resource #5

Pray Freedom for the Americas

**“The LORD will set you free from your sorrow, suffering and slavery.
Isaiah 14:3”**

Background

North America, South America and the Caribbean are regions of vast ethnic, cultural and economic diversity. The gap between rich and poor is ever widening. The United States has the largest economy in the world and is the most technologically developed economy in North America. The USA is a destination country for human trafficking; the online sex trade is exploding, with one site earning an estimated \$20 million in 2010. Children are often victims. Currently 50 000 people are working in forced labor situations. Of the 45 000 to 50 000 trafficking victims that are brought to the U.S. each year, 30 000 come from Asia, 10 000 from Latin America and 5000 from other regions like the former Soviet Union.

A Story

Las Vegas, Nevada

Her ankles and wrists are shackled. She’s wearing used sweat pants in the color of jailhouse orange. She shuffles to the courtroom to face the judge, her mother, and an uncertain future.

Lee-Anne is a fourteen-year-old who was sold for sex.

She wants to go home to her house in the suburbs and the baby sister she hardly knows. Now, facing a sympathetic judge and a mother who wants to make sure she’s safe, Lee-Anne is being told she can’t go home.

It was just after midnight a week ago when Lee-Anne was arrested by undercover police for prostitution charges on the Vegas strip. Although she exchanged sex for money, in the eyes of the law she’s a victim because of her age and the circumstances under which she was sold: by a pimp on a sex website, a pimp who used drugs to entice her and took everything she earned.”

Lee-Anne does not look up as she tells the judge: “It made me feel so disgusting. I just wanted to get it over with and take a shower.” The dark hair covers her face, hiding shame. “It never made me feel pretty, not one time; not one time.” Lee-Anne was seeing four or five men a day, at the standard rate of \$300 for an hour, \$150 for a half.

The problem, explained the judge, is that like so many other underage trafficking victims, “Lee-Anne is a chronic runaway. That is how she was picked up by a pimp after she took off from home in the first place.”

What Lee-Anne did not tell the judge—and not even her mom—is that the abuse already started when she was five. Her father, from whom her mother has been divorced for some time, molested her for years. No shower can wash that off, either.

Lee-Ann may be a victim, but she can’t go home. No one trusts that she won’t run again... back into the arms of a pimp.

Issues in USA

There are hundreds of thousands of girls under the age of eighteen, who, like Lee-Anne, are sold as sex slaves in the U.S. The online sex trade is highly exploitative and ensnaring. Let us pray for the 100,000 teenagers whose drug and other addictions make them vulnerable to being abused and exploited.

- **Pray** for the Church to become educated, to become activated, to reach out and help set these captives free.

Issues in Canada

Amihan thought her future was rosy when she came to Canada from the Philippines as a mail order bride to the owner of a growing laundromat business. Soon after, her life began falling apart. For one, she learned she was his third wife. He beat her, restricted her freedom of movement, stopped sending money to her family and even controlled her diet.

Prayer Points

- The mail order business in Canada (and other countries) is thriving, thanks in part to the internet. This phenomenon has become a major component of the international trafficking of women in the midst of intensifying globalization. **Pray** for the many women from mainly Eastern European and Asian origin who are lured to Canada as mail order brides, only to find themselves in very marginalized and abusive situations. **Pray** for their escape, renewed hope and viable options for their future.
- **Pray** for foreign national domestic workers who are often smuggled into Canada by their employers. Sometimes they are migrant workers who enter the country of their own free will but with limited choices. These live-in workers are controlled, threatened, and mostly underpaid. **Pray** for this marginalized group who are seldom treated with dignity and respect. Let’s intercede for their freedom and better working conditions.
- Canada’s Aboriginal female population is prostituted and trafficked at disproportionate levels. Aboriginal youth are only 3 – 5% of the Canadian population, and yet in some cities they are 90% of the visible sex trade. Let us **pray** for this ethnic minority, which is vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. **Pray**, instead, that God’s Kingdom may come in their lives and for them to become Light-bearers who no longer walk in shame.

Issues in Brazil

Brazil is a source country for sex trafficking both within the country and abroad, as well as a source country for men and children in the national labor force.

Prayer Points

- **Pray** specifically for the vast rural areas of the country, which pose a significant challenge. There are a number of wealthy plantation owners who don't want the laws to change. Intercede for the growing number of NGOs who are trying to help, specifically by implementing fair labor laws. **Pray** that God will use them to become a strong voice against unrighteousness and evil, making a practical difference on ground level.
- Internal trafficking of Brazilians, especially into forced labor, is monumental in its scope. Brazilian slaves have been found working in the production of sugar cane, ethanol, cattle, corn, cotton, soy, charcoal, and other industries. **Pray** for Fair Trade policies to be enforced in large industries, as well as the protection for workers at grassroots level.
- The unequal concentration of wealth in Brazil results in a situation of marginality which leaves 20 million people dependent and more than 40 million children and adolescents needy or abandoned. This situation throws more children into prostitution every day. **Pray** for those who feel hopeless and without positive life choices.
- **Pray** for us to stand in the gap for the up to 400, 000 children who are sold into prostitution each year, with more young boys than in many other places. Stand against the commercial evil of sex tourism, which is seeking to destroy the lives of so many in Brazil.

Issues in Colombia

Continued armed violence in Colombia has displaced many communities, making them vulnerable to human trafficking. Guerrilla and paramilitary groups forcibly recruit children as combatants; the government estimates that nearly 6,000 children may be exploited under such conditions.

Prayer Points

- **Pray** for government and international intervention in this situation. **Pray**, too, that ongoing drug-wars may cease, bringing stability and peace.
- Colombia is a major source country for women and girls subjected to sex trafficking in Latin America, the Caribbean, Western Europe, Asia, and North America, as well as a transit and destination country for people subjected to forced labor. Trafficking robs people of their God-given potential and quality of life. **Pray** for groups who are at high risk for trafficking. These include displaced persons, poor women in rural areas, and the relatives of members in criminal organizations.

Issues in Haiti

After the devastating earthquake in Haiti in 2010, poverty has spread exponentially. This is the reason why Cecile sold four of her five children for 30 Haitian gourds (R5.00/76p) each. The stranger said, they would be adopted by European parents and have a much better future. Her children were not taken to Europe, however, but are now domestic and, in some cases, sexual slaves in the capital of Port-au-Prince. The money only lasted a few months.

Prayer Points

- Haiti has more child slaves than any other country in the Western Hemisphere. **Pray** for the people of Haiti, still recovering after the earthquake; pray they will not be driven to extreme solutions like Cecile. In many cases, traffickers are posing as government officials, taking advantage of the vulnerable.
- 45% of the population in Haiti is under the age of 15. Only 30 % of children go to school. Let us **pray** for this vulnerable part of the population, for much more international protection measures to be put into place and for the deep void existing in the area of education.

Action Point

Ask God to make you aware of those who are isolated and needy in your neighborhood and befriend them.