

Philosophy of Ministry: Human Trafficking

**Assemblies of God U.S. Missions
Compassionate Missionary Council**

The four-fold mission of the Assemblies of God values the demonstration of compassion as an integral part of our fourth reason for being. This is lived out in our core values to proclaim Jesus; to invest in the next generation; to plant churches; to resource our constituency; and to pray. In response to the societal evil of human trafficking, or modern-day slavery, it is the goal of U.S. Missions and the Compassionate Missionary Council to implement our core values by resourcing our U.S. missionaries in each of the Seven Windows of U.S. Missions as their ministries engage with local and national community efforts, including local churches, to end this crime. This goal reflects the heart of the General Council shown in its 2009 adoption of Resolution 20, to “strongly condemn” and “actively confront” the sin of human trafficking.

The demonstration of compassion is best built on the “4 P’s” model as described in the Global Trafficking in Persons Report¹ authorized by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). First signed into law in 2000 and most recently reauthorized in 2013, the TVPA identified governmental, professional, and community roles necessary for a sustainable response to human trafficking: Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution; the fourth “P”, Partnership, was identified in 2009 by then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and added to subsequent updates. As members of the community, we are committed to collaboration under the fourth “P”, identifying our expertise and resources and assessing how and where we can best support local and national efforts. Of course, as members of the Church, many professionals serve within all four “P’s”, in the areas of law enforcement, victim services, and other areas such as residential facilities, where certification and licensing are required; thus, they become salt and light in their communities. Within the framework of the Seven Windows of U.S. Missions, however, ministry response will be based on assessment of expertise and resources to ensure a consistent compassionate response respecting the intersection of public, private, faith-based, nonprofit, and governmental roles as we work together in our local communities.

The fourth “P”, partnership, is best implemented when viewed as a community safety net approach utilizing a variety of expertise and resources. Consequently, it is recommended that U.S. missionaries partner with an existing local task force, coalition, or alliance. Biblical wisdom admonishes counting the cost before starting a project; failure to do so may result in over-promising and under-delivering, or even worse, compromising the safety of the victims as well as of those trying to help. U.S. missionaries involved in anti-trafficking efforts will best represent our fellowship when they demonstrate a level of

¹ “Trafficking in Persons Report 2013,” U.S. Department of State, July 11, 2013, <http://www.state.gov> .

understanding and expertise as described in the Human Trafficking Resource Document² and in U.S. Missions policy as approved by the U.S. Missions Executive Committee.

Many local, state, and federal programs need volunteers and partners in order to serve victims of human trafficking—professionals can offer pro bono services such as dentistry, health care, counseling, even haircuts. Many excellent resources have already been developed and funded by our U.S. tax dollars; consequently, it is good stewardship and within the spirit of partnership to integrate those tools whenever possible. A good example is the Internet Safety Curriculum available through netsmartz.org. A local church may not have the expertise in internet safety, but they can provide a resource—a children’s classroom—and bring to their community an opportunity to learn about an excellent prevention tool, thus telling their neighbors, “We care about your children.” As another example, many churches lack the resources and expertise to fund and staff a residential care facility meeting local, state, and federal requirements, but may have members who can contribute to such a facility in a variety of ways. A brief summary of “best practices” for churches can be found on the website, along with example Memorandums of Understanding between various providers of services.

Equipping U.S. missionaries, interested churches, and individuals with resources and increasing the visibility of missionaries to the local church can help strengthen the local church response and help build prevention strategies. Toward that end, links to appropriate governmental agencies, educational materials, and training opportunities researched and vetted by experienced missionaries, Compassionate Missionary Council members, or other trusted entities will be posted on the website, www.agusmresources.ag.org. Connecting U.S. missionaries with the local church can also help with discipleship and the implementation of demand reduction strategies—for example, a missionary may be experienced in helping a church establish an addiction recovery program, thus addressing pornography addiction as a possible contributing factor to human trafficking.

In summary, it is recommended that ministry be evaluated for sustainability and stability and positioned for partnership in light of the best use of expertise and resources.

Credits:

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The Orange County (California) Human Trafficking Task Force
Resolution 20 sponsors, Montana District Council and Northern Missouri District Executive Presbytery:
http://ag.org/top/Events/General_Council_2009/Business/Resolutions/Resolution_20_Human_Trafficking.pdf

² “Human Trafficking: A Resource Document,” *Assemblies of God, Official Statements*, July, 2011, <http://ag.org>.