

SLAVERY NO MORE 2012 GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE
August 10-11 ~ LOS ANGELES, CA

PANEL – Affecting a Culture Fostering Slavery

Peter White: Our next panel will be moderated by another great man doing this work. He has worked helping the poor in the United Kingdom, worked establishing aid for an AIDS victim community in India. He's currently project director with Oasis USA, working to fight trafficking domestically and internationally. He, too, is another great man with a great big heart for victims. You've heard him talk about community, and he's incredibly attuned to culture and the impact of our culture on this problem. He's got a great panel of folks who are going to explore what that looks like, a multifaceted look at what that means to change our culture and how it affects this issue. Welcome Kevin Potter and his great panel.

Kevin Potter: We're going to look at second culture. What that means, what that looks like. We're going to go through a couple of questions here; I'll give you an early warning. I want you to think of some questions to ask these guys. Culture is a multi-headed beast. You're all impacting into it. In Los Angeles it's multicultural city. You may come from different aspects to it. I think it was Mahatma Ghandi who said, *"A nations culture resides in the hearts and minds of its people."* From Kevin Potter, *"Culture will affect laws. Laws may or may not affect culture."*

I'd encourage you as you think of it as we work through this, think of some questions please to ask our panel as we look at how does American culture contribute to the problem and the atrocities of human trafficking. We have Julian who you may have heard about over these last couple of days. Harmony from Treasures and April who you just heard. Joe is the Director of Oasis, so he's my boss. I've got to watch my P's and Q's. Then there's Priscilla, and Priscilla is a journalist. She's got a Masters in Intercultural Studies, and she's doing research on how to holistically restore people who've been victims of human trafficking back into society.

I'm going to first ask Harmony, in relation to the culture what are some of the indicators that this culture is becoming more accepting to the sex industry and how can we confront it and derail the influences?

Harmony Dust: I would say one of the indicators is the fact that there are more women in the sex industry than any other time in history. We have a high end demand for sex which is seen in the research that shows that 70% of men ages 18 to 28 are regularly viewing porn and that one in three visitors to porn websites are women. I mentioned yesterday in my talk that we're spending \$3,000 a second in this country on pornography. Essentially what I would like to communicate is that we cannot simultaneously be fueling the commercial sex industry and compartmentalize that and think it has nothing to do with trafficking. If you were here for my talk yesterday, you know that 70% of female trafficking victims are trafficked into the commercial sex industry. We as an anti-trafficking community if we're committed to fighting the anti-trafficking with the anti-trafficking movement, we

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can do that and simultaneously be fueling the commercial sex industry. Probably not the most popular girl in the room, but that's okay.

Kevin Potter: There are elephants in the room that we really need to grab. We had people here who may have similar hearts, but we live in a reality of a world where there are these challenges. There are challenges in relation to the pimp culture that is out there. Julian would you like to focus on that area of pimp culture that is a part of our culture?

Julian Sher: I have a couple of slides that I hope will work to give you an example of the pimping culture. Pimps come in all sizes. We have stereotypes. This guy over here is a New York pimp who was recently jailed. Magic Don Juan is the guy who organizes these player's balls which I'll show you in a moment. What's amazing is this is the only crime I know of where we idealize the criminals, and we target and penalize the victims. The point about the culture, as you pointed out, it's not just the laws. Everybody here can say they're against trafficking. Look at how it invades the culture that you live in and your kid's culture.

The Players Ball is kind of an Oscar for the pimps. They organize it in all the major cities here in Los Angeles and the casinos in Las Vegas. Some of the Hollywood celebrities and athletes come out. Knowledge who's one of the main pimps in my book who becomes the main guy that the FBI are after, there's nothing he worshipped more than that five foot statue he got as International Pimp of the Year. These are perfectly legal festivities that are taking place. As one of the girls said, "*How come we're treated like dirt, and the pimps are treated like celebrities and stars?*"

Does anybody recognize somebody in this picture? I hope somebody doesn't say that's my uncle. Ice-T that's right. Now most of you probably know Ice-T better as the detective in Law & Order where he actually goes after pimps and prosecutes. He is an ex-pimp which is fine. He could use his position now to denounce it, but instead he puts out these pimping videos where he describes how you too can become a pimp. As he says in the video, "I had no moral thought about it, being wrong. They like it."

Here's another example of our culture for the children. You can buy a DVD for your child, a cartoon. It's narrated by William Shatner and Bernie Mac, and it tells a story of a young boy. He finds he doesn't fit in with the other kids at school and doesn't relate to his mother. He finds a home with the cities pimps and hoes. Then for the adults, anybody know which video song won for Best Oscar in 2006? Let's play it. Those words were transmitted to billions of people around the world. Look at the words. The words, excuse my language, say, "*You know it's hard out here for a pimp when he's trying to get his money for the rent for Cadillac's and the gas money spent, because a whole lot of bitches talking shit.*"

A girl who's been trafficked, and then is thinking should I run to the police? Should I go for community help? She comes home, turns on the TV, and sees this. What is she going to think about our culture? And finally, can you imagine Amazon selling a book *How to Become a Slave Trafficker*? No. Can you imagine selling a book like that? Change that word to pimp and look what you can buy on Amazon. You can buy these pimpology books. If you buy these

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books, and they're full of tips and guides on how to prey on the week, how to find a girl who's been sexually abused and then manipulate her, you buy one of the books. Amazon will helpfully recommend six or seven other pimpology books that you could also buy.

Finally any of you who have teenage sons or girls, I absolutely guarantee they are playing this game GTA, its called Grand Theft Auto. I've been in high schools, where the boys are up to 700 kills. You get points by killing a prostitute, and here's one video. There are different tips on how you can kill various prostituted women. He picks up a woman. I apologize for some of the language that's going to come up. After he gets into a fight, beats her up, now is going to attack her with the firebomb. That's just an example of the kind of pimping culture that I think we have to deal with. What you have to ask yourself is you might obviously be against trafficking, but this is the world you live in. This is the world that the girls that Harmony was talking about live in. What message are we sending out to these girls?

Harmony Dust: I'm so angry. I've heard about it, but I've never seen it. It reminds me also, probably most of us in here are aware of this. Just the way the porn industry is also targeting our youth, because they have porn video games now as well where you can do everything interactively.

Kevin Potter: As we roll over to looking and thinking how these are infecting our culture and infecting the young people within our culture, and you've mentioned some things already in relation to your work. Would you like to expand on that in relation to the young people here and aspects that we could help them fight against this?

April Steele: I think tremendously difficult in a culture that our homework is kind of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. I'd like to say ban this, but that's not going to work. How do we offer alternatives to your youth? I think part of this is very creative parenting and very creative community involvement. It does take some work to think your way around these sorts of things and to offer kids alternatives. Even in this time where budgets are strapped and community services are strapped for funds and whatnot, the first things that always get cut are we close the swimming pools, we stop the afterschool programs, we have to cut all of those sorts of things. Yet the long term impact by putting children back into videogames and things like that.

I think we really need to spend some time thinking about having alternatives for children, so they don't need to be in on the video games and can be involved in sports or athletics or arts or those sorts of things, I think is really important. Also mentoring is very important in our neighborhoods, not only with your own children, but if the neighbors are home alone after school, checking in on them, because so many of these things, the pornography on the internet, the sorts of touches and first steps into these places happen when children are alone and vulnerable. I think there's some community prevention that we can do with some creative thinking.

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Kevin Potter: Joel, you're talking about the community. You kind of focused on the community and how they can interact with each other. In what ways with Oasis and other things that we can strengthen the micro communities that we're all a part of.

Joel Griffith: I think the first thing that we like to think of is you impact your immediate micro culture first so like April was talking about with your family. I have two young boys who will be teenagers. You look at your micro first and then you look at extending that circle a little farther. Oasis we have a model called Traffic Free Communities, and the idea is a community empowerment tool at the grass roots level. We've got our laws, our macro is hopefully in place. We've heard a lot of great stuff on the macro level happening. What we're trying to do is take that to the micro.

How does this impact my community and my neighborhood and where do I start. Kevin talked about stepping into community and just the idea of how do you step into it. To take that a step further, we talked about changing the eyes in your community so changing what you see. As you're in your faith community, your school community, wherever you interact in your community, changing what you're looking for, changing what you're seeing. This is part of the process that we do is we come in and help with a community activist who's interested in saying yes we want to engage in this. What do we do? We come in and do some research, and we've got about eight of these around the country that are acting in different realms. It's a multi sector approach that can take a different face in each community, because the problem is extremely complex. It's extremely diverse, and we've identified eight key stakeholders in a community that you can start with.

Kevin Potter: As you looked at the eight stakeholders, I know that Priscilla has done some research in relation to reintegration back into community. Would you like to share some of the kind of insights that you've gained as you've looked at that whole cultural dynamic.

Priscilla: I wanted to share also how our cultural beliefs and values affect trafficking and the sex trade and the sex industry and the forced labor trafficking. Just a couple of examples are we have an example in a lot of the African countries. There is this belief in the culture that any male that is HIV positive, or that has AIDS, if he has sex with a girl who's a virgin, he is going to be healed. These are the types of messages that the culture is teaching people. Imagine what that says to the little girl. She is being taught at a very young age that if she loses her virginity to this man, she is helping him live a longer life and helping him and being a vessel to this cure.

While in the same way, we have here more in America where there is such a high demand the same way that we all have spoken for the sex trade and for labor trafficking. We see it in the way that we buy chocolate. Where is our chocolate coming from? We see it in our coffee beans. We see it in our sugar, so all of these things come into effect in the way that we see our culture. Another example that really comes to mind that I think is really important, especially in the aftercare program and in the reintegration, is for a lot of people here in the

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United States clinical services and clinical practices like going to therapy, going to the doctors, all of that is really easy. It's very culturally accepted.

It's fine when we have a domestic victim. She's probably okay with getting into therapy and to having those services provided for her. At the same time, in South America and for a lot of people in South America, there's a negative stigma when it comes to therapy and when it comes to going to the doctor. They do things on a more social level, and they fix their problems more in a family. So we're seeing here, based on a lot of agencies here, they're providing a lot of the services. They're providing a lot of the therapy, a lot of the medical services, and a lot of the legal services. There's no social support structure, and I think that's where traffic free communities could come into play. For example, Oasis comes with a lot of victims that are pregnant. Who is going to throw these women baby showers? Who is going to celebrate their birthdays? These are these things that in cultures they're very powerful, and they give you value. They give you a reason to live. So that's like a big gap that we've been seeing in research.

Kevin Potter: I said I'd give an opportunity to think of any questions.

Participant: What is currently being taught in California schools about human trafficking, human rights, and gender equality which by the way from my perspective I don't feel you can talk about human trafficking without also talking about human rights and gender equality. What is happening in California schools to teach this material to our children as a preventative?

Participant II: I have been a teacher for the past 12 years, in south central, working for LAUSD. Is there anybody here from LAUSD? The answer is no. I'm involved with a program called Youth Empowerment Seminar that teaches kids specific yoga, breathing practices to overcome negative emotions and trauma, and it teaches them human values, higher values, responsibility, self-dignity, so when I said no maybe I spoke too quickly, because LAUSD did pay for my training to go do this training. Last year, I actually taught this program during the school day. We did not touch human trafficking, but we did teach self-respect, self-love, so yes and no.

Kim Biddle: Saving Innocence has done a little bit of this. The problem with LAUSD is that it's obviously very bureaucratic, because sex, in general, is a topic that they tread on lightly and gender equality and all of these things, there's so many don'ts that it's hard to come in with positive dues. We've gone around the back doors a lot, so we've been in a lot of charter schools. Charter schools have their own authority to bring in whoever they want. We've been in inner city and in Compton and in Englewood, and we've been in libraries where teachers will bring students to the local community centers and libraries. We also have a curriculum that we do with youth called My Life My Choice which is prevention intervention. I've talked to teachers in third grade classrooms. They'll say that they know people in prostitution, so they all know it's going on. It's a prevention

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intervention. We do have those tools. It's been hard to infiltrate, so it always takes hero teachers like you that help get us into the system, but there's all those walls. It is available.

Kevin Potter: I'd also encourage you that there actually are people getting involved in the community so Traffick Free Community in Pasadena. There's a summer skills program. They looked at the curriculum of the summer skills program. There's Drugs 101, various other things, the math, but there wasn't anything about trafficking. The group of them went and asked the Pasadena University School District who were putting that on, and said can we run a short awareness on human trafficking?

They were more than happy. It's the second year they've run it. This year, there were young girls going we'll I've heard something about trafficking, but I didn't think it really affected me. And the boys were saying well yeah I thought that was just to do with the girls. So again what we're talking about getting involved in your own micro community.

Participant II: I'm from Riverside County. I work with the Sheriff Human Trafficking Task Force there. Earlier in the year, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors allowed us to test a case within. They brought together 500 kids, representatives from every high school. I wrote a program called the *Love Trap*, and it's based on a variety of traps like the Love Trap, the Baby Trap, the Easy Money Trap, the Damaged Goods Trap, the Internet Trap. I tested on all 500 kids, got great feedback. They allowed me to test it again, and I did that with about another 125 kids. Then we submitted it to the Riverside Police Department and just last week, we were authorized to be their representative for all of the assemblies in all the Riverside and Alvord Unified School Districts. Starting in the fall, we will be able to put on an assembly about human trafficking, going throughout the fall. The Palm Springs Unified School District is also considering, so we are making headway.

Kevin Potter: Excellent resources. We can see there are lots of resources and lots of opportunities out there as well. Do you have a question for this panel?

Participant III: My name is Jeff. I'm with Traffic Free Pomona which Joel and Kevin might be a little familiar with our work. I'm going to express the difficulty that I've witness, and maybe you guys will have some ideas on what we could have done better. As a young activist which I mean three years ago, when we first started getting petitions together and doing things to raise awareness within the community even within my church, I went in thinking a church of 5,000 members, we're going to have 5,000 signatures when we mention human trafficking or modern day slavery. We found that that wasn't the case. I don't want to suggest that it was apathy, but I'm really not sure what the poor response was for that. Perhaps delivery.

I know when I first heard about it, and probably a majority of the people here first heard about human trafficking, we all wanted to break down doors or do something to end this aberration. I found that in the church, I didn't see that as much. Even with that in the community, we would present our case. It was just a petition. We were just trying to get the case act before legislation. People would come back with how is this going to affect my taxes

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or you sold the gas problem, and then we'll come back and we'll talk. Just nonsensical things like that, so I got kicked in the teeth quite a bit. My skin has hardened quite a bit towards that. I'm just curious how do we change the apathy there and bring in transparency within the church, because I don't see a lot of human trafficking talk within the church or pornography and how it builds into that.

I think there needs to be some vulnerability, some transparencies, some accountability within the church. I come from a faith based background. Then also within our community, so is there some way we could have presented that differently without exploiting the victims even more so with shock value or anything presented in a different manner where we would have had 5,000 signatures? I'm still befuddled by the lack of response that we got to things like that.

April Steele: First of all, let me encourage you to keep going. I've been on staff at a church. I've been the person that had to decide whether or not groups could come on campus and what would be presented to the congregation. There is no shortage of good things, but I can tell you two problems that really come into play a lot. The first is affecting culture, and every church has a culture. You've got to do your research and find out what the particular culture of that church is, who's the person that you really need to get to as a point person to move this forward and then give it some time. Keep putting it back in front of that person, keep respectfully bringing it back to them, and you will see it come.

My experience from working with hundreds of churches in this area is that it takes time. It takes many touches before someone will grab into that. That's the first one. The second one is just a lack of education among clergy. There's a lot of fear out there of what can I say politically that's going to get me in trouble, lose my nonprofit status? What can I be involved in? There's an education component. Most pastors are not lawyers and don't want to be and don't really want to be involved in politics. Educating them that petitions for human rights, or some of these other good things, are issue driven not person driven. If they're issue driven it's appropriate for the church to be involved. Many pastors just say no anyway, because they get afraid of what can happen so an educational process to that as well.

Harmony Dust: Another thing I would say is that humanizing the issue through story I think would help. If people are just talking about it conceptually and not really connecting to it on an emotional, personal level, then they're going to start talking about taxes. I hear your point about not wanting to re exploit victims, but there are a lot of resources out there that would be avenues of showing the humanity of it. We have an 11 minute DVD called *11 Treasures* that's a compilation of stories. The women who are sharing their stories are far enough along in their recovery that they have a desire to do it, because they believe its power, and it's a tool. There are a lot of other documentaries out there. Very young girls and just maybe using some kind of media resources to humanize the issue through stories I would say.

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Julian Sher: I think you've also touched on sort of the elephant in the room in that if you look at everybody in this room, by definition people who've come here are already concerned about this. You assume that everybody out there is but walk out the door here. Go to anybody like the rest of the Skirvball Center and say there's a conference on human trafficking. At best they might say oh yeah all that slavery stuff that's going on in Darfur. They're not going to see it as relating to Los Angeles. We're talking about culture. Let's be blunt for most people you raised the question of prostituted children, they'll see it as either like black ho's, white trash. Its people they don't care about.

As a journalist, that's my challenge as well. How do I tell the story that people are going to care about? I think sometimes you have to do everything that they said about humanizing and everything and bring in through Saving Innocence. Bring in real people to talk to them, but also I think you do have to make people uncomfortable. This is an uncomfortable subject, and you have to make people uncomfortable and explain that a society, a church, is only as good as the least offensive people in our society. Who's more defenseless than the children? I think to some degree we have to stop being polite.

Joel Griffith: That question and Harmony's response and then also the woman that talked about the curriculum in Riverside, I think brings up another issue of culture and that's the individual culture of how we respond to this. Not only as my NGO, your NGO, your church, my church but as a community how do we respond together. Our whole philosophy, and I know everybody up here would say the same thing is sharing resources. Let's forget the individual walls between our organizations. We're seeing that at the top level at lot with Homeland Security and FBI. There's a lot of collaboration, and I believe there's a lot of collaboration down here with us as well, but we can do more. You know the idea of once you've figured it out for your church, and continue the process, is talking to another church and helping them figure it out. It is such an individual thing, but I think there's shared learning that can happen too.

Jocelyn White: I wanted to say as far as signatures, sharing the value of what a signature does. Like we talked about yesterday these postcards, Congressman are representatives look at the pile of postcards on their desk to see what issues to focus on. That education component. How many signatures, how many calls did they get? You have to communicate that to the people that you're asking. So many times you're saying a whole church could sign or a whole church could call, but if they don't know the value of it, they're not going to come and sign it as far as is it really going to be taken seriously.

As far as International Justice Mission, I'm the Director of Church Mobilization for the West Coast. Just how we engage with churches is not to focus on the issues, it's God's heart for injustice and that God is passionate about seeing injustice on this earth end so how that is a reflection of what we live without is our heart for injustice. He says, "*Seek justice, to love mercy and walk humbly with your God.*" It's not focusing on the issue necessarily, but its God's heart to see that those who are weak and oppressed deserve our best and that He

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wants that abuse to stop. He wants to include people in doing that, because he cares just as much for us doing the work as the work itself.

Priscilla: Just to piggyback on what everybody said, I think that every church has its own culture and its own DNA. A lot of bigger churches, they have very specific small groups. I think kind of the same idea is Traffick Free Communities. If you try to focus on one small group and see how they within their own church can empower other people in that same congregation to do so, I think that might be another good avenue to look into. I know a lot of big churches, I think First Baptist in Pomona, I think there's a small group just on social justice.

Kerry Decker: Particularly Harmony but anybody who wants to weigh in. Male sexual integrity, we kind of talk around the issue, but it seems to me do we have any positive ways to promote male sexual integrity other than scorn and shame.

Harmony Dust: That is a great question. One of the things that we're working on and have been developing for about a year is something we're calling Men for Treasures, and it's lead up by one of our male volunteers. Essentially it's twofold. One they've looked at some creative ways that they can partner with us as a men to serve the women volunteers of Treasures and looking for ways they can be involved in the on the ground work in a way that won't compromise any of the women that we're working with. One of them is leading up our prayer team. Some of them are driving shuttles. They bring flowers into the office every week.

The second part of that is they've developed a creed and a vision statement and are basically communicating this vision of what it looks like to be a man for Treasures which means what it looks like to honor the women in your life. What it looks like to be a voice in your sphere of influence to shatter cultural norms about the objectification of women and really empowering men that their voice matter and that their life and choices in honoring women matter. We're still in the process of doing a hard launch on it. We've done a soft launch on it. If anyone's interested in finding out more about that you can contact us at www.iamatransure.com.

Julian Sher: I spoke at a conference last year. It's now turned into an annual conference. It's in Minneapolis called Deman Change. They had a huge march through downtown Minneapolis where all the men at the conference ended at the march and signed a huge petition saying I will not buy sex. Where I come from in Canada, there's been a national campaign where athletes and movies starts and prominent males have spoken out to reach the young boys who are playing Grand Theft Auto and prominent men saying it is not cool to buy sex. I think there are things that men can do.

April Steele: I think to address that but also to bring back to some of the presentation you did, and I say this as a parent but also an attorney for a lot of juveniles who are in a lot of trouble. When you see your children or when you see kids in your sphere of influence with the pimp hats or those kind of dress stop it. Tell them no. Tell your

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daughters that you're not going to go out with that person until they're dressed appropriately. There are things that we can do as parents and as advocates even just in our spheres of influence to say that's not cool and this is why, because sometimes we say that's not cool. Those people are bad. It brings the shame part in. No. Explain why. Explain what that culture is doing, what that means, what those symbols mean.

Parents and advocates have to get really smart about what's happening in your community when you see the jelly bracelets on your kid's arms, those are not just jelly bracelets. Take them off. Learn what these things mean and then don't allow your children, especially your teenagers, kids in your youth group, kids in your mentor groups, teach them not to be a part of those sorts of things. Not to broadcast or participation in those things. Many of them don't even know what they're doing. It's our job to educate them and that opens doors to have good conversations, healthy conversations of what it means to be a good person or community to value all people.

Harmony Dust: I don't want to dominate, but one more thing I would say is that sexual addiction is shame based. Shame actually fuels it. The more people feel like they can't break the silence about it and talk about it, the more they're going to go into their addiction. I think especially in the church, creating a safe place, beginning the dialog, bringing speakers in that are willing to talk about it. Talking even about the neurochemistry that happens in that people literally become addicted to the dopamine that's released in their brain and what happens to their frontal cortex. Really educating and creating an environment where people can begin to talk about their struggles with sexual addiction and watching porn. Then if you have the resources creating accountability groups, celebrate recovery, sexual addiction groups, that kind of thing would also help, because the shame and silence is going to fuel the addiction.

Kevin Potter: A lot of these aspects that we've all talked about to flow out and infect our community. For instance, my wife's uncle was in the Pacific Rim, and he was working with the tribal group there. There were various health issues that needed to be undertaken. Three guys came, and they wanted their hair cut, because it was a horrendous situation with their hair. He said come back the next morning. He had a pair of scissors which was a ropy old pair of scissors. He walked out through his door to three guys. Because it was community environment, they were also 20,000 other people. He said, *"I'll cut your three hair and then you go cut another three peoples hair and you go cut another three people's hair."* As we impact our community so our community changes. You are change agents as I am. Thank you very much for interacting with the panel and the panel with you. I appreciate it.