BIBLICAL STATEMENT ON ANTI-SEX TRAFFICKING

Background: The Evangelical
Covenant Church is committed
to the whole mission of God –
extending the whole gospel to
the whole world and joining God
in making things right in our
broken world. FREE is an antisex trafficking initiative that calls
people and churches to pray,
learn, give, and act with our
partners globally and locally.

Scriptures teach us that God created humankind "in the image and likeness of God". and that this esteemed creation is so greatly loved by God that we are called God's children.² Yet just a few chapters later, God's perfect shalom was violated.3 The entrance of sin perverted love for God and inverted love for neighbor. The exploitation of those targeted through sex trafficking is an attack on the Imago Dei, marring and harming those who are trafficked, the traffickers, and the communities where economies of sexual exploitation flourish.



With Mammon as their god, ⁴ traffickers have contributed to the exponential growth of transnational organized crime through sex trafficking.⁵ With a high demand for immediate sexual gratification, sex trafficking generates \$99 billion in illegal profits today, ⁶ making it one of the largest sources of income for organized crime. ⁷ A large majority of the approximately 700,000 people

"GOD HAS COMPASSION ON THOSE WHO SUFFER UNJUSTLY..."

trafficked across the globe annuallyare forced into the commercial sex trade. 8

Traffickers prey on individuals who are susceptible to coercion by luring them with promises of work, shelter, food, and relational support. These individuals—women, children, men, non-binary and trans-persons, migrants, and refugees—tend to be fleeing poverty, war, political nstability, natural disasters, or economic hardship. Traffickers also target individuals with histories of trauma, family violence, drug dependency, homelessness, social isolation, and limited economic resources.

Women, children, and minority groups typically experience higher rates of exploitation. In the United States, 84% of reported cases of sex trafficking were female and a third were under the age of 18. Forty percent of those confirmed trafficking cases are of Black women and girls, and studies have found that Native Americans and Native Alaskans are disproportionately represented in sex trafficking. 11

As a result, sex trafficking victims are not only robbed of their dignity and freedoms created by God, but often suffer substantial economic costs due to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, as well as diminished employment opportunity.¹² These patterns reveal the intersectionality that makes the most vulnerable peoplein our societies the ones most likely to be victims of exploitation. Ethnic and racial minorities, women, children, immigrants, and those who are poverty stricken are prime targets for victimization.

The injustices faced by those who are marginalized and abused are sadly not new. The Scriptures tell us stories of trafficked,¹³ oppressed, and marginalized people. We learn from Scripture that God has compassion on those who suffer unjustly, that God sees them and hears their cry,¹⁴ and that God calls God's people to usher in God's justice.¹⁵

As a response to this call, Serve Globally and Love Mercy Do Justice are collaborating to address the evil of sex trafficking locally and globally through FREE, an anti-sex trafficking initiative of the Evangelical Covenant Church that calls the global church to Pray, Learn, Give, and Act, domestically and globally alongside our partners.

PRAY for God to transform our unjust and violent world.

"But you do see! Indeed you note trouble and grief, that you may take it into your hands;the helpless commit themselves to you; you have been the helper of the orphan. Break the arm of the wicked and evildoers; seek out their wickedness until you find none." (Psalm 10:14-15, NRSV)

LEARN the causes of trafficking and what we can do to prevent it.

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor.'" (Zechariah 7:9-10a, NRSV)

GIVE to invest in care and rehabilitation for a brighter future for trafficked children and adults.

"It is well with those who deal generously and lend, who conduct their affairs with justice." "You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God." (Psalm 112:5; 2 Corinthians 9:11-12, NRSV)

ACT by advocating alongside survivors to pursue God's shalom for our communities.ur communities.

"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2, NRSV)

We invite you to join the FREE initiative to see a collective movement toward opposing and breaking the cycle of this evil.

- 1. Genesis 1:26-27
- 2.1 John 3:1
- 3. Genesis 3
- 4. Matthew 6:24
- 5. 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report
- 6. Human Trafficking Profits
- 7. https://covchurch.org/trafficking/definition
- 8. U.S. Department of State.
- 2004. Trafficking in Persons Report. Washington, D.C.:
- U.S. Department of State.
- 9. Human Trafficking Hotline Resources and The Economic Drivers and Consequences of Human Trafficking in the US

- 10. Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2008-2010
- 11. Alaska Ad Hoc Nongovernmental Organization Working Group on Sex Trafficking
- 12. Human Trafficking by the Numbers: The Initial Benchmark of Prevalence and Economic Impact for Texas
- 13. Genesis 37:26-28
- 14. Genesis 16:13; Exodus 3:9; Psalms 10:14-18; Isaiah 61:8; James 5:4
- 15. Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 82:3; Isaiah 1:17, 58:6-7; James 1:27