

## RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT ABOLISHING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Recognizing that all persons are created in the image of God, are worthy of God's grace, and are welcome into relationship with Christ Jesus;

Whereas, the **2008 General Conference of The United Methodist Church**, addresses slavery and sex trafficking in **Resolutions 6021 and 6023** and calls for the abolition of all forms of modern-day slavery;

*Therefore, be it resolved*, that The United Methodist Church officially support efforts to end all contemporary forms of slavery and bonded labor; and

*Be it further resolved*, that the United Methodist Church actively champion anti-slavery efforts by petitioning the United Nations, United States Congress, the State Department, the Department of Justice, and the legislative bodies of all countries in which the United Methodist Church has an organized ecclesiastical structure, to demand the freeing of all subjected to modern-day forms of enslavement and bonded labor; and

*Be it further resolved*, that The United Methodist Church petition the United Nations and the United States Congress and State Department to abolish slavery through the use of nonmilitary options such as negotiations and sanctions; and

*Be it further resolved*, that The United Methodist Church officially support stock/mutual fund divestment campaigns that urge people to remove funds from organizations whose actions profit from and contribute to slavery's existence; and

*Be it further resolved*, that The United Methodist Church inform all members of the church, via news publications and other communication channels of the connectional system, that slavery currently exists and that The United Methodist Church officially opposes its existence and urge all United Methodists to join with international human rights organizations in working to end all contemporary forms of slavery and bonded labor; and

*Be it further resolved*, that this document be sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the United States, the United States Congress, and the legislative bodies of countries in which The United Methodist Church has an established ecclesiastical structure. **(from Resolution 6021)**

*Therefore*, The United Methodist Church, through education, financial resources, publication, lobbying, and the use of every relevant gift of God, shall join in the active battle against the modern-day enslavement of humans for commercial sexual exploitation, i.e., sex trafficking. *The General Board of Church and Society* shall lead The United Methodist Church's efforts toward the abolition of sex trafficking for the 2009-2012 quadrennial. On this issue, the General Board of Church & Society shall work in cooperation with the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries. The United Methodist Church shall recognize the urgency and gravity of this issue through a substantial monetary investment toward the galvanization of the Church at all levels to live out her gifts and calling in relation to the abolition of modern day slavery. **(from Resolution 6023)**

Whereas, human trafficking is defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 as . . .

A. Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or

B. the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery;

Whereas, "nearly 1,100 American-born youths have been trafficked into the sex trade and another 783 foreign-born persons have been forced into labor or sex trafficking in Ohio" (from a study by the Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission);

Whereas "another 2,879 American-born children and teens are at risk for sex trafficking" [in Ohio] (from a study by the Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission);

Whereas, there are 14,000-17,000 persons estimated to be trafficked in the United States each year with some figures as high as 50,000 to 60,000 each year;

Whereas, in the world,

- 27 million people are in some form of slavery today as commercial sex slaves, forced laborers, and child soldiers.
- 12.3 million people are victims of forced labor worldwide. (2.4 million are as a result of human trafficking.)
- According to the U.S. State Department, 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders worldwide every year. 50% of these people are children and 80% are female, and the majority are

trafficked for sexual exploitation.

- Human trafficking is the 3rd largest source of income for organized crime, generating close to \$32 billion in annual illicit profits.
- Trafficking for sexual exploitation represents 25% of the trade.

Whereas, the Scriptures remind us of the value of all persons;

*Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice ,to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? **Isaiah 58:6***

*But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. **I Corinthians 12:24-26***

Whereas, human trafficking, in all forms, is abhorrent to all Christians;

We resolve to:

- Declare the West Ohio Conference to be an Abolitionist Conference
- Encourage local congregations to declare themselves communities that support abolishing modern-day human trafficking in all forms
- Ask that all United Methodists in West Ohio seek to:
  - Engage congregations in education regarding human trafficking;
  - Contact local schools regarding education about human trafficking;
  - Network with local ministerial associations, centers for family violence prevention, community service agencies, schools, law enforcement agencies and other local entities to educate, prevent, and provide safety for victims of human trafficking;
  - Advocate for adequate laws in Ohio to protect victims of human trafficking and prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking; and,
  - Each year, set aside, the second Sunday in January to remember and to pray for victims and perpetrators of human trafficking

Signed:

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Let Justice Roll Team

West Ohio Conference United Methodist Women Executive Committee