

Modern-Day Slavery: “Consider it, take counsel, and speak out.”

As a church women’s organization, it is important for Mennonite Women USA to be informed about the often invisible crime of human trafficking. This crime affects all races and ethnic groups and spans the globe; we are all needed to combat these atrocities. To learn about trafficking, this September I attended an ecumenical conference held at the Church Center for the United Nations in NYC.


Dr. Mary Streufert of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America began the conference with a presentation based on the Judges 19 story where a woman dies following repeated sexual violation. Her body is then cut into 12 pieces and sent to the 12 tribes of Israel with these words, “Consider it, take counsel, and speak out.”

Consider it:

- Trafficking of humans is the third largest criminal industry in the world, with the first and second being drug trafficking and arms trafficking.
- 80% of victims are females under the age of 50. Of this number a disproportionately high number are African American, Hispanic, and Asian.
- Over 2 million children, some as young as 6 years old, are exploited in the child sex trade around the world today. The problem exists everywhere, including in the U.S.
- 50% of trafficking victims are minors.

As I returned home I wondered if trafficking was happening in rural Pennsylvania. That week, my local paper reported the apprehension of a prostitution ring with two children, ages 15–16, being controlled by adults.

Though it may be difficult, it is important for us, as women, to know the facts, consider them and speak out about this crime, bringing it out of the darkness and into the light.

On the Internet, go to <www.MennoniteWomenUSA.org> for the complete report of the conference with links to organizations and churches working against trafficking. Free literature is available at <<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/form.htm>>. The Church of the Brethren has developed Bible study resources on trafficking at <www.brethren.org>. 



Rhoda Keener

Rhoda Keener is executive director of Mennonite Women USA. Contact her at 5207 Heisey Road, Shipensburg, PA 17257, 717-532-9723; rhodak@MennoniteWomenUSA.org.