



SEX SALE

Let's make our voices
vuvuzelas for those silenced
by sex trafficking.

By Nicolette Ferreira.

HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA conjure up images of postcard perfection – sunny blue skies; a *tannie* smiling and waving from her *padstal* door surrounded by fat, orange pumpkins; golden brown people tanning on the beach bordering turquoise seas with splashes of colour. South Africa – a flourishing sex industry? It cannot be... however, between 28 000 to 30 000 children are currently prostituted in South Africa. We take a look at the other side of picture perfection...

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Broadly speaking, human trafficking involves the abduction, recruitment and cross-border transportation of people

through coercion and *deception* to serve an exploitative purpose, such as sexual slavery or child labour. According to the International Organization for Migration, over 1000 adolescents in Zambia are enticed from their homes each year under the pretext of better lives in the regions' most prosperous countries like South Africa and Botswana. Once the victims are lured away, they are sold to so-called 'sex homes'. As stated in last month's article on human trafficking, "Traffick Proof", these and other victims of human trafficking are "tricked, transported, trapped and used," (see www.justiceacts.org, an invaluable source on the topic).

When Rosa was only 14, a man came to her parents' house in Mexico and asked if she was interested in making lots of money in the United States (tricked). A week later, Rosa was smuggled into the United States (transported) where she was told for the first time that her employment would consist of having sex with men for money. Because she was a virgin, the men decided to initiate her by raping her repeatedly to teach her how to have sex. Over the next three months, she was taken to a different trailer every 15 days (trapped). Every night she had to sleep in

the same stained bed in which she had been forced to service customers all day (used). Eventually Rosa became pregnant and was forced to have an abortion, after which she was sent back to the brothel almost immediately.

A LIFEJACKET

There is a lifejacket for people like Rosa. For The Silent is a non-profit organisation 'lifeguarding' children silenced by human trafficking (see www.forthesilent.org). After hearing stories of young girls being forced into sexual slavery, founders Kenny and Julie Rigsby could not ignore this injustice – they knew it grieved the heart of God: "*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed...*" (Col. 3: 5). For the Silent was established to help victims of sex trafficking and to mobilise others (like you and me) to use our voices. The project's workers assess the needs of already established organisations in the field of sexual exploitation and adopt projects that help meet the long-term needs of sex-silenced human beings. Just one such example is Paul Baloche's recent show that was held for the benefit of For the



Please note: children in these photographs are not victims of trafficking.



Paul Baloche's recent fundraiser




Silent: this money became a lifejacket to many pulled down by the weight of sexual exploitation. Although For the Silent currently focuses on on-the-ground projects in Cambodia and on creating awareness in America, founder and director Kenny Rigby says their goal is to work towards other countries in the future.

GETTING INVOLVED

We can help For the Silent to spread the good work. Imagine that for every card you make, every painting you paint and every song you write, each cent earned goes into the care of a rescued child. The next adventure race that you sweat out or the next gig that you rock, could fund new classrooms. Through your art, singing, handmade creations, praying and even running, you (yes you, *Today* reader!) can be a voice for the voiceless (see www.forthesilent.org and click on the link "Actions"). Let's make a loud, disrupting noise!

The organisation Justice A.C.T.S (Alliance of Christians Against Trafficking) can help you traffick-proof your own community. Justice A.C.T.S list some of the most regular instances of human trafficking as: refugees are promised safe passage into South Africa only to be taken to sex homes; women, men and children are recruited for jobs abroad with the promise of a better life and income, then trafficked on arrival; men romance and lure away young, vulnerable women with hints of marriage; agents traffick women and girls hoping to be models; orphans are 'exported' to become child labourers, wives or prostitutes. We should all be aware and prepared.

REMEMBER...

The four signs of human trafficking are always: tricked, transported, trapped and used. Come on everyone... let's blow the *vuvuzela* on human trafficking, for "we are Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us..." (2 Cor. 5:20). 

Provided by ACTs: Trafficking helpline number: 0800 555 999.

A few projects where For the Silent restores life to victims of human trafficking:

- **Aftercare Centre Vehicle:** Involves funding a vehicle for a partner organisation, Hagar Cambodia, which safely transports rescued children to school, church, home visits, medical and court appointments in Cambodia.
- **The Boy's Counselling Project:** Training professional counsellors to respond to the needs of male survivors of sexual exploitation in Cambodia.
- **The Classrooms Project:** Funding three new classrooms for an aftercare facility in Cambodia that provides catch-up education for girls aged 4 to 16 from backgrounds of sexual exploitation.

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Renowned Christian musician, Paul Baloche, nominated For The Silent as one of the headline projects which will benefit from the sales of the CD. Buy a copy of *CompassionArt* from your local Christian music store and support For The Silent .

SMS AND WIN

We're giving away one free copy of the *CompassionArt* CD. Sms 'compassion' and your name to 32692 or see the "Giveaways" section on page 63.