

RELIGION

Children For Sale

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

It's hard to believe. But it's true. One million children around the world, mostly young girls, are forced into prostitution every year. One million children's bodies for sale.

It's not something most Americans are aware of, but even here, in the land of the free and home of the brave, there are between 125,000 and 200,000 teenagers who engage in prostitution each year. The majority of teenagers forced into prostitution live in Asia, with some also living in South America, including Argentina and Brazil.

It's a whole new kind of tourism market in these poor, developing countries. The men who seek out these children, boys and girls, are not from these countries - they're primarily from Germany, Japan and the United States. Indeed, about one quarter of the tourists abusing children in Asia are Americans. In the Philippines, which used to house American naval bases, at one time U.S. men comprised 60 percent of these sex offenders.

How these children get caught up in the world of sex and prostitution and drugs is a sad story indeed. The children are pawns in a \$5 billion industry. They are tricked or sold into prostitution, sometimes by their own parents or relatives, with the promise of jobs, education and a better life. The reality is that many face death at young ages, from AIDS, from injuries received from their clients, from the sex itself or from drugs.

For many of these countries, struggling to find ways to grow economically, tourism is seen as the solution to their problems of development. Consequently,

many of these nations' laws are lax and the enforcement of these laws reluctant. In the words of Wassila Tamzali, director of women's rights for UNESCO, "It's frightening. We are losing all boundaries. More and more children are being sacrificed to the sex industry. We must break down the wall of silence around this."

Not only are these countries often struggling for their economic survival, but also are the people who live in them and who find themselves selling their children into prostitution. Children as young as five in many of these countries are lured, abducted, adopted or sold by their families into brothels for prostitution and pornography. Over recent years, the ages of these children has continued to drop as the rise of HIV/AIDS in the world has led foreign tourists to believe that the younger the children, the less likely the risk of HIV infection.

Poverty is the root cause of these children's exploitation, poverty of nations and poverty of families. Increasing urbanization, accompanied by the breakdown of families and rising family violence as well as the wider economic gap between the rich and poor countries of the world all have led to the explosion of child prostitution over the past decade. Whole villages in Asia have become empty of girls because of it.

But there are signs of hope in this dreadful world of children for sale. Over the past five years or so a number of church and community groups and committed individuals have become involved in the battle against child prostitution around the world. As the stories of these children have been told, outrage

has been building among people who believe that no society can go on destroying children in such large numbers.

In 1990, a group of social workers from several countries met in Thailand and launched a world-wide campaign to end prostitution of children by focusing on four Asian countries where the situation seemed the worst: Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand. Called End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism Campaign (ECPAT), they have established a U.S. arm, located at 475 Riverside Drive in New York City.

They have focused on telling the story of these children and of those men who travel to these countries to abuse them. They have focused on changing laws and currently laws have been passed in Germany and Australia making citizens who abuse

children in other countries legally accountable for their actions when they return home.

In the words of Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison, "Everywhere, everywhere, children are the scorned people of the earth." Or, in the words of Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, "Oh God of the child prodigy and child prostitute, of the child of rapture and the child of rape, of run or thrown away children who struggle everyday without parent or place or friend or future, help us to love and respect and protect them all."

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Success Of Celebrating The Holidays, Fund Raiser

The program in planning is scheduled for December 10, 1994, 5:00pm at Bethel AME Church located at 5828 NE 8th Avenue (corner of NE 8th and Jarrett). This program offers a service of a "Musical Extravaganza", sponsored by the Senior Usher Board of Bethel AME Church featuring local choirs and soloists. Invitations have been sent to target audiences extensive in the tri-county area and Vancouver, Washington (community organizations, churches, private homes, etc). We will be offering complimentary light hors d'oeuvres while our guests visit the confirmed exhibitors. Diners will be available for \$3.50 each

(chicken or chitterlings). We want to encourage the exhibitors to present their community programs, job opportunities, and/or their product. As a fund raiser, we are requesting a exhibit donation of \$100 for a table.

We would like to extend an invitation for your organization to participate as an exhibitor. Please remember your donation is tax deductible. A positive response would be gratefully appreciated, commitment is encourage by November 21, 1994. If you are interested, please contact Mrs. Virginia Winchester, President Senior Usher Board at 288-5429.

Jesuit Holiday Wine Tasting

The Jesuit High School Alumni Association will be kicking off the 1994 holiday season with the 14th annual Jesuit Holiday Wine Tasting at Jesuit High School on November 12, 1994, from 5:00 to 9:00 pm in the Knight Physical Education Center. The gala event features 80 different wines for sample and purchase at excellent prices and benefits the school's financial aid program. Local businesses will be acting as sponsors for various wineries. Be sure to arrive early for best selection.

Tickets are available through the Jesuit High School Alumni office 291-5414 or at the door. Tasting wines, hors d'oeuvres by Table Afaires, a complimentary wine glass, live music, and a silent auction are all a part of the \$25.00 per person ticket. Non-alcoholic beverages are also available.

The Knight Physical Education Center is located at Jesuit High School, 9000 S. W. Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy.

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Birth Announcement

Baby's Name: Sydney Taylor Shephard-Sims

Date of Birth: 10/21/94

Sex: Female

Mother's Name: Latanya Denise Shephard

Father's Name: Toney Lamont Sims of Portland, OR

Weight: 6lbs 10oz

Length: 18 1/2"

Brothers/Sisters: Chloe, Kiana, Dimitri

Grandparents/Paternal: Mary Johnson of Portland, OR

Grandparents/Maternal: William Austin Shephard

Gwendlyn & Clarence Martin of Portland, OR

Great Grandparents/Maternal: Clarence Shephard of Portland, OR

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