

**2021 M3 Conference**  
**Q&A with Leigh Kohler**  
***“The Gospel and Human Trafficking”***

**CLICK LINK TO WATCH SESSION: <https://youtu.be/Bm5MHt7DW2s>**

**What is the biggest need in helping to prevent human trafficking right now?**

There are literally so many needs, so whatever resource God has placed in your hand, a skill or job you have, you can reach out to anti-human trafficking organizations to find out how your skills and/or personality can be utilized. You can help someone who’s a survivor or assist with prevention efforts. We can always use more beds, jobs for women, being a voice, and raising awareness. Lending your voice to raise awareness is very important because there’s always new legislation being introduced, so we need a grassroots movement to help people be informed. We also need to bring awareness and educate our youth in schools. Regarding prevention, we need to do more to fight the demand (addressing the problem of pornography and how it’s fueling this industry). Also, laws and the enforcement of those laws are crucial. The U.S. State Department puts out a report every year called the Trafficking in Persons Report (commonly called ‘TIP Report’), which ranks governments based on their perceived efforts to combat the problem. This is an extremely helpful resource. You can view the TIP Reports on the U.S. State Department’s website at [www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report](http://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report).

**How would you encourage someone who feels that they are not sufficient or significant enough to make a difference or to accomplish the dream God has placed in their heart?**

Faithfully give God your, “yes.” I think of it like picking up breadcrumbs (little by little). You just take the next step. Read stories in scripture like Moses who said things like, ‘don’t send me, I stutter and I can’t do this.’ The Lord says, ‘no, I’m going to be with you.’ I recently heard someone use the illustration of having the Lord with and in us from the perspective of being an athlete. If I were to show up to play a basketball game and winning the game was based on my ability, we’d be in big trouble. But if you told me, when you get on the court, you are going to have Michael Jordan’s ability. Miraculously, it’s going to come out, the basketball skills of the greatest of all time, you’re going to have Michael Jordan’s strength on that court. Then, I would say, ‘okay, bring it on.’ There would be a confidence that would come, and I wouldn’t feel at such a disadvantage. When we realize that we have the greatest of all time, Jesus Christ, Who now indwells us, Who fills us with His Spirit, Who empowers us, then all of the sudden we realize that it’s not about us, it’s about abiding in Him. Scripture says in John 15, ‘I can’t do anything on my own, but with Him...,’ well, I think that changes everything. The Lord, at least in my life, has had to get my eyes and my focus on Him. He has turned down the lies of the enemy, so I can focus on Him and Who He is and His power at work in and through me. That’s what I would say to encourage my brothers and sisters. If the Lord has called you to do it, He will equip you. We have the greatest of all time, Jesus, working in and through us.

**How can nurses and staff at hospitals be prepared or recognize the signs that their patients may be victims of human trafficking? What is the proper action to take when we suspect a patient is being trafficked?**

In Houston, we have something called the Houston Area Human Trafficking Healthcare Consortium. They meet regularly to discuss how they can make a difference in the healthcare community in this area. It’s so important for nurses, doctors, and the medical community to be trained to know the signs of trafficking, so they can

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identify someone who, in their care, needs help. Medical professionals are the ones who regularly see women who are being trafficked, although they may not realize it because often a woman being trafficked will not come out and say she is being trafficked due to fear or other factors. That's why it's important to know the indicators of trafficking and the proper questions to ask.

**Note from M3 Conference:** Unbound Houston provides an online training program for medical professionals called "Identifying and Responding to Victims of Human Trafficking in a Clinical Setting" at [www.unboundhouston.org/medical-trainings](http://www.unboundhouston.org/medical-trainings)

### **How can I get involved in anti-human trafficking efforts if I live in a small rural area?**

No matter where you live, you can be part of the team through prayer. Prayer may feel counterintuitive because we feel we need to get out there and do something (physically). A prayer watch is powerful; whenever you are praying for your children or in your prayer time, remember to pray for all of the vulnerable people in the world, those caught in human trafficking and those who may be at risk. Also, start learning as much as you as you can - there are so many resources available online. It's important to learn the stages and signs of trafficking because once you know those, it's easy for you to identify and know the appropriate actions to assist. Never underestimate learning and having your eyes open. Lastly, you don't have to be involved with an anti-trafficking organization to be involved in prevention efforts. For example, if you foster a child, you have provided a safe place for a child that would have otherwise been in a vulnerable situation that makes them susceptible to being trafficked.

### **As a father of four, I am deeply touched by your testimony. What do you need mostly? Donations? How can I help? Thank you for talking about such a prominently unspoken evil.**

Thank you so much for your encouraging words. Lakewood Church is a part of the Freedom Church Alliance. We would love to have you connect with us. Our website is [www.freedomchurchalliance.org](http://www.freedomchurchalliance.org). You can also sign up for our newsletter and stay updated on ways to help. For more information, email us at [info@freedomchurchalliance.org](mailto:info@freedomchurchalliance.org). Thank you so much for being willing to help!

### **I'm from India. What would you tell the Indian audience who are listening who want to know how they can be involved with the anti-human trafficking ministries?**

Thankfully, there are a number of organizations addressing the issue in India. I would say seek out where trafficking is likely happening and organizations who are fighting it and see how you can come alongside them to support their work. One large organization is International Justice Mission (IJM), and you can learn more about IJM at <https://www.ijm.org>. There are also smaller organizations that are doing great work there as well.

### **How should the church influence and request laws that would inhibit practices on trafficking, kidnapping, sexual abuse?**

The U.S. State Department puts out an annual report called the TIP Report (Trafficking in Persons Report). The report ranks governments around the globe based on their perceived efforts to combat human trafficking. It would be a good place to start as far as learning what the government is doing to address the problem. You can also email or call your local officials (and beyond) and ask what they are doing to address the problem and encourage them to make it a priority to combat the problem. Praying, being aware, learning about the issue, and being a voice are great ways we/the church can be an effective influence in the fight against trafficking.

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**Besides evil men, who are the other players in trafficking that we should be aware of, such as organizations and institutions?**

There are trafficking rings, and they have designated people who they use to recruit their victims. They prey upon vulnerability and are going to camouflage themselves, so from that perspective, they can be anywhere or anyone. I did not bring up the pornography industry, but it is an industry that certainly needs to be addressed. Pornography is fueling the problem of trafficking.

**Do you do any work with American Indian women? I am Canadian First Nation, and it is a very horrible situation here.**

I have heard about the horrible situation of sexual abuse and trafficking inflicted upon American Indian women. Since Freedom Church Alliance mobilizes churches to start prevention efforts and partners with anti-human trafficking organizations, we do not work specifically with American Indian women, but your question makes me want to look into this more. I will do so. Thank you for sharing.

**How do you overcome visualizing the darkness that you encounter daily without it breaking you?**

That's a great question. I'm learning that I have to take it to the Lord and process it with Him in prayer and by being in His Word. Also, worship is powerful and so important. I pray for those who are doing the difficult task of undercover investigations because they are seeing some unimaginable and horrific things, and that is tremendously difficult. They need our prayers. Last thing, I also rejoice when I see the good that is being done, and I remember that light always overcomes the darkness. I hope that helps!

**In your presentation you stated, "many streams make a mighty river." The ministry you founded, Freedom Church Alliance, was established on this concept. Can you tell us more about the importance of partnering with others?**

It's the idea that when we stand shoulder to shoulder, we are stronger. When we start getting into the work that the Lord has called us to do, we realize why the apostle Paul used so much battle imagery, because we are in a battle. When we get in the trenches of battle, I think a lot of foolish and prideful things can fall away. Sometimes we only think about things like, "what significant role does God have for me?" or "what am I going to do?" But, when we get in the trenches, busy doing the work, we can have the realization that maybe we're not supposed to be doing this alone. Just like a soldier in war is really happy to not be alone in a foxhole, there's a special bond that comes from being in the battle together. That's what "many streams make a mighty river" means. We need the body of Christ, and I've come to love and appreciate the body. I see the places where I am weak, and then I see my strengths as well within the strengths of others. From this, I realized we really need each other, and we can be more effective working together than individually alone. I think that's God's heart, it's unity, and He blesses unity.

**"When we feel the most ordinary, it's actually the best place we can be." Would you expand on that a little bit more please?**

I think I've learned in all of this that dependence on God is the thing that keeps us on our knees, that keeps us from walking in pride, which I think really is probably the greatest enemy to any of our ministries, right? Pride and thinking that we can accomplish it on our own? So, at least in my experience and from others that I have learned from, it seems like God puts us in situations where we feel that we are in over our head, and the truth is

that we are in over our head, but it gives the Lord an opportunity to demonstrate His glory through us. And then, I have found that you just love Him more, because you know He is real. All of a sudden, you are experiencing what you have heard about other people experiencing in the past...I can remember growing up and hearing testimonies of missionaries and people in ministry and thinking, "God I've got to experience You like that! I want to know You like that personally." But I think that until you're in a position where you have to walk by faith, until you are in that spot (of feeling ordinary), you don't really get that opportunity, but once you are in that spot, all of a sudden you get to see Him come through in the most amazing ways. And, it's really thrilling, scary, but thrilling.

**What human trafficking organization are you with and how do I get plugged in?**

I am with the Freedom Church Alliance. Freedom Church Alliance mobilizes churches to start prevention efforts and partners with anti-human trafficking organizations. Feel free to visit our website at [www.freedomchurchalliance.org](http://www.freedomchurchalliance.org) and sign up for our newsletter and learn about opportunities to engage. You can also email us at [info@freedomchurchalliance.org](mailto:info@freedomchurchalliance.org) for more information. To get plugged in, I would say keep learning and know the signs of trafficking. Also, there are some great organizations out there you may want to explore. Ask God to show you how you can use your gifts and resources in this fight. It could look lots of different ways.

**Where is the young woman from the beauty salon today, are you still in contact with her and is she attending church?**

What I can tell you is that she did start coming to church. God also provided her a new job where she was able to work at a school with her young children. Another praise, eventually she was able to return home to visit her family that she had not seen in many years. They thought she had passed away. It was such a blessing to get to meet and know this precious young woman.

**What is the name of the documentary you mention in your presentation?**

The documentary is called "Nefarious-Merchant of Souls." You can view the documentary at <http://nefariousdocumentary.com/>.