

To my blog readers:

May the USA's Independence Day hold special meaning for you this year. Most of us have grown up in freedom and lived with relative peace and safety 'til this moment. This blessing has been a mercy; however, it doesn't leave us without obligations to others.

May I draw attention to an emerging matter that might well be a decisive factor for our nation's well-being into the future? It is the matter of human trafficking and the trafficking of minor children, specifically. How we, as Christians, respond to this crisis, I believe, matters deeply to Him. We are learning more now, more than ever before, about this horrific criminality. The most recent revelation is through a new movie playing nationally in cinemas this week. It's called Sound of Freedom.

The movie gives a glimpse into the authentic story of child rescuer Tim Ballard. He and his wife, parents with children, put everything on the line for Tim to pursue this work. The Ballards committed, so as not to be ashamed at the Judgment Seat of Christ*, that they would do what they could in this life to rescue trafficked minors. Their decision, a mighty witness to Christians everywhere, was not to ignore evil. Instead, they chose to involve themselves in eradicating it. As it is said, "God's children are not for sale."

Jordan Peterson recently interviewed Tim Ballard and Jim Caviezel, the actor who portrays Tim in the film <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTBGNEliczc>. The interview is excellent and highly informative, but it also touches on some painful facts that are hard to take in and even sickening to hear. If you listen to the interview (and it *is* worth hearing), you may need to take a break from listening depending on your sensitivity. But for those who can listen to the interview and watch the drama "Sound of Freedom," I'd suggest doing so.

My family has seen the movie, it presents as a very well done drama and not overly graphic. It delivers like a thriller. There are some sad, fearful and teary scenes, but not unduly shocking. The level of criminality involved in trafficking is actually deeper than shown in the film, but the movie suffices to bring the topic to the public's attention. The content is deeply moving and worth taking in. The account is based in fact. I consider it a serious film, rather than simply entertainment. The movie is adult themed, of course, as the focus is trafficking of minors. The rating is PG-13. The movie trailers on-line can help you determine suitability for family members.

We cannot oppose and overcome that which we are unaware of. Trafficking of minor children is a reality. It is a worldwide phenomenon and is, sadly, not new. Only the broader knowledge of it is relatively new. With fuller exposure through this movie and frank interview, it appears it's time to address the horror and be part of a solution.

I believe

- It would be suitable to pray about what God would have us do in response.
- It would be appropriate to ask Him to guide us into related ministry.
- In asking for the prayers and guidance of one's priest or spiritual father.

We are God's hands and feet on the earth. He made us. He knows our gifts, talents, and inclinations. He can use all that in ministry to others. I truly believe God wants us to help heal His afflicted ones. Surely there will be ways to be involved, and we'll likely hear more about them soon.

May I share something else? The criminality of trafficking minors appears to be a psychopathic evil. Not everyone should delve deeply into the details because the goal is not to traumatize those who need to know more but to inform and move them to action.

So, know yourself. If you are ultra-sensitive, don't try to go too deep into the details, but make at least a commitment to pray daily. You could use a small prayer rope, "Heavenly Father, send your mercies, save your children from trafficking." My spiritual father gave me this prayer over a year ago, asking me to offer it on a 33 knot prayer rope daily. It's a prayer you can offer without knowing every detail about trafficking. It will help cover both rescuers and the children they seek to deliver. And, of course, offering the Akathist to the Holy Archangel Michael is of inestimable worth. As I'm made aware of other ministries we can engage with, I'll share them with you.

I'm still considering how this topic will unfold, but it's likely to unite many people, "for the sake of the children," as it should. Safeguarding children must be a precedent for this generation. Eradicating human trafficking is the goal.

I write to you as an Orthodox Christian, representing myself and my personal views in this matter, which I believe are in concord with our Lord's.

Thank you for considering what I've written here. Please see statistics that follow.

Your sister in the Faith,
Pres. Candace

From <https://youth-underground.com/facts-figures/> [Youth Underground is based in Switzerland]:

- **Human trafficking is the 2nd largest criminal trade in the world after arms.**
- **It is the fastest-growing illicit trade in the world.**
- **It generates over \$150 billion in profits every year.**
- **40.3 million people are living as slaves worldwide.**
- **152 million children were victims of child labor in 2016, which amounts to nearly one in every 10 children worldwide.**
- **Sexual exploitation earns 66% of the global profits of human trafficking.**
- **1 in 4 victims of human trafficking are children.**
- **Over one million children are trafficked for the sex trade every year.**
- **Approximately 30 million children have lost their childhood to human trafficking in the past 30 years.**
- **Some children forced into human trafficking are as young as 4 years old.**
- **The average age of a sex trafficked child is 13-14 years old.**

- 1 in 3 children who run away from home are approached by a trafficker within 48 hours of their running away.
- A pimp can make up to \$150,000-\$200,000 per child a year.
- 76% of transactions for human trafficking with underage girls, start on the internet.
- The U.S. accounts for more than 52% of global human trafficking, with the sex trafficking of minors accounting for the largest percentage. [This is what the film deals with.]
- Traffickers make over \$9.5 billion annually in the U.S. alone

*Tim Ballard and family follow the Mormon religion. Their concern about giving a good account at the Judgment Seat of Christ and taking action is certainly commendable. The Mormon religion and the Christian Faith are not the same, nevertheless the Ballards have been moved to do a work in the world that is of great worth to the heart of God--saving the lives of children. I hope we'll all find ourselves willing to be used by God, "for the sake of the children."

