Rescuing Women from Sex Trafficking

Part 2 of 2: Ministering to Victims of Sex Trafficking
with Darrell Bock, Katie Pedigo, Linda Tomczak
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Darrell Bock  

Linda, let’s talk a little bit about your experience. How long have you been going to the – these jails and been working with – you said Alert is a small organization – grassroots organization. Let’s talk a little bit about them first.

Linda Tomczak  

Okay.

Darrell Bock  

How long has it been around, do you know?

Linda Tomczak  

Oh, I’m not sure. No, I’m really – I’ve been volunteering for about three years.

Darrell Bock  

You’ve been volunteering for about three years.

Linda Tomczak  

So I became –

Darrell Bock  

So how did you get started?

Linda Tomczak  

When I heard that underage girls were being trafficked, then Christina Mackenzie, who is the founder of Alert, she used to go into brothels and talk to women. And then she heard it was underage girls primarily that were being trafficked that – and there were no safe homes, and they wound up arrested. So she began Alert, and she came and spoke at DTS on human trafficking during a missions conference, and I listened to her message and I thought, “That makes perfect sense: if we can prevent them from getting into it.”

So I first volunteered to make art things. The girls can’t have scissors or anything they could use as a weapon, so I said, “How ‘bout if I do some art projects that you can go in and do with the girls?” And then there was a training coming up. You have to get a background check and everything to be able to go into detention, and they didn’t offer those very often, but they were offering one. So I took that, ‘cause I wanted to go in and meet the girls and work with them, and I didn’t know what to expect. I didn’t – I thought, “I’m so much older. I don’t know if I could relate to them…” But I told the Lord, “If you can love me through them, I’ll do this.”
I – and it’s been amazing. I mean, these – I expected hardened girls, that it would be really hard to break into their worlds, but they are just fun, and smart, and warm, and affectionate. I mean, they’re just so glad to see us and just thank us all the time for coming. And it’s been a real surprise at how easy this has been, so –

*Darrell Bock*  
So it’s doable?

*Linda Tomczak*  
Oh, yes, yes, it’s so doable. Yeah.

*Darrell Bock*  
Yeah.

*Linda Tomczak*  
And if – even – there’s really a need to go in and minister to the boys, because so much of this is changing the attitude of the buyers, and a lot of the young men – in fact, there were – they’ve asked us, “Please, can you get someone to come in and work with the boys?” There were over 50 boys that were asking for mentors. There were only two male volunteers to step up. And so, here are boys that wanna be mentored who wanna know what – “What does it look like to be the kind of man that I should be,” and there’s no men that tell them that, so their examples are pimps and gang leaders. And they – there’s just no one – and they get the impression that nobody cares, so that’s – yeah.

*Darrell Bock*  
Now, how does Alert operate? I mean, obviously it’s a grassroots volunteer organization, but are they also a non-profit?

*Linda Tomczak*  
They’re also 501(c)(3).

*Darrell Bock*  
And get support from churches like – or from individuals or from foundations in the city like New Friends New Life?

*Linda Tomczak*  
Yes.
And then we are – one of the other things we do is provide a Thanksgiving meal to all of the kids in juvenile detention: the boys, and the girls, and the volunteers. So we’ll do that every year, and that’s just a way to communicate to all the kids that they all matter, even the ones that we don’t directly interact with. So Christina Mackenzie will send out just a newsletter and just kind of – people underwrite that for us, so we serve them Thanksgiving, which is fun. We get to know all the kids, and see them, and –

**Darrell Bock**

So you – so take people through what you do. So you obviously have a – is it a weekly meeting?

**Linda Tomczak**

It’s weekly, uh-huh.

**Darrell Bock**

And what exactly does that involve? And then what’s your – if there is such a thing – your typical experience with a girl? What’s that going to be like?

**Linda Tomczak**

We come and we start out doing highs and lows: what’s your high of the week? What’s your low of the week? And from that, we just get to know the girls better, and they share. We encourage them. It’s amazing. They’re kind of self – if they’ll do something wrong, they’ll – they have a point system, so they can lose points. That’s how they do, and they’ll be like, “Well, I lost points, but I know what I did wrong, and I know I was wrong, and I know I’m gonna do better.” So – but they’re excited to share with us what their week went like. So we’ll do that and then we’ll – there’s so many great resources online, so I’ll have maybe things I’ve – I’ve bought a lot of “I am Second” stories – the videos, or – there’s just a lot of good resources.

So we’ll pick kind of a topic, and we try to listen to what the girls – we’ve asked them, “What do you want us to talk about? What would help you most?” So if we see a need or if they express a need, then we’ll address that. We’ll do it a lot of different ways: we’ll do it through maybe some – watching some videos; we’ll have interactive things; we’ll talk to them. We try to make it fun and interesting and kind of vary it. And then lots of times we’ll do a craft, but we’ll try to tie the craft into what we do so then they’ll kind of remember it. But we also just wanna give them an opportunity to make something that’s beautiful that they see that they can, and in that, we’re always looking for, “What are their strengths? What can we encourage them in? How did God gift them?”
And then if we hear of things like – a girl’s maybe shared that she was abused or something, we make sure that someone’s aware of that; we make sure that she’s getting the help that she needs. And then we also – the girls have a lot of time to read in there, so we’ll get really good Christian books on, say, recovering from sexual abuse that would appeal to their age range. And we’re like, “If there’re books that you want us to get that would help you, we can get resources for you. We wanna make sure that you get the help that you need.” And they’re – I know we have one case where a girl had disclosed that, and we talked to her about it.

And there’s a really good book called Breath and Hush, which are – a young woman who was molested by her stepfather. And I said, “I’ll get those books. I’ll bring them next week and” – I mean, she had read both those books by the next week and just said, “Thank you so much. You remembered, and I’ve read them both,” and there was just the calmness in her mind after – I mean, her – so, we’re able to help them wherever we see a need.

**Darrell Bock**

Now, the difficulty here is that you have access to them while they’re in recovery, and that’s about a three-month period. And then the hard part I take it is that they are released after those three months and have to go back out into the street. And so the next natural question is, so where do they go?

**Linda Tomczak**

Well, I mean, since they’re minors, they go – the system makes sure that they have what they – as safe of an environment as they have. So they usually go back home. If they don’t have a safe home to go back to, then they’ll put them in foster care. There are kids that have to stay in there longer because they don’t have a safe place to go until they can find somewhere for them to go. Lots of times they wind up back in detention. They’ll go use drugs again or they’ll get arrested again, and sometimes we get them – they’ve been in there once or twice, but it’s amazing because sometimes it takes that long for them to get it, and a lot of girls are like, “If I weren’t in here, I’d be dead.”
When they finally get it, they’re like – I know that they see it as being rescued, because they – they’re living pretty unsafe lives, so if they’re living on the streets, if they’re involved in the things that they’re involved in – most of these kids know someone who’s been killed – either died from a drug overdose or been shot in maybe gang violence or something. So they live pretty dangerous lives, so –

Darrell Bock
So that’s the hard part, in some ways, is that they go back, and there’s no good safe place – necessarily a good safe place to land. I mean, they’ve tried, but there’s no guarantee that there’s gonna be a good landing once they’re released.

Linda Tomczak
Or they go back into the same environment that they weren’t able to succeed in, and so for some kids it was their own family members that were pressuring them into doing the things that they were doing. And we – we’re like, “We can get you into a safer place, and we” – but they have to – we can’t contact them once they’re out, but we – we’re like, “Please contact us. Please, please.” We’ll –

Darrell Bock
They have to take the initiative.

Linda Tomczak
They do, just because they’re minors, and with kids – one girl was gonna go back to her boyfriend because her clothes were there. We’re like, “We’ll take you shopping [laughs]. You don’t need to,” ‘cause she knew he wasn’t good for her. And so we try to give them every reason to contact us, but lots of times they’re back – they get caught back up in, and we often don’t hear from them. We rarely hear from them, actually, which is really heartbreaking.

Darrell Bock
Once they get out?

Linda Tomczak
Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Darrell Bock
Yeah, that’s the hard – that is hard. So how do you break the cycle?
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*Katie Pedigo*  Yeah, that’s the question. Breaking the cycle is letting them see that there is a way out. It’s giving them hope – letting them know that there is survival outside of this. And sometimes, as you mentioned, their living environment is so detrimental or it’s unsafe that, for an adult woman, our best strategy is to get her out of this city – to get her – we have connections with some in Kentucky, and Tennessee, and California – get her out of –

*Darrell Bock*  Let her get a complete fresh start.

*Katie Pedigo*  – fresh start, to where it’s safe – where the trafficker’s not pursuing her, and – because, as you mentioned, it is his income source; and unlike drugs, it’s not disposable. He can sell it time, and time, and time again, and so it’s just ever growing. So there are times when the best solution is to get out of the city, but –

*Darrell Bock*  Is there danger for these girls if they try and come to you for help?

*Katie Pedigo*  There is. There is danger, and so it’s very important to us that we work with law enforcement, or we’re working with court systems, we’re working with Homeland Security and the FBI, and working with those that are there to let them know, “You will be supported and you will be helped.”

*Darrell Bock*  Yeah, we actually had planned as a follow up – and I don’t normally do this, but we actually do have planned, as a follow up, I have a contact in New York who worked with the FBI, and who works in this area, and who works it from the law enforcement side. And we’re gonna talk about the law enforcement dimension that’s a part of this that’s important, because obviously, there’re several layers to this conversation.

*Katie Pedigo*  It is. We’re hosting a breakout in the Conference Against Crime Against Women coming up in March, and it’s only for law enforcement. And what the law enforcement has told us is, “Finally. We needed something to break that cycle, ‘cause we kept arresting her, taking her to prison, she’d get” –

*Darrell Bock*  Yeah, they know who these people are.
\textit{Katie Pedigo} – “go back out, arrest her, go back though it,” and it’s a revolving door that just keeps going. And so if we can offer an alternative to that revolving door and she can get out of that, then I don’t have to keep that cycle. But that’s really what it takes: it takes all of us in the community coming around her – surrounding her with the resources. You mentioned that the girls in the safe houses many times will run – or in the foster care will run, and that’s what we have found also.

And so it makes you say, “What are they running from there? Is it – is there love there? Is there support there? Is there respect there?” Because if she’s getting that love and surrounded by that, then she won’t run. And so that’s the key component to breaking that cycle, but that’s the key question we have to answer.

\textit{Darrell Bock} Now, how difficult is it to break another cycle that seems to me, besides the dependence and the abuse, the inability to trust – we’re adding up all kinds of layers here. How difficult is it to get these girls to realize that this isn’t the only way to earn money in order to survive? ‘Cause really, part of this is – in some ways, they’re trying to survive, and if they have children, in some cases they’re thinking, “Well, this is the only way – only means I have to provide for my child.” How do you break that cycle?

\textit{Katie Pedigo} So our goal is to help her build a bridge to self-sufficiency; that’s really what we’re doing. So we will help and we will help provide the food, and rent assistance, and transportation while she’s getting education, and job training, and the things she needs to survive. Wrapped in all of that is helping her with her mental health, because, as we’ve mentioned, especially if she started as a 13 year old girl, she has got to go through a great amount of sexual abuse recovery and mental health resources that surround her to help her while we’re walking this – building this path to self-sufficiency.

But it’s very – the job skills, the education, the long-term sustainability is a critical component, because if she does not believe she can provide for those two children at her kitchen table, she will continue that cycle. And so we have to let her know that we’ve got her back. That way, if she works the program and if she will really follow through, then we’re gonna follow through too; and that there is a bridge, and the other end of that bridge is being self-sufficient and providing for her children in a long-term way.
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Darrell Bock Now, we’ve alluded to the fact that if you’re a minor, you can’t take the initiative to contact them. Does that change once they come of age?

Katie Pedigo It does change when it comes of age, for sure. We definitely can contact them. But another key for the minors is working with their families, and New Friends New Life is starting an initiative in our juvenile detention program where now we’re helping train and offer recovery for the families, too, because many times it’s – she was in a bad living environment not because it was intentional, but because they were in the same cycle of abuse, and trauma, and poverty that she is in.

And so if we can work with the families as well to provide some healing and some resources, and some real tools for them, then she can go back to a safe place, again, full of love and support; but it comes through really working both with the young girl and with their families, because, when she’s a minor, they really – unless they relinquish the rights, they have the control to decide if she can go to a safe house, if she can go get the resources she needs when she leaves the facility.

Darrell Bock Wow. Well, let’s turn our attention in a lightly different direction, ‘cause we kind of painted the situation in the – in what the practicalities of what is faced in human trafficking. So if someone says – like Linda, when she was hearing this radio broadcast years ago – “Well, this sounds fascinating. I think I might, maybe be interested in doing something to help.” What would that look like? What could someone do?

Katie Pedigo Well, for New Friends New Life, they can help in a couple of ways: for sure is men and those that may have bought commercial sex in the past to make a decision today that they’re not gonna do that again. If they need to go get their recovery, if they need to go get the resources they need, it really starts there. If we could have men stop buying commercial sex, then we would stop having girls being abused from commercial sex; so that’s the first thing, that if men are engaged in commercial sex acts – and that, as we talked about, could be online, or in brothels, or in clubs.
It goes – it really stretches the gamut. If you can make that decision and get the help you need to stop buying that commercial sex, that’s step one. Then step two is, decide how you can engage. What – our goal is always to say, “What’s your passion and your gifts?”

It never ceases to amaze me that we’ll have a teacher come in to – and wanna volunteer. And we’ll say, “Great. We’ll put you in our children’s program,” and she’ll say, “Ugh, I can’t take another minute with children. I spend all day, every day – please, can I work with women?” Yes. Okay. You can be a budget counselor. You can be a career works volunteer. You can help come and serve meals on Wednesday nights when we have our Bible studies. You can help – there are so many things that women and men can do to volunteer their time, and their efforts, and their energy, and the talents. We just wanna help decide what that is for you. What’s that spark that God put on your heart? And then let’s find the right fit for that.

**Darrell Bock**

So if they come to you, you’re gonna open the opportunity for them to be of help somewhere and help give them a sense of where they might fit, etc?

**Katie Pedigo**

Exactly. Question one is, what’s your gifts and talents? What’s your passion? And then let’s – I can promise you, we have a need that will match those two things.

**Darrell Bock**

And in your situation with Alert, how does it work?

**Linda Tomczak**

Just – if anyone contacted Alert and wanted to volunteer, they could – we wouldn’t send someone in. We would take someone who’s been going in and always have someone –

**Darrell Bock**

Pair them up.

**Linda Tomczak**

– right, right.

**Darrell Bock**

Yeah.
But also, we would really love to have more male involvement, just to do something with the boys. And even if they went in and showed good films – even to – if they’re maybe intimidated, they wouldn’t know what to say maybe, there are so many good films that teach good values. And the media affects things so much, a lot of times people are getting the negative impacts from the movies. But to go in with some positive movies, and then maybe once a month out of that have a discussion about the movies and the values. That would be an easy way for someone who didn’t feel comfortable, maybe actually presenting a program that could really offer something.

And the other thing that’s interesting is kids have a lot of time in detention to read. And I’m surprised, ‘cause here – this is such a great environment. You’ve got kids that don’t have their cell phones, they don’t have their computers, they don’t have the friends to run around with to get them in trouble, and you’re the best thing to show up all week, besides the – they value their families, too. And so, just – if you can encourage them to do things and provide things for them to where, now, you have a captive audience; and things that didn’t appeal to them otherwise appeal to them a lot; and you have time and opportunities to change their minds, and their thoughts about things, and attitudes, that would be great with both the boys and the girls.

**Darrell Bock**

So how does someone contact New Friends New Life?

**Katie Pedigo**

They can call. Probably the easiest way is Google New Friends New Life –

**Darrell Bock**

Okay.

**Katie Pedigo**

– or just go to our website, newfriendsnewlife.org – it is .org and it’s all spelled out. And on that website gives lots of different ways on how to serve, how to give, how to raise awareness in my community on the issue so that my neighbors understand what the issue is; so there’s lots of resources there, or they can call. We have a weekly Bible study that we do every single Wednesday evening, so we can connect them to that if they wanna come and serve meals or work as mentors, budget counselors. The best contact, though, is through our website, newfriendsnewlife.org.

**Darrell Bock**

Okay, and for Alert?
Linda Tomczak: It’s alertedfw.org.

Darrell Bock: Okay.

Linda Tomczak: And – same thing: there would be contact info on there.

Darrell Bock: Now, does that mean that Alert has different city chapters around the country, or –

Linda Tomczak: No, I think probably just the name Alert –

– was probably taken already, so –

Darrell Bock: Okay, okay. Now, here’s a question that I have – because we send this out to churches, and ministers, and that kind of thing, so let me ask two questions: first is, if you could say anything to pastors of churches about human trafficking and developing sensitivity in your church for human trafficking, what would you say? Let’s start there, and then I’ll have a second question I’ll ask later.

Katie Pedigo: Well, one I would say, please know that this is very biblical, this concept of justice, this concept of the woman at the well, this concept of the good Samaritan. There are stories – just so many stories in the Old Testament and in the New Testament that refer – that could be taught from the front about human trafficking. And I’ve heard pastors say, “Oh, I can’t talk about that. We can talk about that in our women’s ministry, but we’re not gonna talk about it from the front.” And we just want you to say, “The way to end” – just like abolitionists did in the Civil War, the way to end this kind of modern-day slavery is to talk about it – shine the light – God’s light on it.

Get in the Word, and find out what it says about that and how Jesus responded to that. And that’s the best news I know, is to tell pastors that it’s okay – there are resources out there available, to where we can talk about it in our churches. And to know that, very likely, there are for sure guaranteed abused women in your congregation, and possibly trafficked girls in your congregation. And so the sensitivity that comes to that is very important. And so we offer resources on how to talk to these young girls – talk to abuse survivors so that there’s sensitivity that goes around that. And then third, just to know that there are resources out there that can be met.
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The one thing that we do ask our church partners is please don’t just put another Band-Aid on that wound. If she comes to you and says, “Well, I just need my rent paid. I just want my groceries” – there is true transformation. There is a full-fledged program to get her a new life. And so we say, instead of putting a Band Aide on and saying, “Okay, here’s your rent. Go down the road.”

**Darrell Bock**  Yeah, so you want more than just a – someone writing a check.

**Katie Pedigo**  Exactly. Let’s connect her to New Friends New Life. Let’s connect her with resources so she can get true help that she needs, mental health resources, job training, education, all of that wrapped around experts in the field that have been working on this for 16 years. And so instead of just a quick fix, connect with those that really are committed to the issue.

**Darrell Bock**  Now, what would – Linda, what would you say to pastors of churches if you could say something?

**Linda Tomczak**  I would wanna say that – several things – is – one is the attitude that seems to prevail through history toward prostitutes, is – if a woman, especially a girl who is taken into prostitution, they are abused quite severely so they don’t cross the line, so they don’t run or try to get away from their pimp; I mean, they’re raped – they’re beaten if they don’t meet a certain quota. Lots of times there’re severe consequences, and these aren’t women, lots of times, that are – there’s just a preconceived notion that these are just women or girls that like sex, or that want this way to make money, or – but there really is so much abuse in there.

And this is more than a women’s rights issue; it’s a human’s – human right issue. And then, also, just – there’s a link – quite a link between pornography and trafficking, that that is creating a lot more of a demand for sex. And if there are 300,000, say, trafficked women in the US, those women have anywhere from 5 to 30 men a night that they have as customers. That’s an awful lot of men that are driving this, and it is – if there weren’t a demand, there wouldn’t be a supply. And so, I think to change attitudes toward this, both on viewing the women with compassion and then holding the men accountable for what they’re doing. So –

**Katie Pedigo**  Very well said.
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*Linda Tomczak*  – I think those would be two points.

*Darrell Bock*  Yeah.

*Linda Tomczak*  That’s great.

*Darrell Bock*  Now, the second question that I have goes like this: the – we tend to think of individuals volunteering, but again, because this is going out to churches and the podcasts are sometimes designed to speak to small groups, or Bible studies, or groups of people who are meeting together, do you all get many volunteers that actually are a group of – I mean, you mentioned the Bible study that’s kind of the gist of what led to New Friends New Life.

If you had a chance to say something to a small group or a Bible study that might be diving into this for the first time, and it’s brand new, or whatever, what might you say to them about what their opportunities might be? ‘Cause a lot of small groups meet together and they sometimes get asked the question, “Well, what could we as a group do in ministry together;” that kind of thing. What –

*Katie Pedigo*  Well, there are many opportunities. Here, locally, they can connect with agencies like New Friends New Life or like Alert. We have two groups – usually they’re Bible study groups – every week bring food to serve. Or they can pray within their small group to really research and make themselves aware about what the Bible says, but what our culture says about sex and about what this does to the women, and they can pray for the work and pray for healing. They can write cards – support cards – “I’m here for you. I’m praying for you.”

Maybe put it in a Bible and a great book that they read and give those so that we can pass those out to the women and children: really, any way that they can just kind of get engaged and know that there’s something that can be done in their community. They can show films. There’s lots of films out now that small groups are doing to raise awareness, where they watch the film and discuss that, or they read a book and they’ll discuss what that means.

*Darrell Bock*  And I’m gonna talk about resources in just a second.
And it’s a critical piece to that, because I know, especially within our churches, the women that come to us are particularly cautious about coming in to a church. Sometimes their abuse happened in the church. Sometimes they were told they needed to endure the abuse that happened in the church. They are told that God is their father and their father was their abuser. They were told that they’re a sinner, that they’re dirty, that they’re condemned, that they’re going to Hell; so there’s a lot of those misconceptions, and myths, and lies that these girls have been told at such early ages that we, as small groups or as larger groups, can come back and say, “We’re gonna break that myth. We’re not going to listen to that anymore. Those are lies that are being told to you. You are good, you are worthy, you are valued, and there is redemption there.

And what would you say, Linda?

One thing that Alert does is we provide any girl who wants the Bible a Bible. They – because we’re working within the juvenile justice system, we have restrictions put on us. And one is they can’t have hardback books, so we have to provide things in paperback. Volunteers can’t come in and help unless they’ve gone and gotten a badge, so they have to go through the training system that the juvenile justice system has in order to – we can’t just have people come in and speak. But if a group wanted to do it, I think – to – a film night would be great, because – the thing is, is they wouldn’t all have to come each week.

If there was a large group, they could kind of divide up so it wouldn’t be so overwhelming if they felt like, “Well, I can’t give one night a week, but I could give one night every second or third week.” And then – so – and the other thing – we send out prayer requests each week. We take prayer requests from the girls and we send those out each week. So if anyone wanted to get on our list and just pray for our girls, that would be great. So that – those are all things – also, a lot of the girls want mentors when we get out – when they get out, so if someone wanted to be a mentor.
And the other thing that’s kind of been disappointing is, a lot of the church groups go in and don’t – they don’t really preach a message of grace to these girls. They come in very – girls will say, “This other group said this,” and it’s something that isn’t biblical at all. And so it’s kind of scary, ‘cause their concept of what God is – they’re hearing a lot of different perspectives from different groups. And so when that happens – we’re always sharing the Bible. We always say, “Well” – if they say that, we’ll go, “Well, let’s go see what the Bible says about that, because that – a lot of people can say a lot of things about God, and we need to see what the Bible says.”

So we always try to turn them to the Bible, and then we’ll give them verse cards that have a really pretty picture and scripture that I make and have printed at photo places, and just – if churches wanted to even help Alert to, say, get scripture in their hands, ‘cause they say those and we teach those – I mean, we get them just to hold on to them. They like those a lot, so – I don’t know.

**Darrell Bock**

Well, let’s talk about resources briefly –

**Katie Pedigo**

Okay.

**Darrell Bock**

– ‘cause, Linda, I see that you brought a couple of things that you want to show that you think are helpful to get people oriented. So why don’t you share what you brought?

**Linda Tomczak**

Okay. This is a video called Nefarious, and it’s a documentary on the global sex trafficking problem. But it won a lot of awards, and it also has some really good interviews. One’s with Annie Lobert, who’s a former prostitute who has a ministry called Hookers for Jesus, I think, in Las Vegas. And there’s just former Johns, who are men who buy sex, a former trafficker, and a lot of people that are helping women get out. So this is a great, great DVD if anyone wants to learn more about it.

And then this is a book by Victor Malarek who went – interviewed a lot of men who buy sex just to kinda get a profile of the men that buy sex and what drives. I thought that was a – really, I –

**Darrell Bock**

And so it’s called – just the title.
The Table Podcast Rescuing Women from Sex Trafficking

Linda Tomczak It’s called The Johns: Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It.


Linda Tomczak And he’s a Canadian journalist. And then the Polaris Project is – they run the human trafficking hotline, and that number is 888-373-7888. And that’s a great resource if people have questions – if they see something that looks like trafficking. Any underage girl or boy who is selling their body is a trafficking victim by definition, because that – minors cannot consent to sex. So if anyone is a minor who is selling their body, they are actually a victim of human trafficking. So that’s a good number if anyone has questions or if they want to give to someone who wants to – who is trapped and needs out, or just to learn more, and they have great resources on their website. So it’s – it’s called thepolarisproject.org.

Darrell Bock Okay. Anything else?

Katie Pedigo And also, for church leaders, New Friends New Life is hosting a break-out session for Greater Dallas Movement Day that is January 23rd at the Dallas Convention Center. And so, Tim Keller’s coming, and others, and they’re estimating 1,600 faith leaders are coming together to talk about ways to end major issues in our city, like poverty and human trafficking. And so that’s a great time to come, and we ask that, if people are interested in knowing about the faith community, in particular, with human trafficking, that’s a great afternoon session. It’ll be a three-hour session as well.

Darrell Bock The one thing I don’t know is whether or not we will release before or after that event, but in one way or the other, we’ll alert people to either that it’s coming or that – on the other end of it, what’s come out of it, because that is a significant event that is happening in this city. Well, I really do thank you all for taking the time to come in and talk to us about this. It’s – there are two topics that I feel really are important that we’ve tried to talk to churches about: one is this one, human trafficking; the other is domestic abuse, which is kinda the other side of this. And we’re planning on dealing with several – have several podcasts to deal with various aspects of this problem.
But the one that we’ve just – that we’re doing, this one, is important because it is really – it represents an invitation to people to take advantage of the opportunity to minister in a way. Some people say, “What can I possibly do,” or, “What might be of value,” so I thought – in closing, I thought what I’d let you all do is – I’m gonna ask you all for – do you have one story of kind of hope or encouragement that we could end with? ‘Cause this, in some ways, is a grim topic. I mean, it’s a – it – we’re very much looking at the underside of how people treat one another. So do you have some story of hope or encouragement that you could offer to people?

Katie Pedigo

There’re so many stories of hope. That’s the best part of what I do. We say this is such a rollercoaster and there’re such lows, but then there are high highs where Jesus comes in just saves the day. The one I’m thinking about is a wonderful woman that’s in our program. She has two precious girls: one that’s 16 and one that’s 9 years old. And she endured the same cycle of abuse that we’ve talked about this afternoon, and she ended up in prison. And her two children were staying – bounced around, staying with grandparents and others.

And when she got out she got in contact with a survivor from New Friends New Life, and she said, “The second I leave this prison I’m going to that office, and they’re – I’m gonna make sure they talk to me the day I get out of prison,” and she did, and that was three years ago. She now has a fantastic job. Her daughter is in a private school and is excelling. She’s probably gonna be president of the United States some day; I would not be surprised. She has a new home through Habitat for Humanity. Her daughter is signing up and enrolling for college.

I mean, it is a true story of transformation and breaking that – what we’ve talked about – that generational cycle of abuse, but it came because she was courageous and she said, “I believe that I can,” and then He said, “I know you can, through Me.” And so she accepted the love of Christ, and accepted that not only for herself but her changed family. And it didn’t just change her and her children: it changed her whole community now. It changed her family. It changed her neighbors. It changed everyone around her, and that’s what a transformed life can do.

Darrell Bock

That’s great. Linda?
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_**Linda Tomczak**_  
Well, I had said that some of the girls come in more than one time, and we had one girl that we just loved. She was just fun. All the girls loved her, too, and she said, “Can I share something,” and we said, “Sure.” And she said, “When I was – someone told me that when I was in before, I was just a strung out druggie that they had no hope for,” and she said, “but” – she said, “That’s not me anymore,” and she said, “and I love God so much, I love Jesus, and I’m so glad I’m not that person I was before.”

So we hear stories like that all the time, where God just works in their heart and it brings them out of what they’re – and sets them aside kind of – only about 5 percent of people who need help for drug abuse get it. And so just the fact that they’re there and we’re able to share truth with them – so we hear stories like that all the time from girls.

_**Darrell Bock**_  
Well, so there’s hope.

_**Linda Tomczak**_  
There’s hope.

_**Katie Pedigo**_  
Lots of hope.

_**Darrell Bock**_  
It’s doable and there’s hope. Well, great. I wanna thank both of you for coming in and taking the time to do this. As I said, it’s something that’s very important to us. We think there’s a terrific value in showing how service and ministry really does touch all parts of life, and this is certainly a part of life. And our hope is, is that people who have listened have gotten a glimpse of what’s possible, of ministry that is possible, of what churches can do that’s possible in a way that makes a difference – profound difference in individual lives, so thank you all very much. And we thank you for being a part of The Table, where we discuss issues of God and culture, and we trust that this look at human trafficking has been an encouragement and instructive.