



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** Wednesday, July 16, 2014

**Contact:** Rev. Dr. Campbell B. Singleton, III, Senior Pastor

**Email:** cbsmaestro@hotmail.com

**Time:** 7:30pm.

**Location:** 14 Midland Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07042

“Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun; I saw the tears of the oppressed - and they have no comforter; power was on the side of their oppressors - and they have no comforter.” - Ecclesiastes 4:1 NIV

***A Call to Awareness and Action to End Human Trafficking***

Union Baptist Church of Montclair invites the community to share in its second educational forum to bring awareness to the world-wide crisis of human trafficking, the second largest and fastest growing illegal trade in the world, and to call for action that provides protection for vulnerable populations. As a people whose ancestry has experienced the horrors of centuries of slavery in this country, we are particularly impassioned to dismantle and tear down systems that fortify modern day global slavery.

As a community of faith, we believe that trafficking persons violates human freedom to be who God has created us to be. It demeans and devalues the sacredness of human life and exploits people for monetary profit at the expense of their physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing. We are incensed and outraged at such diabolical practices and join the chorus of prophetic voices who are condemning it and calling for justice on behalf of the million of persons forced into varied forms of exploitation. We are resolved to personify the Christ who proclaimed release to the captives and set the oppressed free (Luke 4:16-19). We believe that God calls God's people to love God with all our soul and to love our neighbor as our self and it is this unconditional love that motivates us to advocate for global efforts to end this abusive and violent activity.

Our vision is to cultivate a conscious, informed, watchful and vocal community that bands together as good neighbors to create a network that prevents and protects those at risk from the systematic schemes of predators and supports healing and wholeness for everyone.

Toward this end, we have invited Ms. Tracy Thompson, Assistant Attorney General of the State of New Jersey, Ms. Carolyn Murray, Acting Essex County Prosecutor, Mr. Robert Jackson, Mayor of Montclair, Mr. David Sabagh, Montclair Chief of Police, Dr. Renée Baskerville 4<sup>th</sup> Ward Councilwomen, Ms. Michelle Russell, Montclair School District, Chief Talent Officer, town leaders and residents to join in a time of prayer, reflection and action. In the future, we are prepared to extend invitations to each school in Montclair to share in our series of educational forums in our church.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

2 Corinthians 3:17 NRSV

### **Communal Response**

Our educational forums seek to encourage participants to partner in a set of actions:

1. **Pray** that we will possess the courage to confront and transform a culture that tolerates cruel and dehumanizing behavior. Pray that we eradicate the poverty, hunger and sexism that feeds into human trafficking. Pray for the deliverance for all persons enslaved and experiencing ongoing physical, psychological and emotional trauma.
2. **Report** suspicious activity related to the NJ Hotline 1-855-END-NJHT (363-6548). The hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by detectives in the Human Trafficking Unit within the Division of Criminal Justice, or the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) at 1-888-373-7888. NHTRC is a national toll-free hotline available to answer calls from anywhere in the country. Hotline specialists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to take reports from anywhere in the country related to potential trafficking victims, suspicious behaviors, and/or locations where trafficking is suspected to occur. All reports are confidential.
3. **Read** about the United States Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in persons. Learn about victim protection, prosecution of traffickers, prevention and anti-trafficking programs. There are other materials available such as “5 Ways to End Human Trafficking.”
4. **Call or Write to your congressional leaders.**

In 2013, there was an effort to strengthen the Trafficking in Persons Office at the Department of State. The Human Trafficking Prioritization Act was introduced as H.R. 2283 and S.1249 in Senate. This legislation would elevate the Trafficking in Persons Office to the status of a Bureau – elevating human trafficking and to the status of other important diplomatic concerns. ([ijm.org](http://ijm.org))

Call your representative today and ask them to co-sponsor the Human Trafficking Prioritization Act (see sample Letter)

### **5. Educate**

Work with other entities to share information and plans that will help prevent and protect our vulnerable populations

## Appendix A

Dear Member of Congress,

The Trafficking in Persons Office (J/TIP) is leading the U.S. fight against slavery internationally. Through the annual TIP Report, the U.S. leverages its diplomatic leadership on human trafficking to encourage other countries to improve their anti-slavery efforts.

But because it is an *office* and not a *bureau*, TIP Office leaders can be left out of important conversations. The State Department office that is most expert on slavery should at least have a seat at the table where important decisions are made, such as a country's ranking within the TIP Report.

**This office speaks up for the most marginalized people on the planet—their voice needs to be as powerful as it can possibly be. Please support upgrading the TIP Office to a State Department Bureau by co-sponsoring H.R.2283/S.1249, the Human Trafficking Prioritization Act. This change will have zero fiscal impact but will contribute significantly to the U.S. fight against modern-day slavery.**

Sincerely,

Your Name