

To Stop Trafficking We Need Backbones

President Ronald Reagan's description of how he viewed the end of the cold war with atheistic soviet communism aptly describes how we should fight the war against human trafficking.

For 70-plus years, communism caused 20 million to 30 million non-World War II deaths across the 15

Charitably Speaking



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countries of the Soviet Union through famine, abuse, torture, purges, executions, disappearances, slave labor, repression, censorship, and religious persecution.

The most sympathetic comments from the most forgiving historians are that it was well-intentioned and the casualty numbers are inflated. Small comfort to the victims. But even a casual reading of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Beria and Molotov reveals the evils espoused by a state system that denied both God's existence and fundamental human rights.

The campaign against the evil of human trafficking must also be uncompromising. If it is merely the next feel-good project to hug in hopes of getting a participation trophy, then evil will win. As writer Clementine Paddleford would say, "Never grow a wishbone where your backbone should be."

In the array of justice issues, there can be no compromise, no rationalization, and no treaties with traffickers. Unconditional surrender must be the ultimate goal. Backbones, not wishbones.

Although shutting down Backpage — an internet site used by traffickers — was a tactical victory, it was not the end of the war. Think about it: no matter the protection afforded offensive material by the first amendment, no one, not the ACLU nor Planned Parenthood nor atheistic communism, has offered any defense of human trafficking.

It is a continuing abomination demanding the next group of abolitionists of every race, creed, color, gender and national origin to unite and act against it. It can be done. In a rare show of unity, both Democrats and Republicans strongly condemned human trafficking in their respective 2016 national platforms.

Most parents care first and foremost for their children. How, then, can they not be incensed to learn that a trafficker will find a middle school runaway within 48 hours of leaving home? How can parents, both fathers and mothers, pimp out their own children for money or drugs? How can we not engage and partner with other social and faith-based organizations, schools, law enforcement officers and medical providers to serve the survivors of this profane business?

Anecdotes and research data do not allow us to ignore what Pope Francis identified as a "crime against humanity." Men in particular must recognize our duty to our wives and children to speak out. Clergy can confront their congregations on Sunday morning to recognize what happened Saturday night. News media can choose words that identify the real criminals of this unholy trade. Employers can include training about trafficking during hiring orientation. Businesses can spot and stop grooming actions by customers, employees or suppliers.

We need to watch for the subtle warning signs on display and keep our heads out of the sand at work, shopping or school. We need to win and traffickers need to lose.

St. Josephine Bakhita, patroness of trafficking victims, pray for us.

'We win;
they
lose.'

— Ronald Reagan
