

Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

(This RAG is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International)

Website www.racsrag.org

11 June 2016

Issue No 65



Editor: Mark Little – Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, England

"We are the doers of our communities, the leaders, the ones who are most involved, who see the problems and have the means to find the solutions. We are a worldwide network of inspired individuals who translate their passions into relevant social causes to change lives in communities"

Kalyan Banerjee (RI President 2011/12)



RACSRAG at the RI Convention in Seoul

(by Carol Metzker, One World Rotary eClub)

A giant stone gate called Gwanghuimun (trans. "Bright Light Gate") sits in the Dongdaemun district of Seoul. Centuries old, it has seen travelers pass by the old city wall on horseback, in automobiles and, throughout the ages, on foot. It has witnessed dynasties come and go; it has watched modern skyscrapers change the skyline of Seoul. Through its strength, the gate remains a steadfast part of continuing history.

The 2016 Rotary International Convention - held in Seoul from 28 May to 1 June - likewise saw the old and the new.

Traditional drummers and 21st-century superstar PSY, brought music. Guests — adorned in kilts, colorful Nigerian skirts, beautiful Korean dresses, and suits — visited from far and

wide. Rotarians exchanged business cards and ideas.

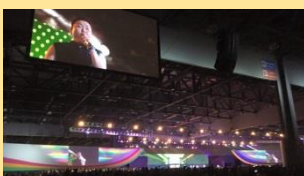
The Convention also brought new perspectives on the ancient and continuing injustice of slavery. Heinous crimes against our fellow humans, age-old forms - debt bondage slavery, sex and labor trafficking, and forced child marriage and labor—have been joined by organ harvesting and the sale of human flesh via the internet.

Sadly, 46 million people worldwide are enslaved, as estimated by Walk Free's Global Slavery Index in an updated figure and report released during the week of the Convention. Tragically, victims are subject to exploitation, brutal violence and, often, death. Many of the victims are children.

Fortunately, growing numbers of Rotarians are now facing this monstrous crime and spreading the word that we can take action against it.

At the foundation of that work is RACSRAG (the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery)

Like the Gwanghuimun Gate, RACSRAG has been steadfast from its beginning as a provisional action group when it began its work in 2009 to accomplish projects, raise awareness and attain official status and recognition from the Board of Rotary International, to its progress today as it expands its membership globally and forms new partnerships with government leaders, businesses, anti-slavery organizations and grass root activists.



PSY performing at the closing ceremony



RACSRAG in Seoul (Cont'd)



RACSRAG Breakout Session – 30th May 2016
Rotarians combating Child Slavery and Human Trafficking.

“You may never know what results come from our actions, but if you do nothing there will be no result”

(Gandhi)

With efforts akin to grinding, transporting and laying the first stone blocks of the ancient stone gate, RACSRAG secured one breakout session at the Sydney Convention in 2014 - RI's first session addressing modern slavery and human trafficking - that drew an audience which exceeded the room's capacity.

With the groundwork laid, this year's event included two breakout sessions featuring the subject and the first presentation on “slavery” during a Convention's plenary session.

In a room packed with Rotarians and guests, Mark Little, Carol Metzker and Gillian Booth spoke about the worldwide issue

and ways Rotarians are combating modern slavery; Stephen Sypula and Dave McCleary joined them for a Q&A segment.

A newly formed group with relevant and overlapping efforts—Keeping Children Safe Online—included Carol Metzker's presentation of three cases of child sex trafficking in which the internet played a role.

At a general session, Gary Haugen, CEO and founder of International Justice Mission, delivered a powerful speech which culminated in a standing ovation and the realization for many Rotarians that although slavery was abolished legally, it still exists in every nation.

Like the steadfast old gate, RACSRAG and Rotarians are entering a new era. The Action Group continues to serve as a pioneer in the fight against modern slavery and human trafficking.

Increasing numbers of clubs are wrangling the issue. More clubs and districts in more countries are engaging in projects to aid survivors and to prevent additional victims.

RACSRAG is, and will continue to be, an integral part of history as Rotarians serve humanity and work to end modern slavery.



Photo: Panel for Q&A Session (L to R): Mark Little, RACSRAG Founder and Chairman (UK), Stephen Sypula, RACSRAG Vice Chair/Treasurer; Carol Metzker, Rtn. and Author of *Facing the Monster: How One Person Can Fight Child Slavery*; Gillian Booth, RACSRAG Western Australia Co-ordinator; Dave McCleary, RACSRAG USA Co-ordinator.



Chairman's reflections

Armed with the good wishes of my club and District and the blessings and wholesome support of a local church, I travelled to the RI Convention in Seoul, Korea with RACSRAG Vice Chair, Stephen Sypula, to give a voice for the voiceless and enslaved children of the world.

The annual springtime RI Convention reunion with fellow anti-slavery activists from around the globe, is always a special thrill for me. We were all in Seoul to encourage more of the Rotary family to join forces with us to support the work of anti-slavery organizations in protecting the vulnerable and exploited from slavery and its consequences.

Before the Convention I had asked for volunteers to help staff the RACSRAG booth which was situated in the Kintex House of Friendship. The response was amazing. In accordance with RI's booth regulations, we were fully manned at all times, as there were always volunteers ready to step in to cover whenever the core volunteers' presences were required elsewhere. To all those who staffed the booth, I say thank you for your help and support.

Well over 200 Rotarians recorded their interest in the work of our RAG by leaving their name and club details for future contact. These Rotarians will be receiving our regular Newsletter and we hope that in due course they will become fully paid up and active members of our Action Group. We even persuaded two of the visitors to consider becoming RACSRAG Coordinators, ie one for India and the other for Pakistan. More about these appointments in the next issue of the Newsletter,

One session I was unable to attend because it coincided with RACSRAG's Breakout Session rehearsals, was the presentation by Gary Huang, the President and CEO of International Justice Mission. (IJM) Gary's speech was entitled "**Until All Are Free: How to End Slavery in Our Lifetime**". It is the first time a speaker has been asked to speak on this topic in a plenary session of an RI Convention. I understand Gary received a standing ovation from all of the delegates after his presentation.

A copy of Gary's speech is included in the Annex of this Newsletter. He challenged his audience to take a more positive role in combating injustice, highlighted the evils and the extent of modern slavery, complemented Rotarians for sounding the alarm about polio and raising the funds to ensure that everyone received the vaccine and suggested that Rotary could/should play a similar role in helping to eliminate slavery from the face of the globe.

Today there are millions of slaves waiting to be freed. The organizations which liberate the slaves know how to set slaves free and they know how to help slaves achieve rehabilitation and reintegration back into their own homes. What they struggle to do is to mobilize funds that will help extent their work further.

This is where our RAG can make a huge impact in the struggle to end this crime against humanity. The impact can be achieved by positively encouraging our members to support the efforts of small and large anti-slavery/human trafficking organizations, just like IJM.,



Board members, Dave McCleary and Stephen Sypula at the RACSRAG booth in Seoul.



Gary Huang(IJM) speaking on "slavery" at one of the plenary sessions.



Gary Huang (second from left) visits the RACSRAG booth.



46 million estimated to be in Slavery

THE GLOBAL SLAVERY INDEX

“The mass movement against slavery will only work if every single supporter performs simple acts of preventative abolition”

(Ben Skinner)

The latest edition of Walk Free’s [Global Slavery Index 2016](#) estimates that there are 45.8 million victims of modern slavery around the world.

The countries with the highest estimated prevalence of modern slavery by the proportion of their population are North Korea, Uzbekistan, Cambodia, India, and Qatar. In North Korea, there is pervasive evidence that government-sanctioned forced labour occurs in an extensive system of prison labour camps while North Korean women are subjected to forced marriage and commercial sexual exploitation in China and other neighbouring states. In Uzbekistan, the government continues to subject its citizens to forced labour in the annual cotton harvest.

Those countries with the highest absolute numbers of people in modern slavery are India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Uzbekistan. Several of these countries provide the low-cost labour that produces consumer goods for markets in Western Europe, Japan, North America and Australia.

400,000 enslaved in Eriteria

A United Nations Commission of Inquiry last week suggested that Eriteria’s systematic and widespread human rights abuses should be referred to the International Criminal Court as crimes against humanity include the enslavement of up to 400,000 of its own people.

The Commission reported that the government of the small Horn of Africa country has made no progress on the most critical of rights violations which were highlighted and documented a year ago. Eritrean refugees are one of the largest groups trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. The new report says 47,025 Eritreans applied for asylum in Europe in 2015.

The Chairman of the Commission, Mike Smith told reporters that *“the crimes of enslavement, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture, persecution, rape, murder and other inhumane acts have been committed as part of a widespread, systematic campaign against the civilian population since 1991,”* which was the year that Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki came to power

US seizes slave tainted products

Earlier this month, the United States seized low-calorie sweetener stevia imported from China by PureCircle, making it the latest company to be targeted by a new law that bans imports of products made by forced or child labor. The Trade Facilitation and the Trade Enforcement Act was signed into law in February 2015 to improve transparency across the global supply chains.

This is the third product seizure since the law came into effect. Imports of potassium and other related products brought in by Tangshan Sunfar Silicon Industries have been impounded and shipments of soda ash and other chemicals by the Tangshan Sanyou Group and its subsidiaries have also been seized



Mike Smith, Chairman of Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eriteria



Leaves of a stevia plant



RACSRAG Board

Chairman: Mark Little, RC of Norwich St Edmund (D1080), England. mark@racsrags.org
Vice Chairman: Mark Doyle, RC of Pretoria West (9400), South Africa. mpdoyle@mweb.co.za
Vice Chairman: Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange (D1260), England. stephen@racsrags.org
Secretary: Harry Payne, RC of Burnham on Crouch (D1240), England. harry@racsrags.org
Treasurer and
Webmaster: Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange (D1260), England. stephen@racsrags.org
Board Member: Bob Christie, RC of Dalkeith (D1020), Scotland. bob@racsrags.org

Board Member: Dave McCleary, RC of Roswell (D6900), USA dmcclary@fms-inc.us
Board Member: Dorothy Pulsford-Harris, RC of Swaffham (D1080), England. dorothy@racsrags.org
Board Member: Girish Mittal, RC of Mumbai Boravali East (D3140), India girish@racsrags.org
Board Member: Judith Diment, RC of Windsor St George (D1090), England judith@thediments.co.uk

RACSRAG Coordinators

North America Dave McCleary (For contact details see above)
Cokkie Eakie, RC of Roswell (D6900), USA cokkie@endhtnow.com
Chuck Fitzgerald, RC of Peoria (D5490), USA chuckfitzgerald@gmail.com
Caleb LaPlante, RC of Greater Grants Pass, (D5110) caleblaplante@gmail.com

Africa: Mark Doyle, RC of Pretoria West (D9400), South Africa. mpdoyle@mweb.co.za
Oceania and parts of SE Asia: David Black, RC of Dunedin Central (D9980), New Zealand
dblack@mainlandpoultry.co.nz
India: Girish Mittal (For contact details see above)
Italy: Laura Dryjanska, RC of Roma Centenario (D2080), Italy.
Laura.dry@windowslive.com

Philippines Ernesto Perez, RC Makati Central (D3830), Philippines evperezlaw@gmail.com

Australian States

Victoria Tony Stokes, RC of Box Hill (D9810) stokes9@optusnet.com.au
Western Gillian Booth RC of Bay View Claremont (D9455) shreveportgb@hotmail.com
NSW John Roberson, RC of Wagga Wagga, (D9700) johnroberson@bigpond.com
South Teresa Evans, RC of Salisbury, (D9500) teresa1407@hotmail.com

NB There are vacancies for Coordinators to cover Queensland and Tasmania

Disclaimer: The views expressed by the contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the RACSRAG Board

**Copy of a Speech made by
Gary Huang, President and CEO, International Justice Mission
to
Rotary International Convention, Seoul, Korea, 30th May 2016**

“Until All Are Free: How to End Slavery in Our Lifetime”

One day our grandchildren are going to give us a history exam. How well will you do?

It won't be a test of what we knew about history. It will be a simple question about what we did about history.

It seems that, eventually, history convenes a tribunal of our grandchildren, and they ask us: where were you?

Where were you grandpa, when the Jews were fleeing Nazi Germany and seeking a safe shelter in the world?

Grandmother, where were you when Nelson Mandela was rotting in prison for more than 25 years fighting the apartheid system in South Africa? What did you do? Did you raise your voice?

Over time, there are just a few great dramas of human history which our grandchildren discover with crystal clarity – and they just want to know from us: what did you do?

It's a way of asking: what kind of family do I come from?

And what a glorious thing to be able to look that child straight in eye and with all humility and gentleness say: well, I just did my part. To say, as my father's generation could say – well, we all did our part, at great cost, to make sure that the forces of good could wade ashore on D-Day and bring the Nazi nightmare to an end.

Or to say, well, all around the world, we raised our voices against the apartheid regime in South Africa and didn't stop until Nelson Mandela walked free.

Indeed, imagine your grandchildren asking: “Grandma, grandpa – where were you when children like me were perfectly safe from the terror of polio, but thousands of the world's poorest kids were crippled by the disease every day?” And how glorious for you Rotarians to say, with all humility and gentleness: “Well, we all just did our part. We raised our voices and millions of dollars. And we didn't stop until every child was safe from polio.”

And in that moment your grandchild's heart will swell with a quiet joy and pride – because they will have learned something fundamental about goodness, and about the kind of family they come from.

Such an affirmation is all the more powerful because they know that not everybody actually passes the tests of history. Millions, in fact, did nothing to resist the rising Nazi evil. Millions were silent during the apartheid era. Millions closed their eyes and gave not one penny to safeguard children from the terror of polio.

And so it raises the question: what fundamental challenge of history might we be missing right now?

It's impossible to know for sure what will be on our particular history exam – because our grandchildren get to make up the questions from the clarity of their hindsight, not from the confusion of our present day pre-occupations.

But there is one question *I know* will be on the exam because it is the most iconic form of evil in human history – and because in our era, right now, there is more of it than ever.

This will come as a surprise to almost all of us because – like polio – almost all of our families are completely safe from this evil. And our safety actually puts us at great risk of failing this exam because it's likely we have no idea that millions of the world's poorest are victimized by this evil every day.

And that evil is very simply slavery. That's right – this ancient evil by which one human being owns another and uses violence to force them to work – this slavery actually thrives in our world like never before.

If when I say the word slavery you think only of illustrations in dusty books – of Moses freeing the Hebrew slaves in ancient Egypt, or Abraham Lincoln freeing the plantation slaves in America, or old pictures of slaves ships stuffed with human cargo from Africa – you will need to come with me on a journey of discovery that that will turn your world upside down.

There are really just three things that you need to know about modern slavery:

1. It is more vast than ever.
2. It is as brutal as ever.
3. It's more stoppable than ever.

First, slavery is more vast than ever.

This is why I am sure our grandchildren are going to ask us about slavery in our era – because there are more people in slavery now than in any other time in human history.

Experts tell us that there are more than 35 million people held illegally in slavery today. That's roughly the entire population of Canada and 3 times more slaves than were extracted from Africa during 400 years of the transatlantic slave trade.

And the profits are astronomical. Annually, slavery is a \$150 billion dollars business – generating more profit than Apple, Exxon, Chevron, Microsoft, Google and Facebook combined.

Slavery is not a relic of history – it's a larger reality now than ever before.

If our mental image of slavery is a black and white photo from the 19th century – we will need to update it with color for the millions of 21st century slaves laboring, for instance, on agricultural facilities around the world. Or if this is the picture of slavery in our minds, it needs to reflect the millions of slaves trapped by violence in brick factories today. The horrors and degradations of slavery that we learned about as children continue on an even more vast scale today. And of course, children, who in other eras found themselves born into slavery, today likewise find themselves inheriting the yoke of slavery by the millions, as the old violence and humiliation of slavery takes on 21st century forms.

If these realities of modern slavery seem shocking and surreal (and even unbelievable to you), I know exactly how you feel. I'll never forget the first time I met a slave – nearly 20 years ago. A tiny 10 year old girl – just a few years older than my own daughters – who was forced to sit in one place on the floor and roll cigarettes, 7 days a week, 12 to 14 hours a day, year in and year out. Or the time I was conducting an undercover investigation into the child sex trade in Southeast Asia, and found myself in the back room of a brothel where a dozen children between the ages of 5 and 10 years of age were being sold to foreign pedophiles and sex tourists. After 20 years of working with International Justice Mission, the largest

international anti-slavery organization in the world, I can stand before you and assure you that the modern face of slavery is not only real – but it is more vast than ever.

My colleagues and I have met tens of thousands of slaves, by name – and they are on every continent and are hidden away in every country, including my own, and yours.

This is why our grandchildren will one day ask us about it.

The second thing we must know about modern slavery is not only that it is more vast than ever – but also that it just as brutal as ever.

I want to be clear that we are not talking about metaphorical slavery – or harsh working conditions that seem slave-like – or parents putting children to work to help with the family income. We are talking about human beings that are owned by other human beings and are coerced to work by the sheer force of violence. These boys are beaten by their master if they do not comply. These men had their hands cut off when they tried to run away from their owner. There is a steel padlock on the cell where this young woman sleeps, and these slaves are held in a brick factory by terror. The brutality of slavery is real – and the face of those who administer the violence is real as well.

But here is the good news. Remember I said there were three things to know about modern slavery.

1. It's more vast than ever.
2. It's as brutal as ever.

But #3 is this: it's more stoppable than ever.

Why is that?

There are several reasons.

First, for the first time in history slavery is against the law everywhere in the world.

But then why are so many millions still in slavery?

The answer is surprisingly simple. Slavery exists on a massive scale in our world today because there are huge swathes of our world where you simply do not get into trouble for enslaving a poor person. In other words, while there are laws against slavery in every country; there many countries where these laws are simply not enforced – at all. For instance, in South Asia, statistics show that if you enslave a poor person you are more likely to be struck by lightning than you are to be convicted of your crime.

While slavery exists in every country, it has concentrated itself in a few countries where slave traffickers can freely get away with it. In fact 70% of the world's slaves are in just 10 countries.

It's like the global AIDS epidemic. Every country has an HIV/AIDS problem and every country must have a strategy to address it. But as a global epidemic, the tide was turned when we realized that 70% of HIV transmissions were coming from a handful of countries in sub-Saharan Africa – and the world focused resources and strategies to make dramatic gains in the fight.

This leads to the final reason why slavery is more stoppable than ever. For the first time we are learning how to measure it and we have found the vaccine that stops it.

Imagine how difficult it would be to fight polio if you couldn't count who has it and therefore couldn't measure which vaccine works to reduce it?

This has been the problem with modern slavery. After it became illegal, it became a hidden crime and difficult to measure. But in recent years new techniques have been discovered to measure slavery and now we can increasingly see what interventions work and which do not.

And here is what we have learned. When effective law enforcement is combined with excellent survivor services – slavery rates fall dramatically. At International Justice Mission we have measured this impact many times – with outside auditors documenting reductions in human trafficking of 75% to 86% in just a few short years from communities where it once thrived. Because it turns out that the slave owners are not brave people –and if they think they are going to get caught and sent to jail, they stop doing it.

So what does all of this have to do with you – and this massive, world-wide family of Rotarians?

Well, you, indeed, are a unique force in the world. You bring together a global network of volunteers who dedicate your time and talent to tackle the world's most pressing humanitarian challenges. And look where the world once was in the fight against polio. A perfectly good vaccine existed to stop it – but the world's poorest and most vulnerable were suffering and dying without it. And the rest of the world simply didn't know about the crisis and had not built the capacity to address it. But Rotarians changed everything. You sounded the alarm that woke up the world – and in partnership you raised the resources to make sure everyone got the vaccine.

And today, I believe Rotary is uniquely positioned, once again, to change everything. For the first time ever in human history, there is a generation alive on planet earth that could bring an end to slavery as a force in human affairs. In thousands of years this has never before been possible – but now, on your patch of history, it is. We know what stops slavery, but there are millions of the world poorest who simply don't have access to the vaccine.

You can change all that. You can sound the alarm. You can rally the political will and the resources to make sure even the poorest are safe from slavery. The forgotten millions who were once living under the terror of polio had no voice – but you lent them your voice, so they were heard and seen. And now millions are safe.

Today another unique moment in history is before you. As Pope Francis and the representatives of the world's great religions recently gathered to pledge to do all in their power to end slavery, they affirmed that "Today we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human and moral imperative."

Likewise, as your own President Ravidran said in a ground-breaking speech on modern slavery at the Carter Center in Atlanta last year: "We are doing away with the idea that human trafficking is something that doesn't happen anymore, or that only happens somewhere else. It is here, and it is now, and it is everyone's responsibility to recognize that."

Responsibility. That's really what our grandchildren are asking us about with their history quiz – when they ask: "where were you?"

And this is my great hope. That one day, when they ask us: Grandma, grandpa – where were you when millions of the world's poorest were languishing in slavery, in numbers greater than ever.

I hope we can simply say, with gentleness and humility, that we showed up, that we did our part – and together, we changed history, for good.

Thank you very much.