

Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence.

The Olympia FOR's program airs several times every week for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV's schedule at www.tctv.net.

You can also watch the program described below (and more than 100 of our previous interview programs and special programs) at the Olympia FOR's website, www.olympiafor.org. Simply click the "TV Programs" link to reach www.olympiafor.org/tv_programs.htm, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch.

Many of our website's TV program listings also include a document (in Word and/or .pdf format) describing the program.

FEBRUARY 2015

"Human Trafficking: Problems and Solutions"

by Glen Anderson, producer and host of this TV series

We especially provide opportunities for the public to hear voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media.

This month we'll explore an issue that most of us do not see. The problem is largely hidden from most of us, but it is very real. This is the problem of human trafficking. Some people are trafficked as workers to be abused, and some people are trafficked to be exploited for sex.

We'll look at problems and solutions.

We'll lift up the work of several non-profit organizations, especially Washington Engage, www.waengage.com, which has local affiliates in Thurston County and other parts of Western Washington.

We begin the program by explaining what "human trafficking" means. It includes trafficking some persons to abuse them as workers and trafficking some persons to abuse them for sex. Within each kind, there are several varieties of exploitation.

This is not just a problem in other countries or big cities. It happens in local communities – including our own – and in various kinds of businesses beyond the ones that seem obvious.

Our three guests explain how individuals (especially young women and under-aged girls) are recruited and "groomed" for domination and exploitation. In some businesses that might appear legitimate on the surface, they are denied the rights that other employees have and are treated instead as "independent contractors" whose rights are not protected by labor laws.

Severe domination, brainwashing and violence make it hard for victims to speak out or escape.

Our guests explain some of the cultural factors that feed into the grooming and exploitation. These include the hyper-sexualization of various aspects of our culture, the pervasive advertising that treats women as mere objects for men's gratification, and commercial and cultural pressures on younger and young girls to wear clothes and makeup that make them appear like older sexual persons, and to behave on those ways.

After we explore problems in the first half hour, we devote the second half hour to exploring solutions. Many of the solutions are designed to reduce the demand for commercial sexual exploitation.

Some of the solutions include changing the cultural factors mentioned two paragraphs above, in order to relieve the exploitative pressure on women and girls, and in order to allow men also to escape from sexual stereotypes.

Law enforcement has focused on arresting prostitutes, but this has not particularly reduced commercial sexual exploitation. Merely legalizing it (as a few European nations have done) has only increased prostitution and allowed organized crime to dominate it. Better results have come from arresting the men who pay prostitutes. Sweden took that approach in addition to decriminalizing the women who work as prostitutes. Sweden provides a variety of social services to help women heal from exploitations and work in better jobs.

Various regulatory agencies at state and local levels have failed dismally to use their full powers regarding worker rights, workplace safety, health regulations at food service facilities, business licensing, business taxation, and so forth.

All three of our guests have collaborated in studying the problems and working for solutions in a variety of ways. Our program highlights Washington Engage (www.waengage.com), a non-profit organization that has worked vigorously on problems and solutions. (*See below*)

Thurston County's local part of Washington Engage is the Thurston County Coalition Against Trafficking (TCCAT), which meets monthly.

They invite the public to learn more at a "Culturing Grooming Forum" scheduled for Thursday evening March 12, 2015, at a location on Carpenter Road SE in Lacey. Information will soon be posted at www.waengage.com.

This program's three knowledgeable, articulate guests are:

- **Rose Gundersen** is the co-founder and Executive Director of Washington Engage, a non-profit organization that works on this issue. We'll discuss Washington Engage's work throughout this hour. Rose Gundersen has a law degree and much experience researching and working on human trafficking.
- **Dr. Carolyn West** has a Master's degree and Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. She has done extensive professional and academic work on domestic violence and sexual violence and other forms of oppression. She teaches about these at the University of Washington.
- **Linda Malanchuk-Finnan** is the local leader of the Thurston County Coalition Against Trafficking. She also has long experience working with the National Organization for Women and other progressive activities for peace and human rights.

We recommend several good sources of information and opportunities for positive action:

Washington Engage
PO Box 4101
Olympia WA 98501
www.waengage.com

Thurston County Coalition Against Trafficking (TCCAT)
(360) 357-7272
lryh@hotmail.com

ASHHO
www.ashho.net

Polaris Project
www.polarisproject.org

Partners in Prevention Education

www.youthchangeagents.org

Truckers Against Trafficking

www.TruckersAgainstTrafficking.org

Emergency numbers for reporting these kinds of abuses

911 or 1-888-3737-888