

# Answering the Call

**VANDERBILT DIVINITY SCHOOL PROFESSOR EXHORTS CORNELL COMMUNITY TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING** | By Catherine Elvy, Staff Writer

God is in the business of restoration, and He delights in offering beauty and dignity to the exploited.

As such, the love of the all-powerful Creator should motivate believers to serve as His ambassadors in the global war on human trafficking.

That was the message from Paul Lim when the Yale University alumnus of 1990 and scholar spoke at Cornell University.

On February 7, Lim, a professor of Christian history at Vanderbilt University's Divinity School, appeared in Kennedy Hall at the invitation of Chesterton House ([chestertonhouse.org](http://chestertonhouse.org)) as part of this year's Institute of Biblical Studies. Bethel Grove Baptist Church and New Life Presbyterian Church co-sponsored a weekend of lectures by Lim for the institute along with Chesterton, a private center for Christian studies in the Cornell community. A Christian Union grant helped underwrite the event.

"God's heart is here, aching and calling those who would go," Lim said.

In short, God is a champion of justice and peace, and human trafficking represents a serious violation of the nature of relationships He designed for mankind.

Likewise, rather than merely being a trendy cause, rescuing individuals caught in sexual and other slavery reflects the spiritual heart behind the principles of human conduct prescribed throughout the Old and New Testaments. God exists as a Holy

Trinity, meaning relationships are central to His blueprints and operations.

"Life is all about relationships," he said. "Human trafficking needs to be seen as a rupture of relationships."

"Christian theology is about lifting up the other person, from being an object of conquest to an object of love and service."

Christ is the embodiment of justice, so believers are called to fight on behalf of afflicted individuals and usher restoration of their beauty and shalom.

"They are individuals created in the image of God," Lim said. "They need our helping hand."

More than a decade ago, Lim was touched by the issues surrounding human trafficking while delivering a series of theological lectures across the

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globe. While in sectors of Asia, Africa, and even Europe, Lim heard myriad disturbing reports from staffers with non-governmental organizations about the widespread, expanding problems of forced labor and sexual servitude.

Then, in 2004, on a trip to Sri Lanka, the realities of the sex-trafficking industry hit shockingly home.



At a lecture hosted by the Institute of Biblical Studies, Paul Lim (Yale '90) said the love of God should motivate believers to fight human trafficking.

After checking into a respectable hotel, Lim received a call from the concierge's desk. The employee, hesitantly but systematically, probed whether Lim wanted a beer, then whiskey and finally wine before turning his next set of unfruitful queries to Lim's sexual desires.

The concierge asked Lim if he wished for the services of a woman. Undaunted by the guest's firm decline, the man then pressed Lim as to whether he, instead, fancied the services of a young girl, possibly a boy, or even two boys.

"I was literally shivering. At a very respectable hotel, a concierge was asking me to be engaged in human

trafficking," Lim told Cornell students.

Enraged, Lim went to the hotel lobby to confront the concierge and to highlight the Gospel purposes behind his journey to the island country in the Indian Ocean.



The concierge's matter-of-fact response changed Lim's life and opened his eyes to the prolific, but desensitized, nature of sexual tourism.

"People who look like you, with U.S. passports, what else do you think they will do when they come to my country? I simply assumed you were after the same thing," the concierge replied.

Stunned, the concierge's answer gave Lim a glimpse into a mindset desensitized to the immorality of sexual trafficking.

Upon reflection, Lim noted overt objectification causes pleasure seekers to see little difference between consuming a beer and buying the sexual services of a youth. "A scotch is no different from a young boy. Both are

commercial items on offer, objects for your own benefit," Lim said.

But, in God's eyes, abused individuals – unlike misused goods – retain their value, and His opposition to such immorality is firm.

As such, Lim encouraged Cornell students to labor with campus and regional groups dedicated to combating modern slavery and prostitution. Likewise, he urged them to help oppose sexual violence on campus.

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About 27 million people are slaves, including 12.3 million in sexual servitude and forced labor, according to

the United Nations.

Sexual tourism is especially vibrant in developing countries, where the average service costs about \$15 versus the going rate of \$100 per service in the United States and major Western nations.

While confronting global trafficking may seem like an impossible task, Lim told Cornell students to think big.

"The world is shrinking. It is much more accessible for you to do good things as well as terrifying things," Lim said. "Globalization has brought in many possibilities and perils."

Inspiration from the triune God points to His heart in restoring the lives of broken individuals and relationships. "Use your talents and treasures to serve," Lim said. | **CU**

#### CORNELL NEWS-IN-BRIEF

### FCA Students Serve With Urban Promise

Students with Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Cornell (<http://cornellfca.blogspot.com>) spent Spring Break participating in Urban Promise in Wilmington, Delaware. For the third straight year, the students worked with underprivileged children, helping them with school work and sharing the Gospel with them.

The mission of Urban Promise is to "equip children and young adults through Christ with the skills necessary for academic achievement, life management, personal growth, and servant leadership."

A Christian Union grant helped underwrite the trip.

### Richard Stearns Speaks at Cornell

World Vision USA President Richard Stearns (Cornell '73 and Wharton '75) spoke at Cornell on February 27 about "World View, the Meaning of Life, and the End of Poverty." The event was sponsored by Campus on a Hill ([campusonahill.org](http://campusonahill.org)) and co-sponsored by the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management.

In March, Stearns and World

Vision were criticized by various Christian leaders and donors for their new policy, which allowed employees to be involved in a

"same-sex marriage." After considering the possible ramifications of such a radical policy, the World Vision Board reversed its decision.

