

Injustice and Graphic Design

The Problem of Human Trafficking and Slavery and the Role of the Graphic Designer

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A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Spring 2010

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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Abstract

For my senior honors thesis I am creating an advertising campaign for a non-profit organization called Faceless International. Faceless works to rehabilitate victims of human trafficking and also educate children so they are less likely to be tricked into being trafficked and kept as slaves. I am creating a postcard-sized handout, a brochure/poster, an identity package for the director (consisting of a letterhead, envelope, and business card), and a t-shirt. The written portion of my thesis explores the tragedy of human trafficking and discusses why organizations like International Justice Mission and Faceless International are needed in our world today, what we are called to do as Christians, and the design process I use to create the pieces, employing design theories and fundamentals to communicate the message to the intended audience (teenagers and young adults) in the best possible way.

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Introduction

27 million. That is the estimated amount of slaves believed to be in the world today. This is not a thing of the past; it is a very real problem that plagues society in our modern world. Sadly, many are largely unaware of this tragedy.

For my senior honors thesis/project I will be creating an advertising campaign for a non-profit organization that I learned about over the summer while at a mission conference. The organization that I will be working with is called Faceless International, which works with victims of human trafficking and slavery. Their goal is to help rehabilitate people that have suffered abuse, have been removed from trafficking, and help them feel like their lives are finally worthwhile again. For example, a great Website to buy items made by women rescued from trafficking is www.madebysurvivors.com. This organization helps “survivors of slavery rebuild their lives after rescue from slavery, with sustainable income, education and help reintegrating into society” (The Emancipation Network, 2009). Faceless International also helps educate children so that they will not be as likely to be tricked into becoming a slave and kept under oppression. I really respect the mission of this organization and that is why I have worked with them on my thesis.

After talking over the phone with Sarah Freeman, the director and co-founder of Faceless International, my first step was to conduct a needs analysis in order to see what would help spread the word about Faceless and human trafficking. I have decided to design the following things for the organization:

- A postcard-sized handout (about mission trips where people can get involved). See figure 10.
- A brochure that unfolds into a poster and will give information about the organization. See figures 8 and 9.
- An identity package for Freeman (including a letterhead, envelope, and business card). See figures 5, 6, and 7.
- A t-shirt (that I hope to actually get made/printed). See figure 2.

A quote from an interview with Sarah Freeman illustrates how she started Faceless International with her good friend Stephen Christian, lead singer of a contemporary Christian band named Anberlin:

Faceless was started in 2006 in Haiti with Stephen and I, along with another dear friend of ours, Seth. While in Haiti, we saw how the group we had with us came back changed, and ready to make changes in their life, after learning about life in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Because of this first group, we knew this experience had to be repeated through other trips. Our goal with Faceless is to use music and the arts to encourage young adults to make a difference in the world – specifically fighting against Human Trafficking and modern day slavery. (Ketchum, 2009)

What Faceless is doing is so admirable. It is especially encouraging to see them encouraging young people to use their artistic talents to help bring about the end of human trafficking. In the same interview, Stephen Christian mentioned that “we looked around the world at all the various hurt and we realized that nothing else in this world

caused us as much pain or sorrow as the little girls who are trafficked around the world” (Ketchum). This is truly a devastating aspect of trafficking; young girls are being taken from or even sold by their families into child prostitution or child labor. Most people do not know the extent of slavery and human trafficking today in our modern world, but the statistics are astounding.

Literary Review

The Widespread Issue of Modern-day Slavery

It is estimated that there are about 27 million slaves in the world today (Price, 2008). That is more than ever before. Human trafficking is a 40 billion dollar business, with the cost of a slave averaging about \$90 (Price). Annually, between 14,500 and 17,500 slaves are brought into the United States (about one every half hour) where 50% of them work in agriculture, manufacturing, or domestic work (Price). As is often the case with slavery, a family takes out a small loan to pay off a debt (sometimes as small as \$25) and promises to work for the one who loaned them the money until it is paid off. But this never happens. The slave owner ensures that, with massive interest and deductions from their payment, no one can ever repay their debt. This means that the slave will never be able to buy their own freedom, keeping them stuck in a life that they never wanted in the first place – a life that they should never have to endure.

In his book *The Good News About Injustice*, Gary Haugen tells us “each year, more than a million children around the world are forced into prostitution – a million *new* children each year” (2009, p. 56). This is a heart-breaking fact. Children, sometimes as young as eight years old, are being used as sex slaves. Another horrifying reality is that “there are around 18 million slaves in Nepal, Pakistan, and India, more than anywhere

else in the world. ... Japan's booming sex industry makes it the biggest user of slave labor among rich nations. An estimated 50,000 women are shipped into the country each year, from Thailand, the Philippines, China, and other parts of Asia" (O'Brian). These are certainly shocking statistics and yet there is so much more to know. It is hard to believe that something like this is happening all over the world and even in our country and we are largely unaware.

Essentially, justice has to do with how power is implemented. Simply put, injustice is the strong preying on the weak. Lies are the reason that most injustice is difficult to confront. The people that commit injustice actually *need* deception to continue in their oppression; otherwise, someone will stop them. We need to remember that "what oppressors must do ... is isolate their victims from those who might come to their aid. ... People may openly suspect them of abuse and oppression, but if everyone is too intimidated to *prove* it, the oppressors will succeed" (Haugen, 2009, p. 157).

The people who oppress the weak actually depend on our inaction due to despair. Haugen mentions that "a recent U.N. study concluded that nearly *three out of every five people on earth* are not adequately protected by their own justice systems" (2009, p.182). Another sad fact is that "at best, the police are reported as largely inactive in their policing roles; at worst, they actively harass, oppress and brutalize" (Haugen, p. 58). How can this be? The very people we would expect to see bring about justice are the ones sitting idly by or worse: contributing to the terror. Existing laws cannot protect anyone unless they are enforced. Haugen shows us that Edmund Burke said it best when he voiced, "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing" (p.

81). Truly, this is not how God intended His creation to be. Our God is a God of justice and He has instilled that desire for justice deep within our hearts.

These different facets of injustice and terror seem true but not real to us. The Bible never tries to hide the kind of world we live in. Bible-believing Christians should not be caught off-guard by the injustice in the world. Discussing the Rwandan genocide, Gary Haugen says, “We would never number all the mother’s children in these mass graves, but their Father in heaven had numbered even the very hairs of their heads” (2009, p. 42). Every person on earth is a special and unique creation, known by God from the beginning of time. It is disheartening to realize this and hear about the injustice that so many people are suffering from all over the world with no one to rescue them. Still, it is somehow hard to relate to these people, perhaps because it did not happen to someone who is a close personal friend or family member. We cannot even begin to imagine the extent of God’s love or embrace everyone like He does.

All too often, we forget the injustice we hear about because it is out of sight, out of mind. But we must remember that Hebrews 13:3 (NIV) says, “Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Compassion comes from Latin, meaning, “to suffer with.” As Christians, we are called to suffer with all those who are suffering elsewhere because “at the root of God’s compassion is the fact that He sees, witnesses, directly observes the suffering of the abused” (Haugen, p. 93). God never abandons those who cry out to Him in their suffering. Every time He sends a deliverer, it is because He is responding to the cries of the distressed.

What Does This Mean to Christians?

So what should we do with all this information? Haugen states “the very information that should move us is so overwhelming that it actually paralyzes. ... We sense our hearts melting and our feet sinking into concrete” (2009, p. 60). It really is a huge undertaking. Acting as Christ’s witnesses and carrying His love into such a huge and brutally unjust world seems scary and beyond what we think we are called to do. We need to remember that we have the power of the God of the universe behind us, helping us all along the way. It is easy to feel helpless in light of the oppression and injustice that exists in the world, but we can meet the urgent needs by being focused on one person at a time. Haugen made a particularly moving statement when he said, “For while we may not be able to make the difference for all, we can make all the difference for one” (p. 190). More often than not, we do not know how to make the shift from awareness to action.

Recall James 2:15-16, asking how we can call ourselves faithful if we do not physically do anything to help those in need. Also, the fact that “seeking justice is a straightforward command of God for his people and part of Christ’s prayer that his Father’s will be done ‘on earth as it is in heaven’” is reassuring (Haugen, 2009, p. 47). Haugen reminds us that “with the Holy Spirit we have been commissioned to demonstrate Christ’s love for all the world: to disciple the nations, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to heal the broken and even to rescue the oppressed” (p. 48). Our commitment to the work of justice is nothing more or less than an extension of our desire to follow our God and Savior. It is just a tangible manifestation of our love for others, reflecting God’s love for us.

Thoughtful Christians would not see God's biblical commands and decide that they have nothing to do with them personally. Sometimes individuals do not even try to make a difference, and yet may still wonder why nothing miraculous happens. We may ask ourselves, "through whose hands does God reach out to meet their needs and show His love? Ours. We are God's hands of mercy and love" (Haugen, 2009, p.112). Instead of merely thanking Jesus for His provisions, we should ask Him what He has given us so that we can help those who do not have power, protection, freedom, or justice. God will not call us to do something that He has not empowered us to do. It would be ridiculous if He has repeatedly given us all these commands to help rescue the oppressed and then said, "Well, good luck out there!" It would not make any sense! Yet sometimes His calling is still viewed this way. We need to simply and courageously submit ourselves to His will and make ourselves available for His use.

It is nearly terrifying to think that "in truth we live in an exceedingly dangerous world in rebellion against its Maker, a world filled with prideful, frightened, willful, violent people who have incrementally chosen to cut themselves off from the Creator's goodness, love, mercy and justice" (Haugen, 2009, p.128). Obviously, this is a situation that needs mending. We must understand that, since there is an eternity, it changes everything. At the risk of sounding cliché, we need to live every day as if it was our last – as if it was our last chance to make the world a better place. As Paul said in Romans 8:18, "Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." It is a wakeup call when we realize that "our great inheritance of hope from a God of justice does us and the world no good unless we claim it" (Haugen, 91).

We need to understand that we *do* have the power to make the world better for everyone and that

[B]ringing about justice can be within our reach, and it is also an integral part of our faith. ... *we can change things*. Our despair, cynicism and laziness may insist to us that nothing ever really changes and that we can never make a difference.

(Haugen, p.75)

God's word aids us in preparing our minds for action. Galatians 6:9 reads, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." We cannot become depressed in the face of such tragedy:

And surely for Christians looking at our evil world of injustice and oppression, despair can always be found lurking at the door of our hearts, waiting to hobble us the moment we begin to take our first steps forward. After all, what can *we* do? How can *we* make a difference in a world of such massive and brutal injustice?

(Haugen, p.66)

We need to realize four truths about God's character: He loves justice and hates injustice; He is full of compassion for all those suffering injustice; God has wrath upon those who commit injustice; and God seeks out rescue for victims of injustice. We can count on it.

Methodology

What Can I do?

The entire book of Esther is all about one woman's practical efforts to end the oppression of people by a corrupt government official. With our abilities and experiences, we must find those practical interventions on behalf of the oppressed that

demonstrate our eagerness to love not with words and tongue, but in actions and in truth, as the book of I John says.

As communicators, we provide a voice to the voiceless. We have to raise awareness. The problem of injustice has gone largely unnoticed for far too long. It is good to become conscious of the fact that “we live in an age in which visual communication permeates every aspect of our lives” (Dowse, 2004, p. 23). It is impossible to ignore images that bombard our consciousnesses every day. It is important to know that “those who believe the function of advertising is persuasion maintain that advertisements exist to change perception” and thought processes (Arnston, 1998, p. 166). It is necessary to bring about awareness of this issue so that justice can be served. In reality, “Graphic designers draw inspiration from both professional and unprofessional sources” (Heller, 1999, p. xiii). Anything we experience can be used as fuel for our designs, whether it be something from our childhood, pop culture, or religion.

God is able to use our careers, words, and artistic expression to bring relief to the victims of injustice. It is a well-known fact that “hospitals, local charities, private schools, religious organizations, and theatrical and other performing-arts groups are continually engaged in fund-raising and often require brochures designed as well as renderings of the results of their latest efforts” (Crawford & Kopelman, 1981, p. 26). This can help get the word out about what normal people are doing to help those in need around them. It might seem shocking, but “there is nothing ungodly about presenting the facts of abuse boldly and truthfully before rulers and the public; it is an act of courageous love on behalf of those who are victimized by the abuse of authority” (Haugen, 2009, p.

205). When something as important as this needs to be said, we must not tiptoe around the issue:

The writers, producers, artists and media professionals in our Christian community can play a vital role in bringing deliverance by telling the stories of the oppressed with all the conviction, clarity and vividness their special gifts of communication allow. And where God in his mercy and power has brought rescue, the story of his faithfulness needs to be told – with every tool of communication and artistic expression at our disposal. Such stories inspire hope, encourage the afflicted and give witness to God’s glory. (Haugen, p. 230)

We have the capacity to give a voice to the voiceless and a face to the faceless because “writing and art are equally visual communications: Either can record and preserve reports of events and people; either can describe, or instruct; either can convey emotion” (Holtzschue & Noriega, 1997, p. 142). As artists, it is our job to create something that catches the eye and causes people to want to find out more. And it goes even deeper than that. People may forget that “art answers any number of problems, fulfills a multitude of needs, meets an infinity of intended purposes, because images are at once tangible and immaterial and because human beings likewise are equally of nature and apart from it” (Stone, 2003, p. 36). Artists make the intangible tangible, and:

As designers, it is our responsibility to create conscious and lucid communications. We can’t afford to contribute to information junk any more than the world’s landfills can continue to be inundated with trash. ... Employing the principles of symbolic design are actually quite practical because they are familiar to us regardless of language or culture. (Macnab, 2008, p. 4)

Thankfully, “given talent, a graphic designer potentially contributes to culture. ... Culture is the product of a society’s collective and individual actions manifest in art, literature, music, sports, and politics” (Heller, 2002, p. xiii). Not only do we want to contribute to culture, but we want to contribute to the greater good of mankind.

The reason that I want to work with Faceless International on my senior project is to help bring light to the many atrocities being committed covertly, and help to prevent them. Sarah Freeman informs us:

Along with this desire to put a face on the faceless, we want to empower you. We have partnered with several in the music industry to allow them to use their obvious talent. But we want you to use your talents as well. Whether it be your artistic talent, your organizational talent, or your caring heart – we all have the ability to make known the faceless. We all have the ability to be the change. We are here to give you the opportunity to be a voice. (facelessinternational.com, 2008)

The fact that Faceless is looking to the young adults of this generation to “be the change” (their slogan) is encouraging. It does not necessarily have to mean going to another country. Even small things are helpful. Buying fair trade items is a good place to start. As Christians, we also need to be conscious about where our consumer dollars are going; who they are supporting. It can be a powerful tool to bring a voice to those who have none.

As for the actual design of the project, it is aimed at teenagers and young adults since that is Faceless’ target audience to begin with. I want the pieces to gain the viewer’s interest so that they will want to look into the organization further. I employed

color theory and other design processes that I have learned about from my training at Liberty University. By definition, “color harmony is the pleasing impression given by a color composition. Visual impact is the graphic power of a color composition. ... Visual impact is the attention-getting color mode.” (Holtzschue & Noriega, 1997, p. 133). In general, “nobody denies that colors carry strong expression, but nobody knows how such expression comes about. To be sure, expression is widely believed to be based on association” (Arnheim, 1974, p. 368). “Color, unlike any other subject in visual communications ... is very complex and frequently misunderstood,” making it either your closest friend or your worst enemy (Drew & Mayer, 2005, p. 7). It can make or break a design. It is for this reason that I aim to be very methodical in choosing the colors I want to use.

I use colors and font styles that will bring across the feeling that slavery is an evil in this world that must be stopped. Arnston declares that “red is a dramatic, highly visible hue. It is associated with sexuality and aggression, with passion and violence” (1998, p. 180). Arnheim mentions that “warm colors seem to invite us whereas cold ones keep us at a distance. ... They express different properties of reality calling for different responses” (1974, p. 370). Colors have many different connotations and feelings associated with them, so it is important to know what these are so that I can get my message across successfully. I incorporate these colors into my design: black, white, red, brown, and gray. Red is intense and active; white connotes purity, brightness of spirit, and youthfulness; [and] black is associated with mourning, death, and ominous things (Litchy, 1994). Single colors set moods, as do different combinations of colors. It makes sense that “the adaptation of our perceptual system to the recognition of the principles of

organic organization ... has resulted in our favoring the same principles for aesthetic composition” (Stebbing, 2004, p. 69).

Type is another aspect to consider. I want to use fonts that will catch the eye of my demographic. I use sans serif fonts and fonts that have a distressed look. I carry over these design ideas throughout because “creating a great first impression is the ultimate goal when you design identities. ... You should set your sights on sculpting an alluring visual form that is not bashful” (Miller & Brown, 1998, p. 61). I also employ visual texture in my designs. Visual texture is “creating the illusion of a texture or the impression of a texture with line, value and/or color” (Landa, 2001, p. 20).

Effective design must be cohesive and bring together all the elements needed to bring about the desired response. Every day, “the designer is challenged to blend the visual elements of a printed message, the words and the pictures, into a unity that compels attention, stimulates readership, facilitates readability, enhances memorability, and elicits a predetermined reaction” (Thompson, 1988, p. 121). Kathryn Moore, a professor at the School of Architecture and Landscape at that University of Central England, explains: “What there is, we can see in front of us. What it means depends on how we interpret and make sense of what we see. As a designer, it is necessary to use and apply this knowledge to create places” (2003, p. 38). The goal is to create a piece that interacts with the mind of the receiver.

Conclusion

I am whole-heartedly excited to be able to use my talents as a graphic designer to help out this organization and bring to light the issue of human trafficking. *Breaking the Rules in Graphic Design* is trying “to encourage all designers to occasionally break with

the rigid traditions, go beyond what is expected, to achieve startling outcomes” (Mullen, 1997, p. 5). This is what I hope to do with my thesis and advertising campaign. I do not want it to be just another thesis that will sit and gather dust on my bookshelf. I want it to make a difference, and I believe it will because:

The arts give an experience that impacts the whole person. When moved by a story we want to enter into its action and meaning. ... Good art is not passive in nature. It asks something of those who engage it. Artistic expression creates a place where artist and audience meet. *Thoughtful reflection is stimulated.* Easy answers are avoided. (Dawson, 2006)

A design is so much more than colors, lines, and shapes; it is a message with a meaning:

The gift of an image is the gift of uncommon vision. It is a glimpse of a world full of wonder, both terrible and gorgeous ... Seeing is not just believing. It is learning. It is understanding It is how we connect with each other and how we take our measure of ourselves and others. The more we see, the more generous our embrace of the world becomes. (Ryan & Conover, 2004, p. 4-5)

That is it. Art is not just something that might hang in a gallery. Art is not just a pretty picture. True art should cause something to stir inside you. It should make you feel something bigger than yourself. It should move you to action.



Figure 1: Faceless International t-shirt idea sketches

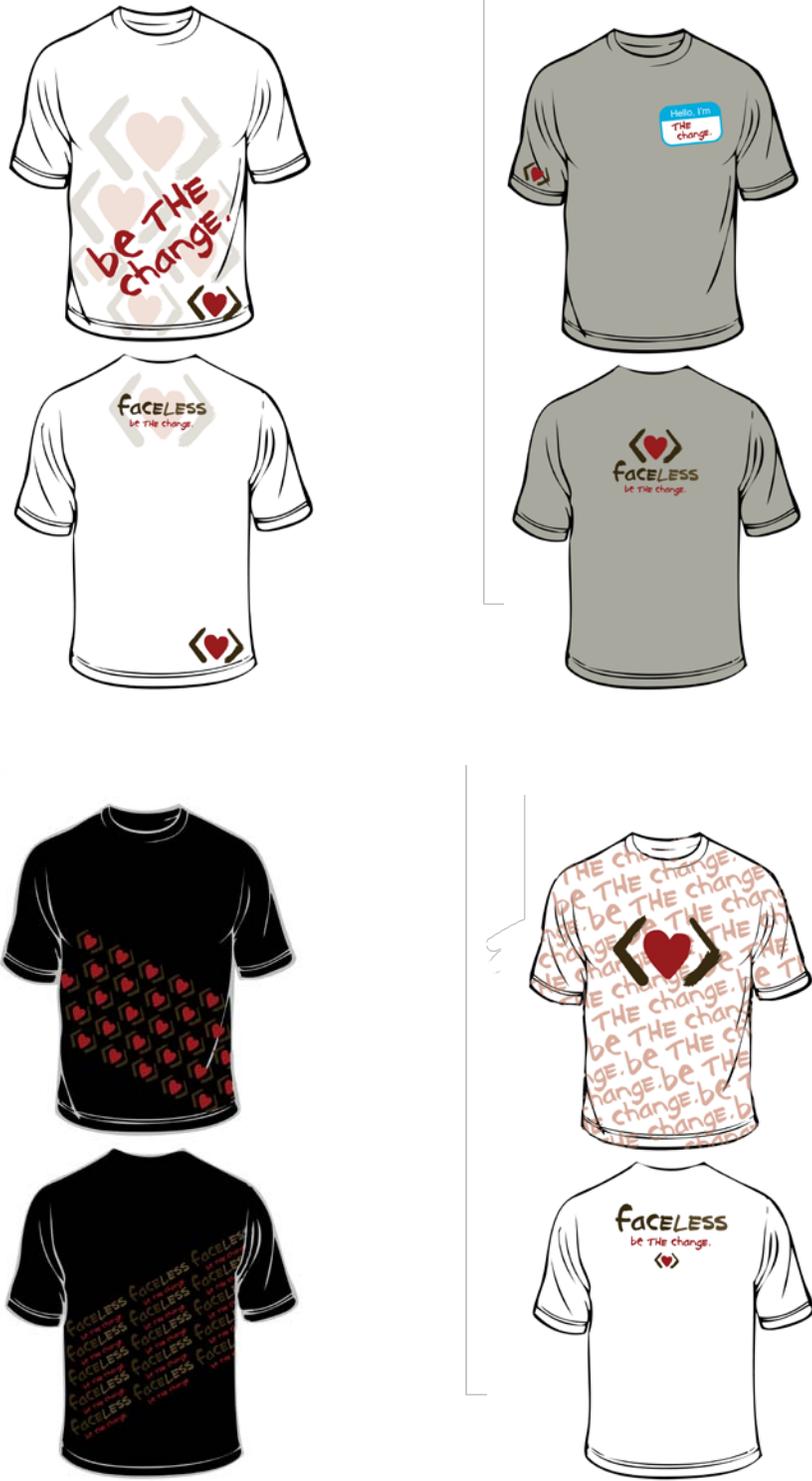


Figure 2: Faceless International t-shirt ideas



Figure 3: Business card idea sketches

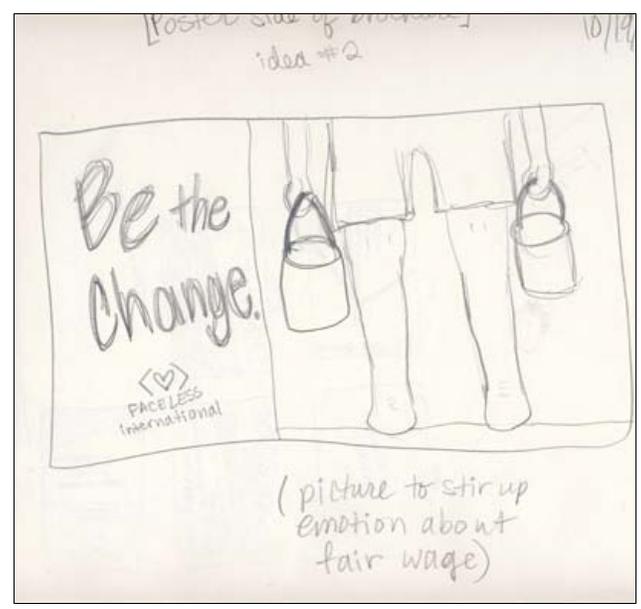
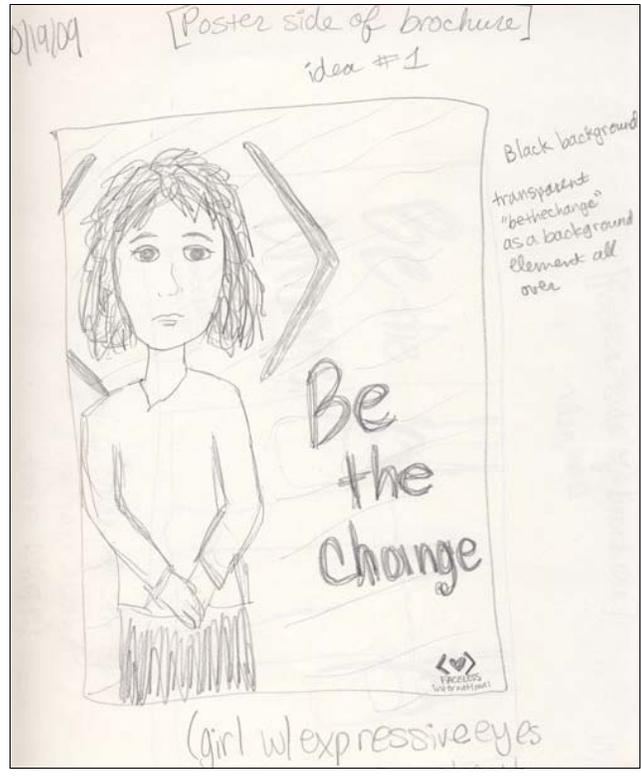


Figure 4: Faceless International poster idea sketches

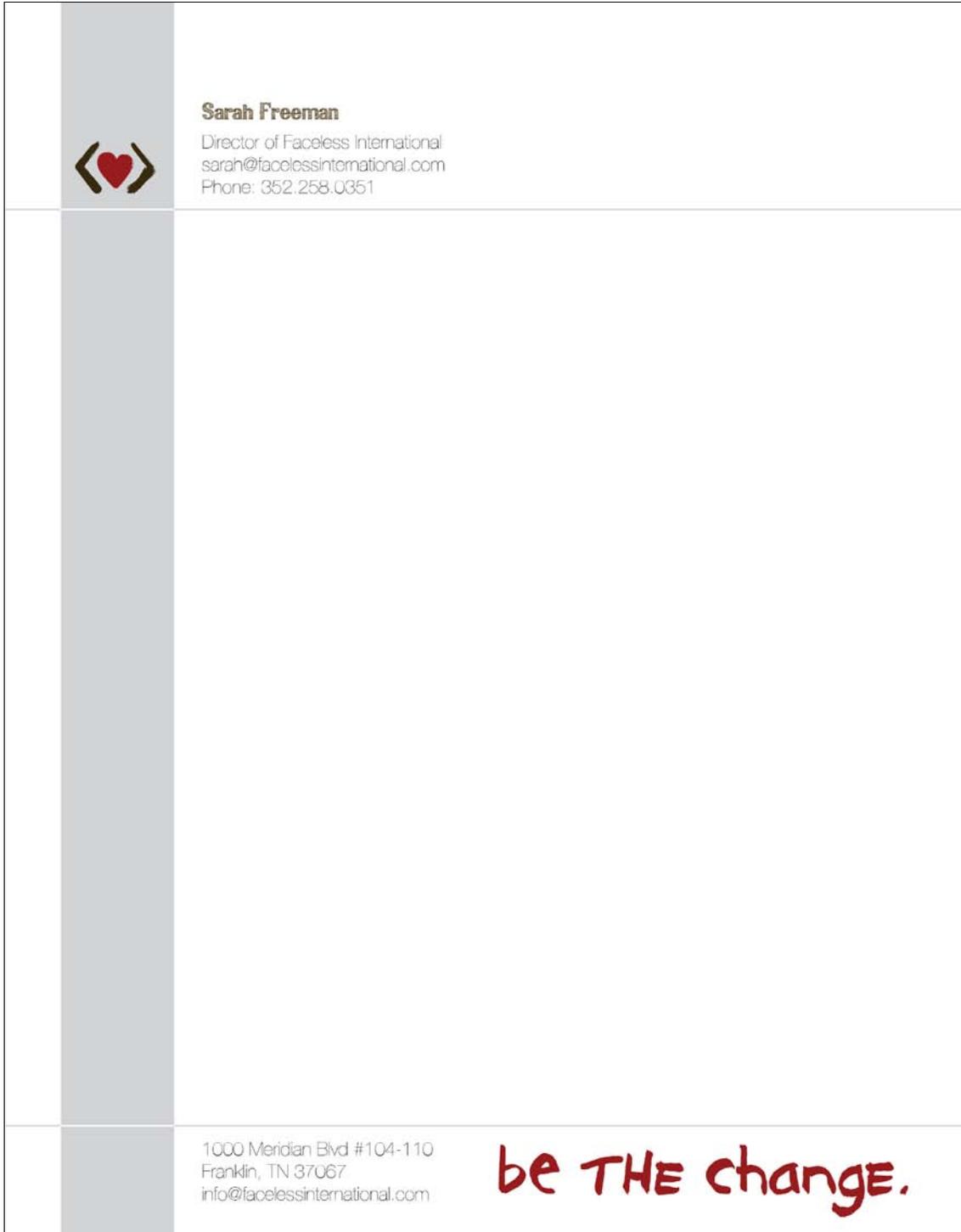


Figure 5: Identity Package: Letterhead



Figure 6: Identity Package: Business card

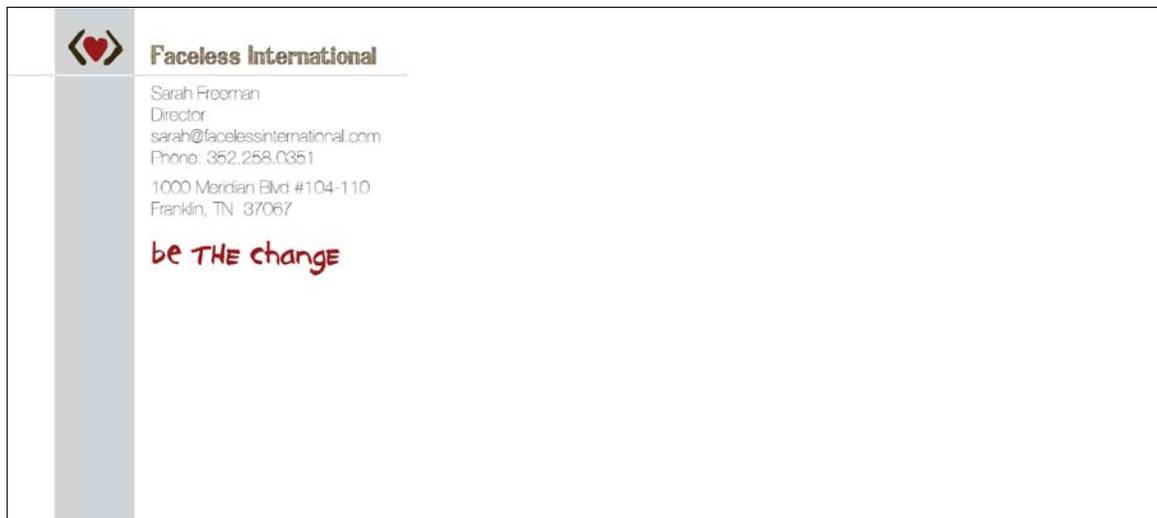


Figure 7: Identity Package: Envelope

Along with this desire to put a face on the faceless, we want to empower you. We have partnered with several in the music industry to allow them to use their obvious talent. But we want you to use your talents as well. Whether it be with your artistic talent, your organizational talent, or your caring heart — we all have the ability to make known the faceless. We all have the ability to be the change. We are here to give you the opportunity to be a voice. We would love to have you use your gifts on one of our trips as we learn about the faceless around the world. But we would also like to connect you with other quality organizations that are here in our own country putting a face on the faceless that get ignored everyday.

YOUR TURN.

Faceless International exists for one reason: we want you to get involved. Whether that be to get involved in your community, your state, your country, or the world, we want to empower you to make a difference.

START TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

YOUR LIFE WILL BE CHANGED.

THEN YOU WILL BECOME THE CHANGE.

FACELESS

27 MILLION PEOPLE ARE ENSLAVED RIGHT NOW

BE THE CHANGE.

www.facelessinternational.com
352.258.0351

THESE ARE THE FACTS:

1.2 MILLION CHILDREN ARE ESTIMATED TO BE TRAFFICKED EACH YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATED 50,000 TRAFFICKED INTO THE UNITED STATES.

ONE PERSON IS TRAFFICKED EVERY MINUTE AROUND THE WORLD.

THE AVERAGE COST OF A SLAVE IS \$90.

SOMETHING HAS TO BE DONE NOW

ABOUT FACELESS:

Faceless International was co-created by Stephen Christian of Anberlin along with his two friends, Seth and Sarah. While the three were on a humanitarian trip together in Haiti, they realized the positive impact the trip not only had on them, but also on the lives of the friends joining them. It was in Jacmel, Haiti that Faceless International was born.

The purpose behind Faceless is simple. We want to put a face on the many people in our own country and around the world who have gone faceless, or unknown, for so long. Everyday in our own country, people pass by many who are struggling. Each day around the world, people ignore the plight of millions who have no food, no clean water, no education or even no freedom.

Figure 8: Faceless International brochure design (front, unfolded)



Figure 9: Faceless International brochure design (back)

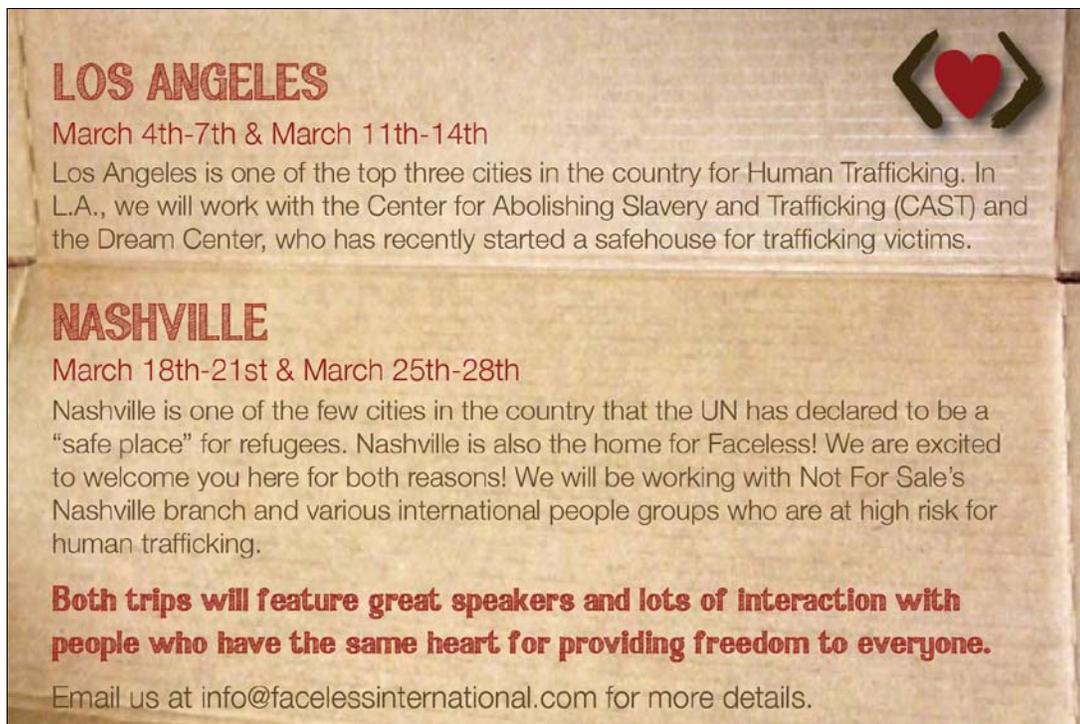


Figure 10: Faceless International trip postcard-sized handout (front and back)

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