

To be silent is to be unfaithful

A resource pack for the church on human trafficking



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“Detectives Free Dozen Sex Slaves Held in City”

Newspapers and TV bring us stories of “human trafficking” – people bought and sold, transported across the world, forced often into prostitution, living in fear.

It seems to take us back to a bygone age of slavery. It is over 200 years since the UK Parliament outlawed our part in the slave trade. We are right to celebrate the role of Christians like Wilberforce and Newton in focusing public attention on the realities and scandal of slavery, and the need for change. Human trafficking is today’s slavery, and the challenge is to build a movement for change by making people aware of what’s happening now.

While it is difficult to determine just how many people who have been trafficked are here in Britain, the UK House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Report in May 2009 stated that there were an estimated 5,000 victims in the UK, and year on year the numbers are rising.

This is not just something that happens on TV, in another world, but there are trafficked people living in fear just down the road from you and me. This pack aims not just to help you discover what’s going on – the facts and the people – but to help you see this in light of your faith; it also suggests what you can do to help make a difference. It is builds on a strengthening ecumenical commitment in Scotland to tackle these issues.

Over to you ...

To be silent is to be unfaithful

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How to use this pack

This pack has been designed to be very flexible. It can be used as a resource to help churches to respond to the often hidden problems of human trafficking. This material can be used to prepare church services or to provide information and activities for small group discussion. The Scottish Churches Anti-Human Trafficking Group will be happy to provide speakers to lead discussions or run workshops on the topic (contact Action of Churches Together in Scotland, tel 01259 216980)).

Please feel free to copy the resources.

Use it to:

- Raise awareness of the issues
- Pray for the people who are abused
- Campaign to stop human trafficking

This pack aims to help you discover what's going on – the facts and the people – and also to help you see what you can do to help make a difference.

Here are a few questions to get you thinking about some of the issues:

- Is it possible that the house along the road from you, where the blinds are always closed, could be a factory where Vietnamese children are forced to tend cannabis plants?
- Has it occurred to you that the au pair, nanny, or other home-help fleetingly seen around a neighbour's home may in fact be living in domestic servitude, sleeping on a mat in a kitchen in comfortable suburbia?
- Are you sufficiently aware of human trafficking to consider that a woman living in an adjacent flat may be being subjected to enforced prostitution?
- Might the group of men whom you see every morning at the corner of the main road be waiting to be taken, without choice, to work in the construction industry?

Context

The International Labour Organization estimates that globally 20.9 million people are victims of forced labour. This estimate includes victims of human trafficking and, while it is not known precisely how many were trafficked, there is reason to believe that there are currently millions of people who have been forcibly removed from their homes to be enslaved in degrading activities.

Launching its 2012 Global Report on human trafficking over the past five years, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said the victims can be found in restaurants, fisheries, brothels, farms and homes across the world. The UNODC report stated that between 2007 and 2010, people had been found to have been trafficked from at least 136 countries. This is believed to be a conservative estimate since the hidden nature of trafficking crimes makes it difficult to assess the size of the problem accurately. People are trafficked around the world for sexual exploitation, forced labour, marijuana cultivation, removal of organs, forced marriage, illegal adoption, and participation in armed combat.

In 2012 the World Council of Churches drew attention to the disappearance in the Sinai desert during recent years of thousands of asylum seekers escaping political turmoil, hunger and poverty in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Northern African countries while crossing from Egypt to Israel, hoping to end up in Europe. However, instead of safe passage to Israel, the refugees find themselves in the hands of human traffickers under whose control they suffer appalling abuse, or fall victim to organ theft.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) has been set up by the UK Government as a framework, the purpose of which is to identify victims of human trafficking and ensure that they receive the appropriate care. It also provides statistical data on victims of trafficking who have been identified by the authorities. The NRM reported that 1746 people were detected as having been trafficked into the United Kingdom in 2013. Of these, 1122 (64%) were females and 624 (36%) were male. 450 (26%) were under 18 years of age. Forms of exploitation included sexual exploitation (n=725; 42%), forced labour (n=634; 36%), and domestic servitude (n=186; 11%). 11% of cases were of unidentified forms of exploitation. In 2013, 99 people were referred to the NRM in Scotland, with the profile of forms of exploitation reflecting that of the UK.

While the NMR statistics provide information about the number of cases referred by authorised agencies such as the police, the UK Border Force, social services or certain NGOs, the covert nature of exploitation means that the vast number of people who are trafficked are never identified and the true scale of human trafficking is not known. Impersonal statistics, however, mask the grim picture for the millions of people who are trafficked. While this lucrative global crime generates billions of dollars in profits for the traffickers, those who have been trafficked are violated both spiritually and physically and are robbed of their humanity. Each number in an official report represents one life, one woman, one man, one child, for whom life has become a travesty, from whom dignity has been taken, from whom choice has been removed and who is forced to do what their captors demand. When any person is treated as a commodity, all of humanity is diminished.

What have the churches in Scotland been doing?

The Scottish Churches Anti-Trafficking Group comprises representatives from many Christian denominations in Scotland. It exchanges information with other organisations which campaign against human trafficking, such as Abolition Scotland, Anti-Slavery International, and with services that provide support to victims, for example Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA). It aims to raise awareness about human trafficking by delivering talks to interested groups, such as Guilds, and is politically engaged in the fight to reduce human trafficking.

The group has been involved in the following activities:

- 2007 Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act commemorated across the UK.
 - Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) Task Group formed to address human trafficking which was seen as modern slavery.
- 2010 Report developed by the Task Group in which the potential rise in human trafficking at the time of the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow was highlighted.
- 2011 ACTS Anti-Trafficking Working Group formed
 - Hosted two round table meetings of organisations that are engaged in preventing human trafficking or supporting its victims
 - Published an information leaflet
 - Signed up to the Slavery-Free London 2012 pledge
- 2011 The Salvation Army was awarded the contract by the UK Government to manage the support of victims of human trafficking in England and Wales for two years. The Salvation Army runs a 'safe house' in England for individuals rescued from trafficking
- 2012 Action Plan approved by the Church of Scotland, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal Church, United Reformed Church, The Salvation Army, Quakers/Religious Society of Friends
- 2012 The ACTS Working Group collaborated in hosting a national conference of the Scottish Women's Convention that was held in October 2012 to explore the issue in more detail.
- 2013 On the Bicentenary of the birth of David Livingstone leaders of several church denominations in Scotland signed a statement highlighting his campaign against slavery and acknowledging that slavery continues today as human trafficking and the exploitation of those who are forced into prostitution, committing criminal acts, domestic servitude, or working in poor conditions for little or no pay.
- 2014 Two leaflets were published. The first, 'Human trafficking: the human stories' highlights the problem of human trafficking and what the churches in Scotland have been doing. The second, 'Human trafficking: What are the indicators?' describes how a victim of human trafficking might be recognised. Both leaflets give contact details of sources of help for victims. They can be downloaded from <http://www.acts-scotland.org/> and http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/speak_out/social_issues

On the political front, the Churches have:

- Encouraged the UK Government to sign up to the United Nations Protocol, the first global legally binding instrument
- Discussed with the Scottish Parliament Cabinet Secretary for Justice and the Solicitor General:
 - the allocation of resources to pursue and prosecute the traffickers
 - support and services for victims
- Taken up an invitation to join the Scottish Parliament cross-party group on human trafficking which has met regularly with MSPs, and one occasion with MEPs.
- Provided a response to the consultation on the proposed Criminalisation of the Purchase of Sex (Scotland) Bill.
- Has responded to several consultations on proposed legislation on human trafficking in Scotland, in Northern Ireland and to the United Kingdom Modern Slavery Bill.

An introduction to major themes relating to trafficking in human beings

Aim: To enable discussion round the issues related to human trafficking.

Preparation

- Print, copy or write the sentences below (one copy for each group).
- Cut the sentences into strips.
- Put each set of sentences into an envelope.

Poverty in many countries leads to trafficking.

The victim is a casualty not a criminal.

Awareness-raising is vital.

Trafficking for sexual purposes is a male issue. If there was no demand there would be no supply.

There is a need to make trafficking visible.

Effective legislation is needed.

A place of safety is required to enable recovery.

Churches together can attempt to counter exploitation and trafficking.

At the meeting:

- Split people into groups with between 5 and 12 in each.
- Sit round a table if possible.
- Explain that each group is to appoint a person to read out the sentences from the envelope then discuss them.
- Place the cut up sentences in the order of importance agreed by the group (allow up to fifteen minutes for this part of the exercise).
- Invite each group to read out which statement they think is the most important and why. If there is time, repeat with the second most important.
- Discuss.
- Return the sentences to envelope (unmarked, so that they can be used again) and give back to the facilitator.

Case studies

Please note that, although the following cases are based on true stories, some details have been changed to protect the identities of the people whose experiences are described. Fictional names are used for all cases.

Case study I: Sabina's Story

Notes for group leader

Preparation

- Have enough copies of the story for everyone in the group and ask them to read it over themselves, or get one person to read out the story.
- Invite people to give a one word reaction to what they have read, without entering into any discussion at this stage.
- Allow a moment or two for people to reflect on the story before opening up the discussion. If it's felt appropriate, a prayer could be offered at this point.

Sabina's Story

Sabina, from the Bangladeshi village of Kamdevpur, was sold into sex slavery at the age of 12 (into a brothel in India) and was for 6 long years forced to work as a prostitute. Every night she had to allow herself to be violated by 10 to 15 different men, sexually abusing her as they wished in many unspeakable ways. She was helpless to resist. She often contemplated suicide, but eventually she convinced one of her regular clients to help her escape and she made her way back to Bangladesh. Sabina has now been back from India for 3 years. She says she will never go back. She hates even the thought of the place. As she says: "That is where I lost my life really. When I stay alone in my house I cry for this lost innocence. But even though I am poor, I am feeling pleased to be back in Bangladesh, for I am free from sexual and psychological torture."

Last year through a church 'Women and Child Trafficking Prevention Project', her life took a turn for the better and she was offered the opportunity to take three months training in tailoring and embroidery. She successfully completed the course, which she hoped would make her financially self-reliant, improve her standing with her parents and help her to recover her dignity. These dreams are now coming to fruition as on graduating she was given an interest-free loan from CBSDP-Meherpur that she used to start a small tailoring business. She now regularly goes to market to buy cloth and to sell the clothes she has made from it. In addition she has also used her loan to begin to rear goats and chickens to raise further income.

(Sabina's story comes from James Pender, an Ecumenical Mission Partner of the Church of Scotland.)

Exploration and discussion of the story

Suggested questions for consideration:

- Sabina was 12 years old. Imagine a 12 year old known to you - perhaps a family member, neighbour, or someone in your church.
- Hold an image of that person in your mind and then list the bare facts of what happened to Sabina.
- Think about those who used Sabina, their motives and their attitude towards her. One of her clients eventually decided to help her. What do you think made him do this?
- Sabina's life has now been turned around. What positive life expectations does she now have, and what lasting pain will remain with her?

Final thoughts

Sabina's story raises huge issues and the group may wish to follow these lines of thought into a general discussion of trafficking in its various forms. This needn't be curtailed, but it might be helpful, before leaving Sabina's story, to spend a few moments in silence reflecting on her particular circumstances and praying for her and those who are helping her.

Case Study 2: Close to home: a story of trafficking in Scotland

Notes for group leader

Preparation

- Have enough copies of the story for everyone in the group and ask them to read it over themselves, or get one person to read out the story.
- Many people may be under the impression that trafficking doesn't happen here, so, as a starting point, it might be worth drawing attention to the quotation at the beginning of the story and asking how many of the group shared that sense of shock.

Close to home – a story of trafficking in Scotland.

"It is frightening to think this is happening just down the road – not just on TV" (Church of Scotland Guild member)

There are trafficked women in Scotland. One such woman came from abroad, finding herself abandoned by the trafficker at an airport because she was ill. Having bought her, he did not want attention drawn to himself, so after passing through immigration, he disappeared. She was alone, scared and did not even know she was in the UK. Since the age of 12 she had been abused and then sold in her own country. She ran away and did go to the police but they did not help her.

Her life continued to be terrifying until she met a woman who was a business woman and a trader. However this woman too forced her to sleep with men and without receiving any money she was then sold to the man who brought her to Europe.

She is being befriended, but she is still a troubled woman, who is struggling to put her experience in the context of her Christian faith. These are her words: "I am confused. I cannot concentrate. I feel like I am going crazy. I sleep badly and have flashbacks. I do not feel complete and I am scared".

"As a member of the Church of Scotland I have been befriending her. Through the statutory services I was asked to make contact with her, as the officer who was supporting her felt unable to answer her questions on Christian Faith. I have listened and hopefully helped her. We have always met in a neutral place organised by the officer. I have been in regular contact with her by phone and particularly when she was detained in Dungavel. However, when I suggested to the officer that I would like to visit her in the flat she is occupying, this was deemed not acceptable. The officer went on to explain that when she visited she was always accompanied by a fellow officer, as there was the possibility that the trafficker knew of the trafficked woman's whereabouts. The officer felt that it would be too dangerous. I am still digesting this opinion but feel that as a Christian I should have no such qualms. There might be risk but it is one that I personally would be prepared to take."

(This story is from the report of the Church and Society Council to the 2007 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.)

Exploration and discussion of the story

Suggested questions for consideration:

- The first part of the story focuses on the situation of a woman trafficked to Scotland. Look at the 'I' statements at the end of paragraph three. Think of a time when you have felt any of these emotions. Where did you find help, advice or encouragement – and how does this woman's experience compare?
- This woman has a Christian faith. How might that sustain her and how might it add to her anguish?
- Look now at the befriender's words in the second part of the story. What kind of risks does a befriender in a case like this take?
- This trafficked woman has now linked with a local church. Can you think what your church might do to help someone in her position?

Final thoughts

Case studies are, by definition, specific in their focus. Discussion begun in the case study could range far and wide, but it might be helpful to close consideration of a particular story with a time of silent reflection or prayer before moving on to more general, 'big picture' issues or further group activities.

Case study 3: A community responds – Pradhan's story

Notes for group leader

Preparation

- You will need copies of the story for everyone. Give these out and allow everyone time to read over the story, or get one person to read it out.
- It's worth noting that this case concerns a different aspect of trafficking from that of the sex industry, which more normally springs to mind in the UK context. There are several players in this story so it might be helpful to clarify the various relationships at work in the family and community.

Pradhan's story

Pradhan was like any other child in his village in the district of North India. When he was not at school he played outside with his younger brother and also helped his widowed mother with the chores. She had dreams to fulfil – to see her sons educated and settled in life. They were poor but life was happy, until one day in September 2005 Pradhan's maternal uncle visited and persuaded his sister that he could secure a better life for his 12 year old nephew if she would let him take the boy back with him to Boropukhoria in West Bengal.

She agreed to let Pradhan go back with his uncle Dhena and his friend. Altogether four children went from the village, but they only stayed one night in Boropukhoria. The next day they left for Kalimpong where Pradhan was handed over to Mr Ashok Sahani in exchange for money. The child is reported to have died on 4 November when a fire broke out in the room where he was sleeping. Ashok informed Pradhan's uncle of his death and handed back some money. The body was cremated without the knowledge of Pradhan's mother.

A local campaigning group in Boropukhoria managed to obtain confessions from Dhena and his friend Ladhana, a well-known trafficker who sends women and children to different parts of India through a chain of agents. Dhena was sent to Pradhan's village to inform his sister about her son's death, but he didn't return and further enquiries revealed that he had lied to her, saying that all the children from the village were doing well in their new life.

The Boropukhoria group confronted Dhena and Ladhana with the relatives of the children and they confessed their role in trafficking them but refused to name the families which had bought them. The villagers sought help from the police but they have been repeatedly fobbed off by officialdom. The whole matter has now been reported to the district Magistrate, but months later the children had still not been found.

This story is retold, by permission, from the report of the Church of North India's Project on Tackling Newer Emerging Vulnerabilities Leading to Trafficking of Children and Women in Eastern Himalayan Region (2005).

Exploration and discussion of the story

Suggested questions for consideration:

- Invite those of the group who are parents to share the kinds of dreams they have for their children. Does educational opportunity figure in our culture as a means of attaining a better standard of living or chance in life?
- Which people do group members feel are most at fault in this story; and what possible excuse might there be for their actions?
- Consider the role of the village group. What are the stumbling blocks they face in their efforts and what sustains and keeps them motivated?
- Has this kind of direct action on specific cases disappeared from our community life?
- Would we respond in similar ways or leave things to "the authorities"?

Final thoughts

This case study comes from the Church of North India. It might be useful – and challenging - to think about what we can learn from our partners where their experience has, so far, been more immediate than ours.

Case study 4: Eftim's story

Notes for group leader

Preparation

- You will need copies of the story for everyone. Give these out and allow everyone time to read over the story, or get someone to read it aloud.
- It's worth noting that this case concerns a different aspect of trafficking from that of the sex industry, which more normally springs to mind in the UK context. There are several players in this story so it might be helpful to clarify the various relationships at work in the family and community.

Eftim's Story

The following story is based on the experiences of staff employed to work in the fruit picking in Angus, Fife, Perth and Kinross and Fife as highlighted by research conducted for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as part of a broader UK study on conditions faced by migrant workers.

Eftim is a 30 year old man who came to the UK legally from Bulgaria to work, having paid £2,000 for what he had thought would be a well paid job. However, the reality was very different.

"Picking berries from the early morning until late evening ... bending down on the fields for many hours is a very hard work. By lunchtime we were worn out: legs, arms and back were hurting a lot. My age added to it as well.

"The supervisors shouted at us, swore at us ... did not call us by our names, we were called by numbers. They treated us like slaves. We were paid in envelopes, we had a lot of deductions for the caravan, for transport, to pay our debt and percentage on top of it and some other unexplained deductions, so we had nearly nothing left. But we did not have a choice as we did not have our passport and very little language knowledge.

"I felt so miserable. My dreams did not come true. I was imagining it differently."

(Eftim's story is taken from a 2012 report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation: Experiences of forced labour in the UK food industry (Scott et al).)

Exploration and discussion of the story

Suggested questions for consideration:

- What emotions did you feel when reading Eftim's story?
- What can we as a church family do to address this?

Final thoughts

While there are many good employers of migrant workers, such experiences of intimidation and violation of human rights and dignity cast a deep shadow on our national conscience, impacting on our sense of humanity and our call to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Contextual Bible Study

Introductory Notes

A fresh approach to sharing Scripture in groups:

Contextual Bible Study offers a fresh approach to the sharing of Scriptures in groups. It was developed in the townships of South Africa during the Apartheid era and has been adapted for the context of contemporary Scotland.

Contextual Bible Study seeks to engage the participants / community in a reflective dialogue with the Scriptures and with people's lived experience, and to inspire action for change.

Contextual Bible Study 'Conversations – The Companion'

In partnership with the Scottish Bible Society the Contextual Bible Study Development Group have produced a 'companion' which explains the approach and provides facilitation training exercises. Copies are available from the Scottish Bible Society.

As part of the 'Conversations' project, a number of people across the country have trained as facilitators. There may be a small team available near you. Also, a database of questions from 200 Contextual Bible Study sessions is available online at: www.scottishbiblesociety.org/resources/Conversations

Running a Contextual Bible Study session:

Contextual Bible Study sessions take a 'conversational' approach to sharing the Scriptures. We recommend that, where possible, the facilitation of the session be led by two people. The facilitators have the responsibility of creating a favourable atmosphere for sharing, including preparing the space, selecting introductory and closing prayers, and organising the reading of the text out loud. Their particular role is to enable the conversation to flow, and encouraging everyone to take part, without letting any one person dominate or allowing the group to wander off the text or theme.

The questions provided here are structured to encourage the conversation. They begin with careful attention to the particular Scripture text before going on to look at what the text might have to say to the contemporary context. We also offer guidelines about when to look at a question in a small group of three, and when to work in the full group. We would often use a flipchart to write up participants' insights and comments.

Suggestion for a Session Plan:

- Aim for 60 – 90 minutes for a session
- Prepare well
- Set the scene – you could use some of the case study stories and information in this pack
- Begin with a suitable opening prayer (some possibilities are included in the worship materials section below)
- Have the Scripture passage read out loud (preferably twice)
- Follow through the questions (feel free to adapt as required)
- Finish with thanks and a closing prayer

We recommend making a copy of the chosen text for each participant. This could be read in parallel with the version of the Bible that you normally use.

Contextual Bible Study on Human Trafficking – Option 1: Psalm 137

Background information

When we come to look at the Bible Study on Psalm 137, the background is the Exile of God's chosen people from Judah into Babylon. After a series of military/political alliances and rebellions in Judah's association with the opposing superpowers of the day (Egypt and Babylon), Jerusalem, its capital city and spiritual home, was invaded in 597BC by the cruel forces of Babylon. The city was burned, its walls razed and its people taken into exile away from two of their main identifying features - the land and the Temple. The political and spiritual background to the Exile is succinctly summarised in II Kings 24: 1-4. The content and style of the Psalm reflects the author's bitterness and sorrow at the whole experience.

Psalm 137: Lament over the Destruction of Jerusalem

By the rivers of Babylon –
there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion.
On the willows there we hung up our harps.
For there our captors asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”
How could we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither!
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.
Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem's fall,
how they said, “Tear it down! Tear it down! Down to its foundations!”
O daughter Babylon, you devastator!
Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us!
Happy shall they be who take your little ones
and dash them against the rock!

(taken from NRSV)

Questions

In groups of 3, then feedback to the whole group.

Q1: What jumps off the page at you from this text?

Full group

Q2: What do you know about when and why this Psalm was written? (Exile in Babylon c.597 – 537 BC)

Q3: Name all the feelings and emotions that you can identify in this text.

Q4: What main feeling or emotion does this Psalm call up in you personally?

Q5: How best could this Psalm be used in personal and public worship to raise awareness of the issue of human trafficking?

In groups of 3, then feedback to the whole group.

Q6: Try to imagine the feelings of a victim of human trafficking. How might they use this Psalm?

Full group

Q7: What do you know of the reality of human trafficking and its victims in your own area?

In groups of 3, then feedback to the whole group.

Q8: In the light of our shared reflection, what challenge might be addressed to the Christian community, locally and internationally, in response to the issue of human trafficking?

Full group

Q9: Look at the suggested uses for the pack (page 1). How relevant are these suggestions to the local challenges which you have highlighted?

Contextual Bible Study on Human Trafficking – Option 2: Matthew 18: 1-10

Matthew 18:1-10 'Who is the greatest? / Leading others astray'

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!

"If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire.

"Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven."

(taken from NRSV)

Questions

In groups of 3, then feedback to the whole group.

Q1: What jumps off the page at you from this text?

Full group

Q2: What phrases or ideas in this text do you find as offering hope to the victim?

Q3: What phrases or ideas in this text do you find as posing challenges to the community?

In groups of 3, then feedback to the whole group.

Q4: What would you say are the main teachings of Jesus that are contained within this passage?

Full group

Q5: In a few minutes we will go on to look specifically at the issue of victims of human trafficking. First, who else today might be considered as 'these little ones' who are not to be 'looked down on' or 'caused to sin'?

In groups of 3, then feedback to the whole group.

Q6: Now, how might we understand victims of human trafficking as being 'looked down on' or 'caused to sin'?

Full group

Q7: What do you know of the reality of human trafficking and its victims in your own area?

In groups of 3, then feedback to the whole group.

Q8: In the light of our shared reflection, what challenge might be addressed to the Christian community, locally and internationally, in response to the issue of human trafficking?

Full group

Q9: Look at the suggested uses for the pack (page 1). How relevant are these suggestions to the local challenges which you have highlighted?

Worship materials

Prayer

○ God we are silent before you,

Silent because there is so much we would say and we don't know where to begin.

(silence)

Silent because we cannot put into words what we feel about our own inadequacy.

(silence)

Silent because our confusion, our hesitancy, our indifference, our lack of awareness has caused us to sin.

(silence)

Silent because our sin is a sin of silence.

(silence)

○ God in the silence let us hear your voice

(silence)

○ God in the silence we hear your voice and you call us to come forth.

You lift us from our knees with your word of forgiveness

You enable us to stand with the promise of your presence

You call us to walk forward in the company of our Lord

You give us courage to open our mouths and to break the silence.

To break the silence with words of love

To break the silence with words of compassion

To break the silence with words of hope

To break the silence with words of courage

To break the silence with words of power;

And in breaking the silence we begin to break the chains that bind our sisters and our brothers.

With our words

With our action

With our love

May we bring the sound of justice

May we release the captive

Unbind the prisoner

And set free our sisters and brothers

May we open our hearts and welcome them in and may we fill the earth with sound, sound of our rejoicing.

Amen

Meditation

A candle or candles can be lit during this meditation which can use one or many voices. Either the candle lit at the beginning or one candle lit with every sentence of prayer. It can be used with two speakers or five or six. It was first used at morning worship at Cornton Vale Prison for Women.

Jesus taught us that all are included in his love, that no one is unworthy or on the outside but all are welcomed in, in to the circle of love. Jesus taught us that nothing is impossible in his name that if we have faith then we can move mountains. In his love we can look beyond the place where the earth and the sky meet and see hope calling our name and urging us forward into a new tomorrow.

What if I learned to think before I speak.

What if I tried harder to understand.

What if I stopped being afraid.

What if I walked a mile in your shoes.

What if I really found my voice.

What if I really believed I was valuable.

What if we held out our hands to each other.

What if we were all quiet for a while, and listened.

What if we could draw a line under yesterday.

What if we could speak of how great our hurt is, our pain, of how angry we are...and know that someone was listening.

What if we can find the courage to keep on going, trying, striving to make a difference.

What if we really trusted God...if we allowed ourselves to live in Jesus and he to live in us.

What if there were no more tears and no more pain...

What if we really prayed for each other...if we tried each in her own way to bring the light into the darkness.

What if we looked into each other's eyes and allowed the connection to happen...a moment of holiness...hearts touching hearts.

What if we allowed God to forgive us and to free us to truly love and live.

This is the miracle in this day with all that it brings of pain and frustration,

of hurt and hopelessness,

of new opportunities,

of challenges,

of possibilities,

there is love and there is God.

Sermon Outline

Notes for a sermon on the nature of our responsibilities towards each other and how our action or lack of action can affect others' lives.

The readings which form the basis for these thoughts are:

The Old Testament reading: Genesis 37:12-30

This is the moment in the story of Joseph where his brothers take matters into their own hands. They throw him in a pit and then sell him off to some traders who take him to slavery in Egypt. Reuben, the eldest, participates in putting Joseph into the pit with the intention of returning later to lift him out but by the time Reuben returns it is too late and Joseph has been sold.

The New Testament reading: Luke 15:11-32

The parable of the prodigal son is one of the best known and loved stories ever told. It is a story which speaks to all of us, with most people relating to the prodigal son himself, knowing their own weakness and wrongdoing and feeling in their lives that sense of the forgiveness of God and his love expressed in Jesus Christ which brings healing and newness of life.

However much is often made of the elder brother and his response to the homecoming of the son, and many would also relate to something in that older brother's attitude. The stories can be juxtaposed, focusing on the actions of each elder brother:

Reuben, who didn't mean any harm, but whose silence, inaction and indeed active participation in the assault on Joseph led to Joseph's being sold into slavery. When Reuben did decide to act, it was too late. So a son is lost, a brother is sent into slavery far away, and a whole family suffers because of it, for what took place that day, while never spoken of, is never forgotten.

The older son who stays at home, does all the right things, but in his heart has no real understanding of his father's love, and who resents the forgiveness and reconciliation shown to his younger brother. This man has no desire to welcome home the lost, his heart is closed.

So a son who has been lost is welcomed home by a loving father, but his brother has neither forgotten nor forgiven the fact of his going, nor the mistakes he has made, and in his heart harbours resentment at his brother's return from servitude.

The story of Joseph ends with Joseph both forgiving and saving his brothers. Joseph has learned the hard way what love is and what it is about. The story of the prodigal son has no real ending, we are left to wonder – did the older brother come round? Was there real reconciliation and understanding, did they work together helping and loving each other? It has been said that the parable is left open because the story is about us and it is an ongoing story of how we treat each other.

Both stories are about family, and the breakdown of family life, about the intricacies of relationships and of our ability to misunderstand and misuse each other, of our lack of tolerance for each other and of misunderstanding of love. Both stories involve a refusal to act and interact with each other which leads to pain and hurt and slavery; slavery of the person and of the heart.

God's word teaches us that we are a family, all of us, and that we are responsible for each other, no matter who the other is. We are called to act, not to be silent, not to be passive, not to be frightened to stand out from the crowd, but to act and to love.

Resources, Advice and Further Information

The Serious Organised Crime Agency has published a guide to best practice with regards helping victims of trafficking (www.soca.gov.uk/about-soca/about-the-ukhtc/best-practice-guide)

This highlights the vulnerability of potential victims of human trafficking and the importance of sensitivity on the part of frontline practitioners with whom they have contact. This includes the need to be aware of the significant impact that both verbal and body language can have on an individual who is distressed or traumatised. They make the point that potential victims may fear revealing their status or experiences to state authorities and will often mistrust individuals in authority, thus compromising their ability to participate in any future proceedings, for example as a witness.

Tell-tale signs that someone in your community is a victim of human trafficking include:

- People who seem isolated from the local community and/or appear to be under the control or influence of others.
- People living in over-crowded conditions, often rented accommodation and often with a heavy security presence.
- Foreign nationals or teenagers who rarely come out of a house without guidance or older men or women.
- People being collected very early and/or returned late at night on a regular basis.
- Always appearing frightened or anxious, looking unwell and poorly nourished.
- Frequent visitors to premises, often a stream of men arriving and leaving at unusual times.
- Sex workers who offer 'special services' at a low price, who are advertised as having a particular ethnicity, who appear underage or speak little or no English.
- Bruises, scars and other signs of physical abuse and torture, although trafficked victims are often beaten in areas, like their lower back, that are not outwardly visible.
- Being unwilling to engage with others in workplace or social settings.
- Working within a poor safety environment for little or no pay.

If you see something suspicious, call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Organisations supporting the victims of human trafficking:

Migrant Help (a non-campaigning organisation that provides support, guidance and safe accommodation across the UK)

www.migranthehelp.org/human-trafficking

Tel: 07766 668 781

Email: mhl@migranthehelp.org

Poppy Project (works to support women victims of trafficking in England and Wales)

www.eaves4women.co.uk/POPPY_Project

Tel: 020 7735 2062

The Salvation Army (provides support to women in England who are victims of human trafficking).

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/uki/humantrafficking

Tel: 0300 3038151

Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance, TARA

- a project of Glasgow City Council

www.saferglasgow.com/what-we-do/support-services-for-victims

Tel: 0141 276 7729

Christian Resources

Abolition Scotland is a group of churches working to raise awareness of sex trafficking issues in Scotland.

www.abolitionscotland.org

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate

Responsibility (ECCR) is an organisation that works for economic justice and human rights, particularly in the business environment. ECCR has been campaigning to eliminate human trafficking in the hospitality industry.

www.eccr.org.uk

The Salvation Army Human Trafficking App - information at www.salvationarmy.org.uk/uki

The World Council of Churches. The Council's project on migration and social justice aims to engage and challenge the churches in their work with migrants, including refugees, internally displaced people and victims of trafficking, and to develop advocacy strategies on migration and racism. www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/migration-and-social-justice

Campaigns that are working to end human trafficking:

- Abolition Scotland www.abolitionscotland.org
- Antislavery International www.antislavery.org
- Anti-Trafficking Alliance www.atalliance.org.uk
- Blue Blindfold www.blueblindfold.co.uk
- Coalition Against Trafficking in Women www.catwinternational.org
- End Child Prostitution and Trafficking www.ecpat.net
- Free the Slaves www.freetheslaves.net
- The Human Trafficking Foundation www.humantraffickingfoundation.org
- MTV's End Exploitation and Trafficking www.mtvexit.org
- Not for Sale www.notforsalecampaign.org
- Shared Hope International www.sharedhope.org
- Stop the Traffik www.stopthetraffik.org

Further reading

Equality and Human Rights Commission Inquiry into Human Trafficking in Scotland, 2011
www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Scotland/Human_Trafficking_in_Scotland_/inquiry_into_human_trafficking_in_scotland-full-report_pdf_.pdf

Equality and Human Rights Commission Inquiry into Human Trafficking in Scotland: Follow on report, 2013
www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Scotland/Human_Trafficking_in_Scotland_

Joseph Rowntree Foundation Experiences of forced labour in the UK food industry, 2012
www.jrf.org.uk/publications/forced-labour-uk-food-industry

The Centre for Social Justice, It Happens Here: Equipping the United Kingdom to fight modern slavery, 2013
[www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/CSJ_Slavery_Full_Report_WEB\(5\).pdf](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/UserStorage/pdf/Pdf%20reports/CSJ_Slavery_Full_Report_WEB(5).pdf)

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Modern Slavery: How can we end forced labour in the UK?
www.jrf.org.uk/topic/forced-labour

Selling Olga by Louisa Waugh, published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006 (ISBN: 0297850709)



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