



# Abolition Journeys

## And still there is slavery!

**Additional sheet 1 March 2007**

**2007 gives us an opportunity to let people know it still exists and do more to stop it**

Slavery is “people (being) controlled by violence and denied all their personal freedom to make (or save) money for someone else.” (Kevin Bales).

Kevin, a modern Quaker writer and campaign leader, continues to write in his book, “Disposable People”:

‘Three key factors helped to create the new slavery and change the old:

1. The population explosion that flooded the world’s labour markets with poor and vulnerable people.
2. Economic globalisation and modernised agriculture (farming) that has dispossessed the poor farmers and made them vulnerable to enslavement.
3. The chaos of greed, violence and corruption created by economic change that is also destroying the social rules and traditional protective bonds of responsibility’.

**Here is a list of slavery that exists today:**

- **Trafficking in persons**, Chinese cockle pickers in Liverpool, gang workers in East Anglia producing food for supermarkets, cocoa plantation workers in West Africa, women and children deceived and traded from East to West Europe or in Brazil for prostitution, or within Thailand for sex tourism. (estimated as 2.4 million people worldwide by ILO.)
- **Child domestic workers** (normal in some countries, like Philippines, but hidden in Paris, London and New York.)
- **Child labour**, children kidnapped and working in sweatshops making carpets or

footballs or on Indonesian fishing platforms.

- **Child Soldiers** a cause on which Quakers have worked tirelessly in UN circles in Geneva for a quarter of a century creating awareness and finally recognition, an NGO coalition and international action.
- **Descent-based traditional slavery:** human beings from birth treated as chattels or property (still existing in parts of West & East Africa).
- **Bonded Labour**, especially on the Indian Subcontinent (despite being illegal) in agriculture or brick making arising from indebtedness to landlords and moneylenders.
- **Camel jockeys** in the Middle East exploiting very young Bangladeshi boys. (Hopefully this is now at an end as a result of campaigning.)
- **Religious & ritual slavery**, girls “given” to religious leaders to attain merit or expiate sins: *trokosi* in West Africa, and *devadasis* in Indian temples.
- **Forced begging** (under a beggar master). [Children may be forced to do this for their own family’s survival, but this is not slavery as such.]

## And what can we say?

## Ideas for reflection and activity

Quakers were able to lead in the way for abolition, not just because of what they believed, which was similar to what people in other Churches were saying but because we have a way of working together which allows us to check out our actions and our deepest thoughts, feelings and beliefs. Few remember the names of the Quakers in Germantown, but by living up to the Light in them, they began a change that has had a huge impact on our world.

Slavery is at the worst end of a continuum, a line, of exploitation, which our global economic system encourages.

Whatever our age we can each use or be helped to use our personal power to change how the world works.

How can you, with others, make positive change personally, in your meeting, in your families, with friends and in your town, village or neighbourhood?

Here are some suggestions:

- Use the story on Sheet 1. We have wondered how to make awareness and exploration of slavery, a shared activity, open to everyone. This story can be used with any ages above 4 years. It could be the basis for a shared meeting for worship, a reflective activity before a meeting for learning where different ages are gathered or in an ecumenical act of remembrance. It is different from conventional story telling and there are directions about how to tell it. There is also guidance about reflective conversation and creative options after the story.

- Invite people in the whole meeting, in children's meeting, in link group or as individuals to choose a part of the history or a character that stands out. In children's meeting the stories of several early Friends could be shared and

children asked to think whom they most liked. In Link Groups or main meeting Friends could choose from the timeline. Another way would be to put a selection of names or events in a hat and people of any age are invited to pick one out – each person could then work on their own or with a parent, friend or other Friend to find out what they can.

*How could you then take what they did and use it as a focus for remembrance, celebration, thanksgiving and learning? It might be that telling the story, using a poem, pictures, collage, tapestry or drama could help. Who could you invite from outside of Quakers?*

- As a meeting, in children's meeting or link group or as individuals you could choose one of the contemporary issues of slavery and find out what you can. What help is needed? Discern with others what it is possible for you to do – this is an opportunity to explore the use of Quaker processes together and this can easily include children. Share your thoughts and feelings together. Plan a simple information sharing or fundraising activity as a beginning. Always try to work with all ages. Would it be possible to work with other churches, faiths or community groups? Don't be afraid to reach out.

In future issues of 'Journeys in the Spirit' and 'Abolition Journeys' there will be information and activities on;

- How Quilts and quilting saved lives and can Make us brave
- Posters and power
- Songs, secrets and freedom
- Badges, bags and cups and saucers
- Voices from the past of different ages
- Ethical trade and personal and corporate spending
- Meetings for learning for all ages

**Don't forget – to receive all of the above you will need to subscribe to the children's issue of 'Journeys in the Spirit'**

**Links to other resources and organisations:**

[www.quaker.org.uk/library](http://www.quaker.org.uk/library) - click on Library Guides and choose no.9 on the abolition of the slave trade; The Quaker Life Resources Room can also be found via this link. [www.setallfree.net](http://www.setallfree.net) - A Churches Together website with lots of information and links about slavery. Three other websites are [www.antislavery.org/2007](http://www.antislavery.org/2007)  
[www.rendezvousofvictory.org](http://www.rendezvousofvictory.org)  
[www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?5324](http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?5324) for a free download of a booklet on slavery.

# Journeys in the Spirit

## Children



### Additional sheet 2 Abolition Journeys March 2007 A story

If the story is being used for a multi age meeting for worship, in a children's meeting or another setting the method for telling it is the same.

#### Getting ready

- Lay out a table or tables with creative equipment (pens, pencils, coloured paper, crayons, pastels, scissors, a range of boxes, paints, PVA glue, glue pens, pipe cleaners, lollipop sticks and drinks stirrers for example).
- The storyteller should read the story through and practice when to pause and emphasise.
- The fabric and other simple props are very important although the story can be told without them. The story is not an historical account. It is intended to offer images, ideas and situations that encourage imagination, personal engagement, wondering and individual response. It is not meant to be easy to listen to.
- Someone to act as doorkeeper to welcome people to the story. This could be a child with an adult.
- The storyteller should position her or himself on the floor, on a cushion or low stool in the room being used for the story with the equipment next to them.
- The storyteller does **not** have eye contact with those who have come to listen – she or he should focus downwards as if in a centred or meditative position; in a way it is a meeting for worship for storytelling.
- Wait until everyone is settled.

#### Engage. Here is what the storyteller says:

I am going to tell you a story.  
(Pause)

Here is a huge ocean, a great big sea.  
(Pause)

This is a country. A long time ago it was a beautiful place. It was very hot. People lived here, it was their home.  
We will call this Africa.  
(Pause)

Here is another country.  
It was sometimes warm and sometimes cold. It rained a lot.  
People lived here – it was their home.  
We will call this England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The United Kingdom.

All the way over here is another country.  
We will call this the Americas. People lived here - it was their home.

This was a very long way.

One day a terrible thing started to happen. Ships came from America and England to Africa and began to take people away – women, men and children - even though they didn't want to go. They wanted to stay in their homes. They were forced to go. People from their own country and men from the ships, with guns, made them go. They were taken away. They were very scared.

*Lay out the blue cloth slowly; from your left to right; let it have folds like waves*

*Lay out the yellow cloth across the end of the blue, just touching and lay out the dark green cloth behind the yellow, just touching. Scatter tissue petals over the green. Stand some people up – maybe 10.*

*Lay down the two brown ovals & place the smaller green ovals on top towards the top of the ocean & about a third of the way across.*

*Lay down the other yellow strip just touching your left side of the ocean. Lay another, lighter green strip and a dark brown strip – each just touching.*

*Sweep your hand slowly from America to Africa.*

*Move your simple ship slowly from America or England to Africa.*

*Move your people very slowly, looking back, one by one onto the ship.*

**(Continued overleaf)**

# Journeys in the Spirit



## Children

The people were tied together with heavy chains in the bottom of the ships. They could hardly move.

They were prisoners. They could not go home.  
(Pause)

When the ships were full of people they began to sail across the ocean. Each person had only the space of a coffin to lie down. This was a terrible journey.

There was never enough food or water; people went to the toilet where they lay down.

Many people became ill – many died before the journey was over. People were the most sad you can be and more.

The ships were often in horrible storms. The prisoners, the people in the bottom of the ship, did not know when they would get to land again. Nobody told them when or where it would be.  
(Pause)

One day after weeks and weeks on the sea, the ships stopped. The big flat doors on the decks were opened & light and fresh air flooded in. For a moment the people thought they were free.

But they were not. When they came off the ships, they still had chains. Other people, in America, came to buy them & take them away to work on their big farms, plantations. Children were taken from parents, parents from children, brothers from sisters and sisters from brothers. The people with the money did not care.

The people from Africa all had to work very, very, very hard growing plants to make sugar or cotton for the people with money. If they didn't work or tried to run away they were hit with whips.

They were slaves and they could not go home.

But do you know, some how, some slaves remembered songs from their home & they did not give up. Some people in America & England began to think that slavery was wrong and, after a long time, the slaves & these people stopped the ships. End. *Hold the quiet for a short while and then ask these questions one at a time:*

- I wonder what part of this story you liked best?
- I wonder what part of this story you think is most important?
- I wonder if you are in this story and the story is in you?
- I wonder if there is any part of this story that you could leave out and still have all the story you need?

*(Pause after each - you can ask them again. Accept answers or silence without judgement – just thank. After a time you can lead into a period of worship and/or offer people the use of craft materials, to sit quietly, read the story or use the story equipment. After about 20 minutes gather for optional sharing of what has been done or felt.)*

*Lay them touching in the bottom of the ship. Put the 'deck' over the ship.*

*Fling the length of chain down along the shoreline with force as you say this.*

*Move the ship slowly, weaving and a little up and down as you talk.*

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*Lift one or two figures out and put them on the sea. Move the boat on.*

*Continue to move the ship.*

*Bring the ship to the American shore, passing south of the United Kingdom*

*Take the 'deck' off the ship.*

*Bring the people off of the ship very slowly & one by one. Move some in one direction & some in another. Make the separation look hard – move figures as if they are dragging. Move them 'inland'.*

*Pour the sugar from one bowl into another & lay out the plain cotton. Lay or fling down the whip or model of a whip.*

*Bring the chain from Africa & bring it down across the shoreline.*

**Resources:** 1 metre blue cloth or tissue ½ metre wide; ½ metre dark green cloth or tissue strip; ½ metre lighter green cloth or tissue strip; 2 x ½ metre yellow cloth or tissue strips; simple petal shapes cut from coloured tissue; 1 larger (about 20 cms long) & 1 smaller rectangle of brown cloth or tissue with 2 smaller rectangles of green cloth or tissue; a simple ship – a weetabix box, top cut off for a deck with prow & stern made from 2 strips of card bent & stuck to shape & a mast of rolled paper or card with a splayed base so that it can be stuck – a 1 ltr. ice cream tub can work as well; simple cut out card figures to fit in ship; a length of heavy chain from a hardware store; brown sugar & 2 bowls; a piece of plain cotton or linen; a whip made from a short cane & string painted or coloured brown.



# Abolition Journeys

## 2704 - the number of slave ships to sail from London before abolition

### Additional Sheet 3

**‘After all, what makes any event important, unless by its observation we become better and wiser, and learn ‘to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly before God?’ - Olaudah Equiano – freed slave and activist.**

We used this quotation in the first Abolition journeys and repeat it in this and the next supplement – in Quaker language it could convert into a valuable query that bears repetition and reflection: ‘How, by observing the event of the abolition of the slave trade can we seek to become better and wiser, and *learn to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly before God?*’

#### **How can we continue to respond to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade?**

Several writers and commentators in the media and from other Christian communities have commented strongly and positively on the Quaker role in the abolition – often in a way that Friends have not bothered with or allowed ourselves. It is very important, that as Friends we give ourselves permission to recognise the strength of our ways and action – past and present; but the query suggested above also brings the usual tough challenges of the Quaker way.

In the first Abolition Journeys there were suggestions about ways that Friends could commemorate, learn and act on this anniversary. Some of these were for individuals; some were for local and monthly meetings with children and young people and without – there was a strong recommendation to seek ways to work in a multi-age way; these are issues for everybody of any age.

#### **What could meetings for learning be like?**

Here are some suggestions for structures, questions and themes to use as a beginning for Meetings for Learning.

- A conversation and shared lunch after meeting for worship.
- A whole meeting or Link Group activity on a Sunday, a Saturday or maybe a Friday evening. Activities could be worked out to fit the queries to the needs of different or mixed ages. This could be followed with a mixed age sharing of thoughts and activities in whole or small groups, followed by a formal meeting for worship and a shared meal. This is a bit like ‘First Day School’ practiced in some American Yearly Meetings.
- A programme of different activities on a variety of days, including evenings and Saturdays that culminate in a special meeting for worship or ecumenical event that involves sharing and display of what has been explored and done.

## Here are some possible queries with which to start conversation or activity:

These are meant to be challenging and, perhaps, uncomfortable. There are two sets of these under different headings.

### Engaging with others

- In the global village, who are our neighbours and how are we 'neighbourly'? 'Am I, are we, more considerate of those on the other side of the world more than those we pass on the street?'
- Whilst appreciating the worth of others, are we truly welcoming only of those who are likely to share our attitudes and appearance?
- What, and who, is Meeting for Worship for? How could worship sharing with people from different histories be positive for us, and for them?
- Who is 'us'?
- How can we work and worship with, or even simply uphold, those who are different?

### From sugar boycott to Fairtrade

In the late 1700's there were highly organised boycotts of sugar – a product of slave labour (see the chronology in the first issue of Abolition Journeys). There are now growing movements for fair trade and ethical trading.

Some possible questions for reflecting on this include:

- Does society rely on 'wilful ignorance' so that our immediate comfort can be achieved without reference to the consequences for others? How are we kept ignorant and why?
- If information on the conditions of people who provide our goods and services is more readily available than ever before what stops us from finding it?
- Which Friends from the abolition campaign could be 'patterns and examples' for us?
- How can we explore 'fairtrade' with children and young people without producing guilt?
- How can I spend my money more fairly?

- How can my meeting spend more fairly?
- How can my parents spend their money more fairly?
- What can we do as a meeting or as individuals to persuade supermarkets, shops, councils, employers and other businesses to check and change their practices? Be bold!
- If we can't rely on material things for our comfort, on getting and having, what can we rely on?

### Some background to fair trade and ethical trading:

What's the difference between ethical trade and fair trade?

Given the variety of labels that make different social, ethical or environmental claims about products, it is hardly surprising that there is a lot of a confusion about what exactly ethical trade is, and how it differs from products that are described as 'fairly traded', and/or carry the FAIRTRADE mark.

The main difference between ethical trade and Fairtrade (that is, goods carrying the FAIRTRADE mark) is:

- *Ethical trade* involves buying companies taking action for working conditions throughout their supply chains. It is particularly relevant for large multinational companies that outsource the majority of their production, and so don't have a direct employer-employee relationship with the workers who make their products.
- *Fairtrade* is an alternative approach to trade and aims to support disadvantaged small producers in developing countries. It is particularly relevant for commodities such as cocoa, coffee, sugar and cotton, where producers are often marginalised and suffer from major fluctuations in world prices for these commodities.

### Information and resources:

[www.quaker.org.uk/peace](http://www.quaker.org.uk/peace) - Quakers on trade justice & development campaigning – lots & lots.  
[www.ethicaltrade.org](http://www.ethicaltrade.org) - information & campaigns.  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk) - information & how to do it.  
[www.eiris.org.uk](http://www.eiris.org.uk) - ethical investing.  
[www.eccr.org.uk](http://www.eccr.org.uk) - Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility.

# Abolition Journeys

Additional sheet 4 May 2007



## Distant voices still alive.

**'After all, what makes any event important, unless by its observation we become better and wiser, and learn 'to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly before God'? Olaudah Equiano – freed slave, writer and activist.**

In this the final of the three issues of Abolition Journeys we reproduce extracts from the writing of three people between 1789 and 1802. They could be for careful use and reflection with different ages and might be used as testimony and ministry to support discernment about what action to engage in around issues of slavery now. Please see Bill Moyers model for social change overleaf.

'At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck, so that we could not see how they managed the vessel. But this disappointment was the least of my sorrow. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.

' From his personal account of being enslaved, *'The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African'* (1789)

*'We are engaged, under a sense of duty, to bear a publick testimony against a species of oppression which, under the sanction of national authority, has long been exercised upon the natives of Africa, is grown up into a system of tyranny, and is unhappily become a considerable branch of the commerce of this kingdom'*

*From 'The case of our fellow creatures the oppressed Africans...by the people called Quakers'; printed by Quaker James Phillips 1783*



An extract from the *'Negro boy's tale'* by Amelie Opie 1802 in the collection in the library of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. (See Abolition Journeys 1 for picture of Amelie Opie).

"It is long time since lass Ve (we) meet,  
Ven (when) I vas take by bad Vite (*white*) man,  
And moder (*mother*) cry, and kiss his feet,  
And shrieking after Zambo ran.

O missa! long, how long, me feel  
Upon mine arms her lass (last) embrace!  
Vile in de dark, dark ship, I dwell,  
Long burn her tear upon my face.

Poor slaves! .... but I had best forget.  
Dey (*they*) say (but teaze me is deir (*their*) joy)  
Me grown so big dat (that) ven ve meet  
My moder vould (*would*) not know her boy.

' Ah! sure 'tis false! But yet if no,  
Ven I again my moder see,  
Such joy I at her sight vould show  
Dat (*that*) she vould tink (*think*) it must be me.

**Looking at the world, discerning our responses and then trying to change it brings with it a variety of experiences, feelings and issues. Slavery remains and demands change.**

We share this model with you as inspiration and support. This repeats some of the chronology from *Abolition Journeys 1* but sets it into a framework that can help work through the ebb and flow of engaging with the world - this could be told as an encouraging story or used as a way to lift the hearts and minds of people of any age when they are tackling hard issues and maybe feeling disappointed or stuck. Use the question, 'Where are we?' to think about a new campaign or support existing work.

<b>Bill Moyer's Eight Stages</b>	<b>The campaign to abolish the slave trade</b>	<b>What would you put in here now?</b>
<b>1. Normal times</b>	Slavery widely accepted as normal – 'a creditable way of life'.	
<b>2. Scattered groups address the problem</b>	Quakers pronounce against the slave trade in 1696 in America and in 1727 in England; they ban Quakers from slave-holding in 1754 in Philadelphia and in 1761 in England. In 1787 nine Quakers and three Anglicans start the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.	
<b>3. Ripening conditions – the movement grows</b>	Thomas Clarkson gathers evidence from all over the UK about the abuses of slaves. In 1788, there were 100 petitions to Parliament from local groups. Wedgwood designs medallion 'Am I not a man and a brother?'	
<b>4. Take-off: dramatic actions and public support</b>	In 1789 James Phillips, on behalf of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, publishes 7000 posters of slave ship Brookes – these are distributed widely. Olaudah Equiano publishes his autobiography and speaks throughout the UK. In 1792 the sugar boycott results in 400,000 Britons refusing to eat slave-grown sugar. 519 petitions to Parliament are made in 1792, with thousands of signatures.	
<b>5. Identity crisis – sense of failure and powerlessness</b>	Wilberforce's bills of 1789 and 1792 are put off or watered down by the pro-slavery lobby. In 1793 war with France eclipses the abolition movement.	
<b>6. Winning majority public opinion</b>	Slave rebellions result in many British soldiers being killed. Stories of sailors on slave ships bring home the effects of slave trade. People begin to see the slave trade as costing too much.	
<b>7. Success: accomplishing alternatives</b>	In 1807 Wilberforce's bill to abolish the slave trade is finally passed with general support.	
<b>8. Continuing the struggle</b>	It takes until 1833 to pass legislation to abolish slavery itself. Many years pass when little happens. Women become involved: 'Am I not a woman and a sister?' They call for slaves to be freed immediately. Slavery is abolished in British colonies from 1 August 1834. However, conditions for former slaves remain terrible.	
<b>Back to the beginning of the cycle</b>	<b>Continuing the ministry and challenge today.</b>	

The campaign to abolish the slave trade and the eight stages of successful social movements adapted from the work of Bill, William, Moyer by Marian Liebmann and Karl Gibbs. [www.paceebene.org/pace/the-eight-stages-of-successful-social-movements](http://www.paceebene.org/pace/the-eight-stages-of-successful-social-movements) See William Moyer in Wikipedia on line for his personal history.