



**set all free**

**ACT TO END SLAVERY**

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE ACT  
BICENTENARY 2007

**setting the scene**

**for**

**2007**

**set all free** is a project of Churches Together in England



## DATES

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- 1562 First English slaving expedition by Sir John Hawkins
- 1619 First recorded cargo of Africans landed in Virginia
- 1625 First English settlement on Barbados
- 1626 First boatload of African slaves to St. Kitts
- 1631 Charles I granted monopoly on Guinea trade to a group of London merchants
- 1655 British capture of Jamaica as part of Cromwell's 'Grand Design'
- 1672 Royal Africa Company granted charter to carry Africans to the Americas
- 1772 Slavery declared illegal in England, Wales & Ireland (the Somerset case)
- 1778 Slavery declared illegal in Scotland
- 1781 Over 100 African slaves thrown overboard from the slave ship *Zong*
- 1783 Committee on the Slave Trade established by Quakers' Meeting for Sufferings
- 1787 Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade founded: Granville Sharp as president of a mostly Quaker committee
- 1791 23 August - St Domingue (Haiti) slave revolt
- 1792 Resolution for gradual abolition of the slave trade defeated in House of Lords
- 1805 Bill for Abolition passed in Commons, rejected in House of Lords
- 1807 25 March - Slave Trade Abolition Bill passed in the British Parliament
- 1808 US abolished the slave trade
- 1833 Abolition of Slavery British Empire Bill passed, with effect from 1834 and providing for up to six year 'apprentice' transition  
£20M voted as compensation to slave owners
- 1838 1 August - enslaved men, women and children in British Empire became free
- 1842 Britain & US signed Webster-Ashburton Treaty, banning slave trade on high seas
- 1848 Emancipation by the French of their slaves
- 1850 The Fugitive Slave Law passed in the United States
- 1865 Slavery finally abolished in United States territories
- 1888 Slavery abolished in Brazil

## THE TRANSATLANTIC TRADE

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Since ancient times, it had been regarded as legitimate to trade in slaves, that is human beings who are regarded as somebody else's property, owned as forced, unpaid labour. Slaves might be prisoners of war, criminals, people sold to cover a debt, or children born into slavery.

Slaves are regarded as a separate class of people in society in the texts of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Among Mayans and Aztecs, Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, slaves were a fact of life. The word 'slave' comes from 'slav', enslaved people in Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade exceeded in numbers, brutality and organisation anything the world had previously seen.

Between 1450 and 1850, at least 9 - 12 million Africans were shipped from Africa across the Atlantic to colonies in North America, South America, and the West Indies. Of these Africans 80% (at least 7 million) were exported during C18th, with a mortality rate of 10 - 20% on board ship. This was the notorious Middle Passage.

... soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me.

Olaudah Equiano

Ships working the Triangular Trade started and finished in European ports. They carried copper, muskets, manufactured goods, glassware and cloth. They traded them for slaves who were loaded into extremely cramped ships and given only minimal amounts of food and water.

The demand for the slaves was high in the New World: labour was short, there were insufficient indigenous workers, and they could not withstand the diseases brought in by Europeans or the brutal working conditions. Sugar cane, which needed a hot climate, was becoming popular in Europe and was labour-intensive. So slaves were sold to dealers, and on to plantation owners. Sugar, rum, rice, coffee, cotton and tobacco from the Caribbean and the southern states of America were loaded onto ships which then returned to Europe completing the Triangle. From the outset Africans defied transatlantic slavery; they fought to avoid capture and resisted to the point of death on board slave ships. Moreover, they continued their struggle against slavery in the Americas through acts of passive and active resistance.

Most Europeans never saw the Middle Passage and remained ignorant of its inhumane and deadly conditions. What Europeans noticed was the mortality rates of their own family members who were sailors on the Triangular route.

## PLACES

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### LONDON

The Royal African Company held the monopoly of trade from 1672 to 1698. It administered trading posts on the west African coast, and was responsible for seizing any English ships - other than its own - involved in slaving.

### BRISTOL

After 1698 Bristol was able to use its position as an Atlantic port to become a major player in the slave trade. For 50 years in the C18th it was Britain's main slaving port. It grew in population and wealth and became England's second city. But Bristol was an expensive port to use; its harbour suffered extremes of high and low tide, and as ships became larger they had difficulties on the Avon.

Bristol... the greatest, richest and best port of the trade in Great Britain, London only excepted. The merchants of this city not only have the greatest trade, but they trade with a more entire independency upon London, than any other town in Britain.

...the Bristol merchants as they have a great trade abroad, so they have always buyers at home, for their returns and that such buyers that no cargo is too big for them.

*Tour Through England and Wales*  
Daniel Defoe: c.1720

### LIVERPOOL

Meanwhile Liverpool's port charges were much lower than Bristol's; with its long deep waterfront it was a much more efficient port and could accommodate larger ships. The demand for slaves carried in Liverpool ships rose. By the end of the C18th, Liverpool had over 60% of the British trade and 40% of the European trade. Its net proceeds from the African trade in 1783-93 were over £12M, from 878 voyages and the sale of 300,000 slaves.

### SMALLER PORTS

Ports on the south-west, south-east and north-west coasts of England, along with Glasgow, were also involved.

### THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Slavery contributed vastly to Britain's rise as an industrial nation. Slavers needed ships; crews needed provisions; traders needed goods to barter for slaves – fetters; chains, padlocks, guns, pots, kettles; plantations needed machinery; rum factories needed bottles. Cotton picked by slave labour in New England was manufactured in Lancashire and sold on the colonial market, mostly Africa.

### FINANCIAL SERVICES

Investors loaned money to slavers, bankers banked their profits, insurers insured their ships and cargoes. They and wealthy merchants built mansions and country houses; so the effect of the slave trade spread across Britain.

## **ABOLITION MOVEMENT AND ABOLITIONISTS**

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In C18th the British benefited from slavery more than any other nation: it was also the British who led the struggle to abolish the system. Christians had been complicit in the slave trade, and churches had benefited from it; yet it was Christians who were in the forefront of the abolition movement.

The first petition of Parliament against the slave trade came from the Quakers in 1783. The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed in 1787, and that started a new era of the mobilisation of public opinion through education, campaigning, mass petitions and boycotts.

### **THOMAS CLARKSON (1760 – 1846)**

After winning the Latin prize on Slavery at Cambridge, Clarkson met Granville Sharp and some Quakers, and together they formed the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Clarkson was their researcher; he interviewed 20,000 sailors and collected specimens of the ugly slave-trade ironware. He drew the infamous diagram of the slave ship *Brooks*.

### **OLAUDAH EQUIANO (c1745 – c1797)**

A survivor of the Middle Passage, Equiano managed to buy and retain his freedom in spite of being cheated many times. He made a living as a hairdresser in London and educated himself, and became an associate of Granville Sharp. In 1789 he published his autobiography, and then sold the book throughout Britain, undertaking lecture tours and actively campaigning to abolish the slave trade.

### **HANNAH MORE (1745 – 1833)**

Bristol-born writer and Christian moralist Hannah More joined the abolitionist movement in 1776. A close friend of John Newton and supporter of Wilberforce, she inspired a generation of women to take action against slavery and in other protest movements and pressure groups.

### **JOHN NEWTON (1725 – 1807)**

A former captain of a slave ship, Newton was ordained and later became active in the anti-slavery movement. Among hymns he wrote were *Amazing Grace* and *How sweet the name of Jesus sounds*.

### **GRANVILLE SHARP (1735 – 1813)**

In 1765 Granville Sharp befriended a runaway slave named Jonathon Strong and consequently was closely involved in securing the famous legal ruling of 1772, abolishing slavery within England (the Somerset case, relating to the slave James Somerset). He became first chairman of the 'Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade', was a tireless abolitionist and also part of the founding group of Sierra Leone.

## **ABOLITION MOVEMENT AND ABOLITIONISTS**

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### **OTTOBAH CUGOANO (1757 – 1801)**

Ottobah Cugoano was a slave brought by a merchant to England where he was set free. He played an important role in the case of Henry Demane, a black man due to be shipped to the West Indies as a slave. He worked with Granville Sharp, and in 1787 published an account of his experiences.

### **WILLIAM WILBERFORCE (1759 – 1833)**

William Wilberforce was the Member of Parliament for his native Hull. An Evangelical Christian, Anglican and member of the Clapham Sect, from 1787 he pursued his God-given vocation - 'the abolition of the slave trade and the reformation of manners'. Thanks to meeting Clarkson, and with the support of his university friend William Pitt, Wilberforce agitated against the slave trade and took every opportunity in the House of Commons of exposing its evils. He finally saw the Bill through the Commons, and Prime Minister Lord Grenville through the House of Lords, in 1807.

### **TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE (died in prison, 1803)**

Toussaint became leader of the slave rebellion in Saint Dominique in 1791. A brilliant military leader, he led his slave army in defeating the French as well as the invading Spanish and British. He became de facto governor of the colony. When Napoleon attempted to restore slavery in the French colonies, St Domingue returned to war. In 1803, having been promised safe conduct, Toussaint was tricked by the Napoleon's forces and imprisoned in France.

### **SAM SHARPE (hanged, 1832)**

Sam Sharp, a Baptist lay preacher in Jamaica, led the slaves to strike against any further work unless the plantation owners agreed to pay them wages. When their demands were refused, rebellion ensued, starting on 27 December, 1831 (the 'Christmas Rebellion'). Though quickly suppressed, pockets of resistance continued till May 1832, when Sharp was captured.

### **WILLIAM KNIBB (1803 – 45)**

Baptist missionary to Jamaica William Knibb was accused of raising the slaves' expectations, and therefore the rebellion of 1831. Returning to Britain in 1833, he appeared before parliamentary committees and went on an anti-slavery tour of British Baptists. Back in Jamaica in 1834, Knibb continued to further the slaves in the development of townships free of exploitation.

Other abolitionists included **HENRY THORNTON**, **THOMAS BABINGTON**, **ZACHARY MACAULAY** and **JAMES STEPHEN** and others members of the **CLAPHAM SECT**, a group of Christian friends committed to applying their faith to the social and moral conditions of their day.

# LEGACIES OF TRANSATLANTIC SLAVERY

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## **In West Africa, centuries of the slave trade meant**

- raids
- war
- the fomentation of factionalism
- the supply of arms
- trickery in various ways

## **resulting in**

- the destabilisation of West African coastline and inland states
- depopulation
- loss of skilled personnel
- destroyed markets and industries
- cultural genocide
- destructive effects on the African psyche

## **Meanwhile in Europe**

- the textile industries of cotton and wool grew
- jobs were created in shipbuilding and its attendant industries
- ships needed crews
- sugar refining required both capital and labour
- burgeoning economies needed banking and insurance

## **... and in the Caribbean and Americas**

- raw labour was a major resource
- after emancipation employment became an acute problem
- the infra-structure was not developed
- most people cultivated the land on small plots for a living and provided a cheap hired labour source for the sugar industry and agriculture

## **After the Second World War**

- European colonial powers like Britain had a labour shortage
- they turned to their colonies in the Caribbean to address the shortfall.
- immigrants to Britain suffered poor housing, racism and physical abuse.
- a growing British-born generation of Black people began to suffer from deprived inner-city blight and racism
- they were more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts and suffered more at the hands of the police and the criminal justice system
- increasing racial tensions led eventually to riots in Brixton, Liverpool, Bristol and other urban areas where there was a large Black population at various times between the 1960s through to the 1990s



# **CONTINUING LEGACIES OF TRANSATLANTIC SLAVERY**

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## **The negative impact of slavery on Black people**

- slavery not an event but a process
- the destabilising of African societies
- the compromises and complicity in the slave trade
- the psychological trauma involved
- Africans seen as fair game for slavery because they were not Christians
- dehumanised: lives considered of less value than white people

## **Struggling against negative self-image**

For the African slave there was a struggle not only for freedom but also against the continued onslaught of a negative self-image not countered by any positive normal human advances in life. In the Caribbean colonies a caste system of sorts was being maintained by plantation owners and governments that was largely based on colour. Blacks were the slaves, free Blacks and 'Coloureds' were in the middle, Creole whites were above them and those born in Europe were at the top of society. Divisions of labour and of privilege were based on these lines.

## **Blackness and ugliness**

This favouritism was more than just being able to receive a good education and a career, but also affected fundamental aesthetic values and self worth. For many, blackness became synonymous with ugliness, evil, inferiority and anything undesirable, while that which approached whiteness in values, manners, taste and aesthetics was considered superior. From this it can be seen that what is not articulated is a process of African deculturation within Caribbean societies and the demonising of all things African, with the possible exception of musical forms, which were often the only means left to the African to retain something of his African culture.

## **An enduring legacy**

In today's enlightened world slavery, although it still exists in various forms, is no longer deemed morally acceptable. And Christians would no longer accept that oppression and force are acceptable ways to view and express the Christian message. The world is acknowledged to be diverse and other peoples' religions are respected. This, however, rarely seems to apply to traditional African religious beliefs. Over the centuries African religious forms have been reduced to being 'strange practices' that should not be taken seriously and yet 'God' concepts within them are no more or less arguable than in any other religion.

They tore off my clothes,  
bound me with ropes, gave  
me a heavy load to carry,  
and led me to the town of  
Bonduku... and from there to  
the town of Kumaki... There  
they sold me to the  
Christians.

*Abu Berres Siddir.  
Kidnapped 1804*

## MODERN SLAVERY \*

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Millions of men, women and children around the world are still forced to lead lives as slaves. Although this exploitation is often not called slavery, the conditions are the same. People are sold like objects, forced to work for little or no pay and are at the mercy of their 'employers'.

Slavery exists today despite the fact that it is banned in most of the countries where it is practised. It is also prohibited by the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the 1956 *UN Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery*.

### Characteristics of slavery

Common characteristics distinguish slavery from other human rights violations and are established in international law. A slave is:

- forced to work – through mental or physical threat;
- owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or threatened abuse;
- dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property';
- physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement.

**Bonded labour** affects millions of people around the world. People become bonded labourers by taking or being tricked into taking a loan for as little as the cost of medicine for a sick child. To repay the debt, many are forced to work long hours, seven days a week, up to 365 days a year. They receive basic food and shelter as 'payment' for their work, but may never pay off the loan, which can be passed down for generations.

**Slavery by descent** is where people are either born into a slave class or are from a 'group' that society views as suited to being used as slave labour. People are still born into slavery in some parts of the world, most notably in areas of West Africa, including Niger. People born into slavery in this way are forced to work without pay for their so-called masters throughout their lives, primarily herding cattle, working on farmland or as domestic servants. Children become the property of their masters at birth and can be passed from one slave owner to another as gifts or as part of a dowry. Girls are forced to start work as domestic servants at a very young age and are at the continual beck and call of their masters. Girls may be sexually abused by men in the household or forced to marry at a young age.

\* All information courtesy of Anti-Slavery International

## MODERN SLAVERY

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**Trafficking** involves the transport and/or trade of people – women, children and men – from one area to another for the purpose of forcing them into slavery conditions. Traffickers use violence, coercion and deception to take people away from their homes and families and force them to work against their will. People are trafficked both between countries, and within their own country.

The trafficking of people is a rapidly growing global problem that affects countries and families on every continent. Those trafficked may be forced to work as domestics, in prostitution, as labourers and in many other industries.

Because of its hidden nature, it is impossible to measure accurately the numbers of people trafficked. The International Labour Organization estimates that over 2.4 million people have been trafficked. The United States Trafficking in Persons Report 2004 estimated that 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across borders each year.

**Worst forms of child labour** affect an estimated 179 million children around the world in work that is harmful to their health and welfare. At the most extreme end of the spectrum, 8.4 million children are estimated to be in slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities.

**Forced labour** affects at least 12.3 million people who are illegally recruited by individuals, governments or political parties and forced to work – usually under threat of violence or other penalties.

**Early and forced marriage** affects women and girls who are married without choice and are forced into lives of servitude often accompanied by physical violence.

### What to do

The scale and gravity of modern slavery can be overwhelming. To take action, visit Anti-Slavery International's website, [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)

Anti-Slavery International is the only charity in the United Kingdom to work exclusively against slavery and related abuses. Anti-Slavery International was founded in 1839 and is the world's oldest international human rights organisation. It works at the local, national and international levels to eliminate all kinds of slavery in the world today.

## INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE

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### ***The image of God***

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. *Genesis 1. 27*

### ***Covenant***

God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh'. *Genesis 9. 12-15*

### ***Slavery and freedom***

'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "Let my people go, so that they may celebrate a festival to me in the wilderness.'" *Exodus 5. 1*

### ***Justice and Shalom***

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. *Isaiah 32.16-18*

### ***Incarnation***

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. *Philippians 2. 5-7*

### ***Kingdom***

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' *Luke 4. 18-19*

### ***Sons of God***

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! *Colossians 3. 8-11*

## INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE

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### Reconciliation in Colossians

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers--all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

*Colossians 1.15-20*

### Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. *2 Corinthians 5 14-21*

- ♦ *God in Christ is the initiator of reconciliation.*
- ♦ *Reconciliation is a spirituality involving a change of heart, stemming from a relationship with God, more than a strategy.*
- ♦ *The new creation is for all, both victim and wrongdoer.*
- ♦ *The process of reconciliation is within Christ's death and resurrection*
- ♦ *Reconciliation will be fulfilled with the complete consummation of creation.*

Commentary on 2 Corinthians based on *The Ministry of Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies*, Robert J Schreiter, Orbis 2005

Bible passages are from The New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

# QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

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## THE CHURCH'S ROLE

Christians were involved in the slave trade and in slave ownership; eventually too Christians were at the forefront of the abolition movement. Churches as institutions benefited from the proceeds of the trade. The initial Christian response to the horrors of transporting, trading and owning slaves was to ameliorate the abuses rather than abolish the system. Have the Churches been aware of their part?

## THE BIBLE

The Christian tradition until C18th was that chattel-slavery was acceptable to God and that Christians were entitled to get rich from its proceeds. Plenty of biblical texts could be cited showing how the existence of slavery went unchallenged. So the way that the Bible is used in each generation, including the present day, is called into question. What evil elements of today's society go accepted and unnoticed, which future generations will condemn?

During C17th and C18th, Redcliffe and Bristol grew wealthy by trading weapons, textiles, iron goods and slaves for tobacco, cocoa and sugar in the West Indies. Edward Colston, who gave Bristol many amenities, earned much of his wealth from his slave plantations. Church communities like all human institutions can be imperfect. It is well for each age to examine its activities and values.

*Display board  
St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol*

## EDUCATION

How much about slavery has been taught in British schools, or indeed overseas in countries which have been heavily influenced by the British education system? When abolitionists have been mentioned, has the contribution of Black and white been acknowledged?

## REPARATION

Since there is a long-standing imbalance between benefit and exploitation, in what ways can this be acknowledged and addressed in the current generation? Can this be achieved without apportioning blame?

## RESPECT

What can be done to restore respect to those who themselves, or their forebears, have been treated as sub-human, objects to be owned, traded, and abandoned? Should, and how can, those who are the unconscious beneficiaries of the slave system be made more aware of their history and its effects on their present situation?

## MEMORIALS & MEMORIAL DAYS

What forms of memorial are appropriate at the bicentenary?

## SYMBOLIC ACTS

What value do symbolic acts of repentance and reconciliation have?

## REFLECTIONS

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**Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species***

*London, 1787*

Is it not strange to think, that they who ought to be considered as the most learned and civilized people in the world, that they should carry on a traffic of the most barbarous cruelty and injustice, and that many... are become so dissolute as to think slavery, robbery and murder no crime?

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**Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa the African***

*London, 1789*

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'?

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**John Wesley's last letter, written to William Wilberforce** *February 1791*

I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be fore you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O be not weary of well doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.

Reading this morning a tract wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a 'law' in our colonies that the oath of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villainy is this? That He who has guided you from youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear sir,  
*Your affectionate servant, John Wesley.*

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**William Wilberforce in Parliament**

*19 June, 1816*

They charge me with fanaticism. If to be feelingly alive to the sufferings of my fellow-creatures is to be a fanatic, I am one of the most incurable fanatics ever permitted to be at large.

## **PRAYERS**

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### **ADORATION**

Eternal God, you are forever a loving, seeking, inviting God,  
calling us on to new steps in faith and faithfulness;  
Lord Jesus Christ, you are forever generous, self-giving, gracious,  
reconciling us to our Maker and to one another;  
Holy Spirit, you are forever going between us and the Creator  
and building community between us and our neighbours.  
Holy Trinity, beyond our imagining, diverse but bound together in love;  
one in will and purpose, we worship you.

### **CONFESSION**

Ever living, ever loving God, our words are inadequate,  
and our minds too small to encompass you.  
We ask you to forgive us the times when we have acted  
as if we knew you so well that we could dismiss another's apprehension  
of your nature and purposes.  
Forgive us if we have spoken  
as if we knew your will and purposes to the exclusion  
of any possibility of new truth breaking forth.  
Holy Trinity, you are one in love,  
a love broader and more inclusive than the measures of our mind;  
you persevere in loving, in forgiving and in hoping;  
Forgive the smallness and narrowness of our loving, we pray.

### **INTERCESSION**

God who takes the side of those who bear injustice, pain and insult,  
we pray for healing.  
Through the telling of our stories, and through speaking the truth in love,  
may we find healing and create whole and wholesome communities.  
Healing Spirit, we pray for the imagination to think how we would feel  
if what has been done to others had been done to us.  
We pray for openness to listen to others with respect.  
Grant humility and forgiveness in the hearts of all.  
Heal the blindness that looks but does not see,  
the deafness which refuses to listen and so does not hear,  
the dullness which hears but does not comprehend;  
and the lack of integrity that knows but does not act.  
Gracious God, heal our wounds and set all free.  
We pray in the name of the Christ. Amen

*Adapted from material from the Uniting Church in Australia*



## RESOURCES

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### NON-FICTION

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African various editions

Wilberforce, John Pollock, Constable, 1977

The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1440-1870, Hugh Thomas, Macmillan, 1997

Britain's Slave Empire, James Walvin, Tempus, 2000

Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to abolish the slave trade, Adam Hochschild, Macmillan, 2005

Capitalism and Slavery, Eric Williams, Andre Deutsch, 1964

The Mighty Experiment, Seymour Drescher, Oxford, 2002

### FICTION

Roots - Alex Haley

Beloved - Toni Morrison

Sacred Hunger - Barry Unsworth

Cambridge - Caryl Phillips

A Respectable Trade - Phillippa Gregory

### FILMS

Roots DVD released 2002

Amistad – Stephen Spielberg, 1997

Glory - DVD released 2000

### MUSEUMS

Wilberforce House Museum, High Sreet, Hull HU1 1NQ

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London SE10 9NF

The Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN

Bristol Museums, Princes Wharf, Wapping Road, Bristol BS1 4RN

Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool L3 4AQ

Wisbech & Fenland Museum (Clarkson) Museum Square, Wisbech PE13 1ES

## **ABOUT set all free: ACT TO END SLAVERY**

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**set all free: ACT TO END SLAVERY** is a project of Churches Together in England. It is a collaboration between the Churches, church-related groups, societies and organisations, and others who are happy to work with a Christian ethos on the relevance of the bicentenary of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act to today's world. The project aims to highlight the values that motivated the original abolitionists so as to ensure that society engages with them in this generation. It falls within the realms of biblical injunctions such as 'Let my people go' or Isaiah 61: 'The year of the Lord's favour' – setting the captives free. The name points out that we are all in some form of slavery or bondage and in need of the Lord's deliverance.

**set all free** assumes change and transformation. A freed person is no longer the individual s/he was when they were in captivity. They are released, unshackled and unburdened from the constraints that formerly held them in metaphorical or actual chains.

*all* in **set all free** characterises the inclusiveness of the project. We are all in bondage to the legacies of slavery, whether this is physical, mental or emotional bondage; *all* signifies that we all need to be participants and partners in the act of setting 'free'. It is not done on someone's behalf but with their participation, empathising with their struggles and situations, invoking an incarnation dimension.

**ACT TO END SLAVERY** asserts that slavery is 'unfinished business' and that we need to work together to look at other forms of exploitation, not least by campaigning for debt cancellation, more and better aid, and trade justice.

**[www.setallfree.net](http://www.setallfree.net)**  
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Copies of this booklet can be obtained from the above address price £1.50 incl. p&p; 5 or more, £1. Donations, large or small, to the costs of **set all free** are welcome, and would greatly help the project's work in education and the public arena – cheques payable to 'Churches Together in England'.



**25 March 2007** marks the bicentenary of the Parliamentary Act to abolish the slave trade in the British colonies. It ended more than three centuries of British involvement in a trade which transported over three million African men, women and children to the Americas.

**set all free: ACT TO END SLAVERY** aims to remember the past and apply its lessons to the present. A project of Churches Together in England, it is a collaboration between the Churches, church-related groups, societies and organisations, and others who are happy to work with a Christian ethos on the relevance of the bicentenary to today's world.

This guide sets the scene for the bicentenary. It contains material on

- Dates
- The Triangular Trade – Facts and Figures
- Places
- The Abolitionist Movement and the Abolitionists
- The legacies of transatlantic slavery
- Modern slaveries
- Insights from scripture
- Questions to explore
- Reflections
- Prayers
- Resources –bibliography, film, museums
- Explanation of the Project and contact details

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