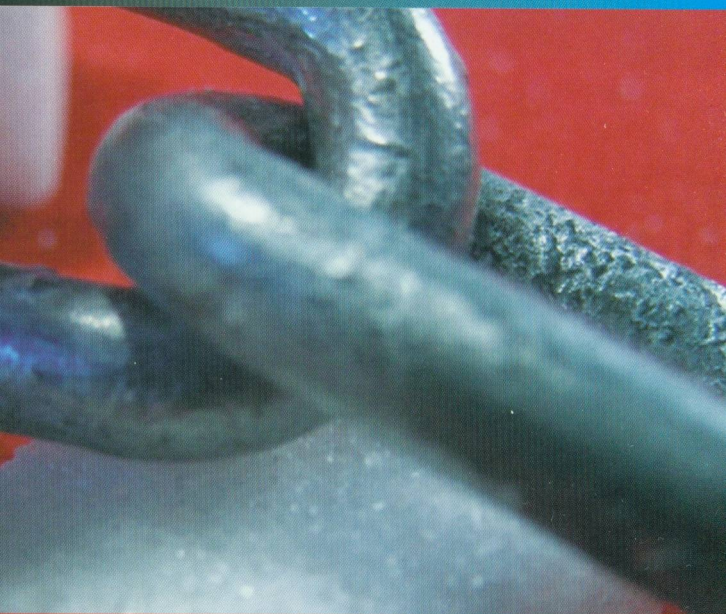


REMEMBERING REFLECTING AND RESPONDING TO SLAVERY



Marking the bicentenary of the
Abolition of the Slave Trade Act

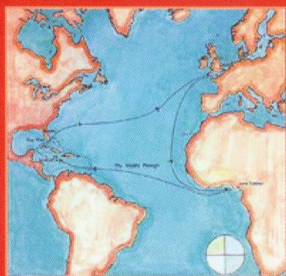


set all free

ACT TO END SLAVERY

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE ACT
BICENTENARY 2007

TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE



Slavery is as old as time. It is clearly mentioned in the Bible and has been practised in most societies in history. The word 'slave' comes from the term 'slav': Eastern Europeans who were enslaved in the

Middle Ages. England first became involved in the slave trade in 1562 when Plymouth-born adventurer John Hawkins trafficked 300 Africans from their continent to the Caribbean island of Hispaniola. These Africans were exchanged for animal hides and other merchandise which were taken back to England.

Britain joined virtually the whole of Europe in a trade that lasted four centuries and transported nearly 12 million Africans across the Atlantic to work on plantations which produced sugar, tobacco, cotton and coffee. By the 18th century, the peak of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, Britain was a major player in the trade with Liverpool becoming the major slaving port in the world. From 1783 to 1793 a total of 132 ships made 879 voyages which was 60% of Britain's trade and 40% of Europe's.

"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

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

The Transatlantic Slave Trade was one of the largest forced mass migrations the world has ever seen and it helped shape the world as we know it. Britain obtained considerable wealth from the trade, which helped to develop the country industrially, financially and culturally.

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William Wilberforce

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Olaudah Equiano

By the late 18th century many in Britain had begun to question the morality of treating Africans as commodities to be bought and sold for profit. An anti-slavery movement was established by the Quakers in 1787 and supported by evangelical Christians. This movement soon became a mass one, which spread the breadth of the country resulting in petitions, boycotts, speeches and a range of anti-slavery activity. Key among all this activity were William Wilberforce MP, Thomas Clarkson, Hannah More and Granville Sharp. The Africans themselves had been resisting slavery from the outset and used all manner of active and passive resistance to gain their freedom.

In Britain, the former enslaved Africans, Olaudah Equiano, Ottobah Cugoano and the Sons of Africa fought alongside their white counterparts for freedom. This combined pressure finally forced Parliament to pass the Act to end Britain's involvement in the slave trade on 25 March 1807. Further pressure was needed to end British colonial slavery in the 1830s.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The enslavement of Africans was based on the belief that they were less than human and deemed more suitable to enslavement than Europeans. Verses from scripture were used to justify this belief and laws were passed in the Americas to

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restrict the freedoms and rights of Africans. Although the abolitionists successfully worked to end African enslavement in the

19th century, little was done to rid the world of the ideologies or attitudes that had developed over centuries. Slavery helped to spawn the racism and inequality that currently blight our society.

The Church has often struggled to come to terms with racism within its structures - just as it struggled with slavery centuries before. Today's Church is a diverse place reflecting God's creation and the bicentenary offers the body of Christ an opportunity to ensure that all get the opportunity to use their God-given talents to further the Kingdom, irrespective of ethnicity.

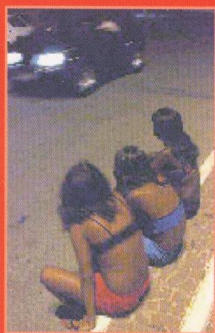
Some of the legacies associated with Transatlantic Slavery and racism are the destabilising of African societies, the psychological trauma involved and the struggle against the continued onslaught of a negative self-image resulting in low self-esteem. Another legacy of Transatlantic Slavery and racism is that of systemic poverty in Africa, the Caribbean and other places.

MODERN DAY SLAVERY



Slavery still continues today with millions of men, women and children around the world forced to lead lives as slaves.

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 Slavery.



Women from Eastern Europe are bonded into prostitution, children are trafficked between West African countries, and men are forced to work as slaves on Brazilian agricultural estates. Contemporary slavery takes various forms and affects men and women of all ages and racial groups.

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WHAT IS 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.

TAKE ACTION

Two hundred years ago a coalition of Black and White men and women worked to end the slave trade. It was the courageous efforts of these groups and individuals which convinced the public that the buying and selling of individuals was morally and legally wrong. Christians were at the forefront of this campaign and they need to work together today to address the legacies of slavery and modern day enslavement. **For more information:**

set all free www.setallfree.net email: info@setallfree.net

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