

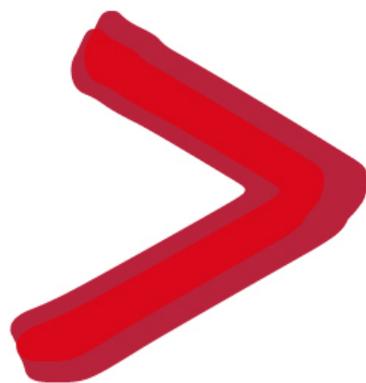
C H U R C H E S

W O R K I N G

T O G E T H E R

F O R

F R E E D O M

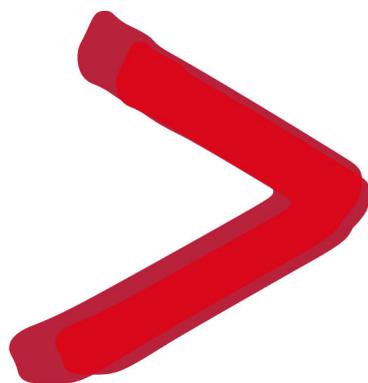


F R E E D O M

S U N D A Y

16 OCTOBER 2016

R E S O U R C E P A C K



PARTNERS



Anglican Diocese of Canberra Goulburn



Anglican Diocese of North Queensland



Anglican Diocese of Tasmania



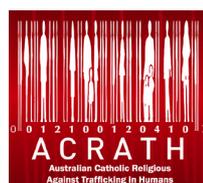
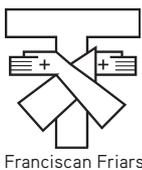
UnitingWorld
connecting communities for life



Social Justice Board
Uniting Church in Western Australia



Anglican Diocese of Newcastle



C O N T E N T S

1. WHAT IS FREEDOM SUNDAY?

2. THE FREEDOM SUNDAY PRAYER

3. WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

4. A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

5. A LITURGICAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP

6. RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP

7. FROM WORSHIP TO ACTION

8. MORE RESOURCES

9. PRAYERS FOR FREEDOM

“In the eyes of God, each human being is a free person, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity.”

Pope Francis, Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma), Venerable Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Chan Khong (representing Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh), The Most Ven. Datuk K Sri Dhammaratana, Chief High Priest of Malaysia, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Skorka, Rabbi Dr. David Rosen, Dr. Abbas Abdalla Abbas Soliman, Undersecretary of State of Al Azhar Alsharif (representing Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar), Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi, Sheikh Naziyah Razzaq Jaafar, Special advisor of Grand Ayatollah (representing Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Basheer Hussain al Najafi), Sheikh Omar Abboud, Most Revd and Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France (representing His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew)

A quote from the Global Freedom Network Faith Leaders declaration
www.globalfreedomnetwork.org/declaration

W H A T I S

F R E E D O M
S U N D A Y

Freedom Sunday is a global day of worship, prayer and action on human trafficking. On the Sunday or Saturday closest to 18 October 2016, which is Anti-trafficking Day, faith communities will join together to raise awareness of the crime of human trafficking and show the world our compassion for men, women and children who are trafficked and exploited around the world. As the world's faith communities we must demonstrate a united and tangible response against human trafficking. This heinous crime must not be tolerated.

At the close of 2014 a number of world faith leaders including Pope Francis, Archbishop Welby, Argentine Rabbi Dr Abraham Skorka and Iraqi Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi and Zen Master Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Chan Khong signed an historic declaration aimed at tackling human trafficking and modern slavery. It stated that everyone is born with dignity and freedom, and anything that injured that was an "abhorrent crime against humanity".

Through Freedom Sunday faith communities will make commitments to take action to prevent the crime of human trafficking in our local and global communities. Together, let's stop human trafficking and let's start freedom.

Of course if this date doesn't work for you please choose the best date for you and your faith community.

F R E E D O M P R A Y E R

We are inviting all churches to join together in praying this Freedom Prayer during their service.

Voice 1: On this holy ground of worship
In this sacred place of prayer
We have heard the voice of freedom
Crying 'Let my people go.'

**All: God of freedom,
Who leads us into life,
Deliver us from every evil:
And make of us
Deliverers of others.**

Voice 2: Where chains restrain God's chosen children
Where humans trade in kin and skin
May our words pass on your promise
Of a land where liberty is sweet

**All: God of freedom,
Who leads us into life,
Deliver us from every evil:
And make of us
Deliverers of others.**

Voice 3: Give us faith to face the Pharaohs
Who line their pockets from this plague
Send us as salvation's sponsors
Willing servants; slaves to love

**All: God of freedom,
Who leads us into life,
Deliver us from every evil:
And make of us
Deliverers of others.
Amen**

To download the Freedom Prayer in other languages go to
www.stophetraffic.com.au/freedomsunday

W H A T I S H U M A N T R A F F I C K I N G ?

Human Trafficking is the recruitment or movement of a person, by deception or coercion for the purpose of exploitation. People are bought and sold for sexual exploitation, forced labour, street crime, domestic servitude or even the sale of organs and human sacrifice.

Human Trafficking is the world's fastest growing global crime and is one of the largest sources of income for organised crime. The profits are high and the risks are low.

Human Trafficking is a system based on greed, control and power.

In whatever shape or form everyone dreams of progress, whether it's to be loved, to be seen, to belong, or for a better future for their family. Traffickers often exploit that desire amongst the most vulnerable. The trafficker creates an intimate point of sale, making promises of progress like an education, a new start and future choices. This is the ultimate deception.

Human Trafficking is a global market place where people are the product and everyone has a price tag. It's based on an international conveyor belt of transactions and exchange, with sophisticated trade routes and communications. This human product creates profit, tens of billions every year...and growing.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS
AN HORRENDOUS CRIME**

This crime is so awful that often people instinctively struggle to admit it exists. Often society doesn't listen, business doesn't see and governments don't talk about it. Those trafficked are often invisible, always powerless, and are put to work.

THIS HAS TO STOP!

The answer is for individuals, communities and society to see this crime, listen for it, talk about it, and take action to prevent and disrupt this global system!

We can only STOP this crime together. Society, government and business must work together to generously share knowledge, information and resources that can be used to empower vulnerable communities, making them safe, and to disrupt and ultimately stop the traffickers' trade.

Faith communities around the world have a vital role to play!

T H E O L O G I C A L R E F L E C T I O N O N H U M A N T R A F F I C K I N G

CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE - WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

Christians believe that human beings have a unique place in God's creation. Created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27), humanity reflects the glory of God and is given dignity and worth. We are also gifted with individuality, autonomy, reason and creativity and with the capacity for knowledge and moral awareness (Romans 2:14-15). Reflecting the nature of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we seek for relationship and fellowship both with God and with each other. We are created with an innate longing for deep spiritual communion with our Creator (Psalm 42:1).

God's creative purpose for humanity also brings responsibility. Humanity is entrusted with the care of the rest of God's creation (Genesis 1:28 -30). We are also called to value all people, since every individual is created, known and precious to God (Psalm 139:13-17).

HOW OUR WORLD AND OUR RELATIONSHIPS HAVE BECOME DISTORTED

Often our attitudes, choices and behaviours fall far short of God's creation plan for humanity (Romans 3:23). In conflict, hostility and division and in the mistreatment of people it is evident that relationships with God and with each other have become fractured and distorted. The use of power to abuse and exploit is further evidence of a broken world.

WHY HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS EVIL

Human trafficking strikes at the heart of what it means for humanity to be created in God's image. It dehumanises those who are trafficked, denying them their God given value and worth and robbing them of their dignity and autonomy. Motivated by profit and greed, traffickers makes commodities of human beings.

They prey on people in vulnerable situations such as poverty, desperation or debt bondage. Trafficked people are oppressed and trapped, losing their freedom through coercion, fear, false promises or deception. Body, mind and spirit are affected.

GOD'S CONCERN FOR JUSTICE FOR THE VUNERAVLE AND THE OPPRESSED IN OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Trafficking of fellow human beings is not new. The Bible tells the story of Joseph who was sold by his own brothers (Genesis 37:28). Joel records how the defeated nation of Israel was scattered and its people traded (Joel 3:3). Amos describes poor people being sold, trampled on, denied justice and oppressed by their own people (Amos 2:6-7).

Yet God's concern for justice is also made abundantly clear in the Bible. Set free from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites were called to live differently from surrounding nations – as God's covenant people. They were never to forget what it was like to be enslaved (Leviticus 19:33-34). The Levitical code set out God's instructions to ensure protection and provision for disadvantaged, poor and vulnerable people such as aliens, widows or people with a disability (Leviticus 19:9-18).

The Psalmist testifies that God upholds the cause of the oppressed, the hungry, prisoners, those bowed down, aliens, the fatherless and the widow (Psalm 146:7-9). The prophets insist that God loves justice (Isaiah 61:8), and call for it to 'roll on like a river' (Amos 5:24). The obligation is clear to 'act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8).

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL

God went far beyond the call for justice and mercy. In Jesus the Word became flesh (John 1:14). In self-emptying love and humility, God entered our world, making possible life 'to the full' for all people (John 10:10). The stated mission of Jesus, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2, makes clear God's redemptive purposes – particularly for the poor, those deprived of freedom, the suffering and the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). Restoration, renewal and reconciliation are offered to everyone through Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection (Ephesians 2:14-18). This powerfully demonstrates God's love for us and the value placed on humanity. In Jesus, God was prepared to make this self-offering in order to re-create, renew and restore all of creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH

When we respond to God's love we begin to live with different values – God's values. We live the prayer 'Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' (Matthew 6:10). We learn that to love God is to love our neighbour as well (Mark 12:30-31). As people who have been reconciled to God we join in God's reconciling work in creation (2 Corinthians 5:19). Like Jesus, we learn to care for the least and the lowest (Matthew 25:40). In such ways, we strive to make God's kingdom here on earth a visible reality. This is a struggle – a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12).

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Our response to human trafficking is based on what we believe about God and God's purposes for humanity. We also have an obligation to listen and to learn from survivors of human trafficking. Their voices are central to shaping and transforming both our theological and our practical responses to trafficking. Their plight cannot be ignored. Their needs are urgent.

Underlying causes of trafficking should be acknowledged - such as the demand for cheap labour, cheap services or cheap products. If we have been complicit or unheeding in these areas we need to be challenged to change and to work for a world where there is equity and enough for everyone.

Both individually and as the Body of Christ, we are called to respond in prayerful and practical ways. Our first priority is to pray for people who have been trafficked. Also, where possible, Christians can be actively involved in initiatives which seek out the suffering and provide places of refuge and sanctuary. Freedom and dignity must be restored to those who have been oppressed.

The church seeks to stand alongside people who have been trafficked by protecting them & preventing this crime through speaking out to the powerful systems that enable this crime to thrive, systems that we are all a part of in some way. In conjunction with other concerned groups, the church has a duty to press for societal and structural changes, alongside legal changes where these may benefit those who are trafficked. It should also support moves to hold human traffickers to account while believing for and working towards the transformation of the lives of both those who are trafficked and their traffickers.

L I T U R G I C A L
S E R V I C E
O F W O R S H I P

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

Leader: The freedom of the Peace of the Lord be always with you
All: And also with you

HYMN

To see some suggestions for appropriate hymns see page 12

PRAYER

Let us pray.

We pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of glory,
may give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation
as we come to know and worship him this day.

May the eyes of our heart be enlightened,
Bring us to know what is the hope to which we have been called,
the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints,
and the immeasurable greatness of your power for us who believe.

God as you put this power to work in Christ when you raised him from the dead,
and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,
You have put all things under his feet and have made him the head over all things for the church,
We are his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all and brings freedom to all,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Jesus said, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'
This is the greatest and most important commandment.
The second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Lord have mercy on us:
and by your Holy Spirit empower us to love you, and all our neighbours
by bringing freedom to all in bondage

God of love and liberty,
We pray this Freedom Sunday
That you may instil your will and your ways,
in your people, and in all people.
That justice may roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Open our hearts to those in slavery,
that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay
and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

In the name of Christ.
Amen.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Old Testament Reading
Epistle Reading

HYMN

Gospel Reading
The Creed is said here or after the sermon with the people standing

SERMON

To download some suggestion sermon outlines head to www.stophetraffic.com.au/freedomsunday

HYMN

OFFERING

We pray for your church that they may accept the faith, grace and love,
That you freely and generously give
so that as we join together in the ongoing mission of Christ;
And that we may see unity and truth being shared together,
For the sake of service to your world
And the glory of your holy name,
Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the saints that have gone before,
who gave their lives for the abolition of slavery,
and the freedom and dignity of all people.
By your grace may we follow their example and the calling of your Holy Spirit,
to share together in bringing in your will for the world.
Father, hear our prayer,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

At the conclusion of the prayers the minister may say...

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray...
Our Father in Heaven...
(use the language and form of your church)
... For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.
Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN

COMMUNION

In accordance with the liturgies of your church

SENDING OUT

Go out in peace and bring freedom to all we find and affect.
Be anointed to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.
Go out with the peace of God, the purpose of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit.
To love and serve the world. In the name of Christ.
Amen.

R E S O U R C E S F O R W O R S H I P

BIBLE PASSAGES

Here are a range of bible passages that you may like to use within your Freedom Sunday service:
Psalm 82:1-4 / Proverbs 31:8,9 / Isaiah 58:6-8 / John 10:7-10 / Luke 4: 16-19 (Isaiah 61) / Luke 10:25-37 /
Ephesians 6:9. Or the reading set for this Sunday in your church.

SERMON OUTLINES

Looking for further inspiration? Choose from a range of sermon outlines at
www.stopthetraffik.com.au/freedomsunday

SONG SUGGESTIONS

As it was for all those enslaved throughout history, singing songs of freedom calls freedom into reality. The world faith communities hold a wealth of resources for sung worship, please feel free to choose songs/hymns which are most appropriate for yours.

Looking for some inspiration to get you started? STOP THE TRAFFIK has selected as the top 10 freedom and justice songs from across the ages.

HYMNS

Amazing Grace (John Newton)
And Can it be that I should gain (Charles Wesley)
God of Freedom, God of Justice (Shirley Murray tune Picardi)

SONGS

Comfort, Comfort (Robin Mann tune Dorothea)
Brother Sister let me serve you (Richard Gillard)
Jesus Christ is Waiting (John Bell)

AFRICAN

Freedom is Coming (VID: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DNNdAR0ixI)

CONTEMPORARY

Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone) (Chris Tomlin)
Let My People Go (Matt Redman from the Album (Your Grace Finds Me)
God of Justice (We Must Go) Tim Hughes

AKASH AND THE PIGEONS

Award winning children's author Penny Reeve, has written a beautiful story inspired by her trip to India with STOP THE TRAFFIK. Tell this story in your children's group or at kid's time in church.

To download the story and flashcards at www.stopthetraffik.com.au/freedomsunday

W O R S H I P & A C T I O N

RAISE AWARENESS LOCALLY

Show a sign on Freedom Sunday

Put a message on your church sign. Following are a few suggestions to get you started.

“You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know.”
William Wilberforce

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”
Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

“In a new country there will be no slavery and hence no slaves.”
Captain Arthur Phillip 1st Governor of Australia

Make sure you take a photo and tag us at www.facebook.com/STOPTHETRAFFIKAustralia

CAMPAIGN GLOBALLY

We live in a global village. Each day we are connected to countless individuals, communities and countries through the products that we buy, wear and consume. Trafficking is a global problem that takes place within many business's supply chains. This challenges us to consider our own buying power and consumer habits. As the faith community we can also raise our voice to campaign for an end to this injustice.

To find imaginative ways that your faith community can engaging in campaigning to end trafficking through engaging with one of our STOPTHETRAFFIK members or joining in one of our campaigns
www.stopthetraffik.com.au

MORE RESOURCES

Download a few extra resources to help you plan and promote your Freedom Sunday service.
www.stopthetraffik.com.au/freedomsunday

- Freedom Sunday Powerpoint template
- Freedom Sunday Poster
- Freedom Sunday Images

SHARE YOUR STORY

Whatever Freedom Sunday looks like for your community - we'd love other groups to be encouraged! Make sure you take a few photos of your worship service, bible study or any other action that takes place in your faith community. Afterwards post them up on social. When you post, the best way to connect your post with the rest of the world is by including hash tags.

#FREEDOMSUNDAY
#HUMANTRAFFICKING
#STOPTHETRAFFIK

F R E E D O M S U N D A Y S E R M O N

Sermon for Year C of the Revised Common Lectionary

READINGS OF THE DAY

Old Testament > Jeremiah 31:27-34

Psalm > Psalm 103:1-8

Epistle > 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Gospel > Luke 18:1-8

SERMON

Each year there is an upgraded YouTube clip called Did You Know?¹

This year it informs us that (choose what you would like to use):

- This year 83 million people will be born – they will be born into a data economy. Never has data been more important.
- If you are one in a million in China... there are 1,360 people just like you. In India there are 1,100 people just like you
- The 25% of the population in China with the highest IQ's is greater than the total population of North America (Canada, USA, Mexico)
- During the time of this sermon, 120 babies will have been born in the USA, 488 in China and 702 in India.
- It is estimated the children going through primary school will have 10-14 jobs by the time they are 38 and we are currently preparing students for jobs that do not yet exist... using technologies that haven't been invented... in order to solve problems that we don't even know are problems yet.
- For the first time in history we have 4 generations working alongside each other and who communicate in very different ways on very different preferred platforms.
- Over 3 billion people use the internet now and this will be 75 billion by 2020.
- 10 million cars will be on the road by 2020
- Worldwide there are over 1.55 billion monthly active Facebook users – if Facebook were a country it would be the largest in the world
- 1 in 6 couples married in the west last year met online and in USA 1 in 5 divorces are blamed on Facebook making it divorce lawyers new best friend (yes they track for people exhibiting relational problems!)
- The amount of technical information is doubling every 2 years – for students starting a 4 year Technical or Universality degree this means that half of what they learn in their first year of study will be outdated by their third year of study

Yet in the midst of all this development, growth and advancement we have more slaves in the world than any other point of history. In fact, this is because of some of these developments! As we have moved to a global economy manufactured goods, agriculture and aquaculture (fishing) has an invisible global chain of supply that can stretch around the world. The west has a hunger to consume goods – and more and more of them. To do this we have to have more and more free money to purchase them or we need to get these goods cheaper. It is the latter that has driven goods and consumables, “Down! Down!”

In order to purchase these goods for cheaper and cheaper prices, they are manufactured in places where labour costs are very cheap, or hidden in places where it cannot be easily discovered that people are

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqZii00YI7Y>

being abused to create them. These are the hidden people.

Most are women (80%) young people and children (50%) and almost all are poverty stricken. In other words, it is the powerless and vulnerable. So many are migrants who have been displaced or are willing to take the chances to help their families, or escape the poverty that their families and people are trapped in.

In the Jeremiah 31 reading today we hear of the prophecy that there was a relational covenant coming where God's says *I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people*. This relationship was to be based on a covenant that was not about law but about love. It would be on their hearts.

This new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34 has been regarded by some biblical scholars² as the premier point of the Old Testament Scriptures. This is because it promises:

1. a deep authentic Spirituality directly connected with God ("I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it"),
2. intimate communion between Israel and God ("I will be their God, and they shall be My people"),
3. comprehensive knowledge of God on the part of Israel ("they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest"),
4. and complete forgiveness of sin ("for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

God had taken them out of the slavery of Egypt – by the hand - and into a covenant that shaped and created a culture based on a relationship with God. They broke that relationship and that covenant. This new covenant would be based on intimacy and love and would bring them closer to the heart of God which is freedom. Love is the great God force of the universe that breaks the shackles of all forms of slavery and allows people to be themselves as they were created to be – in this love covenant with God.

E. Stanley Jones the missionary to China, Africa and India once met with Mahatma Gandhi. They had become good friends and Stanley asked: How can we make Christianity naturalized in India? Not a foreign thing, identified with a foreign government and a foreign people, but a part of the natural life of India and contributing to its power to India's uplift?

Ghandi (who read the Beatitudes each morning) apparently responded to this question without hesitation,

1. "First, I would suggest all of you Christians missionaries and all must begin to more live like Jesus Christ.
2. Practice your religion without adulterating it or toning it down.
3. Third, emphasize love and make it your working force, for love is central in Christianity.
4. Fourth, study the non-Christian religions more sympathetically to find the good that is within them, in order to have a more sympathetic approach to the people."

Ghandi knew something of the importance of freedom and its source.

But how do we bring this into what we do about slavery? Well, the Gospel reading gives us an insight. It is about keeping persistent, to pray always and not to lose heart. (18:1) The woman is looking for justice from a judge that cares nothing about her or God or doing the right thing. However, she keeps at him and at him. In the end he gives her her justice to stop her coming to him again and again. She is persistent. The only way we are going to prevent, disrupt and abolish slavery is by being persistent! Persistent in prayer and prayer in action.

Christian activist Shane Claiborne has written a book called *Becoming the Answer to Our Prayers: Prayer for Ordinary Radicals*. It is an insightful book that says sometimes God gives our prayers back to us. When we pray God please stop the injustice of slavery God may be saying *Ok I will, and you and your churches actions will be how I do it!*

Theologian Jurgen Moltmann raised this in a conference in New York on Hope and the Future of Humanity where he said:

² E. W. Nicholson, *Preaching to the Exiles: A Study of the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Schocken, 1970), 83. See also H. Elvet Lewis, *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah: A Devotional Commentary*, ed. C. H. Irwin (London: Religious Tract Society, n. d.), 224.

The future which does not begin in this transformation of the present is for me no genuine future. A hope which is not the hope of the oppressed today is no hope for which I could give a theological account. A resurrection symbol which is not the symbolizing resurrection of the crucified one does not touch me. If theologians and philosophers of the future do not plant their feet on the ground and turn to a theology of the cross and the dialectic of the negative, they will disappear in a cloud of liberal optimism and appear a mockery of the present misery of the suffering.

Barry Parkin, the Head of Sustainability for Mars Confectionary and President of the Industries Cocoa Action Program, said at the World Cocoa Conference this year that we have made steps forward in dealing with child worst labour practice (including slavery) but we are nowhere near where we need to be to eradicate it in the chocolate industry. This has been slowly worked on now for over 15 years! It is time to engage with and change what Moltmann called a *mockery of the present misery of the suffering*. Unless we plant our feet on ground and take the kind of actions which will end this abuse, we miss of the point of the hope which God gives us.

In January this year (2016) STOP THE TRAFFIK took a group of 12 campaigners to see what is happening in parts of India. (STOP THE TRAFFIK does this trip each year³.) In Mumbai, as a surprise, the females were offered to have their hands and feet painted with beautiful designs in red henna. Oasis Trust do some great work with women caught in bonded labour slavery in brothels there. They run vocational training for these women so that they have a skill and trade to keep them out of falling back into these abusive situations.

When Carolyn Kitto asked if there was a skilled lady that could paint the females in the group (10 people) she was told there was a trained lady that would really be helped by being paid to do this. When asked why she would be helped Carolyn was told that – we will call her Ashani – had a big debt to pay to free her from the brothel owner.

Ashani's father was sick, but they had no money to pay for the needed treatment and medicine. Ashani offered to go with an agent to get a job in a factory to pay back a loan that would pay for her father's medical needs. She found out later it was no factory but a brothel.

Trapped, powerless and penniless, she suffered in this place 'til finally she got the courage to escape. She found her way back to where she had come from. There she soon got married. However, the brothel sent men to find her and force her back to the Mumbai brothel. They do this so that it puts the fear into others who may think of escaping. Having found her, they beat her up and her husband as he tried to protect her.

She found herself not only back in the Mumbai brothel, but pregnant. She had to continue to work and had her child, a boy. Miraculously she was able to get her son back to his father. The brothel owners generally like trafficked workers to keep their children with them. It is just another aspect of power they have to threaten the children if their mothers do not do what is required of them.

Carolyn enquired how much Ashani still owed? It was 20,000 rupees. That is around A\$400. Ashani made around A\$1 a time and out of this she had to pay for the small cubical at the brothel (the room she slept in) food, water, clothing and living needs. It was going to take a long, long time to pay off the debt. She was enslaved. Carolyn put this story to the group who readily agreed they could each pay \$40 each – it was even less than this would have cost to have it done back home.

The Saturday came and it had all been rearranged with the madam at the brothel. As the day went on Ashani's smile got bigger and bigger. Her skills and henna painting were so good. Then at 4pm Carolyn handed over the 20,000 rupee and another 3,000 to buy a train ticket for the 22 hour train trip back home.

The Oasis Worker took Ashani to the brothel, paid over the money, took her to her room and collected her few meager belongings and at 7pm she was on the train back to her husband and 11 month old baby. She was met by a Social Worker who was going to work with her to make sure she had the skills to manage and not to get entrapped in this situation again.

The group was almost dazed by the experience. They kept saying "We just freed a woman from slavery!" Unlike the woman in the gospel story that did not have to keep pestering the judge to get justice – they had

3 <http://stopthetraffik.com.au/shop/indiatrip2017>

what it took at that moment in that opportunity to free a person from slavery. They came away from that experience with a drive, empowerment and understanding that they were now going to keep at the “judge equivalents” in their countries for justice to happen for people entrapped in slavery around the world.

Like the woman pestering the Judge for her justice; we need to persist while at the same time praying to God who does care, does listen, does love and uses us as the avenues and channels to bring in His Kingdom on earth as in heaven.

We live in an ever changing world. A world that can develop technology and innovate new opportunities for human advancement. We too can innovate and we can take this covenant relationship with God that we know in and on our hearts. We can use the power of God’s love for us and for the oppressed and enslaved of this world. We can persist for the justice of God’s Kingdom for all to be free from slavery. We can persist so that when Jesus comes again, there will be faith that is found in a people loving God and loving neighbours.

In the words of the Psalmist “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed.” Amen.

“Human trafficking is a grave crime against humanity. It is a form of modern day slavery and a profound violation of the intrinsic dignity of human beings. It is intolerable that millions of fellow human beings should be violated in this way, subjected to inhuman exploitation and deprived of their dignity and rights. This outrage should concern each one of us, because what affects one part of humanity affects us all. Virtually every part of this world is touched in some way by the cruelty and violence associated with this criminal activity.

If we are to combat this evil then we must work together to prevent the crime, support the survivors and prosecute the criminals. The knowledge that churches have of their local communities puts them on the frontline in this campaign. Freedom Sunday provides churches with an opportunity to join together with others around the world in a day of worship, prayer and action on human trafficking. Freedom Sunday challenges us and resources us to take action to prevent the crime of human trafficking in our local and global communities.”

Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby

F R E E D O M S U N D A Y S E R M O N 2

Sermon for Year A of the Revised Common Lectionary

READINGS OF THE DAY

Psalm > Psalm 99
Old Testament > Exodus 33:12-23; Isaiah 45:1-7
Gospel > Matthew 22:15-22

SERMON

Psalm 99

In this Psalm God is called 'Mighty King', at the heart of God's kingship is justice and equity (verse 4). The Psalm declares God's forgiveness as an essential part of the character of a just God (verse 8). God seeks to undo things that have gone wrong, bringing transforming hope where there is despair.

Psalm 99 gives us an imagination of God being at the centre - not the edges. God is present and God's presence should produce a strong response! God's presence instils God's greatness. What this means is that it is not just a piece of information but a reality that does not produce a casual response. It is a reality check. It is anticipating what is to come when evil - and the ways of evil - will be ousted and God's Kingdom of goodness, righteousness and justice will be reality. The reference points are not just about the past but are about the present and about a future that is going to happen.

This mighty King has made his presence known and worked through those who follow him. God has established fairness (equity) as a policy to be practiced at all times. God has showed justice in the way he has treated the nation (Jacob) and Moses and Aaron were actively responded to when they prayed to God - and God brought the nation out of slavery.

God not only spoke to the nation through the Pillar of Cloud but as the people obeyed his ways (justice) he then continued to bring them out of slavery in a forty year process in the Exodus. God was forgiving and was building His character into the people of Israel.

God is continuing this action as we bring God's justice into reality for people that are trafficked and enslaved. To worship God is to reflect God's character, might and justice. Worship comes from an old English word meaning "worth-ship". We give God God's worth, as we live out his call to justice and fairness, with the power to bring this will of God, to free people from the evil of being trafficked against their will to feed the greed of others.

We therefore are called as God's people to love justice and establish fairness because we are made in this image of God. Moses, Aaron and Samuel are described in verse 6 as people who could approach God safely and with courage because they too were characterised by justice and fairness. (verse 7) We live out this truth of the Psalm when we are prepared to be people who will help stop the trafficking of people and restore God's character to all people.

Globally, trafficking is the second most profitable crime after drugs. We are challenged by this passage to raise awareness of the extent of the abuse that is so opposed to God's justice and fairness. We must go further and accept responsibility for the role that we have played as consumers in fuelling this injustice by purchasing goods that have trafficking in their chain of supply. Wilberforce's vision over two centuries ago was to abolish slavery and it is just as necessary and relevant today. As God's people, aware of God's grace and forgiveness, we build integrity as we continue, like Wilberforce, to worship God as we offer our actions to extend God's call to justice

for those caught in slavery - and we offer it in spirit and in truth.

Exodus 33: 12-23

The book of Exodus is the story of a people coming out of slavery. Like most forms of slavery today the story did not start with people choosing to go into slavery. There was a crisis. They were in a drought and moved to a new land to survive and find refuge. A new Pharaoh, who did not know the story of Joseph, and the reason they came to Egypt, capitalised on a vulnerable people. So they started to be exploited and could not leave until they discovered they were in slavery.

This passage paints for us a beautiful picture, where we see the Lord speaking kindness and reassurance to his faithful follower Moses. The Lord responds to the cries of Moses, saying "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." This is what people who are enslaved long to hear. Moses wants to know if he has done the right thing. He calls out to God "Remember that this nation is your people!". We know that all the nations, tribes, cultures and individuals are God's people. God cares for all people and God does not want people enslaved. We were created for freedom – not for slavery.

Individuals throughout history have fought tirelessly for the freedom of others, freedom for those who have been enslaved, trafficked, bought and sold. We are standing on the shoulders of many who have not given up hope but have fought on against the odds. Yet so often we can feel like Moses. We can be tempted to feel overwhelmed by the scale of this global crime. We can doubt that we have the power to make a difference. We can question what God requires of us.

Moses saw God's glory from behind. He saw God's back. He saw where God was headed, he experienced the presence of God that was to encourage and engender hope in Moses to lead the people to freedom. To lead the people to the place and space where they would be free.

God does the same with us when it comes to human trafficking. He comes close to us and do we not call out to God as Moses did "If you are pleased with us, if we are your people, teach us your ways so that we may know you and continue to find favour with you."?

Like the people in the story of the Exodus, God continually shapes us. God continually shapes our cultures and shapes our ways, so that we may take on the ways of God, the justice of God and come close to the very glory of God. What this empowers us to do – as it did to Moses - is to help others experience freedom from being trafficked and helps us to build resilient communities that will prevent people being trafficked and enslaved.

Matthew 22:15-22

In this passage the religious and political leaders have sent their disciples to trick Jesus. Their question was designed to force him to take sides on a politically controversial matter. A trap has been set so that if Jesus comes down on either side they have him. If Jesus says yes to the payment of colonial taxes, he would estrange his followers who hated the obligation of taxes to a foreign occupying army. If he rejected the Roman taxes, he could be charged with treason and inciting others to insult Caesar. They insidiously try to butter Jesus up. Jesus however sees through the setup and turns the table on them with the truth.

They are caught up in the very system they are trying to trick Jesus with. They are carrying the very coin, which they are trying to trick Jesus into denying. They are hypocrites. People don't like to be hypocrites.

Human trafficking is a deep seated problem within the chocolate industry. Children and young people in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) are trafficked and exploited in cocoa growing and production. It is so hypocritical to buy chocolate easter eggs for children that have been produced using trafficked child labour. The egg is the symbol of resurrection and new life. To use chocolate easter eggs symbolising new life that has been made by children who have had their life taken from them is hypocritical.

Jesus is being tricked here by the use the question of who we serve and who do we obey? In the same way we are being tricked. We are being tricked and companies are being tricked by human traffickers / slave traders, who use so many smart and creative ways to trick people into being trafficked.

We have got to be smarter and more creative to stop them, just as Jesus was. Some companies are trying to hide, or do not even know, what is in their chain of supply or where trafficked people are being used in their products. Like Jesus we have got to see through what is happening and bring the reality into the light.

We too have to ask whom it is that we serve and whom do we obey? Do we just give in to an economic system that thinks people will not care if there are trafficked people used in the production of the products they buy? When it comes to human trafficking what do we give back to the economic systems - and what do we give back to God? Perhaps we need to develop a WWJB campaign - What Would Jesus Buy?

Crimes may also go unnoticed as some victims are so conditioned by their traffickers that they do not realise they are being exploited, or are reluctant to come forward for fear of the alternative. This is the insidious situation that the victims can find themselves in.

In the traditions of the Church there is a theological understanding called the sin of omission. This is an understanding that God will hold us accountable, not only for the things that we have done wrong - but also for the things that we could have done right, but did not do!

What Jesus is modelling in this passage is not just "what" he responds with but also "how" he responds? When they saw "how" he responded, they knew they could not trick Jesus. They were amazed, so they left him and went away. I wonder how we could so combat human trafficking and prevent it happening in poor and desperate communities, that those involved are amazed, leave, and go away. This is the power of creativity of the people of God. We have the same Spirit that Jesus had that was and is "the mind of God".

F R E E D O M S U N D A Y S E R M O N 3

READINGS OF THE DAY

Epistle > 2 Corinthians 3:12-18
Old Testament > Jeremiah 34:8-16
Gospel > Luke 4:14-20

FREEDOM SERMON

Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann¹ states that evangelism for him consists of “attending to and participating in the transformational drama that is enacted in the biblical text itself.” The text, in turn, is “the articulation of imaginative models of reality in which ‘text-users’ .. are invited to participate.” Evangelism is “doing the text again.”

He suggests that the Bible revolves around 3 focal narratives:

1. promise to ancestors,
2. deliverance from slavery,
3. the gift of land.

Evangelism means inviting people into these stories as the defining story of our lives, and therefore empowering us to give up other dominant stories that have shaped our lives, in false or distorting ways; to tell again the old story, but in ways that impact every aspect of our contemporary life, public and personal.

This deliverance from slavery has many aspects to it. It means deliverance from the slavery of the dominant cultures which demand that we are defined by what we own and by what we do. It means the deliverance of the slavery that we are not good enough and the slavery of self-worth. It means the literal deliverance of slavery where people are bought and sold – trafficked by illegal means.

Today there are 27.5 slaves in the world and Slave trading is the second biggest illegal trade in the world. It happens in:

Forced Labour / Sexual Exploitation / Domestic Servitude / Drug Trade / Child Soldiers / Street Crime / Benefit Fraud / Organ Trafficking / Forced Marriage

In the Old Testament slavery was a given, it was a part of the cultures and practices of the time. But it evolves. God brings salvation to the people of Israel when he brings them out of slavery. Because of his covenant with them God brings them to a land where they can be free. In Jeremiah 34:8-16 he makes a covenant with them again, that after 6 years anyone selling themselves into slavery must be freed. When they go back on the covenant God gets angry:

But now you have turned around and profaned my name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. You have forced them to become your slaves again “Therefore, this is what the Lord says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim ‘freedom’ for you, declares the Lord—‘freedom’ to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth. Jeremiah 34:16-17 (TNIV²)

By 2 Corinthians Paul is able to state:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (TNIV)

¹ Walter Brueggemann: Biblical Perspectives on evangelism: living in a three-storied universe, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1993

² Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, TODAY’S NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 2001, 2005 by Biblica®. Used by permission of Biblica®. All rights reserved worldwide.

It was the mission of Jesus to bring humanity to this state of freedom. Not only are we free but we join with Jesus, the Holy Spirit and God in the acts of freeing the world. We have a whole new mindset about who we are and whose we are.

This story offers an imagination into this:

A holy man was engaged in his morning meditation under a tree whose roots stretched out over the riverbank. During his meditation he noticed that the river was rising, and a scorpion caught in the roots was about to drown. He crawled out on the roots and reached down to free the scorpion, but every time he did so, the scorpion struck back at him.

An observer came along and said to the holy man,

"Don't you know that's a scorpion, and it's in the nature of a scorpion to want to sting?"

To which the holy man replied,

"That may well be, but it is my nature to save, and must I change my nature because the scorpion does not change his?"

The notion of freedom has been in philosophy and theology from the beginning of the recorded thinking of these areas. It has been played with in literature, through stories and films in by some of most profound thinkers. One of the greatest is cleverly crafted is by Dostoevsky in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*³ in the story of *The Grand Inquisitor* from Book Five: Pro and Contra, of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Alyosha responds to Ivan, who tells this story to try and disprove God. It's in a cafe exchange between Ivan and Alyosha, Ivan being the sceptic and Alyosha the believer. Ivan says this: "It is not that I reject your God, Alyosha, I reject his system, his way of doing things." He then tells the story of the myth of *The Grand Inquisitor*.

In the myth of *The Grand Inquisitor*, Jesus, returns to earth in the year 1000 and he returns to Madrid. He wanders down the street. There is a blind man. He heals him. He goes a little further. There is a crippled girl. He heals her. He gets to the cathedral. Coming out of the cathedral is a funeral. They are carrying the corpse of a dead girl. Jesus walks over and raises the girl from the dead. The Cardinal, who is the grand inquisitor, looks down from the entrance of the cathedral and says to his soldiers: "Arrest that man!"

He arrests Jesus and is going to put him to death because he knows who he is.

The next scene is in the cell. Jesus never speaks but the Grand Inquisitor comes to the cells to visit Jesus alone and says: "Why have you come back? It has taken us, the leaders of the church, a thousand years to undo what you did. You came into the world Jesus and Satan showed you the hunger of the world and said: End the hunger! Turn the stones into bread! And you would not do it." There's a good question. Why? "If he had turned the stones into bread people would have followed him because he had given them bread, they would not be making the decision freely in love."

But Jesus was asked by the Grand Inquisitor: "How many people understand this freedom thing. All the starving people in Africa, the little children with their starving bellies, do they understand freedom? Do they understand the existential decision that people must make to be a Christian? Your faith was for a little elite group that understood freedom and how precious it is. Your salvation is for the elite. Our salvation is for the others. Those others who don't understand freedom, who don't understand what it is to make a decision. It is all beyond them. They are struggling for survival. Life is too basic for them to get into this lofty stuff. You are concerned about the elite. We are concerned about the others."

Do you see what is happening in the story. Jesus appears less Christian than the Grand Inquisitor.

The Grand Inquisitor continues, "He took you up to the pinnacle of the temple and told you to jump off and you would have followers. And you wouldn't do it because you didn't want people to be dazzled into the faith. You don't understand how hard life is for people, how oppressive it is, what people need in the midst of their hopelessness. It is the belief that there could be a miracle."

"That's why people buy lottery tickets," he says. "Life is absurd and life is useless but maybe there will be a miracle. You didn't want to be a God who performed miracles all the time but that is exactly what people need. But what you wouldn't do, we do every morning at the mass, hocus pocus. We turn bread into flesh and wine into blood and people who never have a miracle have one every day. And that is the basis of their hope."

“You created freedom for the elite, we pretend to perform miracles for the masses. You are concerned about the few, you even said, ‘Many are called but few are chosen.’ We are concerned about the others.” And then the last accusation. “You went to the pinnacle of the mountain and Satan showed you all the kingdoms of the earth and said: ‘Bow down and worship me and all these will be yours.’ You could end all the wars which would ever take place if you would just go along with Satan. And you weren’t willing to do it. You don’t understand our church. We are willing to go along with Satan if it means peace. You are concerned about the elite, we are concerned about the others.”

In the story that Ivan tells, Jesus gets up, walks across the cell, kisses the Grand Inquisitor and goes to heaven. And the story is over.

Always we have the idea that Jesus was the good guy and the church has messed it up. What Ivan tries to do in the myth of the Grand Inquisitor is to turn it around. Jesus is the hard hearted bloke and the church is trying to create something compassionate out of the mess that he created.

Then Alyosha comes around to the other side of the table and kisses Ivan like Jesus kissed the Grand Inquisitor. Ivan says: “Brother, you steal my idea and copy it.”

“No, I do not copy it, my brother, the story you have told does honour to Jesus, it does not disgrace him.”

Most people do not understand that. The Grand Inquisitor believes that only the elite are capable of lofty decisions and great commitments. Jesus believes in everybody.

The Grand Inquisitor was an elitist. All of us have the capacity for greatness and the kind of decisions philosophers dream about. The church is the community where we believe that everybody has the capacity to go ‘beyond the norm.’ We believe that when God breathed the breath of life into us God breathed freedom into us.

That freedom is not just for us individually but as we love our neighbour we uphold it for all people and bring it into reality for all humanity. The Grand Inquisitor has a mindset that justifies slavery. It is a mindset that would have power over people, manipulate people, it does not believe that people have the capacity to understand and appreciate freedom. But Jesus does, the Holy Spirit does, the creator God does. It can also become the attitude of the Ivan’s of this world. But the Alyoshas of this world that follow Jesus deem freedom and love to be the motivation and end goal as Jesus mentions in his model Prayer (The Lord’s Prayer) your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Because we are followers of Jesus, because we are the body of Christ, we continue Jesus mission in the world. So Jesus’ mission statement in Luke 4 is our mission statement:

*The Spirit of the Lord is on us, because he has anointed us
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent us to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.
(An adaption of Luke 4:18-19 TNIV)*

SO WHAT DOES THIS CALL MEAN?

It means we can do something that will join us with others to stop slavery in our lifetime.

- Become aware and educated about the seriousness and extent of slavery
- Only buy chocolate which is Certified to be Trafficked Free (Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, UTZ)
- When we buy clothes or cotton products, ask if cotton from Uzbekistan or any other places that uses slavery in the chain of supply is part of the garment
- Talk about it in our friendship circles, families and with our politicians
- Ask the Australian Government to bring legislation where companies must be able to show that slavery **is** not a part of the chain of supply

Come let us continue the mission of Jesus, as we seek to abolish slavery, set free those who are oppressed and proclaim freedom for those caught in the imprisonment of human trafficking and proclaim God’s Kingdom is coming on earth as it is in heaven.

P R A Y E R S F O R F R E E D O M

1. FREEDOM PRAYER

2. PRAYER POINTS

3. INTECESSORY PRAYERS

4. A PRAYER USING SILENCE

5. PRAYERS TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

6. A PRAYER BASED ON PSALM 18:1-6

7. PRAYER OF LAMENT & LIBERATION

8. BENEDICTIONS

F R E E D O M P R A Y E R

We are inviting all churches to join together in praying this Freedom Prayer during their service.

Voice 1: On this holy ground of worship
In this sacred place of prayer
We have heard the voice of freedom
Crying 'Let my people go.'

**All: God of freedom,
Who leads us into life,
Deliver us from every evil:
And make of us
Deliverers of others.**

Voice 2: Where chains restrain God's chosen children
Where humans trade in kin and skin
May our words pass on your promise
Of a land where liberty is sweet

**All: God of freedom,
Who leads us into life,
Deliver us from every evil:
And make of us
Deliverers of others.**

Voice 3: Give us faith to face the Pharaohs
Who line their pockets from this plague
Send us as salvation's sponsors
Willing servants; slaves to love

**All: God of freedom,
Who leads us into life,
Deliver us from every evil:
And make of us
Deliverers of others.
Amen**

To download the Freedom Prayer in other languages go to
www.stophetraffic.com.au/freedomsunday

P R A Y E R P O I N T S

Pray for the victims of trafficking:

- › Pray for comfort: trafficking tears people away from family, friends and home.
- › Pray for healing: victims of trafficking are often abused physically and emotionally.
- › Pray for courage: trafficked people often live in fear of their traffickers, and can't speak out against them.
- › Pray for hope: that God will shine his light into dark places.

Pray for the 'consumers' who fuel the trafficking trade:

- › Pray for justice: it can be hard for the police to gather evidence to convict traffickers.
- › Pray for true sight: those who buy services from trafficked people often don't see themselves as part of the problem.
- › Pray for change: that those making money from this trade will stop, or be stopped.
- › Pray for freedom: that the wealthy, western world will find fulfillment without needing to exploit the poor and vulnerable.

Pray for all those working to support victims of trafficking and for those seeking to prevent human trafficking around the world:

- › Pray for protection: traffickers see their victims as sources of income, so it can be dangerous for others to rescue them.
- › Pray for wisdom: victims of trafficking are wounded and fearful; those who rescue them need to know how to best help them.
- › Pray for truth: a trafficked person may have completely lost their identity: those who help them need to enable them to learn who they are in God.
- › Pray for resources: that all organisations working to prevent human trafficking and provide support to those who become victims will have the resources required to continue their vital work.

P R A Y E R O F
A P P R O A C H

Great God of all creation
You formed humans from the elements of the earth.
Then you breathed into us and created life
Into a heart, soul, mind and strength.
You gifted us with freedom to choose,
That like yourself, we may have an ability,
To create, innovate and sustain freedom,
For all of humanity, throughout all the earth.
May your scriptures shape us, your spirit guide us,
And your love empower us;
To bring freedom to the captives,
Liberty to the slaves and justice to the economy,
So that the reality of your Kingdom,
May come on earth as it is in heaven

F R E E D O M
S U N D A Y
L I T A N Y

We are not created to do just what we want;
We are created to freely do, the will and way of God
We are not called to live as selfish and greedy people;
We are called to freely do, the will and way of God.
We are not purposed to capture and enslave our universal family;
We are purposed to freely do, the will and way of God.
We are not generously resourced to support unethical production;
We are to resourced to freely do, the will and way of God.
We are not empowered to help keep others powerless;
We are empowered to freely do, the will and way of God.
Amen!

I N T E R C E S S O R Y P R A Y E R S

PRAYER 1

Leader: We pray for people who are trafficked;
May they find freedom from fear and harm
And courage to live in hope.
Let us pray to the Lord.

(Silence is kept)

Lord have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

Leader: We pray for people who traffick others;
May they find freedom from greed and violence
And courage to live with justice.
Let us pray to the Lord.

(Silence is kept)

Lord have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

Leader: We pray for people who work to prevent trafficking;
May they find freedom from threats and webs of untruths
And courage to live in peace
Let us pray to the Lord.

(Silence is kept)

Lord have mercy

All: Christ have mercy

Leader: God of compassion and mercy,
who heard the cry of your people
and sent your servant Moses to lead them out of slavery
to freedom in the promised land:
free us from the tyranny of sin and death
and, by the leading of your Spirit,
bring us to our promised land;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

PRAYER 2

Prayer written by Rev'd Dr Elizabeth Smith, Anglican Diocese of Perth

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, you saw human beings,
not property, when you said: Let the children come
to me, do not stop them.
You took the children in your arms, and blessed them.
Wherever children are made to work, forced to fight,
or bought and sold as economic assets,
challenge the adults who use and abuse them.
Change the patterns of poverty and the greed
for money and power that put children at risk
of being treated as possessions to be traded.
Set the children free to receive your blessing again today.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, you saw a student,
not a servant, when you said that the part that
Mary had chosen would not be taken away from her.
You gave women the right to learn and to teach your truth.
Wherever women are excluded from education,
forced to labour, pressed into prostitution, invisible
by law or custom, challenge the powers that diminish
and demean them. Lift up the lowly and cast down the proud,
until all women's work, paid and unpaid,
is freely chosen, held in honour, and carried out in safety.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, you had compassion for the crowds
when you told your disciples to give them something to eat.
Your blessing gave plenty of food for everyone.
Wherever hunger makes people vulnerable,
challenge the exploiters who prey on their despair.
Silence the traders who make false promises
and shine with the light of your truth to reveal injustice and deceit.
Bless the gifts of the generous,
distribute the resources of those who have plenty,
preserve the dignity of the poor,
and let no one's body or integrity be sold for daily bread.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

PRAYER 3

Let us pray for all people including those in slavery, and for Christ's church throughout the world.

Leader: Gracious and loving God,
You created us male and female and you created us
all for freedom.
Yet through disobedience to you, this freedom was
corrupted.
This corruption bought injustice and hardships and
suffering.
It bought a broken relationship with you and
between people.
We pray for those who suffer and struggle in the
world because of this.

All: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Leader: This Sunday we pray for those who are
bound by slavery
And those who are trafficked because of greed and
selfishness and corruption.
We pray for families that are split, or who are all in
slavery.
We pray you may be with them and comfort them,
and continually give them courage and hope.
May they never lose their understanding that they
were created with worth
And nothing can take this gift of life from them.

All: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Leader: We pray for conditions that cause slavery,
Poverty, lack of education and economic injustice.
May your people and all people be given the eyes of
your heart,
To see what can be done and to do it,
As a fulfilment of your command to love our
neighbour.

All: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Leader: We pray for the mission organisations, aid
and development groups and NGO's
Who are involved in prevention, education and
eradication of slavery.
We pray you give them, wisdom and understanding
Compassion and communication, abilities and
desires to work together,
With each other, with your church and their
communities
To bring your Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

All: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Leader: We pray for all peoples who suffer, who
are at war and suffer from injustice.
We pray for those in authority as they govern and
lead cultures, communities and nations,
that they may have the courage to administer
justice and
work together for the wellbeing of people and for
goodness.

All: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for your church that they may
accept the faith, grace and love,
That you freely and generously give
so that as we join together in the ongoing mission
of Christ;
And that we may see unity and truth being shared
together,
For the sake of service to your world
and the glory of your holy name.

All: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Leader: We give you thanks for the saints that
have gone before,
who gave their lives for the abolition of slavery,
and the freedom and dignity of all people.
By your grace may we follow their example and
the calling of your Holy Spirit,
to share together in bringing in your will for the
world.

**All: Lord, hear our prayer,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

At the conclusion of the prayers the leader may
say:

*Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord
who taught us to pray, (In the language and form)*

Our father in heaven,...

*... For the kingdom, the power and the glory are
yours now forever.*

Amen.

PRAYER 4

Leader: Lord of all, we claim your justice, mercy, compassion, comfort and freedom for the millions affected by human trafficking in our world today. For the men, women and children, enslaved by fear, torture, dependency, entrapment and bonded labour we ask for you to intervene with righteousness and grace.

All: God of all that is good, give freedom to the captives and restore justice to your world.

Leader: Lord, for the victims who are lured, trapped and exploited. We pray for comfort for their pain, healing for their hurts, courage to speak out against their oppressors and for restorative hope for those who have been rescued and those yet to be rescued.

All: Holy Spirit, we ask you to heal and restore the victims with your transforming power.

Leader: God of Justice, we pray for those that enslave: the trafficker, the slave master and unjust 'employer'. We ask you to stir them with your voice of justice and conscience of goodness. speak to them in dreams, thoughts and words and with lawful intervention. Help them to understand their actions and understand your grace.

All: Jesus the Redeemer, we pray for the hearts and minds of the oppressors: traffickers and consumers.

Leader: Lord of hope, we claim your light for the darkest of situations. Guide and equip those that care and intervene for victims. Give wisdom and insight to those that pursue, prosecute and preside over cases of trafficking and the traffickers.

All: Living hope, we claim you for all that we need to be and do, to stop human trafficking. Help us to be fervent in prayer and in action.

Leader: Lord of all, we want to see your kingdom come and your will be done. We know that trafficking is against your very nature and we pray for a real end to this horrific slavery.

All: God of all that is good, help us to be people of prayer, of action and a people who speak your truth and justice into the world around us. Help us to use our time, our resources and our energy to overcome, by your power, the evil that is human trafficking and to claim the victory that is already ours.

AMEN.

A P R A Y E R
U S I N G
S I L E N C E

O GOD WE ARE SILENT BEFORE YOU

O 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)

O God in the silence let us hear your voice (silence)

O 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, the sound of our rejoicing.
Amen

P R A Y E R S
T O E N D
H U M A N
T R A F F I C K I N G

PRAYER 1

O God of every family on earth, loving and compassionate God,
we come before you in prayer, unable to fully comprehend the horror
of women and men and children transported to unknown places
to be exploited and abused because of greed and profit.

We are people of many creeds, united in our sadness and our anger.
We cry out together against the degrading practice of human trafficking.
Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry that their dignity and rights are being
transgressed through threats, deception, and force.
Give us the wisdom and courage to stand up
against the evil that makes it possible for people to buy and sell and trade others.

Give us wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with the victims, that together we
will find a way to the freedom that is your gift to all of us.
We pray for it to end.

Amen.

PRAYER 2

O God, our words cannot express what our minds can barely comprehend
and our hearts feel when we hear of women and girls deceived
and transported to unknown places for purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse
because of human greed and profit at this time in our world.

We cry out against the degrading practice of trafficking and pray for it to end.
Strengthen the fragile-spirited and broken-hearted.
Make real your promises to fill these, our sisters and brothers, with a love that is
tender and good, and send the exploiters away empty-handed.

Help us to overcome our reluctance, our divisions,
and our feelings of powerlessness, so that we may stand as one in solidarity
with our brothers and sisters in the human family.
Together, open our hearts and hands and our minds to find a way to the freedom that
is your gift to every child every woman, and every man.
We pray for it to end.

Amen.

P R A Y E R
B A S E D
O N

P S A L M 1 8 : 1 - 6

Loving God, all glory and honour to you!

We worship and adore you for who you are.

We give you thanks for the many blessings
we have received through your son Jesus Christ.

We are full of gratitude that we have the liberty to offer our worship
to you.

We can never cease to sing your praise.

However, we are reminded that we have brothers and sisters who do
not share in this freedom because of the injustices and oppression in
our world, often inflicted by fellow human beings.

We ask you to draw close in your mercy, Lord, to
all those who are prevented from expressing their faith, those whose
freedom has been taken away by modern day slavery in our country
and across the world.

We pray for grace and strength for all who suffer in bondage.

We intercede for freedom on behalf of all those who are trafficked
and enslaved.

We pray in faith for the power for your Holy spirit to break in and
change bondage to freedom!

We offer this prayer through the name of Jesus Christ, our saviour
and Lord.

Amen

P R A Y E R O F

L A M E N T & L I B A T I O N

Congregations may wish to use this as a meditation on human trafficking and our response to it. The different sections of the meditation may be accompanied by a ritual of pouring Libation. Such a ritual is based in African tradition; water is poured into the land as a way of honouring and committing to justice for the land and its people, including the ancestors and generations yet to come.

Isaiah 61:8

For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Isaiah 62:8

The LORD has sworn by right hand and mighty arm;
I will not again give your grain
to be food for your enemies,
and foreigners shall not drink the wine
for which you have laboured...

Can we hear with the ears of Justice?

Hear the clattering sounds beneath the pots and pans in
kitchens
where more than hot meals are stewing for the greedy;
for those who prepare the feast are victims of greed and
extortion,
themselves hungry and starving for resitution
from overstuffed bellies who refuse to share their
crumbs.

Can we escape the stench of injustice?

The smell of slavery, forced labour, debt bondage,
and slavery-like practices must fill our nostrils
just as it chokes the life out of children, women and men
who are deprived of liberty, freedom and independence.

Can we be moved by Justice?

To clothe the factory worker with fair wages as she
mends garments for major brands that profit from her
toil?
To liberate the hands of the young boy soldier
forced into militia movements that inflict genocide?
To straighten the backs the farmworkers bent over in
long labor to supply fast food chains?

Where is Love in Justice?

In the courage of those who use their freedom to
set free those who are coerced into involuntary
servitude and debt bondage.
In the persistence of those who use their pens to
author policy and legislation,
creating tough consequences for those who commit
crimes against humanity.
In the eloquence of those who use their voices to
expose the camouflage hiding sex trafficking of
young girls and uproot the foundation of gender-
based violence.
In the strength of those who serve as bands of love
to foster human security around the world.

Are we vessels of Justice?

Can we recognize the traces of blood
on our steel, cell phones, clothing and food supply?
Will we speak and become the front lines of
activism?
Will we faithfully offer recompense and stand in
covenant with the survivors
of the fields, factories, mines, restaurants, private
homes, militias, and globalized businesses?

Will Justice remember...?

... the sacrificial suffering of those who died and those
who survive?
...those who look away from the abject reality of
slavery?
... remember those who hold no one accountable for
these crimes - not even themselves?

We are the sum of Justice.

Let us gather ourselves
so the sums of our bodies, minds and spirits will
speak!
Let us find justice within ourselves.

*By Waltrina N. Middleton, Minister for Youth Advocacy
and Leadership Formation United Church of Christ.*

B E N E D I C T I O N

OPTION 1

Go out in peace and bring freedom to all we find and affect.
Be anointed to bring good news to the poor,
proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free and proclaim the year of the Lord's
favour.'

Go out with the peace of God,
the purpose of Christ
and the presence of Holy Spirit.
To love and serve the world.
In the name of Christ.

Amen.

OPTION 2

You are created with freedom
To love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength
And to love your neighbour as yourself.
May this love bring freedom to those enslaved
And justice to what we make, create and buy.
So go into the world
To love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ.

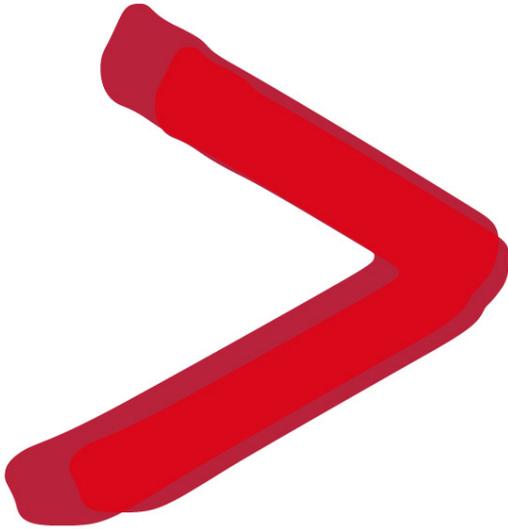
Amen

OPTION 3

written by Rev Tim Dyer, Kilsyth South Baptist Church

Grant us, Lord God,
a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected,
and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared,
and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony
and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice,
and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration, courage and to be brave enough to play our
part to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.



S T O P T H E T R A F F I K . C O M . A U

@ S T O P T H E T R A F F I K A

S T O P T H E T R A F F I K

F R E E D O M S U N D A Y

“Baptists draw inspiration from what the Bible teaches about God as a God of justice and Jesus’s liberating ministry. Consistent with broader ecumenical and evangelical trends, we increasingly see mission as holistic; bringing word as well as deed, mercy and advocacy, justice for the marginalised, liberation for the oppressed, transformation of society and equality of opportunity for all. We join with the STOP THE TRAFFIK Australia coalition on Freedom Sunday in praying and acting towards an end to human trafficking.”

Rev Daniel Bullock, Director of Mission and Ministries, Baptist Union of Victoria

“Over 200 years ago the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed through British Parliament, thanks to tireless advocacy of William Wilberforce and other concerned Christians. It is almost beyond belief that in the 21st century millions of human beings across the world are still pressed into the horrors of slavery. This gross injustice summons us to respond as Christians of old did, with our prayer, advocacy, action, and purchase choices. Supporting Freedom Sunday is one way to raise awareness of continued scourge of human slavery, and to unite Christians to work toward its abolition.”

Rev’d Janet Woodlock, Federal Coordinator Churches of Christ, Australia

“We believe human beings are created in the image of God, and that every person is precious and entitled to live with dignity. Through the prophets and the life and words of Jesus, God calls people to work for justice for the poor and vulnerable. The love of God in Christ Jesus motivates us to live out this calling and to affirm the dignity of all people. We affirm the right of all people to live free of persecution and violence. We invite all congregations to participate in Freedom Sunday through awareness, fundraising, worship, prayer and action.”

Rev’d David Baker, Moderator Uniting Church in Australia