



# BEYOND THE DARK

# ADULT RESOURCE

2021 ANNUAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

'But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you – from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted' (1 Peter 2:9-10 *The Message*).

## AIM

This resource aims to bring a theological perspective and spiritual awareness to the exploitation and dehumanisation of people caused by modern slavery and human trafficking across the globe today. Our goal is for this resource to help mobilise prayer and action.

## INTRODUCTION

Today, there are more than 40 million men, women and children worldwide impacted by modern slavery and human trafficking. Among these, more than 15 million are in forced marriages, more than 24 million are in forced labour situations<sup>1</sup> and about 30 per cent of those exploited are children.<sup>2</sup>

As followers of Jesus, God has called us to speak out against injustice and work towards justice for those experiencing oppression. The prayers and cries of individuals who are oppressed and exploited are heartfelt, and God hears them. God cares about those who are oppressed and exploited, and we should be too.

## BIBLICAL REFLECTION

Use this biblical reflection and The Salvation Army's story below to facilitate deep discussions amongst your group, corps and communities.

Luke 10:25-37 – The Parable of the Good Samaritan

When asked what the most important commandment was, Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and the second to 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Luke 10:27). Jesus was then immediately asked who counts as a neighbour and he responded with a parable.

The person who posed the challenge was a lawyer who specialised in understanding and interpreting the Law of Moses, the accepted foundation of social and economic life. Being a neighbour for him meant belonging to one's tribe and one's race with a responsibility to look after them.

Jesus' story takes place on the road between Jerusalem in the mountains and the city of Jericho, about 18 miles away. The ground between the cities was rough, with few inhabitants. It was frequented by thieves. Different people are mentioned in the story. The person who is mugged would be understood to be a Jew. The priest and the Levite are Jewish religious leaders who have a good knowledge of God's laws. The final person in the story is a Samaritan, a person from the province of Samaria. The relationship between the Jews and Samaritans was marked by strong cultural prejudice, but the Samaritan's actions inspire us to care for those in need, whoever they might be.

He offered practical help which involved accepting responsibility that the person was provided with the care and the resources to put him on his feet again; personal help, encouragement, friendship and, dare we say it, love.

Reflective questions:

- In the command 'love your neighbour as yourself', where do you draw the line? Who am I meant to love?
- Can you think of people in your country and community who are considered to be 'outsiders'?
- How would you describe the care that the Samaritan gave the injured man? Do you think it was adequate?
- What does this passage teach us about the care you should give to others today?
- The relevance of the parable today is evident. As you encounter people who have been robbed and battered, potential victims of human trafficking, what can you do? >>

<sup>1</sup> Global Modern Slavery Index 2021

<sup>2</sup> 2020 Trafficking In Persons Report



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## JAPAN'S 'LICENSED QUARTERS': SALVATION ARMY STORY

God has used The Salvation Army to fight for freedom since its inception. In 1900, Japan had approximately 100 Salvationists serving within the country. For three centuries, a system of licensed prostitution legally prevailed, where women and girls were being openly sold into prostitution. In 1872, an Imperial Ordinance stopped the legal selling of women and girls, yet change didn't occur automatically. Many misunderstood this new law, so instead of selling women and girls, they were loaned by friends and families to brothels throughout the country. These brothels were situated in 'licensed quarters' where thousands of women were being sold for sexual acts.

During times of crisis, such as famine, epidemic or other natural disasters, girls were forced into a life of exploitation to help their families trapped in poverty. It was seen as an act of self-sacrifice, yet many of these girls didn't realise how brutally they would be mistreated. No matter how much freedom they desired, the girls were bound to the brothel until their debt had been paid and they had authorised signatures from the brothel-keeper to show the police. The women and girls were being coerced and trafficked into a life-or-death situation.

Commissioner Henry Bullard, who had recently taken over command in Japan, was hesitant to interfere, but eventually knew The Salvation Army had to take a stand. Commissioner Bullard summoned more than 50 officers to Tokyo who met at Kanda Corps to pray through the night asking for divine guidance on how to help these women and girls. The next morning, a group of Salvationists marched into the Yoshiwara region with a drum, spreading the news of how they had come to help free the women and girls stuck in the brothels. Though accompanied by policemen, the Salvationists were met with great opposition from men demanding that prostitution continue to be legal.

Though the battle was fierce, the Salvationists continued touring to Japan's many licensed quarters, fighting for the freedom of the women and girls within them. After many dangerous but successful invasions, an ordinance was declared on 2 October 1900 that any woman or

girl who sought to be free only needed to contact the nearest police station and state her wish. In addition to this, it made it punishable by law for any brothel-keeper or customer to make a woman stay within those quarters. Through this incredible act of faith and justice, Salvationists made a radical change in bringing freedom to women enslaved in sexual exploitation.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How did God use The Salvation Army to help remove women and girls from the darkness of the brothels? What was the risk?
- Even if countercultural, how can God continue to use The Salvation Army today to bring rays of light to those in modern slavery and human trafficking?
- Are you aware of the realities of modern slavery and human trafficking in your country/ community?
- Does your culture support the idea of a person's right to buy sex? What can be done to challenge sexual norms that promote the notion of a person's entitlement to sex in your community/ country?
- How is God prompting you to pray for this injustice?
- How is God prompting you to take action?

## SUMMARY

Modern slavery and human trafficking are grievous evils, but The Salvation Army's response work is a ray of light in the midst of great darkness. Everyone, everywhere has a part to play. Just as God used The Salvation Army to free thousands of women and girls in Japan's licensed quarters in the 1900s, and as Jesus compassionately helped the Good Samaritan, he is at work today and wants to use you. >>



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## ALLY COMMITMENT PRAYER – BY JEAN NANGWALA

Respond to becoming an ally by standing in solidarity with victims and survivors everywhere.

*I hear the cries of daughters and sons beyond the dark, trafficked and enslaved for the profit of others.*

**I stand with you.**

*I see the next generation of vulnerable children targeted for the benefit of worldly pleasures.*

**I will fight for you.**

*I stand with frontline practitioners, advocating for the freedom of victims of oppression and walking alongside survivors.*

**I acknowledge you.**

*I lament for the ways I have knowingly and unknowingly contributed to modern slavery and human trafficking through my ignorance, my privilege and my spending power.*

**I refuse to be blind.**

*May my prayers and those of your people turn into action as we fight against injustice together.*

**We are not free until we all experience light.**

## MORE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

### [Fight for Freedom Guide](#)

The Salvation Army Guide to Fighting Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) provides a basic understanding of human trafficking and how you can participate in preventing it in your context. It includes theological reflections, survivor stories, Bible studies and much more.

### [Global Toolbox of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Responses](#)

Provides practice principles for how churches can respond to MSHT on a local, national and international level. This resource has been informed and led by practitioners from around the world, together with the Anglican Alliance.

### [Roots of Freedom](#)

The 2020 International Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Response Highlights Report provides a snapshot of response work being done around the globe through The Salvation Army.

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