

From: [The Clewer Initiative](#)
To: ctcinfohub@gmail.com
Subject: Launch of True Freedom - our 2024 international Lent resource
Date: 04 December 2023 10:00:25



Mobilising the Church to help end modern slavery.

Launch of True Freedom

In this month's newsletter, we launch our new international Lent course - an incredible collaboration between the World Council of Churches and The Clewer Initiative. We also reflect on the Christmas story and the vital role healthcare professionals play in identifying victims of modern slavery.

Please forward this newsletter to your friends and colleagues and encourage them to sign up to receive it regularly.



**True Freedom - a new global
resource**

The World Council of Churches and The Clewer Initiative combine forces to launch a substantial new resource for Lent 2024.

True Freedom, a six-week course for Lent, draws on themes from the book of Galatians, and encourages individuals and churches to respond to modern slavery in their communities.

The resource is part of an ongoing collaboration, which began in March 2020, between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and The Clewer Initiative. The collaboration has a particular focus on ending child slavery.

The two organisations saw the potential for creating a resource, similar to *Woman in the Shadows*, *Children in the Shadows* and *Journeys* (past Lent devotionals by The Clewer Initiative), but with an international focus.

True Freedom includes:

- a short Bible study on the book of Galatians
- a reflection written by Revd Dr Kenneth Mtata (WCC Programme Director for Public Witness and Diakonia) and Bishop Alastair Redfern (Chair of The Clewer Initiative)
- questions for group discussion or personal reflection
- victim stories
- a prayer
- art work to contemplate and discuss
- case studies from churches in the UK, Italy, Tanzania, Hong Kong, Ghana, Uruguay, Jamaica and the Cayman Island.
- information and statistics about modern slavery
- action points that are appropriate for different contexts.

[Link to True Freedom website](#)

An incredible collaboration

As part of the creative process, The Clewer Initiative and World Council of Churches organised an online consultation where modern slavery practitioners and church leaders from around the world gathered to discuss early drafts of the material.

This was vital in ensuring that the resource was relevant in different contexts. During the consultation, people were able to share examples of where they had seen churches taking action against modern slavery and we have included many of these stories in the final version. In particular, we are thankful to our friends at

- Christian Council of Ghana
- Presbyterian Church of East Africa
- Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
- Christian Council of Tanzania
- Protestant Church in the Netherlands
- Reimagining Board of the Latin American Council of Churches
- The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide
- Javanese Christian Churches in Indonesia
- Batak Christian Protestant Church (HKBP)

who reviewed the resource and participated in the online consultation.



What next?

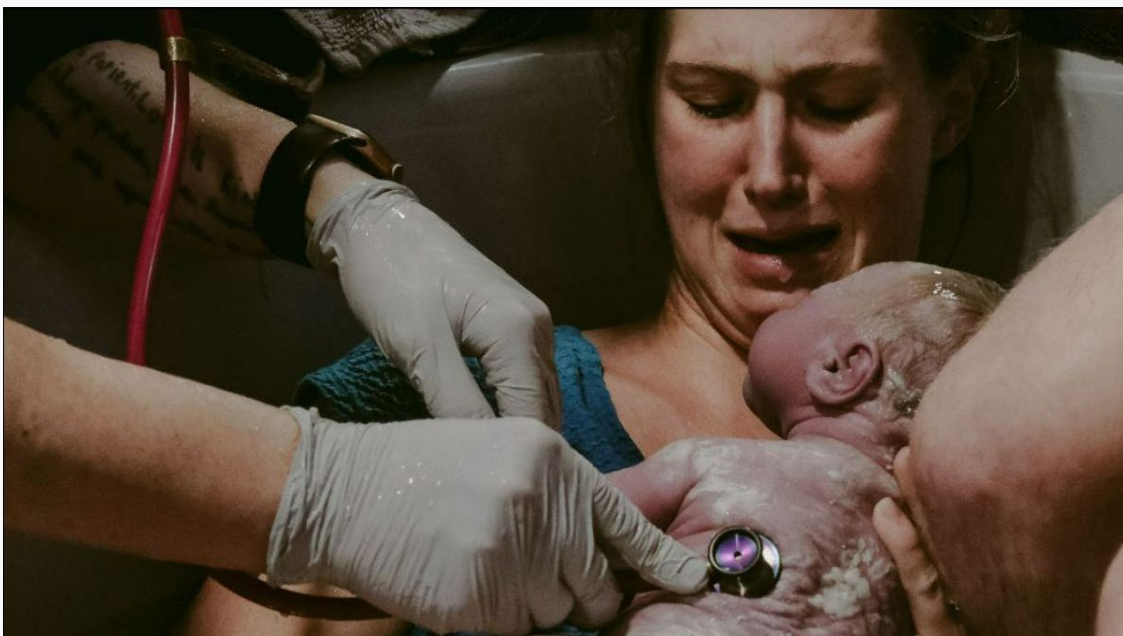
The season of Lent begins on 14th Feb 2024. We have deliberately made the full resource available from now so you have lots of time to review the content and consider how to use it effectively in your church or community.

We would recommend the following steps:

- Visit the [microsite](#) today.
- Download the resource.
- Consider if there is a group of people you could tell about the resource.

- Could it form the basis of a weekly Lent Bible study in your church?
 - Ask your church leader to review the material
 - Encourage individuals to use the resource on their own throughout Lent
- Use [our social media assets](#) to promote the resource on your socials or share our regular posts

[Link to True Freedom website](#)



A reflection for Advent

“Jesus’ mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.” (Matthew 1:18-19)

In this season of Advent, we remember the vulnerability of Mary, Joseph and Jesus. At the start of the Christmas story, Mary is unmarried, pregnant in strange circumstances and about to be abandoned by her betrothed. She ends up delivering her baby in a stable, far from family and support.

Post birth, Joseph is warned that Herod is determined to kill Jesus so he leads his family away from their home country and towards Egypt. They become refugees— on the move, presumably jobless and unable to communicate with locals.

As we reflect on the Christmas story and the vulnerability of Jesus' parents, we

- **think** of those who are in similarly precarious situations nowadays
- **ponder** the opportunities we may have to cross paths and connect with families on the edge. This may be in our churches, social action projects or through our workplaces.
- **pray** for healthcare professionals who may encounter victims of modern slavery in their role. We pray they would have wisdom to know what to say and courage to speak. We pray they would be able to provide timely care to vulnerable people and point them in the direction of further support.

[READ MORE](#)



We have written four original prayers- one for each Sunday in Advent - to help us intercede on behalf of victims of modern slavery.

In our prayers, we reflect on the Christmas story and the vulnerability of Jesus' parents as well as remembering those who are in similarly precarious situations nowadays. We also pray for healthcare professionals on the frontlines every day. Please share the prayers with your friends and family!

[Share our four prayers for Advent](#)



Our Advent campaign

For Advent this year, The Clewer Initiative is shining a spotlight on the vital role healthcare professionals play in identifying and caring for victims of modern slavery.

Our churches and communities are full of people who work for the NHS and it is important to keep modern slavery at the forefront of their minds as they head into work each day.

We have written a number of articles to raise awareness of how the NHS is on the frontline in tackling modern slavery in this country.

[Read more about Modern Slavery & pregnancy](#)

[Read four stories from the NHS frontlines](#)

Read about supporting vulnerable mothers

Read about a scoping review to improve maternity services

Link to Advent Campaign social media assets

In one study, more than two thirds of survivors had presented in healthcare settings whilst or shortly after being trafficked. (Source: [Vita Training](#))

We recently chatted to a paediatric fetal cardiologist who scans hundreds of women each year to help diagnose heart problems in babies before birth. She had become aware of a number of women in her clinic who she suspected may have been victims of sexual exploitation and she felt there was a huge opportunity for her to get alongside patients and signpost support. She also felt her lack of experience and knowledge in terms of the issue. This anecdote demonstrates the importance of medical professionals receiving thorough safeguarding training.



Tackling modern slavery in the leafy suburbs of Surrey

The Diocese of Guildford, Surrey Anti-Slavery Partnership and Reigate Archdeaconry Social Justice Focus (RASJF) joined forces last month to host an event to raise awareness of modern day slavery.

The all-day event, which was entitled 'Modern Slavery: Right Here, Right Now' brought together dozens of people who are working on the frontlines in Surrey to tackle modern slavery.

Victoria Ashdown, a Mission Enabler for Communities at the Diocese of Guildford, explains why the event was so important: "There is a tendency to believe that modern slavery doesn't happen in a leafy county like Surrey but tragically it does! It is so important to raise awareness, particularly in our churches where people might encounter victims of modern slavery in social action projects. For example, if you run a Food Bank, it is vital that you know how to spot the signs of slavery and what to do about it. Any church working in its community needs to know about exploitation."

[READ MORE ABOUT THE EVENT](#)

SIGN UP FOR MODERN SLAVERY TRAINING

Find out more about our training offering, visit <https://theclewerinitiative.org/training-and-events>

Follow us on social for more news from The Clewer Initiative!



The Clewer Initiative enables Church of England dioceses and wider church networks to develop strategies for detecting modern slavery in their communities and help provide victim support and care. [Learn More](#)

Copyright © 2023 The Clewer Initiative, All rights reserved.

You signed up to receive the newsletter from the Clewer Initiative via www.theclewerinitiative.org or at an event in person.

Our mailing address is:

The Clewer Initiative
Lambeth Palace
Lambeth Palace Road
LONDON, London SE1 7JU
United Kingdom

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).



