

Modern Slavery

Introduction

This final article builds on the previous two, which outlined both what Modern Slavery is and the tell-tale signs that can help detect it. This final article looks at opportunities for Prevention and will start with a Biblical Reflection.

Biblical Reflection

Reference - 2Kings 4: 1-7

Elisha and the Widow's Oil. In this passage we see a widow who has lost her husband and is now faced with the unbearable threat of losing her two sons if she is unable to pay her late husband's debt. If she is unable to pay this debt her late husband's creditor will take her two sons into slavery.

The miracle that followed produced an abundance of oil from just one small jar and provided enough money to pay off the debt as well as provide money for the future.

Prevention

In the context of this article, it is worth reflecting on three ideas:

- a. That all things are possible with God's help
- b. It required the community to help
- c. No jar was too small. They did not go to their neighbours and just ask for large jars

Elaborating these three ideas in turn:

Prayer :

Modern Slavery is an enormous problem and sadly engrained in many areas of our modern life. Given the enormity of the problem, it is easy to become paralysed and think.... 'Well, actually what can *I* do to help?'

Of course, one thing we can all do is to remember Modern Slavery in our prayers and the following link provides some useful resources. *Sometimes, it is helpful to use pre-written prayers, which help to focus our minds on the issue.*

<https://theclewerinitiative.org/resources/prayers-for-ending-modern-slavery>

Community :

"The scale of modern slavery and human trafficking is increasing steadily and the threat is growing"
– National Crime Agency

That said, Modern Slavery is unable to grow and thrive in communities which are Safe, Inclusive and Caring; where vulnerable people are recognised, cared for and not allowed to be exploited by perpetrators. In the **Elisha and the Widow's Oil** reflection, it was the community that rallied around to help the vulnerable family. It is this approach that will stop Modern Slavery thriving in our communities. Raising awareness of Modern Slavery, both for ourselves and our communities would be a good place to start. A recommended way to do this would be to join the **Modern Slavery in Cornwall Network**. The Network meets bi-monthly, via Zoom, and exists to raise awareness of modern slavery issues in our county and how we can all help to bring an end to this injustice and support those who have fallen victim to it. The Network is a mutually supportive group of people and offers a safe space to explore issues, share resources, highlight best practice and plan action

relating to modern slavery in Cornwall. Please email newstreet@mg.churchsuite.com for further details and a welcoming and friendly response.

No Action is too small :

This is the third idea, taken from the biblical reflection and in itself is a small point, but actually an especially important one.

No action is too small and may simply be:

- a. Placing a poster in your local church, or village hall. Please email newstreet@mg.churchsuite.com for posters.
- b. Attending a training course, or joining the Modern Slavery in Cornwall Network, as mentioned above.
- c. Recognising, where in your community, vulnerable people could be open to exploitation.
- d. Being a positive role model within your Sphere of Influence, whether that is within your Family, Church, Workplace or where you live. (The point here is that vulnerable people who are at risk of being drawn into modern slavery may have no positive role models).

Training Material and Further Information

A comprehensive list of available resources can be found at the Transformation Cornwall website. Please visit the site at the link below:

<https://transformation-cornwall.org.uk/initiatives/a-modern-slavery-initiative>

Resources from The Clewer Initiative can be found at the following link:

<https://theclewerinitiative.org/training-courses>

To conclude, here is a prayer written by the Mothers Union. Sometimes it is hard to know how to pray and using other people's words can be helpful.

*God - our constant friend of all time,
Help all women, men and children who are used in trafficking to find in your arms,
the love and respect that they have been denied.
When people are trafficked across the world,
treated as slaves and exploited mercilessly -
be there for them in their darkest hours.
May their vision of the world still hold a glimmer of hope;
may we, through Christ working in us,
fight for an end to trafficking and an end to every abuse and to an end to every way in which the
weak or vulnerable are exploited by the strong.
Amen.*

With Blessings....

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