



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

PRAYER ON INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY – DEC. 2

Some facts and figures: An estimated 40.3 million people are in modern slavery, including 24.9 in forced labour and 15.4 million in forced marriage. 1 in 4 victims (25%) of modern slavery are children. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labour, accounting for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in other sectors

Out of the 24.9 million people trapped in forced labour, 16 million people are exploited in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture; 4.8 million persons in forced sexual exploitation, and 4 million persons in forced labour imposed by state authorities.

Source: Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage, Geneva, Sept. 2017

PRAYER:

God you rescued the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt, we pray for those who are enslaved in the world today, the 25 million people in forced labour and the 15 million in forced marriages. We pray for children who are bought to work in factories, as race horse jockeys, and as domestic help. We pray for women and girls who are sold as sex slaves and as child brides. We pray for agricultural workers who work as slaves. We pray for families enslaved by hereditary debt bondage.

Our hearts break for those enslaved as we hear of: the torture they suffer, the fear in which they live, and the psychological agony that is theirs. Bring healing of body, heart, and mind. May all those who are enslaved know that they are of inestimable value to you. We confess that there are persons held as slaves in our own country.

God you have made all people in your image. Teach us that no one is disposable. Teach us to value all people as being beyond price so that no one is regarded as property. Grow a commitment in us to see all people freed, for the enslavement of even one person is too much. Give us courage to call upon politicians to act to make the ending of slavery a priority. Shape our shopping habits so we do not support slave labour.

God who transforms hearts and wills, by your Holy Spirit, change the hearts of those who buy and sell people just as you changed the heart of John Newton, so that those people who engage in the violence of slavery would reject that pattern of life and would instead free the people they have enslaved.

God who desires that all people be free, we thank you for those who work to free slaves, we thank you those who tell their stories to mobilize action, we thank you for political leaders who seek to free slaves, we thank you for police and others who seek to enforce the law.

We pray all of these things in the name of Jesus Christ, who came proclaiming liberty to the captive. Amen.

—*The Rev. Peter Bush, Moderator of the 143rd General Assembly*