

THE PENTECOST

ISSUE #73 APRIL 2013



THE PENTECOST



Shawn Stevens

Exploitation of people is one of the great sins and blights in human history and in our world. It was to combat human exploitation that William Wilberforce fought for the abolition of slavery in the 19th century. The battle to end slavery and human trafficking continues to our day. God bless you as you read the April, 2013, issue of *The Pentecost*. Pray to God and fight for the abolition of human trafficking.

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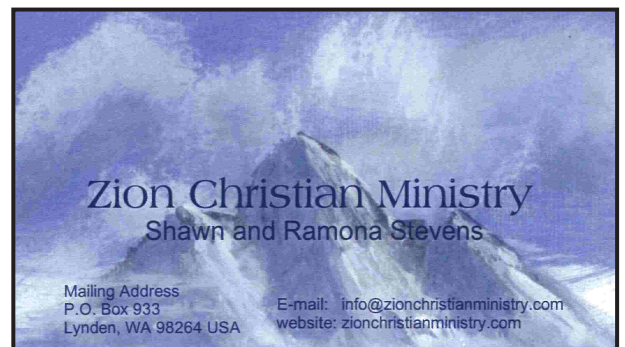
A BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE

Ramona Stevens

Unfortunately, violence against human beings is not just a page in history that ended with the abolition of slavery. In fact, the question remains today: did it really end? God bless you as you read, and for those of you who choose to take a stand, may God grant you wisdom and courage.

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JOHN NEWTON, WILLIAM WILBERFORCE AND THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY PART 2

In our last issue we discussed the courageous battle for abolition that William Wilberforce became involved in during England's 18th Century. We also looked at the involvement of other individuals who were on his side. As well as being assisted and encouraged by the Christian counsel of individuals such as Newton, the Quakers, Wesley, Clarkson and Ramsey, Wilberforce worked with a small group of colleagues that became known as the Clapham Community. The group began in 1792 when Wilberforce's friend, Henry Thornton, invited Wilberforce to share a place of residence with him in an area of south London called Clapham.³⁷ Wilberforce accepted the invitation and the two lived together as bachelors for five years.³⁸ Before long, many other abolitionists were visiting this home, and even moved into the area. Their homes became headquarters for many abolitionist efforts. They held "cabinet councils" where they worked out their strategies for combating the slave trade.³⁹ The evangelical scholar, Granville Sharp, who is regarded by some as the father of English abolitionism, also joined the group. His writings and his encouragement were of great help to Wilberforce.⁴⁰ For the most part, the members of this group had in common strong Christian faith.

Having found a motivation for abolitionism within his own spiritual experience, as well as being aided by the Christian abolitionist encouragement of others, Wilberforce engaged in an unrelenting war against the slave trade. In 1789, Wilberforce began putting forward motions in Parliament for the banning of the slave trade. His first motion took the form of a three-and-a-half-hour speech before Parliament in which he condemned the trading of slaves.⁴³ This was a courageous endeavor that he was embarking on, one that could cost him his political career.

Prior to his abolitionist stand, Wilberforce had gained much popularity in England. Many historians believe that Wilberforce was a likely candidate to succeed William Pitt as Prime Minister, had he not embarked on a public fight against the slave trade.⁴⁴ But Wilberforce's mind was made up. He declared, "So

enormous, so dreadful, so irremediable did the trade's wickedness appear that my own mind was completely made up for abolition. Let the consequences be what they would; I from this time determined that I would never rest until I had effected its abolition."⁴⁵ Soon, Wilberforce found himself standing against a wave of opposition that would continue for the duration of his life. There was much public criticism and vicious slander directed at him. West Indian sea captains threatened his life. The royal family, along with other powerful political individuals, opposed him. The famous admiral, Lord Nelson, viciously spoke out against him.⁴⁷ Prime Minister Pitt, who initially encouraged Wilberforce, eventually withdrew his support for abolitionism. Even Wilberforce's wife was pessimistic and critical towards Wilberforce for not spending enough time with her.⁴⁸ Wilberforce faced physical hindrances as well. At the outset of his battle in Parliament, he began experiencing eye problems that increased to the point at which he could hardly write.⁴⁹ However, even with all of these obstacles, Wilberforce could not be dissuaded. He was labouring for a cause that many thought was unachievable. Yet, with a bottom-line mentality, Wilberforce declared to the House of Commons that, regardless of the consequences, he had determined that he would never rest until he had effected the abolition of the slave trade.⁵⁰ One man in London commented, "It is necessary to watch him, as he is blessed with a very sufficient quantity of that enthusiastic spirit, which is so far from yielding that it grows more vigorous from blows."⁵¹ Wilberforce continued to bring forward motions in Parliament for abolition. With great fervour and intensity, he debated with pro-slavery forces who opposed his motions. On April 18, 1791, Wilberforce's debate lasted until 3:30 A.M., only to have his motion rejected. Sometimes Wilberforce's motions lost by large margins. Other times, the votes were close. In 1793, his motion, on a third reading, lost by three votes. On several occasions, in 1793 and 1804, Wilberforce's motion for abolition was passed in the House of Commons, only to have it overturned in the House of Lords.⁵² In 1805, Wilberforce put forward his thirteenth motion for the abolition of the slave trade, only to have it again rejected. Mr. Hatsell, the clerk of the House of Commons, said to him, "You ought not to expect to carry a measure of this kind."⁵³ Wilberforce responded, "I do expect to carry it, and,

what is more, I feel assured I shall carry it speedily.”⁵⁴ Finally, in February of 1807, a motion in favour of abolition was carried in the House of Commons, winning by the huge majority of 283 to 16.⁵⁵ Wilberforce's long, hard battle had succeeded. However, now addressing slavery in the whole of the British Empire, Wilberforce and the abolitionists continued their fight. In 1833, just three days before Wilberforce's death, the Emancipation Act was passed, officially banning slavery in the British Empire.⁵⁶ Christopher D. Hancock said that “[t]he most malignant evil of the British Empire ceased largely because of the faith and persistence of William Wilberforce.”⁵⁷

Through the faith and persistence of Wilberforce, the slave trade was officially overturned. The fact that the battle was long does not testify to the ineffectiveness of Wilberforce, but rather, it testifies to the opposite, that neither his motivation nor efforts could be dissuaded. Committed, conscience-sensitive Christian leaders, from John Newton to John Wesley, from Thomas Clarkson to James Ramsey, stood with Wilberforce in his battle. Having achieved the official abolition of the slave trade, Wilberforce and the Christian abolitionists fought on to see slavery within the British Empire officially abolished. That abolishment aided not only Negroes in the West Indies, but those in Africa as well. Wilberforce clearly linked his mission with his faith. Knowing that he would one day give an account of his political conduct before the judgment seat of Christ, he set about the two great goals before him, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners. He reasoned his case, sometimes from Scripture, and sometimes from the research of other strong Christian leaders who stood behind Wilberforce, adding to his zeal. Whether from his home in Clapham, or before statesmen in the House of Commons, Wilberforce led an unrelenting war against the trading of slaves. In debates that lasted for hours, Wilberforce pressed upon the consciences of his parliamentary audiences the moral obligation to end the slave trade. He endured the criticism and vicious slander that was hurled against him, and he persevered through the opposition of powerful political figures with an enthusiastic spirit that grew more vigorous from blows, and lived to see the official abolishment of both the slave trade and slavery within the British Empire.

OTHER EFFORTS OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

The abolition of slavery was not the only battle that Wilberforce fought. In 1797, he wrote a book called “A Practical View of Christianity.” One theme in this book was about how Christianity should guide politics.⁵⁸ Another theme that was strongly developed was the concept of duty. Wilberforce gave away a fourth of his annual income to the poor, as well as partially supporting Charles Wesley's widow from 1792 until her death in 1822.⁶¹ He, and the Clapham Community, stood for education for the masses, prison reform and improvement in factory conditions. They fought child labor, savage game laws and flogging in the army. They even intervened on behalf of persons outside of Britain, including the American Indians. They founded the Church Missionary Society as well as the British and Foreign Bible Society. Their religious tract society published five thousand different articles, reproducing them in 500,000,000 copies.⁶²

- Shawn Stevens

ENDNOTES

37. Garth Lean, *God's Politician*, 101.

38. Bruce Hindmarsh, “Aristocratic Activists The Clapham Sect was One of the Most Elite and Effective Bands of Christian Social Reformers – Ever,” *Christian History Issue 53* (1997): 24.

39. Michael Henderson, “Christian Living in a Hungry World,” *Crux 18*, (1982): 9.

40. Dr. Daniel B. Wallace, “Granville Sharp: A Model of Evangelical Scholarship and Social Activism,” *n.d.* <<http://www.bible.org/docs/soapbox/gsharp.htm>>

41. Garth Lean, *God's Politician*, 104.

42. *Ibid.*, 103.

43. “A Web of English History William Wilberforce (1759-1833),” *April 14, 2003* <<http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/town/terrace/adw03/c-eight/people/wilberf.htm>>

44. Garth Lean, *God's Politician*, XII.

45. William Wilberforce, quoted in John Pollock, *Wilberforce*, 56.

47. Christopher D. Hancock, “The ‘Shrimp’ Who Stopped Slavery,” *Christian History Issue 53* (1997): 16.

48. John Piper, “Peculiar Doctrines, Public Morals, and the Political Welfare: Reflections on the Life and Labor of William Wilberforce,” 02/05/2002 <<http://www.desiringGOD.org>>

49. *Ibid.*

50. John Pollock, “A Man Who Changed His Times,” in

Character Counts – Leadership Qualities in Washington, Wilberforce, Lincoln and Solzhenitsyn, 77-78.

51. A Jamaican slave owner's agent, quoted in Hancock, "The Shrimp Who Stopped Slavery," *Christian History Issue 53* (1997): 17.

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57. Christopher D. Hancock, "William Wilberforce and The Century of Reform,"

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58. William Wilberforce 1759-1833, prod. Ken Kurtis, Gateway Films, Videocassette.

59. Donald M. Lewis, "The Moses of These Israelites ... Courtier of Pharaoh' Wilberforce and Shaftesbury as Evangelical Lay Leaders," *Crux*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, (2000): 20.

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FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

One of the noblest causes that a society can rally around is that of the fight against human trafficking. What exactly is human trafficking? It can be defined as the recruitment, harbouring, transportation and trade of human beings, by force, by coercion or deception for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labour. In human trafficking, authority over a person is given, or sold, for the purpose of exploiting them. That exploitation usually takes the form of prostitution but can include forced labour and even organ removal. Human trafficking does not only consist of the trading of persons to a foreign land but, also, the enslaving of persons in their own country.

The trafficking of humans is the fastest growing criminal industry, worldwide. It is the third largest criminal industry after the illegal drug trade and arms-dealing. It may be as large as illegal arms-dealing. The United Nations claims that 2.5 million humans are trafficked worldwide and the victims come from 127 countries. It has been estimated that between five and nine billion US dollars is made each year from human trafficking, worldwide.

Human trafficking is very deceptive. Many times victims consent to their own involvement, without knowing that they are being recruited into prostitution or forced labour. They may owe a debt that they are attempting to pay off and are put in a position of working, but without having the conditions of paying thimated that 600 to 2,000 persons are trafficked into Canada annually. It is estimated that 1,500 to 2,200 persons are trafficked across Canada's border into America.

Other nations have shocking records of human trafficking, as well. In Mexico, children are sold for as little as 100 dollars. The

African continent is notorious for much human trafficking. In Togo and Benin, young girls are given as slaves in shrines and used sexually. Shrine-slavery is also practiced in Ghana. In Africa, the Aids crisis has claimed so many parents that children from such families often become victims of trafficking. It is estimated that 14,500 to 17,500 are trafficked into America each year. South America is another region which is exploited easily because of its poverty. In Colombia, as many as 35,000 women are believed to be trafficked out of the country each year. Southeast Asia is believed to have a staggering 200,000 to 225,000 women and children who are trafficked annually. Most destinations are within their own region, and Japan is said to be the biggest destination in Asia for trafficked persons. India is a huge consumer of trafficked persons. It is believed that 200,000 girls, many younger than fourteen, are sold into sexual slavery there. It is reported that in the Philippines there are an estimated 800,000 women working as prostitutes and half of them are under age. Eastern Europe is said to have as many as 270,000 persons victimized by human trafficking. Western Europe, also, has seen much human trafficking. England has also been involved in human trafficking and, under great pressure from human rights organizations, trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation in England is now illegal, as of 2004. However, this law has rarely been used and by mid-2007 there had been no convictions for breaching this law. The Middle East also has seen a great deal of human trafficking. Syria has been a major centre for prostitution. It is believed that in Syria 50,000 women and girls, from Iraq, have been forced into prostitution.

What is being done to stop human trafficking? The United Nations has launched some international efforts to discourage human trafficking, putting pressure on states where abuses have been prevalent. Many governments have made laws to punish human traffickers. However, many other governments have not shown interest in this cause. Some governments have only been willing to address human trafficking as it relates to prostitution, but not as it relates to forced, or bonded, labor. The issue becomes contentious for Muslim nations because Islam does allow slavery. In fact, Mohammed, who they regard as a prophet, had slaves. Consequently, objections to human trafficking are sometimes seen as Western civilization trying to impose its

values on another culture.

Help is being given to victims of human trafficking by Christian organizations. There are many transition homes and faith-based counselling programs which are there for women and children who are able to flee the trafficking lifestyle. *Exodus Cry* is a major international Christian organization which fights human trafficking. They not only work through rescue-home-shelter type ministry but have made a film to draw attention to this crime of human trafficking.

What can societies do to fight human trafficking? Christian organizations like *Veronica's Voice*, *Kansas City Broiler Room* and *Exodus Cry* are already doing much to rescue and rehabilitate victims of human trafficking. They can be supported in their work by a caring public. In addition to this, governments can do much to combat this evil if they have the political will, or political pressure placed on them, to do so. Governments can pass laws to punish human traffickers. Laws concerning prostitution are often in place but not enforced. Law enforcement to break up prostitution would go a long way to bringing the situation under control. Beyond this, the age of consent (to sexual activities) should be raised in many countries. This gives prosecutors more power to prosecute human traffickers who take advantage of children and young women. Governments can continue to put pressure on foreign governments who do not take human trafficking seriously, for religious or other reasons. Lastly, governments can, and should, support ministries which are already making a difference in helping victims.

God bless you as you consider taking action in this important cause.

- Shawn Stevens

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A BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE

A balanced Christian life is a life that is directed by the Lord Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and increasingly coming into conformity to Biblical principles and priorities. There are four practical aspects of this balanced Christian life. Each of these needs to be in the Christian's life, simultaneously, in order to maximize Christian growth and development.

1. Development of a personal relationship with God through private prayer, practical intake of God's Word, and worship. (i.e. daily Quiet Time - weekly worship)
2. Development of uniquely Christian relationships with the members of a local body of Christ.
3. Personal growth and faithful fulfillment of your responsibilities in the family and at work according to Biblical guidelines.
4. Practical steps of ministry to those who are in need spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically.

All Christians are responsible to witness to and to serve non-Christians, as well as encourage, love, and serve Christian brothers and sisters (personal ministry). Each Christian also has unique gifts and abilities and is called by God to do service. These are discovered, and anointed in a special way, as a person walks with the Lord and is faithfully doing the tasks of witnessing, serving and loving.

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Art by Ramona Stevens



Peace Amidst The Storm

This is the last painting that I created in 2011. It is an acrylic painting showing how we can weather a storm in our lives, with the Lord's protection. This came about after listening to a teaching by Beth Moore called, "Wrecked But Not Ruined" based on Acts 27-28:1-6, which talks about the Apostle Paul's shipwreck experience and how the Lord used Paul to direct all aboard the ship to safety. Although the ship crashed, all the lives were spared. Also in Isaiah 40:12 it says "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, ...". It is encouraging to think how the Lord holds onto us in the midst of any storm, if our lives belong to Him. When we know that He is in control we can trust Him to bring us to safety and place us where we need to be. I pray that you are encouraged by this. God Bless you.

Scripture taken from the King James Bible

Ramona Stevens