

## P R E F A C E

THIS BOOK IS THE outcome of many years' involvement with groups large and small, formal and informal, who are passionate about ending slavery in all its contemporary forms. It is offered for use in churches, in activist organizations and groups, and by individuals, in the hope that it will stimulate discussion, prayer, and action. I hope that those already involved in this work will find much here to reflect on that will enrich their thinking about what they are already doing. Equally, I hope that that it will encourage many more to become involved in combatting an evil that causes untold suffering throughout the world.

It is not my intention here to describe or prescribe ways in which Christians can become involved. There are plenty of resources available for that, and I have listed some of them towards the end of the book. My purpose is, rather, to introduce readers to what the Bible might have to say about slavery and what is now often referred to as the "sex industry," working on the principle that if we believe that God speaks through the Scriptures, then we must pay attention to what they have to say. But there are pitfalls in such an undertaking. For centuries, Christians believed that slavery was in accordance with God's will, because of what they read in the Bible. History has proved this view to be wrong, but this raises serious questions as to how we read the Bible. Fortunately, ours is not the first generation to face this problem, and we will learn from our predecessors here. As the Abolitionists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries knew, if we are to obey God's call to let the oppressed go free, we must learn to discern the voice of love and redemption as we read our Bibles.

The book has been produced specifically for the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the birth of the European Baptist Federation anti-trafficking network in 2015. It has been my privilege to be secretary of this group

since its inception, and I have dedicated this book to my Baptist colleagues throughout Europe and beyond who are working against slavery. However, it is not, by any means, intended exclusively for a Baptist readership, and it is my hope and prayer that it will be of use to Christians of all traditions who have a desire to “set the captives free.”

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