

# Am I not a Man and a Brother?

A BAFTA-winning film has disturbing resonances for our own century.



**12 YEARS A SLAVE** has been both a critical and commercial success for its moving portrayal of the realities of the slave trade. The film is based on the true story of a man's fight for survival in the pre-Civil War United States.

Last weekend the film won the top prize at the BAFTAs, and Chiwetel Ejiofor, who plays the central character, also won best actor.

Solomon Northup (played by Ejiofor), a free black man from upstate New York, is abducted and sold into slavery. Facing unimaginable cruelty and unexpected kindnesses, Solomon manages not only to stay alive, but to retain his dignity. After twelve years, a chance meeting with a Canadian abolitionist (Brad Pitt) forever alters his life.

**“Slavery has no place in Britain. It is an affront to the dignity and humanity of us all, and it is the responsibility of us all to help stamp it out.”**  
Theresa May  
Home Secretary

It is a sign of the changing attitudes of the last 50 years that it is crucial to the story that the central character is already a free man. It is the circumstances that happen to him, and the attitudes of others (both active and passive) that serve to re-enslave him.

It is now universally accepted that all human

beings are created of equal worth and value; that no person is born a slave to another, and yet, accepting the BAFTA for best film, director Steve McQueen expressed the hope that “in 150 years a film like his won't need to be made”. Reminding his audience around the world “there are 21 million people in slavery as we sit here.” McQueen is clear that the film contains a message that our own generation still needs to hear. According to international law and the laws of their own country, each one of those “21 million people in slavery” is a free person like Solomon Northup. Those who enslave them have no right to do so. Change comes when those who see slavery take action to restore freedom.

The media regularly remind us that modern slavery is a reality for men, women and children of different ages, races, and cultures. Last December, Home Secretary Theresa May Bill introduced a draft Modern Slavery Bill, the first of its kind in Europe for 200 years, with the aim of eradicating slavery from the UK.

“Slavery has no place in Britain. It is an affront to the dignity and humanity of us all, and it is the responsibility of us all to help stamp it out.” the Home Secretary said. (see [www.gov.uk/government/news/modern-slavery-white-paper-published](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/modern-slavery-white-paper-published))

“But legislation is only part of the answer. It also requires coordinated effort... with other countries to tackle the problem at source, and increased awareness within all communities, including the business community, across the UK.”

The Government is publishing a Modern Slavery Action Plan in the spring, with training and guidance for front line staff (police, border officers, asylum case workers and health workers); this should improve the way potential victims are identified and supported.

The staff at UK international ports of entry, and especially the big four airports; Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester and Stansted all have a key part to play.

This spring everyone who works at or for Manchester Airport will be invited to explore how they can play their part in addressing this evil and exploitative trade of those who are, indeed, our own brothers and sisters.

George Lane  
Coordinating Chaplain

**IF YOU HAVE**  
food in your fridge, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep

**YOU ARE RICHER THAN 75% OF THE WORLD.**

**IF YOU HAVE**  
money in the bank, your wallet, and some spare change

**YOU ARE AMONG THE TOP 8% OF THE WORLD'S WEALTHY.**

**IF YOU WOKE UP THIS MORNING WITH MORE HEALTH THAN ILLNESS YOU ARE MORE BLESSED THAN THE MILLION PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT SURVIVE THIS WEEK.**

if you have never experienced the danger of battle, the agony of imprisonment or torture, or the horrible pangs of starvation

**YOU ARE LUCKIER THAN 500 MILLION PEOPLE ALIVE AND SUFFERING.**

**IF YOU CAN READ THIS MESSAGE YOU ARE MORE FORTUNATE THAN 3 BILLION PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WHO CANNOT READ IT AT ALL.**

## Prayer Diary

February 24 - March 02, 2014 - Week 9

We give thanks in our prayers for the work of:

The Chaplaincies at

- Chingola Airport
- Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport
- Cleveland Hopkins International Airport
- Coventry International Airport
- Corpus Christi International Airport

And for:

- M.A.G. IS Operations
- Swissport
- Aer Lingus
- Cyprus Airways
- SAS Scandinavian Airlines
- The Real Food Company (T2)

**Daily Prayers (Christian) take place every day at 8.30am in T1 Prayer Room**

(and at many other times and places too)

**Friday Jumma Prayers**

(Islamic) are held in T3 Prayer Room 1300 GMT (Winter)