

Freedom from the clutches of Empire: *Face to Face with Migration and Human Trafficking*

In 2015, as many as 21 million men, women, and children around the world are victims of “human trafficking”¹ and there are as many as 244 million² international migrants worldwide.

“Trafficking in persons” and “human trafficking” have been used as umbrella terms for the act of recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labour or commercial sex with the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Migration, on the other hand is the movement of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people as well as economic migrants, where migrants are people who make the choice about when to leave and where to go, even though this choice is sometimes made under extremely constrained circumstances.

Human trafficking and Migration are issues of freedom – or the lack thereof. Modern day slavery in its various forms such as - sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, forced bonded labour or debt bondage, involuntary domestic servitude, forced child labour, unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers, among others - persists around the globe. In spite of the many benefits of migration, migrants themselves remain among the most vulnerable members of society. They are often the first to lose their jobs in the event of an economic downturn and they often work longer hours, for less pay. Victims of human trafficking and migration also endure human rights violations, abuse and discrimination. At the centre of these is Empire’s goal to exploit and enslave by means of a myriad coercive and deceptive practices with a profit motive.

The Council for World Mission, inspired by its vision: “*Fullness of Life through Christ for all creation*” therefore recognizes that any form of human rights violations, abuse and discrimination are a denial of and an affront to the God of life. Our faith in a God of freedom who abhors slavery in any form provides the impetus for the Church’s calling into partnership with the salvific work of Christ who sets the captive free. The Church is called to raise every valley and make low the mountains (Isaiah 40:4; Luke 3:5), to lay the ground for the salvific work of the God of freedom to spread.

The Council for World Mission’s ***Freedom from the clutches of Empire: Face to Face with Migration and Human Trafficking*** exposes participants to contextual social, cultural and theological realities that enable them to grapple with and to be motivated them for missional action by the world around them. The participants of this Face to Face programme participants will live, learn, reflect and work together as they scrutinise the issues of migration and human trafficking in Europe, with particular focus on the United Kingdom.

For seven weeks, they will form a learning community. They will explore issues of human trafficking and migration through presentations, worship, Bible study and reflection. Throughout their period of stay the participants will also engage in practical placements with different church communities and institutions. The practical experience will feed into and inform reflection and thinking which will in turn enrich the portfolio of materials and written papers that participants will produce to contribute to the discourse on and approaches to combating issues that arise from migration and human trafficking with a goal to enable freedom to flourish. Some of the issues to be explored are:

- A migrant theology, mission in the context of Empire, mission in a European post-Christian, secular context.
- Issues of migration and human trafficking, homelessness and un-documented people and the role of the church.

¹ Data from the International Labour Organization

² Data from the United Nations International Migration Report for 2015

Objectives

- To enable theological students to engage in a global dialogue from the standpoint of theology, spirituality and mission.
- To enable students to engage with issues of human trafficking and migration in depth.
- To enable intercultural exchange and theological reflection thereby contributing towards creating a global network of young theologians
- To facilitate immersion programmes and Bible Studies which would enable students to reflect on doing mission in the context of Empire

Who is this for?

This is open to students of Theology; either currently enrolled or those who have already graduated, but are **not yet** ordained.

Programme Dates

The Programme will be held on **5 June to 14 July 2017**.

Where will it be held?

The Programme will be hosted by the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom. The CWM Research and Capacity Development Unit, with the help of the CWM Europe Regional Office, administers the Face to Face Programme. The programme's implementation is a shared responsibility among CWM, the sending church/college, the host church, and the participant.

The Council for World Mission will arrange for and cover the participant's international travel, accommodation and meal expenses throughout the Programme, including a stipend during the field placements. The Participants will need to arrange for their own passport and required visa(s), [including transit visas]. Participants may seek the assistance of their respective church/college. **CWM will neither cover the cost of the passport nor process the participant's visas.** Participants will need to bring extra spending money for expenses outside those covered by CWM. They are expected to prepare an individual paper under the guidance of a college advisor, to critically reflect on their Face to Face experience. This Programme is not credited. It is therefore not designed to form part of any degree or diploma course. However, participants may submit the paper for coursework assessment if there is prior agreement with their respective college/academic programme. CWM may also consider these papers for publication.

How to Apply

Interested applicants may contact the General Secretary of their Church or the Principal of their Theological College. Application forms are available on the CWM website: **www.cwmission.org**. You may also contact Sudipta Singh, Mission Secretary – Research and Capacity Development via email at: **empowerment@cwmission.org**. There are **two ways** to submit completed application forms:

1. Via email at empowerment@cwmission.org
2. Hard copy addressed to: *Research and Capacity Development Unit, 60 Paya Lebar Road, #11-14 Paya Lebar Square, Singapore 409051*

Deadline of application: 15 February 2017

