

Is there Slavery in Sudan and if so, what is Frontline Fellowship doing about it? Are you involved in buying slaves to set them free? What is Frontline's position on slave redemption?

We are frequently asked questions like these by concerned Christians eager to help make a difference in the lives of suffering Christians in Sudan. Here is a summary of our answers:

Yes, there is no doubt that there is widespread slavery in Sudan today. This is not only done with the knowledge of the National Islamic Front Government of Sudan, but is in fact encouraged by them. Slavery in Sudan is used both as a weapon of terror to destabilise the South and as an economic incentive to induce Arab soldiers to go South, to wage Jihad against the infidel. The Muslim soldiers and militias can enrich themselves with loot and with slaves.

A number of friends and colleagues of mine are involved in the slave redemption programme. I do not want to question their sincere and good motives. However, my position, and that of Frontline Fellowship, is that we cannot in good conscience, be involved in placing money in the hands of Arab slave traders.

I believe that it is unethical to place money in the hands of slave traders. I also believe that it is counter-productive to engage in such commerce, because of the laws of supply and demand. As there is an increase in demand, so too will there be an increase in supply.

The question we need to ask is whether, after all the many thousands, in fact it is now in the tens of thousands, of slaves who have been redeemed, is there a net decrease in the number of slaves in Sudan? Are the Arab masters now doing their own work in the fields? Are the Arab madams doing their own work in the kitchens now? Are the slave harems now empty? Are we actually improving the situation or merely placing a large amount of hard currency in the hands of the enemies of the Gospel?

Another question to be asked is whether all of those who head out to Sudan for these slave redemption programmes, actually know what they are doing? Most of these slave redeemers do not speak either Arabic or Dinka, and are wholly dependent upon a single interpreter in country.

Most fly in for the day and do not even spend the night on site. Knowing human nature and the inevitable temptation to corruption, it is a strong possibility that many of the well-meaning redeemers are actually being deceived. What is to prevent slave traders, who by definition are unscrupulous, from re-enslaving those slaves who have just been freed? It is even possible that some of the people that have been redeemed were not even slaves in the first place, but part of a deception, to separate well-meaning foreigners from their money. It would not be too difficult with foreigners, who do not speak the language, and who spend such little time on the ground.

William Wilberforce fought the slave trade for all his life, successfully, without putting money in the hands of slave traders. David Livingstone and General Charles Gordon successfully fought against the slave trade in Africa, without in any way rewarding slave traders. I am convinced that we need to combat the slave trade in every way possible, including by publications, economic and political pressure, and even direct action on the ground, without engaging in the actual commerce of putting money in the hands of any slave trader.

We are well aware that this is a very unpopular position for Frontline Fellowship to take. We have lost a significant amount of support over our unwillingness to engage in the slave redemption programme. Several ministries in the US have even used our photographs, video footage, stories and statistics, in their fund-raising campaigns to support the slave redemption programme. We fear that the present course of action of so many falls into the category of throwing money at a problem, and wanting a quick-fix.



Students of the Christian Obedience School in the Frontline Fellowship mission base in Sudan are at the

“You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”

Dr. Peter Hammond

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