

FREEDOM SUNDAY

WHEN I BEGAN THINKING ABOUT WHAT I WOULD PREACH ON JULY 4TH, I STARTED TO THINK ABOUT WHAT WE ARE CELEBRATING TODAY. WE ARE CELEBRATING OUR FREEDOM FROM TYRANNY, OUR FREEDOM TO MAKE OUR OWN LAWS IN OUR OWN COUNTRY. BUT I WRESTLED WITH MAKING THIS DAY ABOUT CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM AND I DIDN'T WANT TO GO THERE AT ALL.

THEN I STARTED TO THINK ABOUT WHAT THE OPPOSITE OF FREEDOM IS, AND THE OPPOSITE OF FREEDOM IS SLAVERY. AND SO TODAY WE ARE PARTICIPATING IN FREEDOM SUNDAY, WHICH IS A DAY TO RECOGNIZE AND DISCUSS MODERN DAY SLAVERY, AND THEN TO FIND ACTIONS EACH OF US CAN TAKE TO END THIS CRIME AGAINST ALL HUMANITY.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU THINK OF SLAVERY? I THINK OF MOSES FREEING THE HEBREW SLAVES IN EGYPT. I REMEMBER MOVIES IN THE 50S AND 60S ABOUT SLAVES IN THE GREEK AND ROMAN EMPIRES, PEOPLE ON CONQUERED LANDS WHO WERE ENSLAVED BY THEIR CONQUERORS. I THINK OF THE DIAGRAMS THAT ARE IN THE CHARLES H. WRIGHT AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM RIGHT HERE IN DETROIT, SHOWING BLACK BODIES PACKED LIKE SARDINES, BEING CARRIED ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN FROM THEIR HOMES IN AFRICA TO LIVES OF SLAVERY IN THE AMERICAS. I THINK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION. AS A MEMBER OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, I RECALL THAT OUR DENOMINATION SPLIT OVER THE ISSUE OF SLAVERY IN 1844.

UP UNTIL ABOUT 10 YEARS AGO, I PRETTY MUCH THOUGHT THAT SLAVERY ENDED SOMETIME IN THE MID 19TH CENTURY. OH, I THOUGHT, THERE MIGHT BE SOME SLAVERY SOMEWHERE "OVER THERE" BUT NOTHING IN WHICH I WAS INVOLVED OR THAT AFFECTED ME, AND CERTAINLY NOT HERE IN THE UNITED STATES. AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, UNFORTUNATELY THAT IS NOT THE CASE. I WAS INVITED TO A JEWELRY PARTY SPONSORED BY A GROUP CALLED WAR INTERNATIONAL WHICH STANDS FOR WOMEN AT RISK INTERNATIONAL. YOU MIGHT REMEMBER THAT WHEN I FIRST CAME TO CENTRAL, COSROW SPONSORED A JEWELRY PARTY AT COFFEE HOUR. IT WAS THERE I LEARNED THAT SLAVERY EXISTS TODAY ALL OVER THE WORLD. SOMETIMES IT IS REFERRED TO AS "HUMAN TRAFFICKING" OR "TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS." BUT DON'T BE FOOLED, THIS IS ABOUT SLAVERY, ONE HUMAN BEING OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.

YOU MIGHT REMEMBER JUST RECENTLY THERE WAS A HUMAN TRAFFICKING RING THAT WAS BUSTED RIGHT IN OAKLAND COUNTY, IN MADISON HEIGHTS. MADISON HEIGHTS POLICE CHIEF COREY HAINES SAID THIS: "MANY PEOPLE THINK HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS SOMETHING THAT ONLY HAPPENS SOMEWHERE ELSE. BUT LET ME BE CLEAR THAT THIS CRIME IS HAPPENING RIGHT HERE IN OAKLAND COUNTY. THESE ARE CASES IN WHICH WE HAVE YOUNG WOMEN – GIRLS AS YOUNG AS 9, WE'VE FOUND – BEING TRAFFICKED INTO PROSTITUTION. CHILDREN ARE BEING EXPLOITED IN THE WORST WAY IMAGINABLE, BY ADULTS WHO TRADE THEIR BODIES FOR CASH. SO FIRST LET'S DEFINE, WHAT IS A SLAVE? ON THE FREE THE SLAVES WEBSITE, I FOUND THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION: "A PERSON HELD AGAINST HIS OR HER WILL AND CONTROLLED

PHYSICALLY OR PSYCHOLOGICALLY BY VIOLENCE OR ITS THREAT FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROPRIATING THEIR LABOR.”

LET ME REPEAT THAT: “A PERSON HELD AGAINST HIS OR HER WILL AND CONTROLLED PHYSICALLY OR PSYCHOLOGICALLY BY VIOLENCE OR ITS THREAT FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROPRIATING THEIR LABOR.

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING? IT IS THE RECRUITMENT OR MOVEMENT OF A PERSON, BY DECEPTION OR COERCION FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPLOITATION. PEOPLE ARE BOUGHT AND SOLD FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, FORCED LABOR, STREET CRIME, OR DOMESTIC SERVITUDE. IT IS THE WORLD’S FASTEST GROWING GLOBAL CRIME AND IS ONE OF THE LARGEST SOURCES OF INCOME FOR ORGANIZED CRIME. IT IS A GLOBAL MARKET PLACE WHERE PEOPLE ARE THE PRODUCT AND EVERYONE HAS A PRICE TAG. IT’S BASED ON AN INTERNATIONAL CONVEYOR BELT OF TRANSACTIONS AND EXCHANGE.

TODAY, SLAVERY IS ALIVE AND WELL ALL OVER THE WORLD. IN FACT, THERE ARE MORE SLAVES ON THE PLANET TODAY THAN AT ANY OTHER TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY. IT IS ILLEGAL IN EVERY COUNTRY. THERE ARE UN RESOLUTIONS AGAINST SLAVERY. INTERPOL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN COUNTRIES AND CITIES AROUND THE WORLD HAVE ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNITS.

AS WE SIT HERE, THE MOST CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE IS THAT THERE ARE AT LEAST 40.3 MILLION ENSLAVED HUMAN BEINGS. THE UNITED STATES STATE DEPARTMENT ESTIMATES THAT 14 TO 17 THOUSAND PERSONS ARE TRAFFICKED **INTO** THE UNITED STATES EACH YEAR, TO BECOME SLAVES. BUT, DON’T BE FOOLED, TRAFFICKING ALSO HAPPENS WITHIN OUR BORDERS. AMERICAN GIRLS AND WELL AS BOYS ARE TRAFFICKED INTO THE SEX TRADE. TEEN-AGE RUNAWAYS ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE.

THE NUMBERS ARE NUMBING AND OVERWHELMING. AND WHILE THE NUMBERS ARE STAGGERING, THE STORIES OF INDIVIDUAL VICTIMS ARE WORSE.

ACCORDING TO A SPEECH GIVEN BY JOHN MILLER, THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, THERE ARE AT LEAST FOUR FORMS OF MODERN DAY SLAVERY.

1. DOMESTIC SERVITUDE SLAVERY.
2. FACTORY AND FARM SLAVERY
3. SEX SLAVERY
4. CHILD SOLDIER SLAVERY.

THE FIRST THREE ALL OCCUR IN THE UNITED STATES AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE AROUND THE WORLD.

SO, WHEN I WAS AT THE WAR INTERNATIONAL JEWELRY PARTY AND HEARD ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HEARD HOW THE NUMBERS BECOME REALLY LARGE DURING THE AUTO SHOW HERE IN DETROIT, I BECAME ANGRY!

I HAVE HEARD AND READ TOO MANY STORIES NOT TO BE MOVED TO ACTION.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, ONE CHURCH SENT OUT POST CARDS FOR CONSUMERS TO SEND TO CARPET MANUFACTURERS, ASKING THEM TO SEEK CERTIFICATION WITH THE RUGMARK LABEL. MANY OF THE CARPETS FROM INDIA ARE MADE BY CHILDREN AS YOUNG AS FIVE, CHILDREN WHO ARE FORCED TO WORK 14 OR MORE HOURS A DAY, GIVEN MINIMAL FOOD AND WATER, AND LIVE IN WINDOWLESS ROOMS WITH THEIR LOOMS.

TINY FINGERS THAT MAKE FINER CARPETS. THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN IN SLAVERY IN INDIA DOING THIS WORK. THE RUGMARK LABEL ENSURES THAT NO CHILD SLAVE LABOR WAS INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION OF YOUR PURCHASE.

CLOSER TO HOME, SLAVES HAVE BEEN FOUND DOING DOMESTIC WORK FOR RESPECTED SUBURBAN FAMILIES. SANDRA WAS A HOUSEWIFE IN LAREDO WHO WANTED HELP WITH HOUSEWORK, BUT DIDN'T WANT TO PAY MUCH. SANDRA WENT TO MEXICO AND BEFRIENDED THE FAMILY OF 12 YEAR OLD MARIA. SANDRA OFFERED MARIA A JOB AS A HOUSEKEEPER, PROMISING THAT MARIA WOULD RECEIVE AN EDUCATION AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE THE AMERICAN DREAM.

INSTEAD, MARIA'S LIFE BECAME A NIGHT MARE. SHE WAS FORCED TO WORK LONG HOURS AND WAS BEATEN ALMOST DAILY. WHEN SHE WAS NOT WORKING, SHE WAS CHAINED IN THE BACK YARD, UNDER THE HOT TEXAS SUN. HER NIGHTMARE ENDED WHEN A NEIGHBOR WAS WORKING ON HIS ROOF AND SAW A YOUNG GIRL CHAINED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF A HIGH CEMENT WALL. HE CALLED THE POLICE. THE OFFICER WHO WAS THE FIRST RESPONDER BROKE INTO TEARS IN COURT AS HE TESTIFIED ABOUT MARIA'S CONDITION WHEN HE FIRST SAW HER. SANDRA WAS SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING, AMONG OTHER CHARGES.

THIS STORY IS NOT UNUSUAL. DOMESTIC SLAVES HAVE BEEN FOUND ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES, IN THE HOMES OF "RESPECTABLE" CITIZENS. IN MANY CASES, FAMILIES JUSTIFIED SUCH SLAVERY BY POINTING OUT THAT THE SLAVE WAS "BETTER OFF THAN THEY WERE" IN HAITI, MEXICO, RWANDA, INDIA, CAMBODIA OR WHEREVER THEY CAME FROM.

DAVID BATSTONE, THE FOUNDER OF NOT FOR SALE CAMPAIGN, BECAME AN ABOLITIONIST WHEN HE FOUND OUT THAT THE STAFF AT ONE OF HIS FAVORITE INDIAN RESTAURANTS IN SAN FRANCISCO WERE ALMOST ALL SLAVES. THIS WAS DISCOVERED WHEN ONE OF THE WORKERS WENT HOME TO FIND HER ROOMMATE VERY ILL. NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO, SHE CALLED HER LANDLORD, THE OWNER OF THE RESTAURANT. HE ARRIVED, THEN REFUSED TO CALL FOR HELP AND INSTEAD ROLLED THE SICK UNCONSCIOUS GIRL IN A CARPET AND LOADED HER INTO HIS VAN, THEN TRIED TO FORCE THE FIRST GIRL INTO THE VAN.

A WOMAN HEARD THE GIRL'S SCREAMS AND CALLED THE POLICE. IT TURNED OUT THAT ALMOST ALL THE STAFF IN THE MAN'S SEVERAL RESTAURANTS HAD BEEN ILLEGALLY TRAFFICKED FROM INDIA, OWED A "DEBT" TO THEIR "EMPLOYER" FOR THEIR TRANSPORTATION TO AMERICA, AND WERE PAID MINIMAL WAGES, WHICH DID NOT COVER THE HUGE RENTS THAT THE OWNER CHARGED FOR THE SLUM LIKE APARTMENTS IN WHICH THEY LIVED.

KATYA, A UNIVERSITY STUDENT FROM UKRAINE, HAD ACCEPTED A SUMMER JOB PLACEMENT IN VIRGINIA BEACH. AFTER LANDING IN NEW YORK CITY, SHE AND HER FRIEND WERE MET AT THE AIRPORT BY TWO MEN HOLDING SIGNS WITH THE GIRL'S NAMES ON THEM.

THE MEN, HELPFUL AND REASSURING, INFORMED KATYA AND HER FRIEND THAT THEY HAD BEEN REASSIGNED TO DETROIT. AFTER ARRIVING IN DETROIT, THE MEN TOOK THE GIRLS' PASSPORTS AND PROVIDED THEM WITH SEDUCTIVE CLOTHING AND A JOB AT A STRIP CLUB TO "PAY THE MEN BACK."

WHILE AT THE CLUB, THE GIRLS WERE FORCED TO WORK LONG HOURS AND MEET A QUOTA OF \$1,000 PER DAY. FOR OVER A YEAR KATYA WAS FORCED TO PERFORM SEXUAL ACTS ALL THE WHILE BEING IMPRISONED THROUGH THREATS OF VIOLENCE TOWARD HER AND HER FAMILY. IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE EFFORTS OF A COURAGEOUS INDIVIDUAL WHO RECOGNIZED HER PLIGHT, KATYA MIGHT STILL BE IMPRISONED.

ONE INCREDIBLE STORY OF SLAVERY FROM THE 1990S WAS THAT OF A MINISTER WHO WAS PART OF A MISSIONARY GROUP HELPING SCHOOLS IN ZAMBIA. WHILE IN ZAMBIA, THE MINISTER DISCOVERED A TALENTED A CAPELLA BOYS' CHOIR. HE OFFERED TO BRING THEM TO THE UNITED STATES TO TOUR IN CHURCHES AND OTHER VENUES, WITH THE PROCEEDS TO BE SENT BACK TO THE SCHOOLS PROGRAM AS WELL AS THE BOYS' FAMILIES. ONCE THE BOYS REACHED THE UNITED STATES, THEY WERE SOMETIMES FORCED TO PERFORM AS MANY AS SEVEN CONCERTS A DAY AND LIVED IN DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS.

IT WAS ONLY THROUGH THE WORK OF ONE WOMAN IN ONE OF THE HOST CHURCHES THAT THE SHAM WAS UNCOVERED. IT TURNED OUT THE MINISTER AND HIS DAUGHTER HAD KEPT ALMOST ALL THE MONEY, NO ZAMBIAN SCHOOLS WERE HELPED AND ONLY \$20 A MONTH WAS SENT TO THE BOYS FAMILIES. THE MINISTER AND HIS DAUGHTER WERE NEVER CHARGED, SINCE IT WAS UNCLEAR WHAT TO CHARGE THEM WITH. THIS WAS BEFORE MOST OF THE ANTI-TRAFFICKING LAWS IN THIS COUNTRY.

THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE EXAMPLES OF SLAVERY TODAY. SLAVES ARE INVOLVED IN MINING THE MINERALS FOR OUR CELL PHONES, MAKING OUR CLOTHING, AND HARVESTING OUR CROPS. MANY SLAVES ARE HIDDEN FROM OUR VIEW; OTHERS LIKE THE RESTAURANT WORKERS AND CHOIR MEMBERS ALREADY MENTIONED, ARE OUT IN PLAIN SIGHT.

ONE TRUTH ABOUT TODAY'S SLAVERY IS THAT IT IS A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. NOT ALL CHOCOLATE INCLUDES THE BLOOD OF SLAVES, NOT ALL CELL PHONES CONTAIN MINERALS MINED BY SLAVES. NOT ALL SUGAR CANE WAS COLLECTED AND PROCESSED BY SLAVES. BUT PERCENTAGES DON'T MATTER. THAT THERE IS ANY SLAVERY ON THE PLANET TODAY IS A TRAVESTY AGAINST GOD.

IN OUR READING FROM ISAIAH, GOD EXPRESSES DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE PEOPLE FOLLOW RITUALS WITHOUT HELPING ONE ANOTHER. LISTEN TO THE DESCRIPTION OF THE SORT OF FAST DAY THAT GOD WANTS: BREAK THE CHAINS OF INJUSTICE, GET RID OF EXPLOITATION IN THE

WORKPLACE, FREE THE OPPRESSED, CANCEL DEBTS.” IF YOU DO THIS, THEN WHEN YOU PRAY, GOD WILL ANSWER. YOU’LL CALL OUT FOR HELP AND GOD WILL SAY “HERE I AM.”

THANKFULLY THERE ARE PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD WHO HAVE LITERALLY HEEDDED THIS CALL TO “BREAK THE CHAINS.” AN ORGANIZATION CALLED “FREE THE SLAVES” WORKS AROUND THE WORLD WITH VARIOUS ABOLITIONIST GROUPS TO FREE SLAVES, AND THEN PROVIDE THE SERVICES THAT WILL ENABLE SURVIVORS TO BUILD LIVES FOR THEMSELVES.

THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH STATES THAT UNITED METHODISTS “DEPLORE ALL FORMS OF THE COMMERCIALIZATION AND EXPLOITATION OF SEX, WITH THE CONSEQUENT CHEAPENING AND DEGRADATION OF HUMAN PERSONALITY. TO LOSE FREEDOM AND BE SOLD BY SOMEONE ELSE FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES IS A FORM OF SLAVERY AND WE DENOUNCE SUCH BUSINESS AND SUPPORT THE ABUSED AND THEIR RIGHT TO FREEDOM. WE CALL FOR STRICT GLOBAL ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS PROHIBITING THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OR USE OF CHILDREN BY ADULTS AND ENCOURAGE EFFORTS TO HELP PERPETRATORS LEGALLY AND FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE.

IN THE UNITED STATES, THERE IS INCREASING AWARENESS OF MODERN-DAY SLAVERY HERE, AND ABROAD. BUT AWARENESS IS NOT ENOUGH. JUST RESCUING PEOPLE FROM SLAVERY IS NOT ENOUGH. AFTER EACH RESCUE, VICTIMS NEED PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, INCLUDING COUNSELING, HEALTH CARE, CLOTHING, SHELTER, AN EDUCATION AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

WHEN THESE NEEDS ARE MET, VICTIMS OF SLAVERY BECOME SURVIVORS OF SLAVERY.

IN LUKE, JESUS ROLLS OUT THE SCROLL FROM ISAIAH THAT STATES, “HE HAS CHOSEN ME TO PREACH THE MESSAGE OF THE GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR, SENT ME TO ANNOUNCE PARDONS TO PRISONERS, RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET THE BURDENED AND BATTERED FREE, TO ANNOUNCE, “THIS IS GOD’S YEAR TO ACT.”

SO, THIS IS GOD’S YEAR TO ACT. WHICH MEANS THIS IS OUR YEAR TO ACT.

BUT TO DO WHAT? WHAT CAN WE DO TO ERADICATE SLAVERY TODAY.

FIRST LEARN HOW TO SPOT HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

- VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING OFTEN LIVE ON OR NEAR THEIR WORK PREMISES, OFTEN WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF OCCUPANTS IN A SMALL SPACE. Bouncers, guards, guard dogs or barbed wire may be present.
- VICTIMS LACK PRIVATE SPACE, PERSONAL POSSESSIONS AND FINANCIAL RECORDS AND ARE KEPT UNDER SURVEILLANCE OR ARE ESCORTED BY AN EMPLOYER WHEN THEY ARE OUT IN THE COMMUNITY. THE TRAFFICKER MAY ACT AS A TRANSLATOR.
- THE VICTIM MAY BE BRANDED OR HAVE OTHER SCARRING INDICATING OWNERSHIP. VICTIMS ARE OFTEN MALNOURISHED AND MAY SHOW SIGNS OF RAPE, SEXUAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE, POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS AND POOR PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH.
- BROTHELS OFTEN CONTAIN BARRED WINDOWS, LOCKED DOORS AND ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE. WOMEN DO NOT LEAVE THE HOUSE UNESCORTED.

SECOND, SUPPORT THE WORK OF ABOLITIONIST GROUPS THROUGH MONETARY DONATIONS. WRITE TO YOUR LEGISLATORS REQUESTING STRONGER ANTI-TRAFFICKING LAWS.

REQUEST BETTER TRAINING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, AS WELL AS HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL, WHO ARE QUITE LIKELY TO TREAT VICTIMS OF ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING. BUY FAIR TRADE GOODS WHENEVER POSSIBLE. INSIST THAT JOHNS BE PROSECUTED AND THAT VICTIMS OF SEX TRAFFICKING BE RECOGNIZED AS VICTIMS AND NOT CRIMINALS.

ASK THE COMPANIES THAT YOU BUY STUFF AT ABOUT THEIR POLICIES REGARDING SLAVERY AND SWEATSHOPS.

ALSO, PLEASE NOTICE THAT IN THE CASES I DESCRIBED, SLAVES WERE FREED BECAUSE OF THE ACTION OF A "BYSTANDER." A MAN ON HIS ROOF SAW A GIRL CHAINED IN A BACK YARD. A WOMAN ON THE STREET SAW A MAN TRYING TO FORCE A GIRL INTO A VAN. A WOMAN WHOSE CHURCH SPONSORED THE BOY'S CHOIR REALIZED SOMETHING WAS WRONG AND WORKED TO UNCOVER THE DECEPTION. THE ACTIONS OF THESE INDIVIDUALS RESULTED IN SLAVES BEING FREED AND TRAFFICKERS BEING PROSECUTED.

WE ARE CALLED TO ACTION. EVERY ONE OF US. AS PEOPLE OF FAITH AND AS MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN RACE. WE ALL LIVE IN COMMUNITY AND COMMUNITIES HOLD THE ANSWER TO UNDERSTANDING WHAT'S GOING ON AND TAKING ACTION TO DISRUPT THE GLOBAL CRIME OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

EVERY INSTANCE OF TRAFFICKING INVOLVES A PERSON BEING TRAFFICKED FROM A COMMUNITY INTO A COMMUNITY. THEREFORE, THE COMMUNITY HAS THE POWER TO STOP IT. WE CAN HELP PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

SO LET US COMMIT OURSELVES TO ACT BY ADMITTING THAT OUR CONSUMER CHOICES IMPACT THE EXPLOITATION AND ENSLAVEMENT OF OTHERS. WE CAN CHANGE OUR OWN BEHAVIOR AND CAMPAIGN TO STOP THIS.

LET US COMMIT OURSELVES TO ACT BY, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT PEOPLE ARE TRAFFICKED INTO OUR COMMUNITIES.

LET US COMMIT TO ACT BY PRAYING FOR FREEDOM FOR ALL THOSE ENSLAVED THROUGH THIS TRADE. PRAYING THAT THE CHURCH WILL RISE UP AND TAKE ACTION.

I WANT TO CLOSE WITH A PASSAGE FROM THE TALMUD. "DO NOT BE DAUNTED BY THE ENORMITY OF THE WORLD'S GRIEF. DO JUSTLY, NOW. LOVE MERCY, NOW. WALK HUMBLLY NOW. YOU ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO COMPLETE THE WORK BUT NEITHER ARE YOU FREE TO ABANdon it." Amen.