

THE BETTER HOUR

Documentary Film,
Book, Gatherings,
& High School Contest
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FACT SHEET on Film and Books

Forthcoming Documentary Film for National Television: Coming early 2008

THE BETTER HOUR:

The Legacy of William Wilberforce

This one-hour documentary, sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation and the Wilberforce Project, is being produced to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of British and American slave trade in a 20-year heroic effort led by British Parliamentarian William Wilberforce. (Effective date of U.S. legislation was January, 1808.)

The Wilberforce Project is in post-production of this television documentary, shot in high definition, for national broadcast in early 2008. The documentary explores the 20-year effort of William Wilberforce to lead the abolition of the British slave trade -- a business that was key to the country's economic strength. Wilberforce and his Clapham colleagues brilliantly executed this enormous task. They managed to shape opinion without the help of mass communication technology.

The goal of the documentary is to focus on how strength of character is harnessed in the service of high and seemingly unattainable goals for society. Character and community join together to bring into the world what the English poet William Cowper described as "the better hour." The documentary highlights William Wilberforce's drive and love for humanity and reveals how he and his colleagues took up the cause of abolition of the slave trade at a time when the British economy depended upon slavery.

In October 2007, the film was selected as a featured documentary by the Heartland Film Festival, and also shown at a private screening at an event sponsored by the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Wilberforce's compassion, self-discipline, and respect for others offer lessons for a contemporary audience on how to change the world for the better -- peacefully and definitively. In the world of politics--with so few heroes today-- William Wilberforce's political career is a case study that not only merits attention, but can inspire others to see the potential for great good in a political life which is built on strength of character rather than expediency.

This program will provide greater reflection on the character, inspiration and influence of Wilberforce, who in his day was a household name in both the UK and America. Interviews with leading authors, historians and public figures from both the U.K. and the United States, including the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Rowan Williams, Wilberforce expert Kevin Belmonte, historian James Walvin and Newton Scholar Marylyn Rouse, among others.

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Companion Book to Film: *Creating the Better Hour: Making Goodness Fashionable—The Lessons of William Wilberforce* is an interactive study that provides an in-depth look at life and legacy of William Wilberforce and the Clapham Circle. The book, however, does not stop there. It also contains essays that show how the legacy of Wilberforce and his friends is still working toward the completion of the “better hour” for society. It demonstrates how Wilberforce is a model for all who want to effect change in society. The book contains a study guide that helps groups and individuals internalize the lessons of these heroes of the anti-slavery movement and use what they learn to establish a plan of action. The book contains essays by Clifford Hill, Kevin Belmonte, Os Guinness, Beth Hertzfeld, Mary Ann Glendon, Mark Rodgers, Chuck Colson, Joseph Califano, and others. **Foreword by Rick Warren.**

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The British Abolitionists and Their Influence is a 92-page educational soft cover text, with photos, for schools to use as a companion to the documentary film in history or social studies classes. It compiles together for the first time a summary of the stories of all the British abolitionists, with excerpts from their writings, and also shows how they made an impact on the American abolition movement. It recounts the efforts of William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Olaudah Equiano, Oubona Ottobah Cugoana, Elizabeth Heyrick, James Stevens, James Ramsey and more.

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