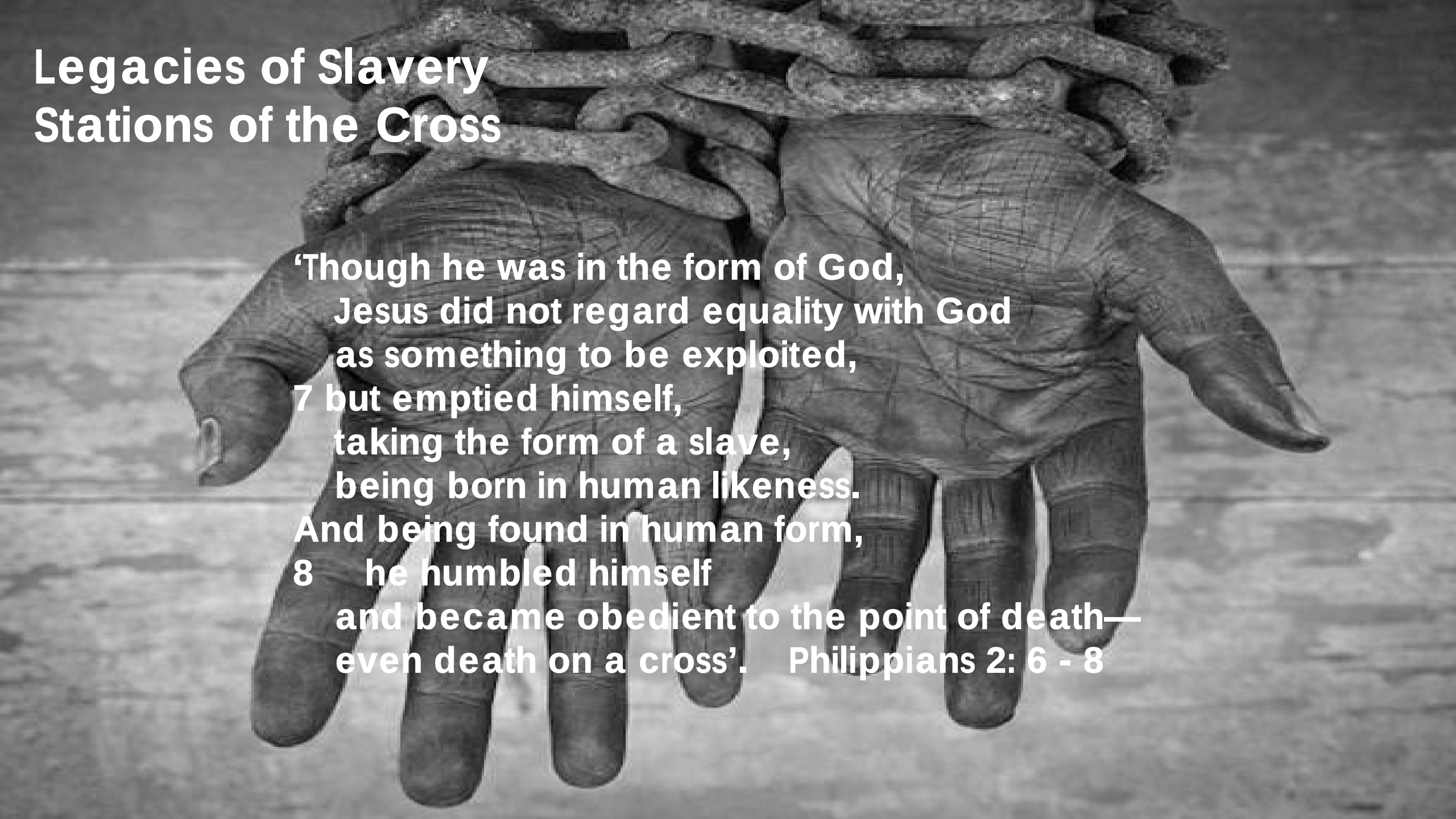
Legacies of Slavery
Stations of the Cross

To mark Holy Week CWM's Mission Development Team has produced some reflections which use the pattern of the stations of the cross to reflect on the legacies of slavery. We have adapted the traditonal 14 stations, but hope people will find in these images, words and issues an invitation into the on going Passion of Christ.



Legacies of Slavery
Stations of the Cross

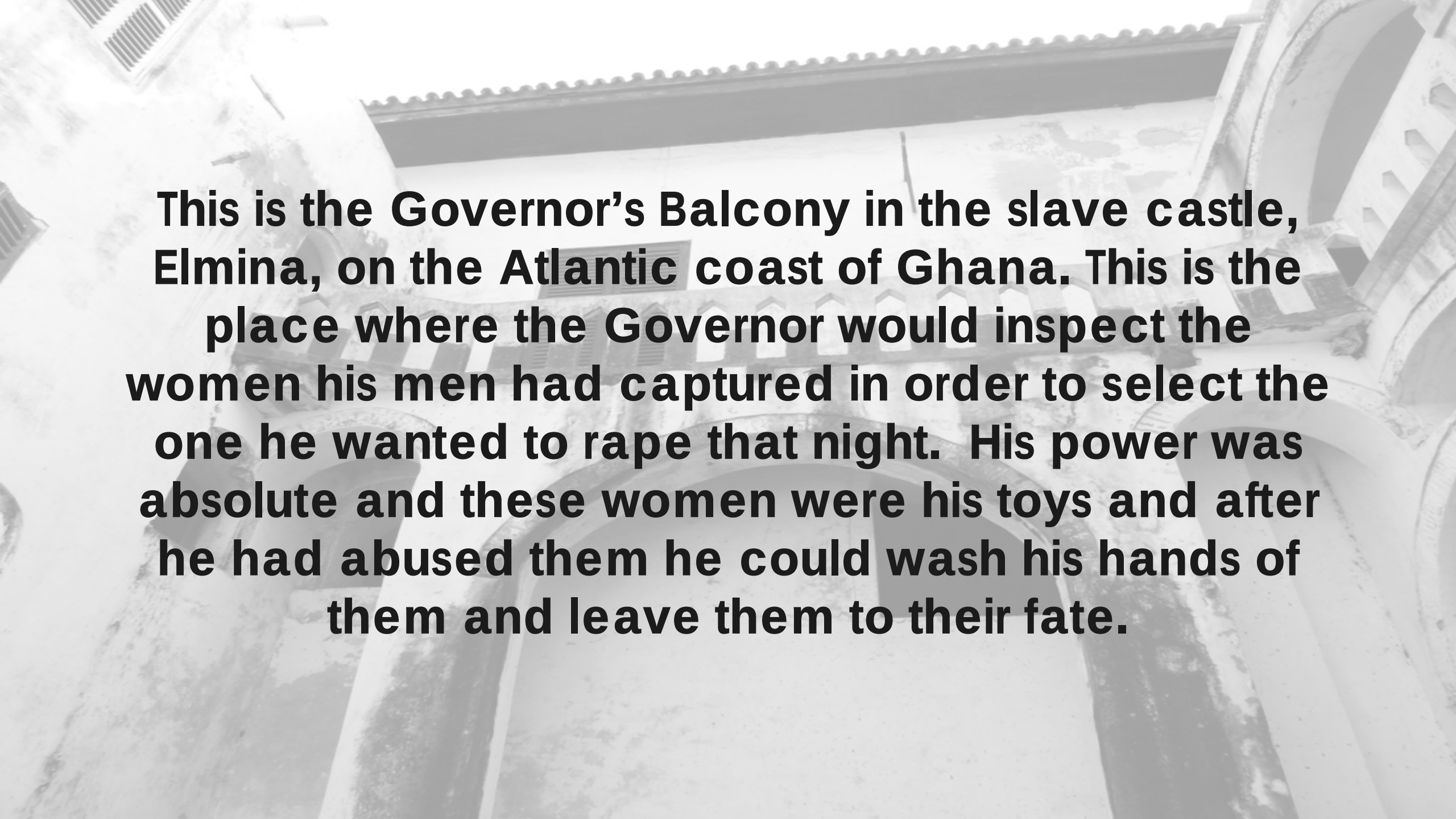
‘Though he was in the form of God,
Jesus did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
8 he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross’. Philippians 2: 6 - 8

Legacies of Slavery
Stations of the Cross

Before beginning the stations you might like to listen to the 'Kyrie' (Lord have mercy) in the Congolese setting of the Mass: 'Missa Luba'

See for example:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ToNb-02n3KY

Pilate
condemns
Jesus
to die



This is the Governor's Balcony in the slave castle, Elmina, on the Atlantic coast of Ghana. This is the place where the Governor would inspect the women his men had captured in order to select the one he wanted to rape that night. His power was absolute and these women were his toys and after he had abused them he could wash his hands of them and leave them to their fate.

Prayer and Quiet:

Christ Jesus
Lamb of God
In the face of your suffering
We mourn and lament
Bodies, lands and lives
Broken for the profit of the powerful,
Poured out to the false gods of Empire.

Jesus meets
his mother

These are the women's dungeons in Elmina. Here women were imprisoned in overcrowded sordid conditions, where they ate, slept, toileted, bled, died and even gave birth. The bodies and beings of these women knew desolation and pain and bore children whose lives, like Jesus', would be led in struggle against the Empire which inflicted such injustice. These cells, reminiscent of the stable of Jesus' birth, house the spirit of women like Jesus' mother who come in compassion to their children who suffer still.

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Simon Cyrene carries the cross of Jesus

Simon of Cyrene was an African, made to carry the cross of Christ. And here we remember him at the door of no return, where Africans were forcibly removed from their homes and pushed out onto waiting boats to be transported across the Atlantic as slaves. These men and women had the cross inflicted on them like Simon, like Jesus, by Empire. And religious and political powers still see blackness as justification for inflicting humiliation, punishment, enslavement and even death

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Jesus falls
again

This is the Atlantic ocean, the start of the middle passage of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, the *via media* but in fact the **via dolorosa**. These are holy waters that house the graves of many Africans who fought the slavers or were murdered by the slavers for insurance gain. This is where we acknowledge the fallenness of White Imperial Christianity which was complicit with this trade, fighting it only towards the end of its 350 year history. And we mourn the manifestations still of these versions of whiteness and Christianity

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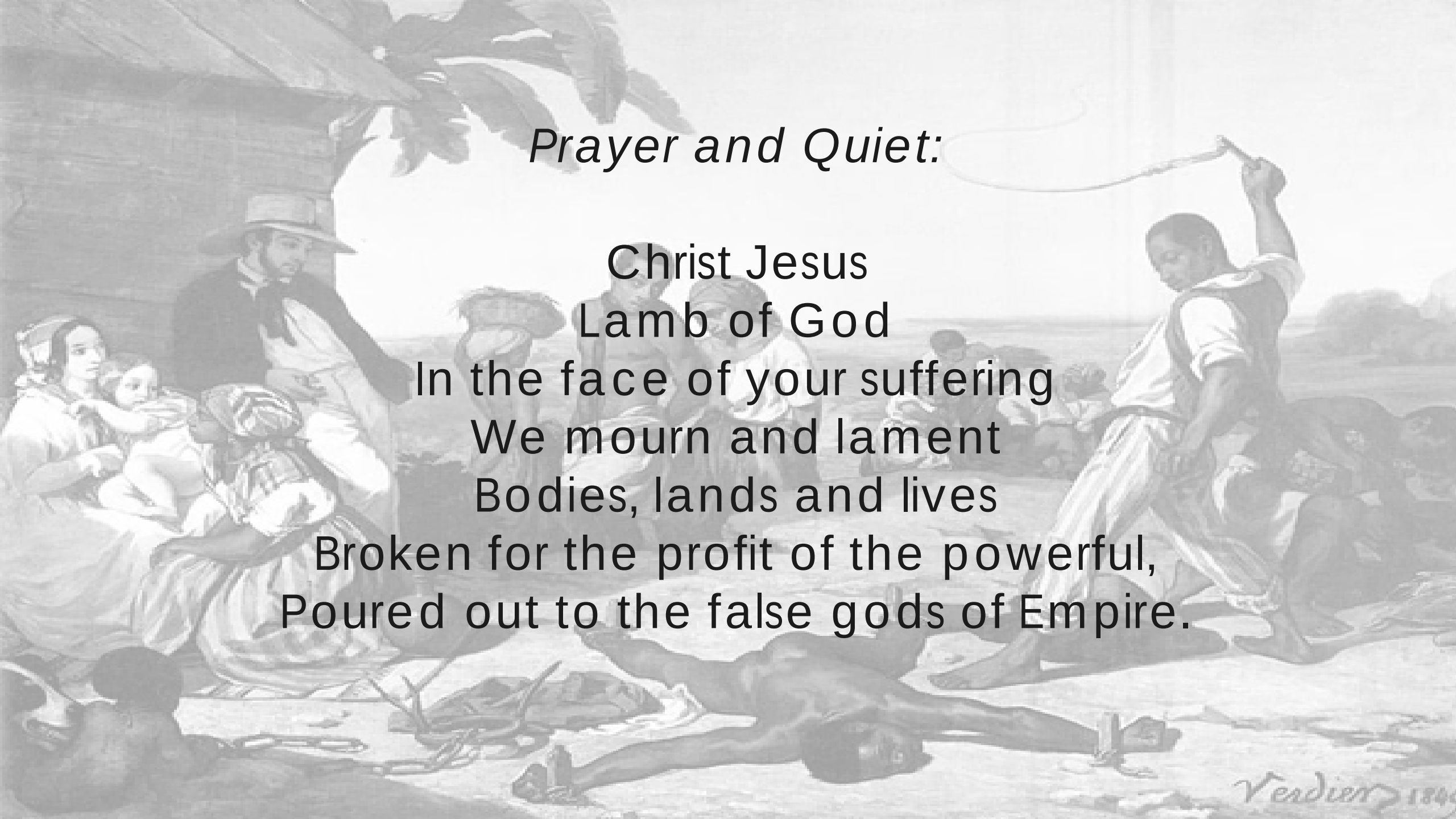
Jesus is stripped
Verdier 1840

The demonization and dehumanization of blackness is one of the longest lasting legacies of slavery. Christian mission and theology played its part in stripping blackness of its worth and dignity. This is how Empires work and we remember how Jesus felt the lash of the political and religious Empire of his day, because in the eyes of Pilate not only did Jesus not have equality with God obviously, he didn't have it with Pilate either. We struggle with Paul's attitudes to slaves, that they should be obedient, as in our text. So we remember Jesus was executed not because he was a good slave, but because he was the free and defiant Son of God



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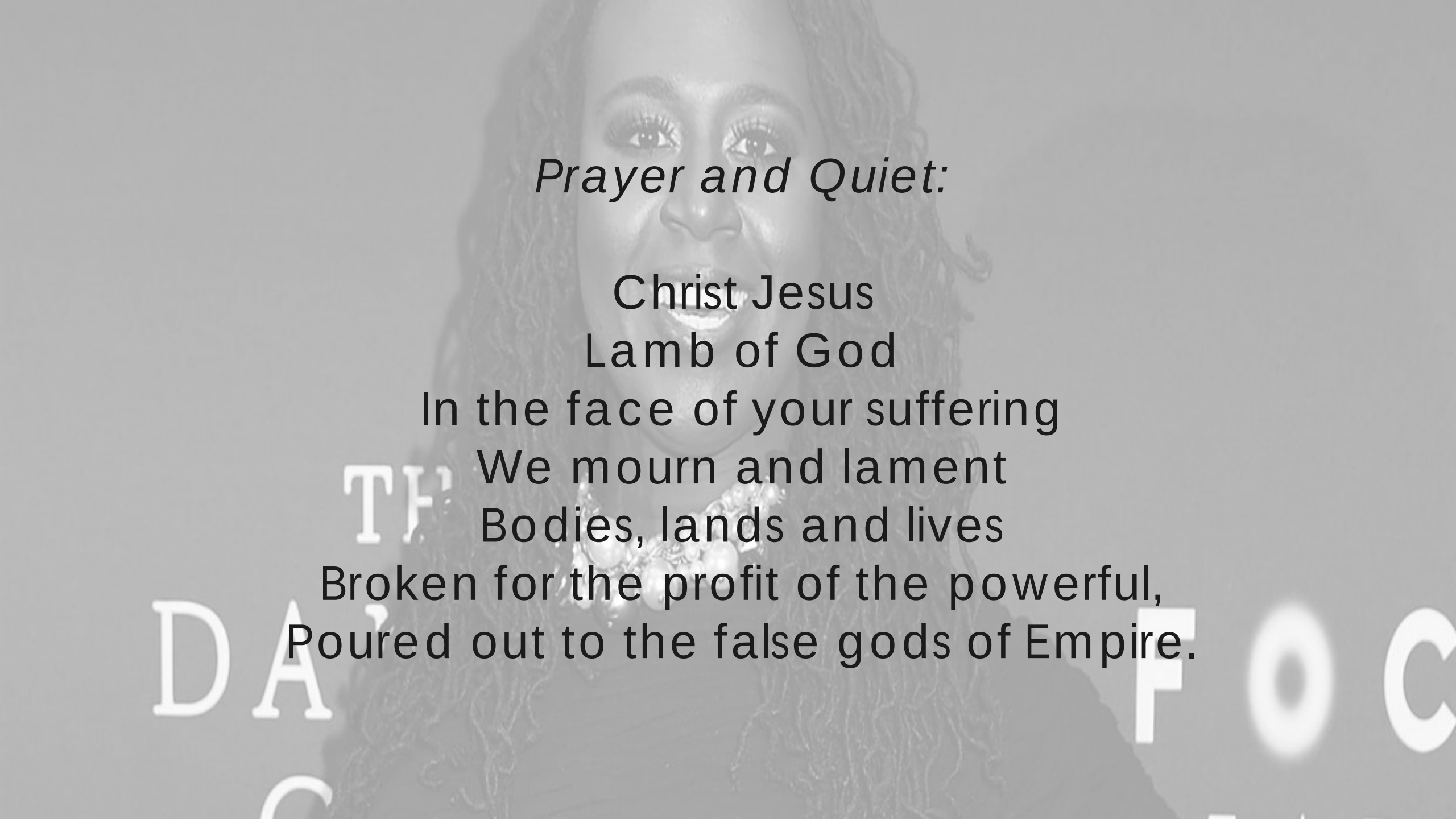
Veronica
wipes the
face of Jesus

Cherno Biko is one of the founders of Black Trans Lives Matters, a movement which highlights the violence inflicted on the black LGBTQI communities. She is one of those people who has courage in the face of the violence of Empire and the opprobrium of the norms of her neighbors, who stoops to comfort and encourage those who struggle against racism. She is the great niece of Steve Biko the anti Apartheid activist murdered by South African police in 1977. Such is the spirit of Veronica who was courageous enough to step forth from a cruel crowd and offer tenderness to Jesus as he faced crucifixion.



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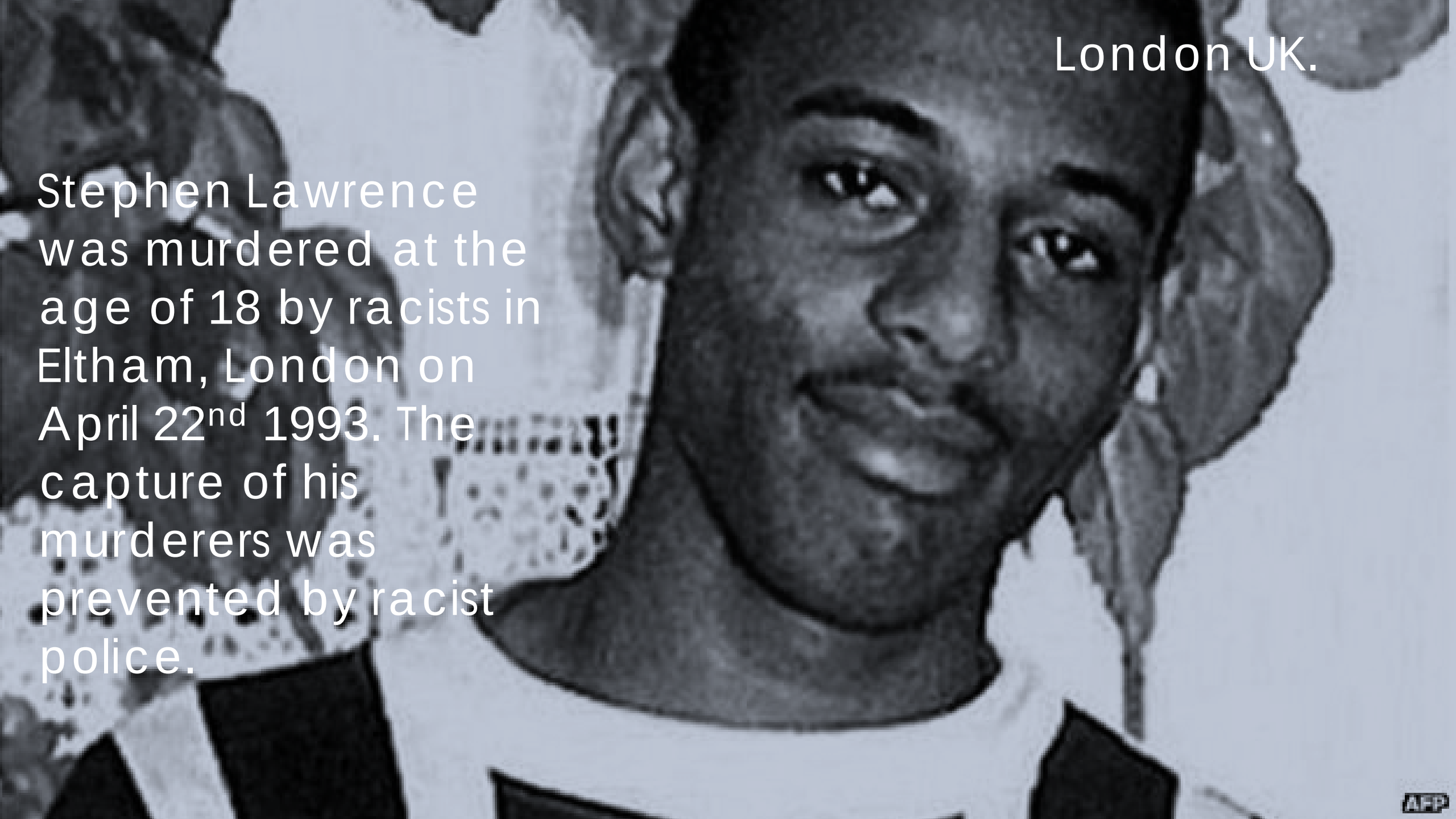
Jesus dies

The CWM Legacies Hearings are taking place in four locations, and each location is marked by many sites of religious, racist and colonial violence. As we mark the death of Jesus we do so remembering such sites in the UK, Africa, Jamaica and the US.

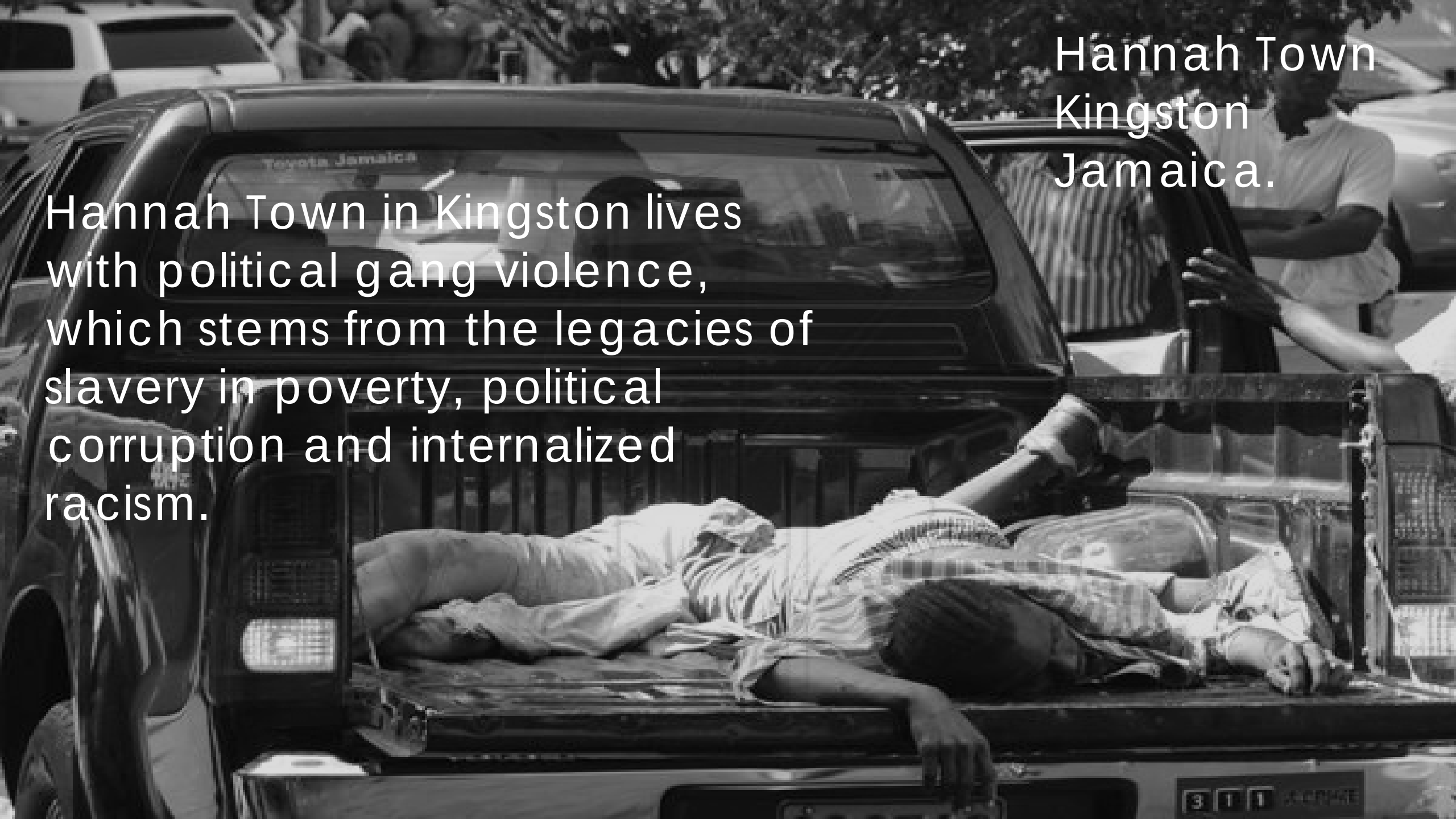
AFP


London UK.
Stephen Lawrence was murdered at the age of 18 by racists in Eltham, London on April 22nd 1993. The capture of his murderers was prevented by racist police.
AFP

District 6 Cape Town SA.

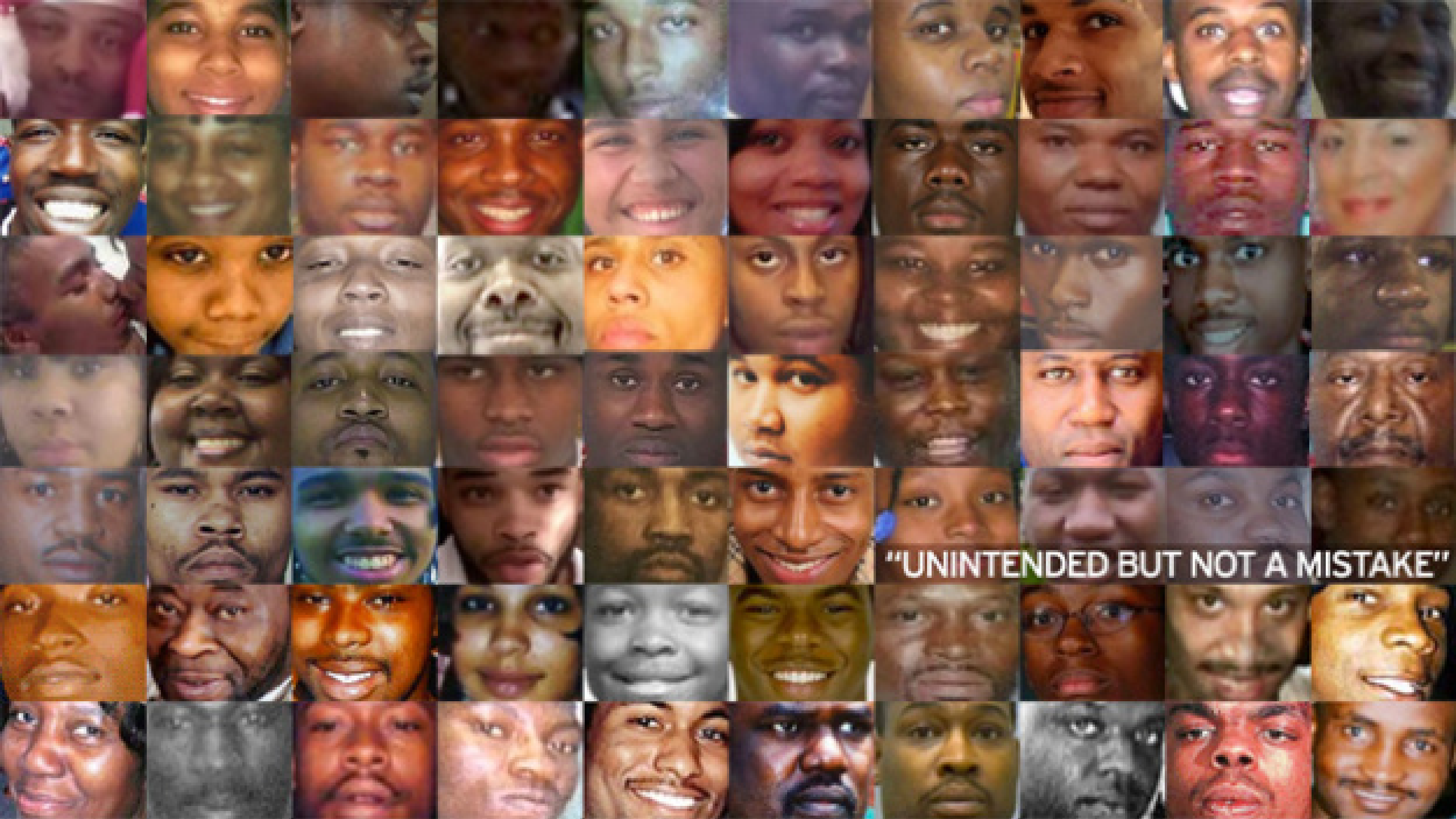
District 6 in Cape Town was a racially mixed and peaceful community in South Africa. But the Apartheid Govt hated racial mixing and so they passed the Group Areas Act to outlaw it. In 1966 District 6 residents were evicted so an all white community could move in.

Toyota Jamaica
3 1 1



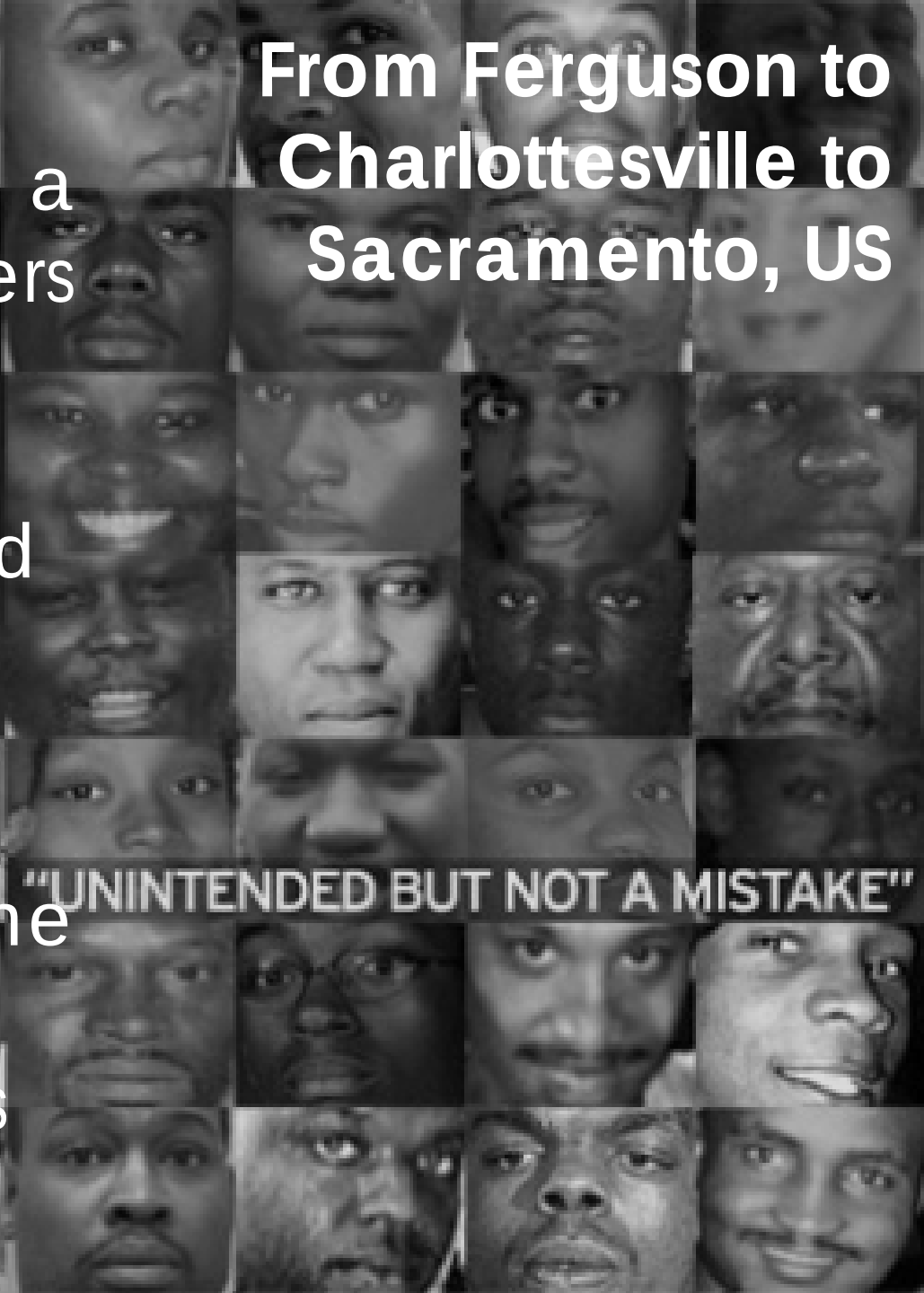
Hannah Town
Kingston
Jamaica.

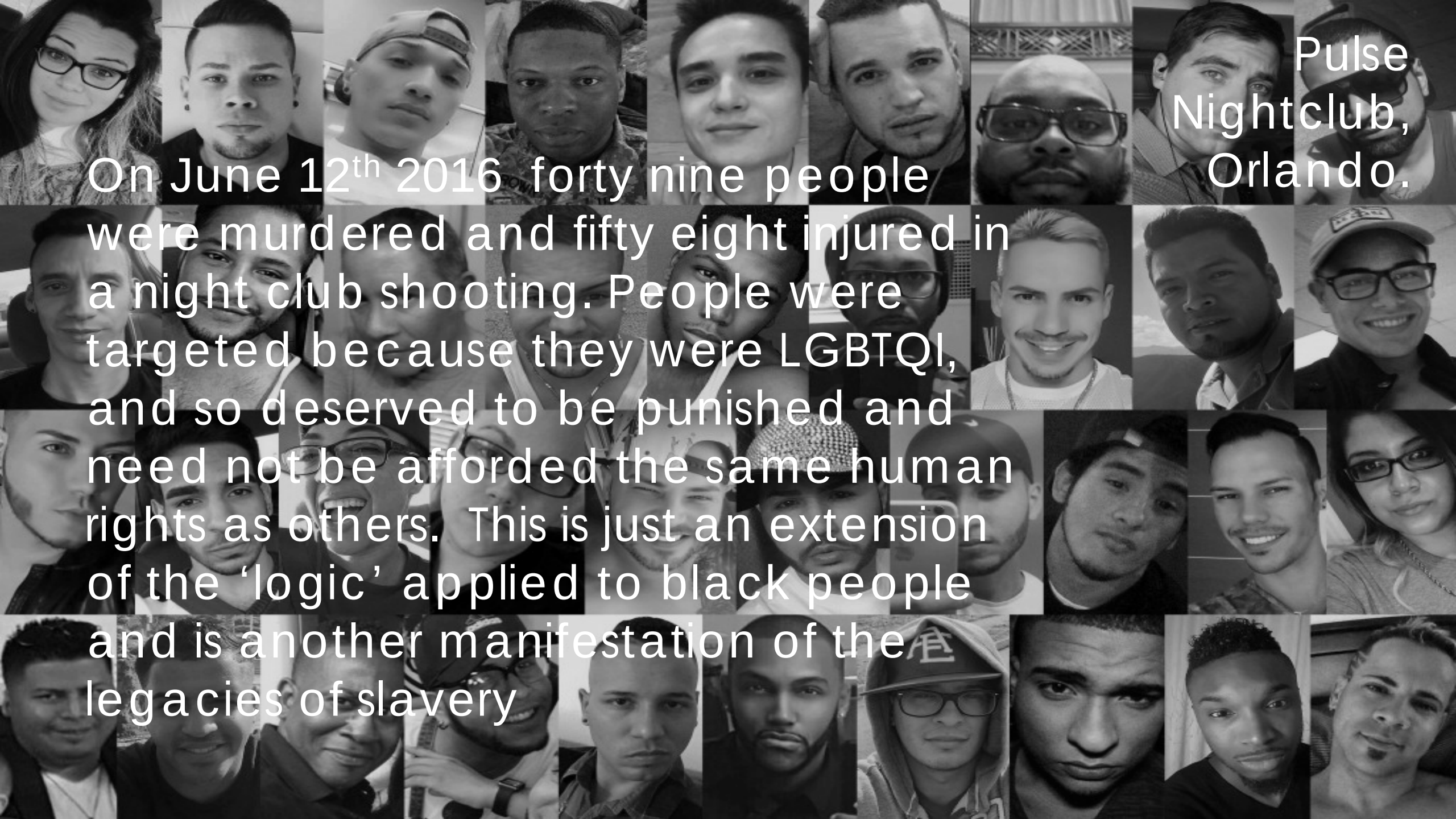
Hannah Town in Kingston lives with political gang violence, which stems from the legacies of slavery in poverty, political corruption and internalized racism.


"UNINTENDED BUT NOT A MISTAKE"

From Ferguson to Charlottesville to Sacramento, US

Black people are three times more likely to be killed by the police than a white person. The Black Lives Matters movement and others highlight the extent and systematic nature of police and vigilante violence aimed at black people in the US. Even as material this was produced, March 2018, Stephon Clark, a black man was shot in Sacramento because the police assumed his phone was a weapon and shot him while he was in his own garden





Pulse Nightclub, Orlando.

On June 12th 2016 forty nine people were murdered and fifty eight injured in a night club shooting. People were targeted because they were LGBTQI, and so deserved to be punished and need not be afforded the same human rights as others. This is just an extension of the 'logic' applied to black people and is another manifestation of the legacies of slavery

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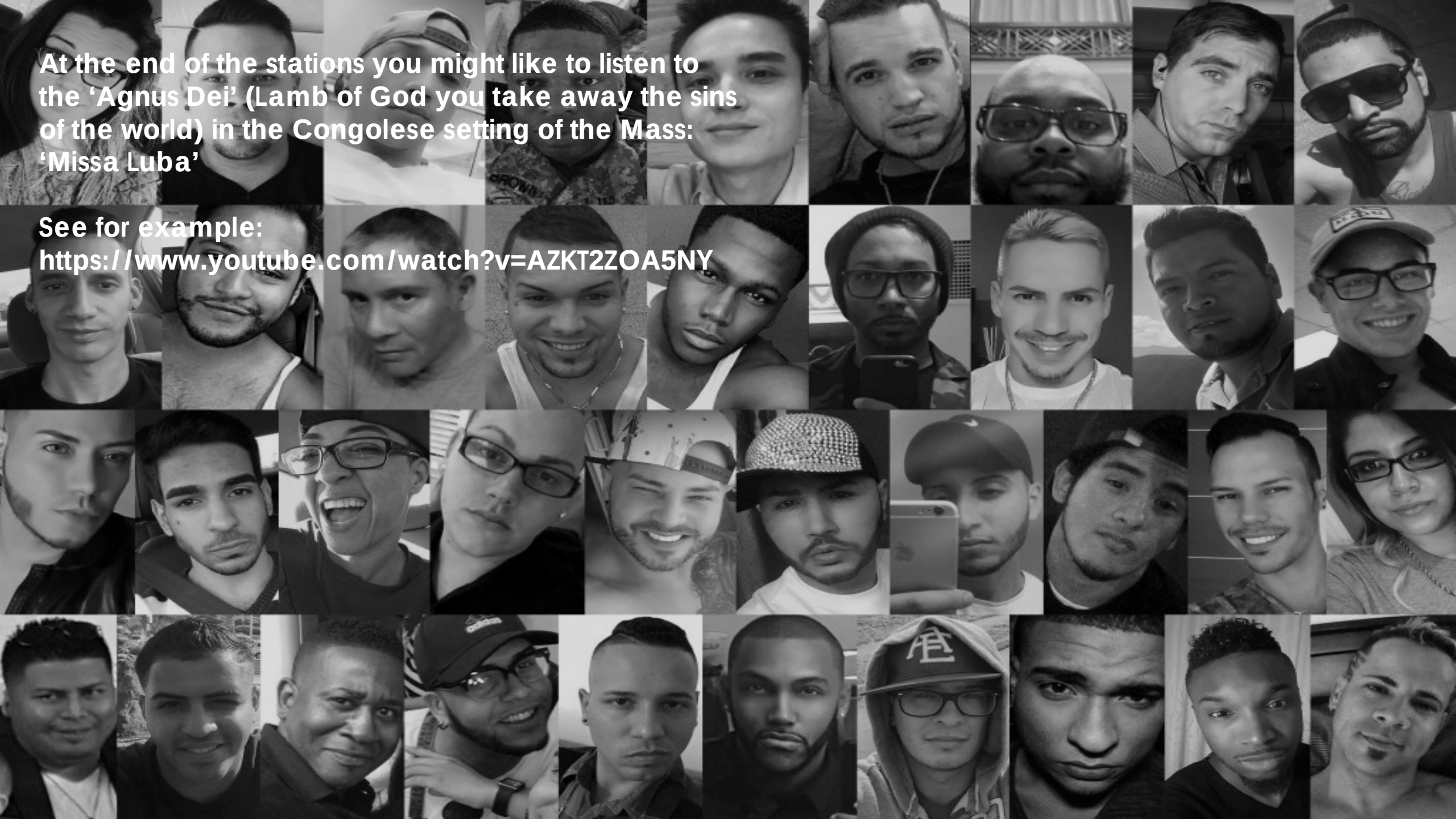
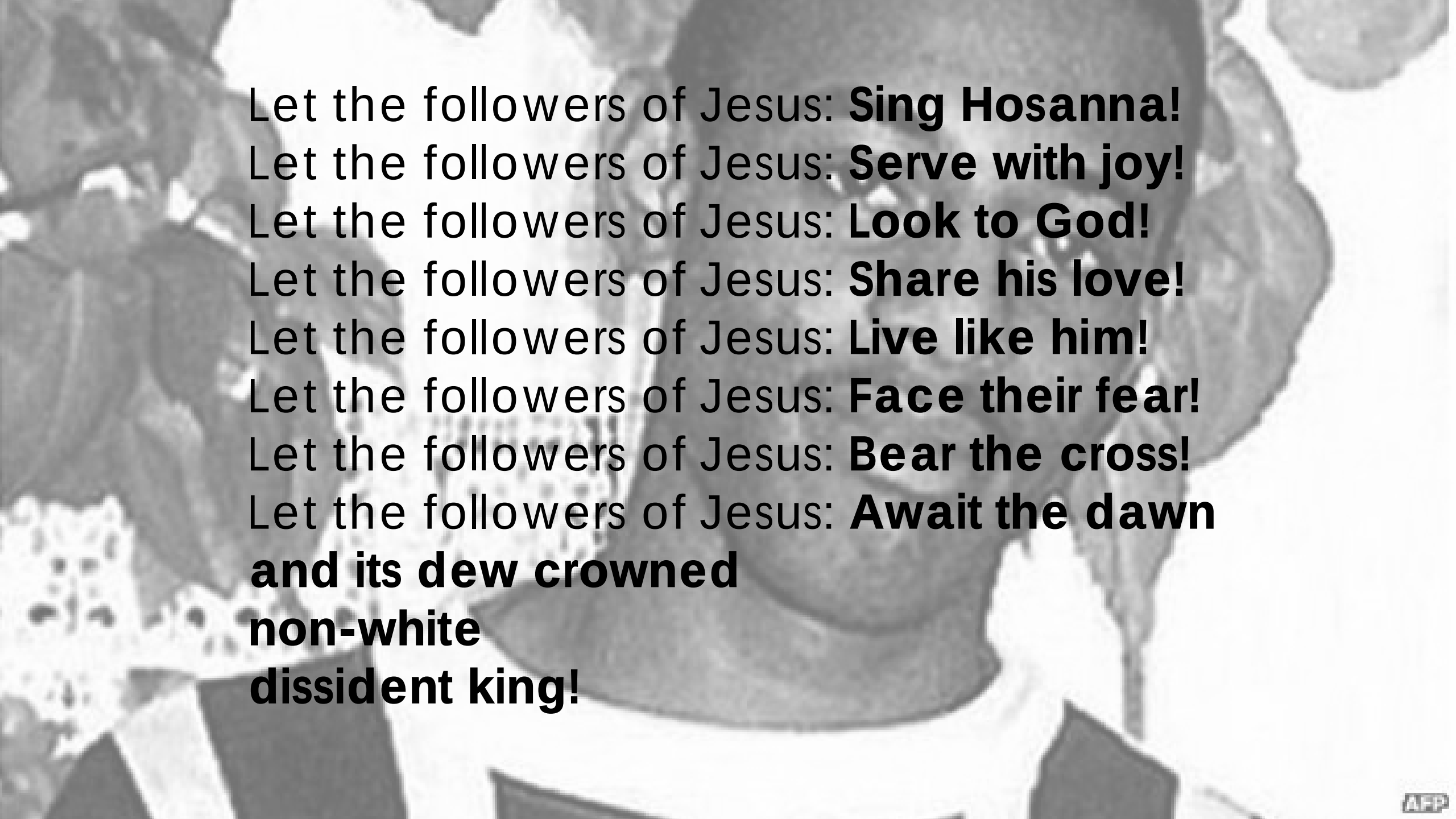


At the end of the stations you might like to listen to the ‘Agnus Dei’ (Lamb of God you take away the sins of the world) in the Congolese setting of the Mass: ‘Missa Luba’

See for example:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZKT2ZOA5NY



Let the followers of Jesus: **Sing Hosanna!**
Let the followers of Jesus: **Serve with joy!**
Let the followers of Jesus: **Look to God!**
Let the followers of Jesus: **Share his love!**
Let the followers of Jesus: **Live like him!**
Let the followers of Jesus: **Face their fear!**
Let the followers of Jesus: **Bear the cross!**
Let the followers of Jesus: **Await the dawn**
and its dew crowned
non-white
dissident king!

AFP

Legacies of Slavery

Council for World Mission (CWM) has devised a project to explore the legacies of the trans-atlantic slave trade. There has been a call for some years now from Black communities of the Caribbean, UK and the US for the legacies of the Transatlantic slave trade to be addressed. It has been recognized by the UN. CWM's own origins as the London Missionary Society lie in this vital period of colonization and slavery as we were founded before slavery was abolished. CWM came into being in the 1970s as a way to de-colonise the mission relationships of the member churches, and its vision of partnership emerged as a way to dismantle some of the consequences of colonialism. This project is a further part of our being a post-colonial organisation. We are looking to take historical contemporary perspectives, examining the practice of slavery in those settings and how this has continued to shape the realities of the people of that place. In this way the hearings will enable people to voice hurt and anger, and for CWM to discover afresh what post-colonial mission movements need to address.

These are the four chief aims:

- CWM is looking to assess its own story and complicity with the systems of slavery
- Understand better the urgency of racial justice and the issues which intersect with it
- Find ways to advocate reparation with its member churches
- Discover anti-Imperial models of Christian mission in today's world.

cwm a partnership of churches in mission