

**“never forget that justice is what love
looks like in public”**

Dr Cornell West.

Liturgy in a Dangerous Time

An opening

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,

A long way from home.

A quote

“Oppression is unjustly distributed.”

Monica A Coleman

A prayer

Disturb us, O Lord

when we are too well-pleased with ourselves

when our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little,

because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, O Lord

when with the abundance of things we possess,

we have lost our thirst for the water of life

when, having fallen in love with time,

we have ceased to dream of eternity

and in our efforts to build a new earth,

we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.

Stir us, O Lord

to dare more boldly, to venture into wider seas

where storms show Thy mastery,

where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

In the name of Him who pushed back the horizons of our hopes

and invited the brave to follow.

Amen

Desmond Tutu



[Mike Von on Unsplash](#)

A quote

“Je ne peut plus respirer.”

Abdelhakim Ajimi (France, 2008)

A quote

“I can’t breathe.”

Jimmy Mubenga (UK, 2010)

A quote

“I can’t breathe.”

Olaseni Lewis (UK, 2010)

A quote

“I can’t breathe.”

Eric Garner (USA, 2014)

A quote

“I can’t breathe.”

David Dungay (Australia, 2015)

A quote

“I can’t breathe.”

George Floyd (USA, 2020)



[Mike Von on Unsplash](#)

A thought

Kingdom Knowing

As of last Sunday we are now in the season of Pentecost. Besides Holy Thursday, Pentecost is my favourite holy day in the Church year. We get to celebrate the birth of the church and continue to ask for God to pour his Holy Spirit on all flesh. This is exciting and gospel-fuelled. As a charismatic Anglican, I look forward to this day every year. And enjoy being able to pray for people to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But I missed being able to do that this year.

Not the actual day, but the liturgical drama and emotion of the day and season. **I continue to feel like I'm in Lent.** I think for many black and brown disciples this has been our reality. As a fairly new convert to the liturgical seasons, Lent has been a time to help me re-centre and reenjoy the story of Christ every year.

Lent is a solemn time of religious observance. Due to Covid-19 and the protest in the US, UK, and around

the world, it has felt like a never-ending time of reflection. I have felt the pains of my BAME brothers and sisters and the silence of my white ones. This daily pain is something that becomes hard to bear.



[Clay Banks on Unsplash](#)

This constant oppression has been building for many people and as we all know, if you continue to blow up a balloon with air, it can only be stretched so far before it pops. The racial balloon has been being filled with an air called oppression and Black people have been trying to explain to their neighbours, what was going on. But they've been ignored.

Then the balloon pops. And the balloon makes a very loud noise. Everyone is surprised and shocked but not quite everyone. Your neighbours who you have been trying to warn are shocked. We are not. We knew this would happen. And we begged our neighbours to watch out and learn, but we were not listened to.



[Obi Onyeador on Unsplash](#)

The sad reality is that this has not been much different from inside the Church community. BAME Christians have been asking for equality and safety for decades, but have been ignored. This Pentecost vision is many people from different

backgrounds being saved by the one who brings people together. Yet, we feel even more divided than before. The Spirit is to bring unity and community. So, when we pray, 'Come Holy Spirit', we ask for unity and renewal of our hearts, minds, and hands. It's not surprising why Black American religious experiences are rooted in good news in the time of oppression, because this was a real lived experience. Gospel Music is so called because it's truly good news regardless of the circumstances. I have been reconnecting with the religious roots of Gospel music to help me in the time of this continued season of Lent. Constantly seeing black bodies killed by the police is traumatizing. Also, watching your social media feed filled with well-meaning people who want to be social media justice warriors through words but no actions, can be infuriating.

Brothers and Sisters, we are all still in this season. We need to reflect and act during this time of waiting. Just like Covid-19, there will be going back to normal. For disciples of Christ, there

is no returning to the normal. The only normal is the theological understanding that he is with and in us all who call ourselves disciples.

As disciples, we must live differently after this.

None of us are ignorant of the plight of BAME people in white-majority cultures. Many people are asking the question, “what can I do?” We all must first pray and second act.

Praying is effective and something we are called to do. We must act too.

Disciples can write letters to political leaders, can donate money, go to a protest of Black Lives Matter, and educate yourself. But praying and acting is not a choice, it's mandatory for disciples of Jesus. Remember, we are called to love our neighbour. And

justice is what love

looks like in public. This is Kingdom living and kingdom knowing.

[Augustine Ihm](#)

A question

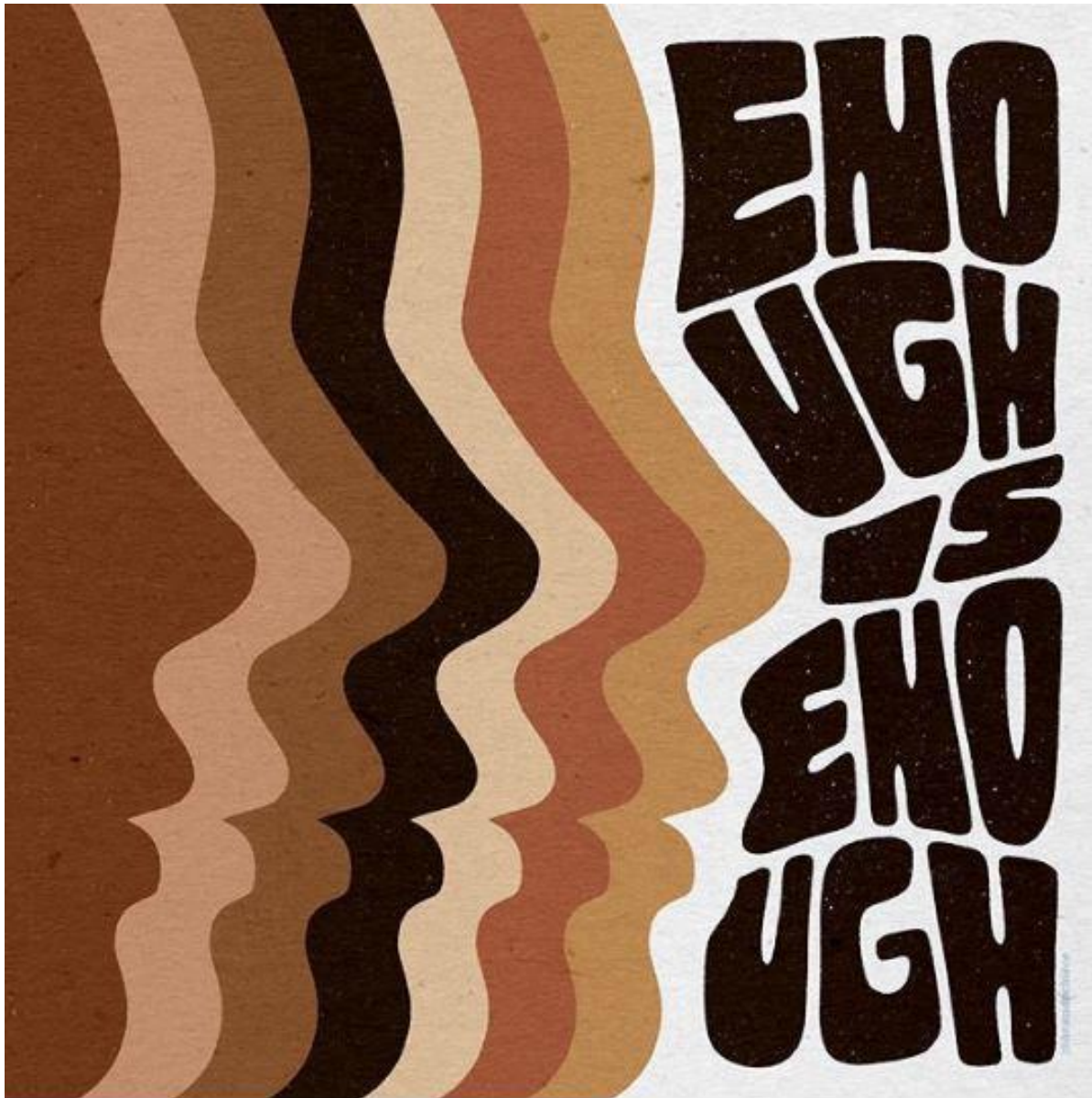
What can we do, in order to ensure that we work together for justice?

64%

of NHS staff who have died from COVID19 are from a minority ethnic background.

20%

of people who work in the NHS are from a minority ethnic background.



[*Brandy Chieco*](#)

A song

Listen to “Perfect friends” by the wonderful Ben Okafor.

“Dry your eyes my child, you’re in the company of perfect friends.”

[Click here to listen.](#)

[*Ben Okafor*](#)

A quote

“Nobody’s free until everybody’s free.”

[*Fannie Lou Hamer*](#)

A poem

“Should the devil himself become a
lion and chase us as his prey,
we shall have no fear
Lamb of God!
Satan says he is a wolf -
Jesus stretches forth His hand,
and look: Satan is a mouse!
Holy One!”

Afua Kuma

An inspiration

Are you struggling to know how to
make a difference? Kate Coleman has
some suggestions, [click here to read
them.](#)

Kate Coleman

A recording

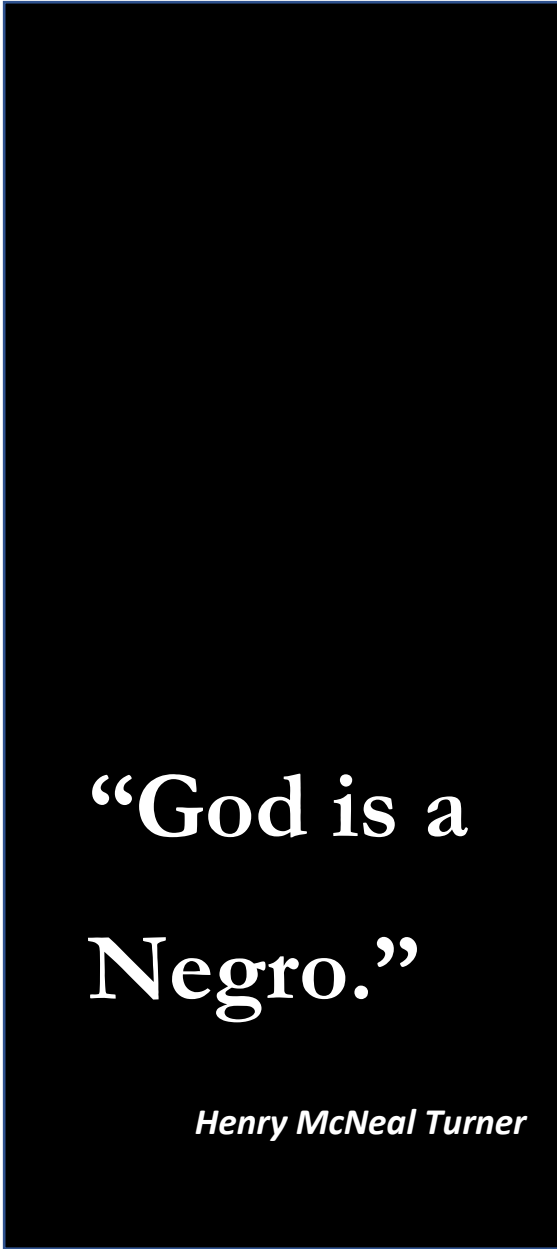
Listen to this, which combines a short
homily by James Cone on ‘the Cross
and the Lynching Tree’, with Billie
Holiday’s harrowing ‘Strange Fruit’.

[Click here to listen.](#)

A saying

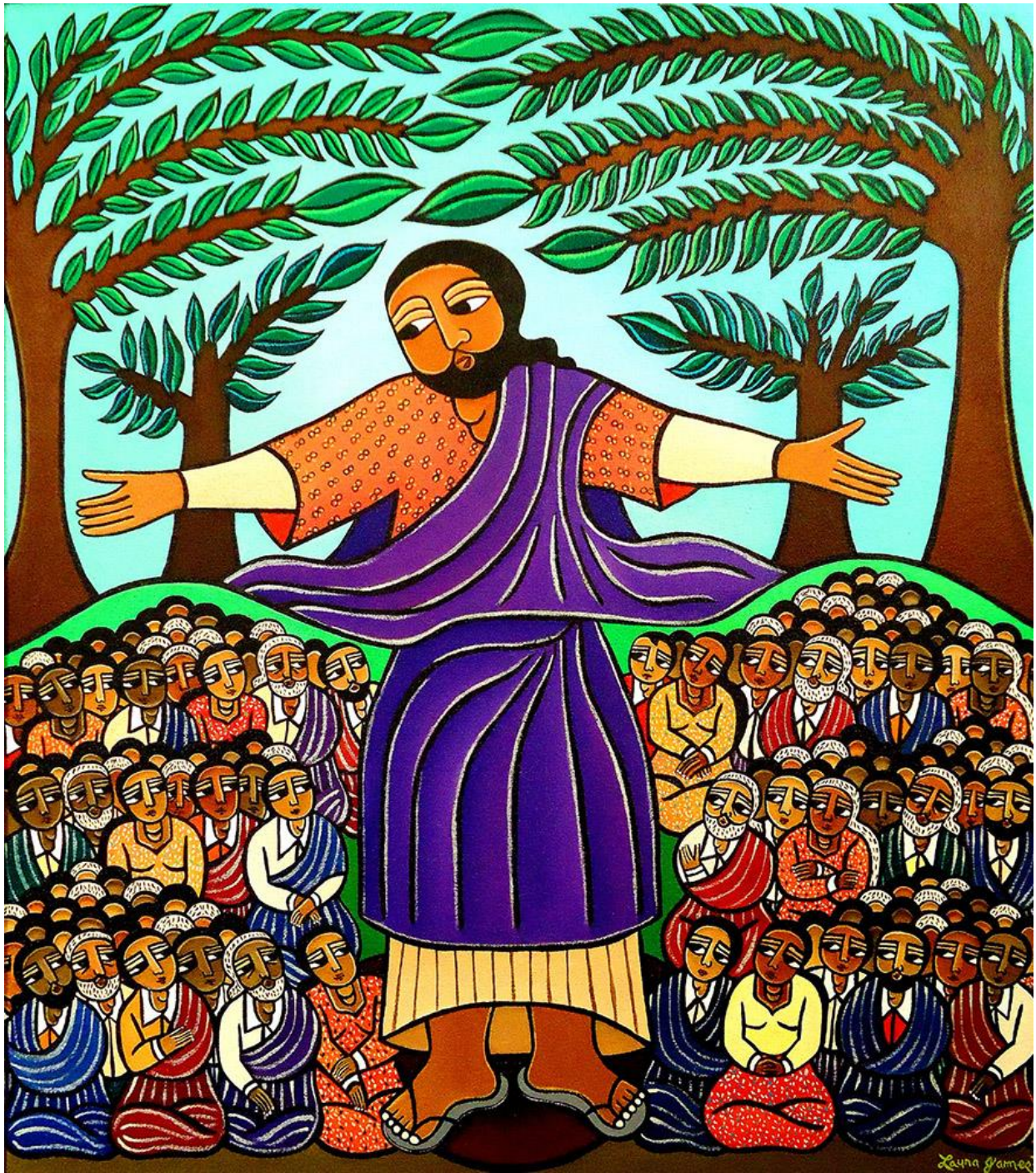
"I saw the snares that the enemy
spreads out over the world and I said
groaning, "What can get through
from such snares?" Then I heard a
voice saying to me, 'Humility.'"

Anthony of Egypt



**“God is a
Negro.”**

Henry McNeal Turner



Sermon on the Mount, 2010

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A remembering

Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche suggested that life would be simpler and more joyful for all if we engaged in “active forgetting”.

He writes: “In the smallest as in the greatest happiness, it is something that happiness is happiness: the ability to forget, or to put it in terms most learned, the ability to feel things, as long as happiness lasts, without any historical perspective.”

Of course, there would be no protests or Black Lives Matter movements if we could simply forget the centuries of injustice as Nietzsche implies, but when I see yet another black person killed I remember all of those who have been treated so inhumanely because of the colour of their skin. Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin and countless others in the US. Sean Rigg, Sheku Bayoh, Joy Gardner and many more in the UK. It is why many of us become so

enraged at the whitewashing of our nations’ histories, the attempt to rewrite the past or simply forgive and forget.

The problem is we can’t. Because we are ‘diminished when others are... diminished’ and the injustice continues, not only across the Atlantic. And unless there is a collective acknowledgment of the place of white power and its effect on every area of society, we can never engage in active forgetting. It is the duty of each of us – black or white – to remember these heinous injustices and stop them happening again.

For as Philosopher George Santayana once said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

(This is a short section from a blog that Chine wrote for Theos, re-printed with their permission. [See the full article here.](#))

[Chine McDonald](#)

A letter

Remember the ark?

Remember Noah.

Who was not a rower,
But knew in his knower
that something was wrong.

Building a boat on dry land,
Scorched sand.
Surrounded by the mocking
Nephilim, giants of an age.

The Nephilim the offspring
of the arrogant sons of God
and the scheming daughters of men.

Engorged with rage, the earth was
theirs for the taking.
The work of uncreating.

The Nephilim prompted the flood,
Noah built on, his faith strong.
Giving sweat, giving toil,
giving blood.

Dear Future me,
Can you still see?

The settling of your
family, during the
upsetting of society,

The routine and
rhythm which arose
from the chaos,

Was supple, respectful,
and light,
The sabbaths revealed
Your little humans,
Who were fighting with
all of their might,
to comprehend the
incomprehensible.

While you future me watched
people of colour die
in droves, the morally indefensible.

Black lives do not matter
on either side of the Atlantic,
You were stunned into silence whilst
others grew frantic,

You watched and waited,
As others debated, why
are black and brown lives so hated?

And you hope your children
are not traumatised,
that there is no apparent way to
equalise.
They have few chances to succeed, to
lead they
Have to puncture white greed.

So remember the arc,
The story arc as the protagonist
is projected out into a
new story not of their making,
grieving is for later
as the old life is breaking.
They are called to do the
work of recreating...

Earth is yearning, for the true
daughters and sons of God and men
to be revealed.

So future you do not be concealed,
Refuse to hide your light.

Pick up your torch against the
ghoulish night,
Now run, gather others, then fight!

[Azariah France-Williams](#)

A prayer

O Lord, our Saviour,
you have warned us that you will
require much of those to whom much
is given.

Grant that we who have so great a
heritage may strive together more
abundantly to extend to others what
we so richly enjoy.

As we have supported the labours of
others, by working with them, in their
turn others may support us in our
work, to the fulfilment of your holy
will;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Augustine of Hippo

A certainty

“Any talk about God that fails to
make God's liberation of the
oppressed its starting point is not
Christian.”

James H Cone

A prayer

Lord does my black life matter?
because I can't breathe
I'm stifled by injustice
I'm stifled by racism
I'm stifled by institutions
I can't breathe.

Lord send your transforming breath
of life
Transform our hearts
Transform our minds
Transform institutions.

Breathe, breath of God, breathe
Breathe your transforming life into
every man, woman and child made in
your image

Amen

Phyllis Manners

A blessing

A blessing for the current days:
(Genesis 9:25-28 – a curse reversed)

“Blessed be Canaan! The highest of
free men will he be to his brothers.
Praise be to the Lord, the God of the
People! May Canaan be an ever
present friend to Shem.

May God equally extend their
territory; may Japheth live in the tents
of Shem, and may Canaan always
partner with Japheth.”

[Lukas Evans-Santos](#)

A closing

And what does the LORD require of
you? To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

This edition features contributions from: **Brandy Chieco (illustrator)**, **Augustine Ihm (ordinand, writer & theologian)**, **Laura James (artist & illustrator)**, **Phyllis Manners (baptist minister & hospital chaplain)** **Chine McDonald (campaigner, writer & broadcaster)**, **Ben Okafor (musician, author, actor & humanitarian)**, **Lukas Evans Santos (lawyer & charity worker, born & bred in São Paulo, Brazil)** & **Azariah France Williams (prophet, poet, priest)**. This series is curated by [Andy Campbell](#) and [Simon Cross](#).