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King Charles Worships in Antigua as Church Service Puts Slavery Reparations in Focus

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Of the Commonwealth must be a"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

King Charles and Queen Camilla attended a church service in Antigua on Sunday 1 November 2026, sitting at the head of the congregation for a special service celebrating the Commonwealth - and the sermon they heard put the slavery reparations debate at the very centre of the week. The Anglican Bishop of North East Caribbean and Aruba, Ernest Flemming, delivered the address at St John's Pentecostal House of Restoration, calling for partnership based on mutual respect, listening and fairness, and saying the voices of small states and marginalised communities must be included in decision-making.

The service was the King and Queen's first official engagement of their trip to Antigua for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, known as CHOGM, which gathers leaders from 56 states every two years. Sir Viv Richards and Prime Minister Gaston Browne were among those present. The couple were greeted on arrival by Sir Rodney Williams, the Governor-General of Antigua and Barbuda.

Bishop Flemming did not soften his message for a royal audience. He told the congregation that the "prosperity" of the Commonwealth must be a "shared prosperity". His words, reported by the Religion Media Centre, were plain and direct: "True partnership requires mutual respect, it requires listening, it requires fairness."

King Charles To Address Commonwealth Leaders On Slavery

The King was due to address Commonwealth leaders at CHOGM on Tuesday, in a speech expected to touch on the issue of slavery. Buckingham Palace said he would speak with "unflinching honesty" and "sincere sorrow" about the lasting pain of the transatlantic slave trade, but that he would not comment on goverment policy.

The Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, changed the terms of that argument just before the summit. He said he was open to the possibility of the United Kingdom formally apologising for its role in slavery, a change in the government's stance. At the same time, he ruled out considering financial reparations.

Burnham expressed "my sorrow and regret for the pain and suffering of so many millions". The British government has never formally apologised for slavery or offered to pay reparations, and his offer of talks about an apology, rather than money, was welcomed by some Caribbean leaders and dismissed as not enough by others.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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