



## **PRESS RELEASE:**

### **The March of the Abolitionists** *Walking in Yokes and Chains in Former Slave Ports to Apologise for Slavery*

The March of the Abolitionists, a walk of reconciliation that offers an apology for the Atlantic slave trade and sees white people donning yokes and chains, starts again on Monday June 4<sup>th</sup>. Following the successful first stage of the March, a 250-mile walk from Hull to Westminster which took place in March, the walkers will set off again from Deptford in south-east London on Monday June 4<sup>th</sup> for the second stage, called the Sankofa Reconciliation Walk. This stage will last until July 11<sup>th</sup> and will link former slave ports, including London, Bristol, Plymouth, Liverpool, Lancaster, Whitehaven and Glasgow as well as visiting many other cities and towns such as Birmingham, Manchester, Derby and Leicester.

A short commissioning service will be held at 9am on Monday June 4<sup>th</sup> in St Nicholas Church in Deptford Green. This church is where slave ship captains sought God's blessing before embarking on their ventures. The first walk will include Deptford High Street and end at Deptford Town Hall. A debate on reparations will be held there. For a full itinerary of the walk, please visit our website or contact organiser David Pott (details below).

"Sankofa" is an increasingly popular word from the Akan language of West Africa and means "we must learn from the past to build for the future." March organiser David Pott comments, "This will be a journey of discovery to learn about the way the Atlantic slave trade has impacted our society right up to the present time. We invite people to join us as we aim to bring an apology of substance, seeking reconciliation and the way forward for future generations."

#### **The Purposes of the March are:**

- To bring an apology for the slave trade (especially the role of the Church) and to help those we meet deal with its legacy.
- To engage with schools, public forums and the media about the true history of slavery and abolition, promoting greater understanding, reconciliation and forgiveness.
- To remember the black and white abolitionists of 200 years ago and wholeheartedly support the current campaigns seeking to end the atrocity of contemporary slavery.

## **The Background**

The March of the Abolitionists is the last stage of the epic seven-year journey of the Lifeline Expedition, which is a Christian response to the legacy of the Atlantic slave trade. After the first Jubilee 2000 Lifeline walk in England, teams of Africans, descendants of enslaved Africans and white people have journeyed to slavery sites in France (2002), Spain and Portugal (2003), USA (2004), the Caribbean Region (2005) and West Africa (2006).

## **An Appreciation**

“We of African descent home and abroad thank you for your remembrance of the suffering of our fore-relatives who were put in chains as animals and used as machines. True repentance is in the demonstration and this is what you have done. Thank you.” Archbishop Paul Hackman

## **Photographs:**

Photographs are available at the press centre on our website, [www.lifelineexpedition.co.uk/mota](http://www.lifelineexpedition.co.uk/mota).

## **Contact Details:**

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## **Partnerships:**

The March of the Abolitionists is an initiative of the Lifeline Expedition in partnership with Anti-Slavery International, CARE, Church Mission Society, the Equiano Society, Northumbria Community, Peaceworks, USPG, Wilberforce 2007 (Hull) and Youth With A Mission. The march is also associated with the Set All Free and Stop the Traffik coalitions.