



PRAYERLINES

APRIL 2006



| www.cms-uk.org



'The Korean Cross', artist unknown

PRAYERLINES



“God does not delay to hear our prayers because He has no mind to give; but that, by enlarging our desires, He may give us the more largely.”

Anselm of Canterbury

I used to feel uncomfortable about coming before God with what seemed to me to be trivial issues. Why should the God who made the world and sustains it by his power want to be involved with the minutiae of my life? The answer is God wants to enlarge the scope of our prayers. So as we pray we expand our capacity to pray. In the process the subjects we pray about will become more in accord with God's ways.

Some of you have written to say, “I already have my own system of regular Bible study: I don't need another.” We're not aiming to rival your favourite Bible reading system but to encourage you into prayer in fresh ways. We will be trying various approaches in the months ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Martin".

John Martin

CMS Head of Communication

Email john.martin@cms-uk.org or ring 020 7803 3311.

WEEK 1

2 – 8 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD OUR FATHER

Read Ephesians 1:3–7

One of the astonishing things Jesus taught is that we can come before God as our father. In a single stroke Jesus turned the religious world of his day on its head.

There are many people however whose relations with their earthly fathers are so difficult or damaged they can't even get to first base with God their heavenly father. Healing of relationships can be a starting point to enable the Gospel to do its work.

Use this passage to pray that impediments to the spread of the Gospel will be taken away and that people everywhere will rejoice in knowing God as father. It may help to write up list of people and places to focus your prayers on.

He is the one for whom women lay down their cloths on the path, and pour sweet-smelling oil on his feet. They run to and fro amid shouts of praise before him:

It is true: Jesus is Chief! Amen

(Ghana: invocation of Jesus of the Deep Forest)

M

Pray for peace in Nigeria among Muslim and Christian communities. Tensions recently spilled over again into violence and fatalities. Amid the trouble the Bishop of Jos's family and mission partner Susan Essam were attacked in February by armed robbers.

T

The Church of Nigeria Missionary Society is restructuring, as is the Directorate of Mission and Evangelism in the Church of Nigeria Secretariat. Former CMS Africa Director Bishop Ken Okeke is leading these processes and implementing them.

W

Seed grants from CMS helped provide national co-ordinators for the HIV/AIDS programmes of the Church of Nigeria and the Anglican Church in Ghana. They help dioceses to shape local responses and find the resources needed to support the work.

T

CMS partner in Sierra Leone, Diakonia Interdenominational Services for Counselling, Evangelism and Teaching (DISCET) needs people with the right knowledge and skills for its new support programme for people living with HIV/AIDS.

F

The much-appreciated medical ministry of the Diocese of Bo in Sierra Leone faces challenges in engaging qualified personnel to run its programmes. Bishop Sam Gbonda and all church leaders in Bo, lay and ordained, value our prayers.



Wusasa ●● Zaria

Kaduna ● Jos

■ Abuja

NIGERIA

Lagos

● Onitsha

WEEK 2

9 – 15 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD WHO UNITES

Read Ephesians 1:8–10

These days most companies have a mission statement, a succinct sentence or so that sums up who they are and where they are heading. Few Bible verses spell out God's mission statement better than Ephesians 1:9–10.

God's purposes extend much wider than the human race. Through Christ, God's plan is to unite "all things" in him (v10). It's a plan for the salvation of the cosmos. God is at work restoring people to fellowship with him in Christ. God is at work restoring the entire created order.

Use this passage to wonder at the grandness of God's purposes and how he chooses to invite ordinary people to join in furthering them. Pray that the church everywhere will never lose sight of the grand scale of God's purposes.

**Pray that our churches may receive all guests
as they would receive Christ himself. Amen**
(A Rwandan prayer)

M

CMS-USA specialise in helping church congregations become truly 'intercultural' – ethnically diverse fellowships that share the richness of their cultures in Christ. Their newly-expanded Board of Trustees is led by the Rev Geoffrey Little.

T

CMS-USA give thanks for the arrival from Kenya of Musyoki Muindi (former CMS office manager in Nairobi), his wife Kamene, and their baby girl Kavi, in New Haven, Connecticut, last October. Musyoki is their Director of Administration and Development.

W

CMS-USA Mission Associate (short-term volunteer) Jesse Osmon has just finished three months working with HIV-positive children at Nyumbani Children's Home in Nairobi, Kenya. He is now teaching at a school in Nakuru, east of the city, until August.

T

CMS-USA mission partners Doug and JoEllyn Fountain, with daughter Alyssa, work at Uganda Christian University. Doug teaches health care and organises AIDS prevention conferences and Jo Ellyn does the administration of the bursar's office.

F

Bernado and Lourdes Lora have been helping CMS-USA and the Diocese of Connecticut plant an intercultural church in New Haven. They are currently on sabbatical, seeking refreshment and clear guidance for the months to come.



CMS-USA mission partners in Uganda Doug and JoEllyn Fountain with Alyssa

WEEK 3

16 – 22 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD WHO ENLIGHTENS

Read Ephesians 1:15–23

Here is a passage that could be made into a prayer. How would you re-shape it to become one?

Paul's focus is Christians in community, that together God's gifts of wisdom, vision and knowledge of him may be a daily experience. It could be a prayer for everyone who's part of CMS.

Pray with Paul's phrase "the eyes of our hearts" (v18). This is our prayer radar where what we see and hear is reprocessed so we begin to see the world as God does. Put them to work now. Where is God inviting you to focus the eyes of your heart? Make a note or two.

Maybe you could invite someone gifted in prayer to share how they put the eyes of their heart to work and how they keep them in tip-top order.

Christ is in the midst of us!
He is and ever shall be! Amen
(A Russian Orthodox acclamation)

M

Hull Youth for Christ (including CMS people in mission Anna and Chris Hembury, Ian Dyson and Merly Jacob, a volunteer from India) celebrate Easter and their community links with a full English breakfast for the children of Boulevard district.

T

Plans are underway for a 25-cathedral tour in 2007 by CMS and Big Intent Theatre Co. School children will create a drama on the injustice of the slave trade for the local community, marking 200 years since the abolition of the slave trade.

W

Husband and wife Laurence Phin and Mairi Crawford are new arrivals at Rugarama health centre in Kabale, Uganda. Mairi, a GP, works with German medical superintendent Christoph Menzel, who took over from CMS mission partner Rachelle Sanderson.

T

Mission partner in Mombasa, Kenya, Meg Merrifield asks us to “pray for Assistant Bishop Denah and his responsibility for theological education in Mombasa Diocese, and that we may work well together.” Meg is on the staff of Bishop Hannington Institute.

F

Up to 60 former CMS study partners in Africa are on their way to a consultation at Mukono, Uganda, (24–28 April). We will discover where our alumni have gone, what they are doing, and ask how they and we can continue to enrich partner Churches in Africa.



CMS mission partners Chris and Anna Hembury, with Elijah and Kavita, work with Hull Youth for Christ. Photo: CMS

WEEK 4

22 – 28 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD WHO IS MERCIFUL

Read Ephesians 2:1–7

Pelagius (354–418) was the first and probably the most notorious English heretic. He taught that we're really not all that bad: so surely God won't come down on us too hard. How English!

Contrast this to what Paul says here about the plight of people who don't know God and refuse to walk in his ways. Paul doesn't leave us there, however. God who is full of mercy and kindness has acted decisively to bring humans into fellowship with him. If we ever doubt, here are cogent reasons for being in mission and wrapping it in sustained prayer.

You might consider focusing on some places and contexts that need to hear Good News of a God who is “rich in mercy”. They may be a long way away, or at your door.

Lord, help us and the peoples of the world to accept the gift of peace that Jesus came to bring. Amen (USA)

M

Mission partner Dr Ruth Huelser works in a primary health clinic in the Diocese of Tabora, Tanzania. It runs at a small monthly loss and needs more funds to carry on its basic work including health education and for an effective strategy to develop its HIV work.

T

Laura and Simon Walton are based at Mvumi Hospital in central Tanzania. Laura is closely involved with local education and Simon is a doctor. Among his roles is sensitively working to help church leaders break the stigma of HIV and AIDS.

W

Today sees the hospital's weekly Care and Treatment clinic for people living with HIV/AIDS, many are women with large families. Simon says, "Some of these patients are extremely sick and need your 'Wednesday morning clinic prayers'".

T

Increased access to anti-retroviral drugs means a better life for patients like Pendo, 36, Sunday-school teacher and mother of five. Her health is slowly improving and she asks prayer for her eight brothers and sisters, "who do not yet know Jesus".

F

The Waltons' church, St Andrew's, has a kindergarten. Administrator Frank Msele reports that it shows the children they are valuable in God's eyes and welcome in his house but parents may struggle to pay the fees of 25p a month in money or food.

WEEK 5

28 APRIL – 5 MAY

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD THE WORKER

Read Ephesians 1:8–16

Faith is one of God's great gifts and the gift of faith is given to propel us into work. We often forget that – not least when so much that is said about this passage cautions us about trusting in good works as a way to be put right with God.

So this passage invites us to think about vocation. Like Charles Wesley we need to understand how to “offer all my work” to the Lord, even the elements of drudgery.

God is at work calling people to specific places and tasks. Continue to pray for people testing a call to mission and for those who having gone on a mission assignment find there are tough bits alongside the exciting stuff.

O God, grant us grace to receive Jesus Christ in every person and to be Jesus Christ to every person. Amen
(A prayer by Martin Luther, 1483–1546)

M

Security in Kitgum, northern Uganda, is still fragile. Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony has reportedly been on the run in Congo, wanted by the International Criminal Court on war crimes charges. Christ's peace is needed more than ever.

T

Mission partner Garry Ion has been based in Kitgum and asks us to pray especially for wisdom for the Ugandan government, for organisations ministering to community and church, and those engaged in attempts to negotiate peace in a fraught atmosphere.

W

Progress towards peace in Burundi continues but the last group of rebels, the Forces for National Liberation (FNL), still needs to lay down its arms. Christian President Pierre Nkurunziza and Archbishop Bernard Ntahoturi need our prayers.

T

In DR Congo, mission partner Judy Acheson is developing Anglican youth work nationwide. The Rev Jean-Paul Muhindo leads youth work in Bukavu Diocese and Rev Willy Bahemuka runs Mahagi youth-training centre, which also trains Sudanese.

F

In DR Congo, Kiiza (in Boga Diocese), Azama (in Kindu) and Cécile, Jeanne and Ruth (in Bukavu), minister to women who have been raped; and Archdeacon Mwenyemali Mulenda is working to reconcile communities in the Kalima area.



More than 1.6 million displaced people live in camps in northern Uganda.
Photo: James Akena

PRAYER FOCUS

CMS IS MOVING TO OXFORD

This is a critical year for CMS as we plan the move of the UK offices from Partnership House in London to our new base in south-east Oxford in 2007. We value your prayers immensely and will keep you updated in **PRAYERLINES**.

We give thanks for the successful purchase of two adjoining houses in Iffley Road, Oxford, to become the CMS 'community house'. Pray for insight as to how CMS should use them best in the development of a Mission Community in Oxford and beyond.

This month we hope to receive planning permission this month for the changes to Thames Court which will make it ready for use. Pray for wisdom in the selection of partners and suppliers to work on the next phases of the building work and office set-up.

Staff and their families continue to weigh up the various options as they come to decisions about moving to Oxford. The personnel team have a huge task in managing this process and making plans for any necessary new recruitment.

PRAYERLINES is produced by the Church Mission Society,
Partnership House, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UU
Tel 020 7928 8681 Email info@cms-uk.org
Registered Charity Number 220297



Artist's impression of of CMS's new building

**Put on
love,
which is
the perfect
bond of
unity.**

Colossians 3:14