



PRAYERLINES

APRIL 2007



| *sharing Jesus, changing lives*



'Risen Lord' by Hong Chong Myung, Korea

PRAYERLINES



“We must alter our lives in order to alter our hearts, for it is impossible to live one way and pray another.”
William Law

Prayer is more than simply something I do. More than just saying words, true prayer is a state of being. A lifestyle. That’s why Paul could encourage Christians at Ephesus to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Eph 6:18).

How do we cultivate this way of prayer? We must find ways to make the best use of certain moments in time. One of the excuses we often use for lack of prayer is lack of time. I’m reminded of a schoolmaster of mine who, when proffered the excuse, “Sir, I had no time!” would retort, “But Martin, you had all the time there was.”

I find it helpful to use things around me as reminders of how my life needs to be a prayer. I’ve developed habits like offering a quick prayer when I press the computer ‘on’ button at the start of the day. As I walk about, I say a word for the people who occupy the space around me. I also pray for people and places I see in the morning paper.

I pray you will be encouraged to live a life in prayer this month.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Martin CMS Head of Communication

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WEEK 1

31 MARCH – 6 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

A God of Justice and Redemption

Saturday: Read Isaiah 59:1–16a

There's so much to observe in Isaiah 59 that we return to it. Do we really believe God detests injustice? We find out more here about how the Hebraic world understood justice. Not merely weighing the case of each side as portrayed by the famous scales of justice towering over London's Old Bailey. It's about positively intervening on behalf of those wronged. When did you last pray for justice in these terms? Or positively intervene to bring justice to a cause?

Sunday: Read Isaiah 59:16b–19

So what happens when no human lifts a hand to work for justice? Does the language of this passage sound familiar? You might look up Ephesians 6:11–17 for a fresh insight on what wearing the whole armour of God is about. Here God wears this armour in his mission for justice. Paul makes clear in Ephesians that this same armour is available to us. Ask God for a wider understanding of what it means to wear his armour and thus share in his mission.

M

The CMS-commissioned play *African Snow* opened on Friday at York Theatre Royal and runs until 14 April. Press night is on 2 April. Pray for favourable reviews and responses to this drama, which commemorates the abolition of the slave trade.

T

Pray that the impact of *African Snow* will help raise active awareness of the plight of millions in slavery today, as well as how CMS is combating this. Pray also that the success of the York performance will strengthen its effect at the next venues.

W

The London Festival of Life will take place on 13 April. This bi-annual event has become the largest all night interdenominational gathering of people in Europe coming together to pray and celebrate God. CMS will be there to share in the celebrations.

T

Please remember the CMS Fundraising Team as they prayerfully plan how to seek funding for CMS grants to our partners this year. Pray in particular for funding applications that are being considered by various grant-making organisations at the moment.

F

CMS will participate in the Nairobi Consultation on mission leadership (19–27 April) with Dennis Tongoi, Regional Director for Africa, and other CMS colleagues based in Africa. Chris Neal and Paul Thaxter will attend to learn from African leaders.



Darrell and Beth Jackson, helping CMS with mission research (see week 4)

WEEK 2

7 – 13 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

God's Spirit, God's Word

Saturday: Read Isaiah 59:20

The violent language of the last passage turns a corner. The God who has gone out on a mission of justice armed to the hilt will return as a loving redeemer. But there's a proviso. Redemption is not for everyone. It is efficacious only for when people "turn". Paul picks this theme up in Ephesians. People who were traditionally "near" (Jews) should not assume they will be included whereas to everyone's surprise people from "afar" (Gentiles) through Christ come to know this redemption as they turn away from transgression and false gods. Pray that this process will continue in the places you encounter this week.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 59:21

God's mission involves proclamation as well. So he equips us as his witnesses by the gift of his Spirit and by putting his words "in your mouth". Like the exiles of Babylon we have a call to communicate our faith story as mediators of God's word and God's way. Presence and proclamation.

M

Liz Hosegood (going to Zambia), and Allan and Anne Lacey (going to Arua, Uganda) are joining Andrew Parfitt (going to Afghanistan) at All Nations Christian College where they will spend one term preparing for the cross-cultural aspects of their service.

T

Liz and Anne have both already been completing courses in Tropical Medicine in preparation for nurse teaching roles. Allan, who has until recently been the minister of an Anglican Church on the edge of Doncaster, will be involved in theological education.

W

Felipe and Sarah Yáñez, with Aaron and Samuel, have just completed the first stage of their preparatory training, and will be going to Malaga in Spain for further preparation and language study before taking up their work with refugees there.

T

Richard and Sue Kellow are in the final term of their year at Redcliffe College. Having spent time in Tanzania and Moscow, they will go to Rwanda at the end of the summer. Do pray that they will be fully ready for the new challenges they will encounter.

F

Pray for Anne Lapage, who returns to East Africa this summer. She completed an MA in Global Issues in Mission at Redcliffe College, including researching the role of language and culture in the preparation of discipleship materials in rural Tanzania.

WEEK 3

14 – 20 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

God's wake-up call

Saturday: Read Isaiah 60:1–3

These words are beautifully re-mixed in Handel's *Messiah*. Israel is given a wake-up call. It must “rise and shine”, leave the world of lethargy and despair and enter a world of energy and hope. God their light has gloriously risen and is the best hope for a Jerusalem lying in ruins. The best hope for today's broken world. Good news for depressed exiles long ago. Good news for today's as well.

Read Isaiah 60:4–7

The purpose of a rebuilt Jerusalem, the prophet insists, is not merely to welcome home her exiled sons and daughters. Jerusalem is to be a beacon of mission. People from all over the world will be attracted by Jerusalem's light. It's an image the Gospel writers found to help them explain the significance of the visit of the Magi to the Christ child. We might want to say that mission is not merely trying to get people to believe the Gospel on our terms. As well as being a “city on hill”, like the shepherd in Jesus parable, mission is about actively seeking out the “lost sheep”. And there are myriads of them.



Tanas Al Qassis, Regional Manager, Middle East and North Africa

M

CMS Asia director Chye Ann Soh passes along greetings and thanksgiving to CMS from GKPB, the Protestant Christian Church in Bali, whom CMS supports through providing scholarships. Please pray for a continued fruitful relationship.

T

The Evangelical Fellowship of India has expressed regret over the Hon'ble Governor of Himachal Pradesh's support of the Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill. Similar acts have been used to harass Christian workers and hinder conversions.

W

Malcolm and Veronica White, mission partners in Jordan (until the end of June) request prayer "for Bishop Riah in his last months before he retires, and for Bishop Suheil as he prepares to be enthroned in Jerusalem on April 15th."

T

The Whites also ask for prayer for Iraqi refugees seeking to keep their lives together under very difficult circumstances and the continued effectiveness of the Grace Project in giving education to refugee children.

F

Please also pray for Christians in congregations in Damascus and Amman, for the involvement of CMS and Tanas Al Qassis, the new CMS manager for the Middle East and North Africa, as he forms a regional CMS strategy for the future.

WEEK 4

21 - 27 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

God who scatters and gathers

Saturday: Read Isaiah 60:8–12

God has scattered his people. It's a great mission theme because while throughout the Bible the scattering seems chaotic, it's part of God's sovereign action. It's still true today. When the church in Uganda was scattered in the time of Idi Amin, a sovereign God turned it for his purposes. Ugandan refugees were instrumental in taking the Gospel to southern Sudan where for years the people seemed Gospel-resistant. The same happened in Congo. The story runs and runs.

Sunday: Read Isaiah 60:12–18

God who scattered his people now brings them back. The poetic description of a house restoration is marvellous: peace as the overseer, righteousness giving the orders, walled around by salvation, gates echoing with praise. You might like to walk around your house and pray that these might be the hallmarks of your family life. Alternatively you might use these cues as a way to surround your church with prayer. Here's a great agenda for what God calls us to be as a community of people in mission.

M

Debbie James, Crossing Cultures Team leader asks for prayer for the participants of CMS short-term mission teams who are meeting together 27–29 April for a cross-cultural training weekend in preparation for their visits this summer.

T

Darrell, Beth and Kai Jackson, mission partners in Hungary, ended their time of service with CMS on 31 March. Through Darrell's work with Redcliffe the relationship with CMS will continue. The Jacksons say 'thank you' to all of their friends and supporters.

W

Tokunbo Akinbadewa, CMS mission partner in Uganda, also finished her term of service in February and will be getting married in May. She says, "I am leaving the paediatric ward in the capable hands of staff I have worked with over the past five years."

T

Mission partner James Pender in Bangladesh is thankful for the opportunity of 25 March 2007 to raise awareness of human trafficking (see Mission Update). He prays that Halina would receive justice and would obtain compensation from her traffickers.

F

Mission partner Trisha Wick in Southern Sudan requests prayer for a functioning hospital in Maridi in the near future, to change the present situation in which people are dying without medical care, especially pregnant mothers and children.

MISSION BACKGROUND

CMS IN SUDAN

Out of a total population of 29.5 million, Sudan has over 2.1 million Anglican adherents. Sudanese Christianity is a huge inspiration. In the South, Bible references to the Nile and Nubia are interpreted as witnessing to a covenant relationship of the people with God. Added to this is a rich, creative indigenous music.

The Anglican Church is the legacy of CMS work begun in Malek, 1906. Early on the going was tough and many missionaries gave up. The exception was Archdeacon Archibald Shaw who stayed 35 years and developed a bond with the Dinka people. Shaw developed such expertise with cattle that the like-minded Dinka people called him Mancuor (Ox).

The second Sudan War (1983–2005) left 2 million dead and 4 million displaced. Perceived loss of power of local gods and disruption of the traditional way of life triggered a massive movement into Christianity by Dinka and Nuer peoples.

Because war destroyed much church infrastructure and few pastors have adequate training, CMS prioritises Christian Leadership formation in Sudan. CMS supports four training colleges, youth leadership training and Theological Education by Extension.

PRAYER FOCUS

CMS IS MOVING TO OXFORD

The latest prayer requests about the move of the UK offices to Oxford in 2007.

So much effort has gone into making this move as painless as possible for all concerned. As the time for transition nears, please pray as final touches are added to the building and as the interior fixtures are sorted. Please continue to pray for those working to transfer our computer systems, that this would be a smooth and efficient process and that we wouldn't lose any data.

Staff members are arranging their work schedules around the moving dates. Pray that they would be able to accomplish all their tasks without tiring themselves out. Along with this, pray for continued strength and wisdom for those taking their leave from CMS and those making the move to Oxford.

Finally, pray that Transport for London and other local authorities will co-operate with CMS and let us park moving trucks in front of Partnership House. As for the new facility in Oxford, pray that we would have good relationships with people in the surrounding community, especially local young people.

PRAYER**LINES** is produced by the Church Mission Society, Partnership House, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UU
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**To act
justly
and to
love
mercy**