



PRAYERLINES

JULY 2006



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'He came down', Nyoman Darsane, Indonesia

PRAYERLINES



“God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it.” John Wesley

The great gulf between the world of our work and the world of our prayer life that I mentioned last month isn't a new problem. In Genesis 3 when the man and woman eat the forbidden fruit and their relationship with the Creator goes awry, it has implications for every part of their existence. Even work becomes an alienating experience. Thereafter, providing the essentials of life is done “in the sweat of your face” (Genesis 3:19).

Even so mortals were created to work. When we get our vocational life right we reflect our likeness to the Creator and feel his pleasure. Offering our work to God is at the heart of mission service. If God is going to use you or me in mission, the odds are that he will take and use skills honed in the workplace and that's what most CMS people in mission offer. So as you pray about your work, consider how to pray for theirs. This month we move our focus of praying with the Bible to the second Book of Isaiah.

Thanks for many encouraging letters and emails.

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

John Martin

CMS Head of Communication

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WEEK 1

2 – 8 JULY

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD BREAKS THE SILENCE

Read Isaiah 40:1-5

The comfort conveyed here is not mere solace. It's a powerful intervention. All seemed lost. All Judah's allies had melted away. It seems there's nothing for a desolated nation to do but meekly accept the humiliation of exile. Then God breaks the silence.

The future is in the hands of God, not the arrogant superpower, Babylon. Mortal power is finite and its tenure is temporary. God's word and God's rule will last forever (verse 8). We can still come to God in prayer with that confidence.

“Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!”

Andrew Murray

M

The blah... Emerging Churches Tour with Ryan Bolger and Karen Ward is in Bristol, London, Manchester and Birmingham, 14-18 July. The theme, Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures, explores emerging churches in the UK and USA.

T

20-23 July sees CMS's C2C (coast-to-coast) sponsored mountain-bike ride benefiting drug rehabilitation in Afghanistan, refugees and CMS mission partners doing medical, engineering and dental work. Give thanks for the pledges that have been received.

W

7-11 July Church of England General Synod meets in York. Pray for Tim Dakin, Ian Smith and CMS members who are part of Synod. We pray that the CMS display will heighten the Church of England's sense of being part of the world-wide Body of Christ.

T

At Faith2Share (31 July - 5 August 2006) the General Secretaries of CMSs around the world and members of the extended CMS family, mainly from the Global South, will meet in Sydney, Australia. Please pray for everyone as they prepare for Faith2Share.

F

Also, begin praying for God's Spirit and wisdom as all the organisations seek ways to network in the future. Pray that those relationships that have been strengthened since the last meeting in Bangalore, India, in November 2004 will continue to grow.



Freda Carey, mission partner in Pakistan

WEEK 2

9 – 15 JULY

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD BUILDS A HIGHWAY

Read Isaiah 40:3-5

In the ancient world there was no need for roads on the scale of modern motorways. When a highway was built, its purpose was not primarily for transportation. Potentates built them to stage triumphal processions to flaunt their victories in war and display the spoils. Even though Judah's worldly circumstances look bleak, the people are invited to celebrate the victory of God.

The twin themes of forgiveness and homecoming figure prominently in this part of Isaiah. They may reinforce the feeling that some of our life, at least, is outside the comfort zone. As followers of Jesus we will often feel at odds with the values and certainties of people around us. The passage invites us, like the exiles in Babylon, to look beyond the present order and to build a life on a different set of values.

“Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure.”

D. L. Moody

M

Mission Partners Geoff and Gill Kimber in Romania ask for prayer for upcoming camps in July and August that will be led by leaders of the Lord's Army mission, and for Nicu Pavel, an Orthodox priest, as he pioneers new ways of mission through the parish.

T

The CMS Encounter team of young adults is spending time at CMS partner Musalaha's summer camp, where Palestinian and Israeli 9-12 year olds learn to see each other through God's eyes as they interact on many levels.

W

Pray for wisdom for Dr Meshach Chujor, CMS South-to-South mission partner from the Church of Nigeria Mission Society, as he helps to provide drug-abuse and HIV/AIDS education for 10-25 year olds, their teachers, parents, and doctors in Central Asia.

T

Freda Carey is a mission partner in Pakistan. She has been busy serving in teaching and academic leadership positions and is grateful for the recent chance to do serious Bible study with students from non-Christian backgrounds at the Cathedral School.

F

Ruth Sayers, CMS mission partner in Cairo, works in the Bishop's office and asks for prayer for wisdom as the diocese works to help refugees from Sudan. It needs wisdom for distributing resources as there are so many people with so many needs.

A PRAYER EXERCISE

PRAY WITH ART

Spending time with a work of art can be a way into prayer. It can sharpen listening in prayer and exercise our spiritual imagination.

- Choose a picture. It may relate to a passage of Scripture, but that's not essential.
- Make yourself comfortable. Ask God to open up something fresh to you through it.
- Spend time taking in the details of the picture: notice the colours, texture, layers, characters, scenery.
- Now try to focus on the big picture. What is the work of art trying to portray?
- Imagine yourself as part of the scene. To which character do you relate most? Does the character relate to where you are right now?
- Ask God what all this might mean to you. Is there something fresh, or timeless, about God, about Jesus, about mission?

Thank God for it.

Adapted from Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

WEEK 3

16 – 22 JULY

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD ISSUES A CALL

Read Isaiah 40:6-8

Like Isaiah 6, this is a 'call' passage. As with the earlier chapter, it's a vision of the court of heaven. Here, different voices join in the drama. In chapter 6 a reluctant prophet is more than aware of his fragility. It's the same here: all human flesh is like grass; it's fragile, short-lived.

In contrast, there is One whose strength and power knows no bounds. His word is eternal and sure.

One way to use this passage in prayer is to pray for people – and ourselves as well – who, in seeking to discover God's call, become aware, yet again, of their own fragility and may be tempted to draw back.

*O greatness of God!
How transformed the soul is
when it comes out of the prayer
after having been placed within the
greatness of God,
and so closely joined with God
for a little while.*

Theresa of Avila

M

Please pray for the CMS Encounter team of young adults who are spending nearly four weeks with Youth For Christ in Cape Town, South Africa, where they will be involved in a range of activities with children and young people.

T

In Rwanda, a CMS Encounter team from Ipswich is spending time in Kigali Diocese. It will help to run a children's club and see firsthand the work of CMS Link Mission Partners Dick and Caroline Seed at Kigali Anglican Theological College.

W

Please pray for the CMS Encounter team which is spending three weeks with the Diocese of Ruaha in Tanzania. It will participate in practical activities and experience grass-roots mission, including the work of CMS mission partners Andy and Susie Hart.

T

Louise Wright, CMS Mission Partner, is returning to DR Congo and asks for prayer for students completing their course at Kalima Bible School, for the new Bible school planned for Kindu and for plans to revive adult literacy work.

F

Mission Partner Meg Merrifield at Bishop Harrington Institute in Mombasa, Kenya, is thankful for the Year One intake, that the graduating class is doing extremely well and that the theological students are making a real difference in the Church in Africa.



Ruth Sayers, mission partner in Cairo

WEEK 4

23 – 29 JULY

WEEKEND FOCUS

GOD'S CALL TO MISSION

Read Isaiah 40:9-11

Suddenly the sense of urgency in the court of heaven intensifies. There's a call to action – a sequence of six imperatives (verse 9b). This is the first time the term 'gospel' is mentioned in the Old Testament. This gospel, good news, proclaims literally, "Look, here is your God."

It is a gospel that makes God visible to his people. Maybe the enemies of Judah could imagine a world without God, but they are wrong. Their power is puny. The future rests elsewhere, with a Shepherd whose word is eternal, whose arm is strong (verse 10) but whose touch is gentle (verse 11).

You may want to pray that the people and places you meet this week will rest in the presence of this great Shepherd.

"Rich is the person who has a praying friend."

Janice Hughes

M

Mission Partner Shelagh Wynne has settled into her new post as personnel manager in Chang Mai, Thailand, and is grateful to have received her unlimited residential Thai visa and a smooth transition into her new post.

T

Gautam D. Money, Mission Partner in Gujarat, India, works on a project called the Post-earthquake Community Development Initiative, which addresses issues ranging from lack of basic needs through initiatives like income generation and training.

W

Mission Partner Gail Phillip in Thailand asks for prayer for peace in the country and legal reforms that will end corruption. She also asks for prayer for wisdom for the new government and for Khun, mentioned in **MISSIONUPDATE**, as he grows in his faith.

T

Give thanks for the 26 new congregations founded by the Indian Evangelical Mission (a CMS partner) that were handed over to the Nasik Diocese of the Church of North India (CNI) in April. Please pray that these young congregations will flourish.

F

Ram Prasad Shrestha is a co-mission partner in Nepal. He asks for continued prayer for the drop-in centre, which serves the large number of Nepalese people who have become followers of Jesus while working in Malaysia.

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 are praying for a good response to the tendering process for the next stage of building at Thames Court. Please pray that we will select the right contractor. We are also seeking to ensure that Thames Court becomes a sacred space as well as an office space, so please pray for understanding in that regard.

Please continue to pray for good relationships between CMS and contractors, suppliers and other professionals, and for future relationships with neighbours in the Bishops Mews development directly adjacent to Thames Court.

Finally, please pray that God would bless all those who visit the Iffley Road house as we continue the journey of forming a mission community in Oxford.

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Take my

yoke

upon you

and learn

from me