



PRAYERLINES

MARCH 2006



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'Calming the storm', by Indian artist Alfred Thomas

PRAYERLINES



“Prayer is not monologue, but dialogue; God’s voice is its most essential part. Listening to God’s voice is the secret of the assurance that He will listen to mine.”

Andrew Murray

True prayer is like breathing, it’s basic to our spiritual life. In its right place it’s almost subconscious.

I said last month that prayer and mission are inseparable. I want to suggest, further, that listening to God is the heart of prayer. People in the missionary movement are activists by temperament. We are people who get things done. A good attribute. So amidst all this activism there needs to be determination to develop places where dialogue with God is possible. It includes creating space in busy schedules to stop and hear the voice of God. That’s one reason why we’ve made our ‘weekend focus’ different from our weekday prayers.

Thanks for your comments on PRAYER**LINES**. We are delighted with the enthusiastic response and the constructive comments from people who pray faithfully and regularly for CMS people and work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Martin". The script is fluid and cursive.

John Martin

CMS Head of Communication

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WEEK 1

5 - 11 MARCH

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD WHO LIBERATES

Read Romans 8:18–24

How do we pray for people and places where the going is tough? In this famous passage Paul sets out impressive reasons why hope conquers despair.

No present troubles are permanent: God has something better in store (verse 18). It's not just a human project: it's for all creation (verse 21). So with all that assured what should be our response in prayer? It's to wait with patience (verse 25). Use this passage to pray for patience: in your own circumstances, and patience among Christians wherever they endure hardship.

Creator of the universe, watch over us and keep us in the light of your presence. May our praise continually blend with that of all creation until we come together to the eternal joys which you promise in your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
(A Celtic prayer)

M

Ghana celebrates 49 years of independence from Britain this week. The ruling party leadership includes some Anglicans, who need our prayers. The Church also seeks to achieve true independence of spiritual expression, under the Spirit's guidance.

T

The Diocese of Tamale in northern Ghana is an area often hit by food crises because of drought. As the new farming season approaches, Christians there ask our prayers for a good harvest of food and a spiritual harvest for God's Kingdom.

W

In student work, the leadership of the National Union of Anglican Students in Ghana and the Anglican Youth Fellowship of the Church of Nigeria, are making moves to co-operate in areas of youth ministry across the two Provinces.

T

The people of Christ Church Cathedral in Cape Coast this year celebrate the 140th anniversary of its dedication as the first public place of Anglican worship in Ghana. We remember them as they look back and look forward to future ministry.

F

Members of the Church in Cameroon, a missionary region of the Province of West Africa, are struggling through a period of crises and survival. The Rev Thomas Dibo Babyton Elango, attacked by armed robbers in Autumn 2005, needs our prayers.

BURKINA FASO



IN

Tamale ●

IVORY
COAST

TOGO

GHANA

Kumasi ●

Accra ■

Tema ●

Cape Coast

●
Sekondi-
Takoradi

WEEK 2

12 – 18 MARCH

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD WHO SENDS

Read Romans 10:12–17

For Paul there is no escaping the imperative to share the Gospel. It's a Gospel for everyone, no exceptions (verses 11–13). But how are people to believe in a Jesus they don't know about (verses 14–16)?

What's changed today? There are still vast numbers of people and places where the name of Jesus is rarely (or never) heard. Who will tell them? If they know only bits, who will help them to join up all the pieces?

Use this passage to pray for people who may be testing a call to mission.

**O Lord, may I be directed what to do
and what to leave undone.**

Amen

(Elizabeth Fry)

M

Peace in Sudan is fragile. The activity of the Lord's Resistance Army from Uganda within Sudan is one of the factors which means the Sudanese people still cannot settle and develop their nation without constant disturbances and harassment.

T

Many displaced people are now returning to Sudan yet the vast majority of the country desperately needs clean water, basic health facilities, hospitals, roads and schools. The nation's leaders must build up a country from virtually nothing.

W

Sudanese church leaders are working out how to contribute to local and national government, and how to meet the huge needs for forgiveness, reconciliation, organisation, and healing of deep psychological wounds, as well as material needs.

T

CMS currently has six mission partners in Sudan, working with the Church in areas like agriculture and training leaders (80 per cent of pastors in the Church of Sudan have had no training at all). They need the Lord's protection in a still volatile situation.

F

In Mozambique, Bishop Mark and the Rev Helen Van Koevering also need resources and people as they build up the church and renew people's faith and lives in the Diocese of Niassa, a fast-growing diocese in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.



At a CMS-facilitated reconciliation workshop in southern Sudan, a soldier prays for forgiveness. Photo: Pauline Walker

WEEK 3

19 – 25 MARCH

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD WHO RENEWS

Read Romans 12:1–3

In CMS there's a lot of discussion about what it means to live a *mission lifestyle*. Well, these words from Paul take us to the heart of it. This passage can be adapted to become a personal mission statement or prayer of commitment.

This week, consider dwelling on these five words or phrases. Consider how they apply in your life: 'living sacrifice'; 'spiritual worship'; 'be not conformed'; 'renewal of your mind'; 'the will of God'. Use them as a focus for prayers for yourself and the people you pray for this week.

Lord, help me to sleep well,
so that I may get up tomorrow
with my limbs healthy;
and show me the work I have to do.
Amen

(A Meru prayer, Kenya)

M

CMS is working with the Anglican Church in Korea to train priests and lay people to serve in Japan. Given the historical, cultural and political background, this endeavour will have to be carried out in a spirit of sensitivity, mutual respect and self-giving love.

T

CMS partnerships are deepening in Asia with an invitation from the Anglican Church in Korea to open a CMS office in Seoul, and the launch of Action Love Limited, based in Singapore – a mission alliance between CMS and Asian Outreach International.

W

The Guizhou Bible School in Guiyang, south-west China, opened its doors in September, with much CMS support (see cover). The first such school in the region, it has a long-term commitment to developing leadership capacity through constant upgrading.

T

Mission partners in China Mike and Tracey Walmsley (with two-year-old daughter Sophie) work with the Jian Hua Foundation to mobilise much needed workers around the country through various agricultural, educational and medical projects.

F

25th March is the 199th anniversary of the bill that abolished the slave trade. Efforts to tackle the legacy of slavery, and its modern forms, surround plans for the bicentenary in 2007 – CMS plans to launch the play *African Snow* and associated resources.



Future leaders: Students at the Guizhou Bible School celebrate their new building.
Photo: Mark Oxbrow

WEEK 4

26 MARCH – 1 APRIL

WEEKEND FOCUS

PRAY WITH THE BIBLE GOD'S INFINITE WISDOM

Read Romans 11:33–36

It's helpful to be reminded of the resources of the One to whom we pray.

Paul, himself a Jew, has agonised over the lack of response to the Gospel by his fellow Jews. Then he has a sudden insight. The infinite wisdom of God is more than adequate when human ideas and argument are exhausted.

We need to learn to focus on the infinite resources of the God to whom we pray, especially when the problems of the people and situations before us seem intractable.

Lord, I am blind and helpless,
stupid and ignorant,
cause me to hear;
cause me to know;
teach me to do; lead me.

Amen

(A prayer by Henry Martyn)

M

Mission Together Africa (MTA) brings together CMS, IFES, Sheepfold Ministries, Church Army and All Saints' Cathedral, Kampala to collaborate in cross-cultural mission in Africa. It needs Churches in Africa to catch its vision and commit resources.

T

MTA's Business as Mission group is seeking to mobilise business people to "incarnate God's Kingdom through the market-place". Its Africa-wide collaboration already includes a mentoring initiative between mature and young business people.

W

MTA's Mission Adventure Galore offers short-term programmes to inspire young people to devote their passion and energy to missions. The second MTA 'think-tank' will bring indigenous mission leaders together later this year to reflect on the future.

T

Bishop Les Walker leads the new Diocese of Mpumalanga, South Africa, and has a passion for evangelistic ministry and church growth. He currently needs wisdom as he builds up a leadership team for evangelistic ministry in the Nkomazi area.

F

In the Diocese of Northern Zambia Bishop Albert Chama leads a renewal movement. More than 200 church leaders attended a Revival Conference and a team is now visiting every parish, aiming to bring new depth and passion to people's faith.

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 that the sale of Partnership House allows CMS to create state-of-the-art facilities for the 21st century, effectively at zero cost. We won't take any money from our regular budget to fund the move. So our fundraising focus can stay on mission, where it is urgently needed.

Specially-appointed Relocation Manager Gillian Wilcox is co-ordinating the move. In March the main focus is on the planning applications for the redesign of the new office building. If they go smoothly building works can start in July.

All UK-based CMS staff are affected by the move. Partnership House workers are currently making important decisions about moving to Oxford, exploring new ways of working, or moving on from CMS. Please uphold them in prayer.

PRAYERLINES is produced by the Church Mission Society,
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Arise,
shine,
for your
light
has
come